

Clause structure and alignment in Movima

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1. Introduction¹

Movima is an unclassified, endangered language with still about 1,000 speakers in and around Santa Ana del Yacuma in the Beni department of lowland Bolivia. The language was first investigated by the SIL linguists Robert and Judith Judy in the early 1960s. The present study is based on my own text and elicitation data collected during a total of 15 months between 2001 and 2007.

The phoneme inventory of Movima contains 19 consonants (represented phonetically when the orthographic symbols are not self-explanatory): **p**, **t**, **k** (realized as [pʔ^m], [tʔⁿ], and [ʔ], respectively, in coda position), ' [ʔ], **kw**, **b** [β], **d** [ɖ], **ch** [tʃ], **v** [β], **s**, **j** [h], **ʃ**, **m**, **n**, **l**, **r** [r], **w**, **y** [j], and **y'** [j^ʔ]. The five vowel phonemes are **i**, **e**, **a**, **o** and **u**. Syllable structure is (C)V(C). Stress generally falls on the penultimate syllable of

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the word, except when the word ends in a glottal consonant, which causes stress on the last syllable. A penultimate open syllable is usually lengthened, the major exception involving words that end in the glottal stop. Lexical roots must minimally consist of a heavy syllable, i.e. (C)VC or (C)V:. Morphologically, Movima can be described as agglutinating (one morpheme = one meaning), although many content words are monomorphemic and there is no agreement morphology. Most morphemes are suffixes, but there are also infixes and several reduplicating processes. Compounding and noun incorporation are frequent. Tense, mood, and aspect are not expressed by verbal morphemes, but by particles. Referential elements (articles, personal pronouns, demonstratives) indicate natural gender, number, presence, absence, position, and ongoing vs. ceased existence of the referent.²

In the first part of this paper I show that Movima clause structure is characterized by largely fixed constituent order (predicate initial). The organization of transitive clauses is primarily governed by referential properties of the arguments according to a saliency hierarchy. Direct and inverse marking on the predicate indicate the semantic roles of the arguments in a transitive clause, direct indicating that the salient participant is the actor and the nonsalient participant the undergoer, and inverse indicating the opposite constellation. The argument that denotes the nonsalient participant in a two-participant event has the same coding properties as the argument of an intransitive clause, and it also has the syntactically privileged status. The non-privileged argument, in contrast, does not seem to have any control properties at all. A valency-decreasing voice operation enables the argument encoding the salient participant to function as the privileged syntactic argument.

The second part of the paper argues that this unusual pattern can be explained by the fact that the elements of a clause are not restricted to particular lexical categories, i.e., both nouns and verbs can function as predicates and arguments likewise. Furthermore, the possessor is encoded in the same way as the nonprivileged argument of transitive clauses. This makes it possible to consider all clauses as intransitive, equational clauses

² For detailed information on the Movima phonology and grammar, see Haude (2006).

whose predicates denote either possessed or nonpossessed entities. The fact that in a prototypical possessive relation, the possessor is salient and the possessed entity nonsalient may explain why it is the nonsalient argument that has the privileged syntactic status in Movima.

For reasons of exposition, the description is restricted to affirmative main clauses and focuses as much as possible on third-person participants. In order to illustrate the argumentation as clearly as possible, only elicited examples are used; however, all constructions are also found in spontaneous discourse. For a more detailed account of the phenomenon, see Haude (to appear a and b).

2. Alignment

2.1. Argument encoding in transitive clauses: the saliency hierarchy

The saliency hierarchy that determines argument encoding in Movima is based on person (1 > 2 > 3), animacy (3 human > 3 animate non-human > 3 inanimate) and topicality (3 topic > 3 nontopic) of the referent. The formal distinction of the two arguments of a transitive clause is brought about not by morphology, but by morphophonemics and prosody. The referential phrase or pronoun that refers to the higher-ranking participant is encoded as a constituent internal to the predicative phrase, the phrase or pronoun that refers to the lower-ranking participant is encoded as external to the predicative phrase, as illustrated in (1).

(1) [PRED [ARG]] [ARG]

The formal properties of the internal argument, which will be illustrated below, are as follows:

- It is obligatorily expressed, zero encoding marking the first person singular.
- It is phonologically closely attached to the predicate by what I call 'internal cliticization' (marked as =).

The formal properties of the external argument are the following:

- It is not obligatorily expressed.

- It is not always, and less tightly, phonologically cliticized to the predicate (this 'external cliticization' is marked by --).
- It has a freer position in the clause, e.g., it can also occur before instead of after the predicate (but never between the predicate and the internal argument).

The following examples illustrate the encoding of the internal argument with the verb **kaya:poj** 'to feed'. In (2), this verb appears alone, i.e. without an overt person marker. Note that it displays the typical stress pattern of a Movima word, the penultimate open syllable being lengthened and carrying stress. The absence of an overt internally cliticized person-marking morpheme indicates the first person singular.³ The second argument is not overtly expressed, but the fact that the verb is marked as bivalent (by the direct marker **-a-**, see below), indicates that a second participant is present in the event. Furthermore, since it is the salient participant that is expressed as the internal argument, we know that the external argument must rank lower in the saliency hierarchy.

- (2) **kay-a:-poj=Ø**
 eat-DR-CAUS=1SG
 [ka'ja:poh]
 I fed X (you, him, her, it, them).⁴

In (3), the internal argument is overtly realized as the third-person masculine absential pronoun, **us**. The attachment of this argument triggers the insertion of a linking vowel **-a** after the verb base, and the fact that stress shifts to the penultimate syllable of the entire unit indicates that the clitic forms a phonological word together with its host. There is no lengthening of the penultimate vowel, however, as is otherwise typical of Movima words with an open penultimate syllable.

- (3) **kay-a-poj-a=us**
 eat-DR-CAUS-LV=3M.AB
 [kajapo'ha?us]
 He fed X (him, her, it, them).

³ Additionally, the first person is optionally marked by the element **ɬ** cliticized to the element preceding the predicate.

⁴ Tense, a feature of the nominal article, is not always overtly encoded. The examples are generally translated into English by the simple past.

In (4), the internal argument is expressed by a full referential phrase. Referential phrases always contain an article, which is cliticized in the same way as a pronoun, i.e., causing the appearance of a linking vowel and causing stress to shift to the penultimate syllable.⁵

- (4) **kay-a-poj-a=us** **itila:kwa**
 eat-DR-CAUS-LV=ART.M man
 [kajapo'ha?us ?iti'la:kwa]
 The man fed X (him, her, it, them).

Turning now to the expression of the external argument, the above examples have already shown that the overt expression of this argument is not grammatically obligatory. Example (5) illustrates the different type of cliticization of an overtly realized external argument. In (5), the internal argument is zero (thereby encoding first person), and the pronoun representing the external argument is cliticized in a way that neither causes the appearance of a linking vowel nor a change in the stress pattern. The open penultimate syllable of the host remains long. Note, however, that the cliticized pronoun is resyllabified with the final consonant of the host, which forms the syllable onset. This example contrasts directly with (3) above, where the pronoun is cliticized internally.

- (5) **kay-a:-poj=Ø--us**
 eat-DR-CAUS=1SG--3M.AB
 [ka'ja:pohus]
 I fed him.

When the external argument is expressed by a full referential phrase, this phrase is not cliticized at all. In (6), this is shown with a referential phrase containing the presential article (as in (4) above), which is vowel-initial and, like all vowel-initial words in Movima, preceded by a glottal stop. There is no resyllabification.

- (6) **kay-a:-poj=Ø** **us** **itila:kwa**
 eat-DR-CAUS=1SG ART.M man
 [ka'ja:poh ?us ?itila:kwa]
 I fed the man.

⁵ The homophony of the presential article **us** and the absential bound pronoun **us** can be considered accidental. The form of the presential masculine bound pronoun would be **u**².

Example (7), finally, shows that the external argument can also be expressed by a free pronoun in clause-initial position instead of the bound pronoun in post-predicate position. This is the marked-topic construction, which will be discussed in 2.5.1 below.

- (7) **usko kay-a:-poj=Ø**
 PRO.M.AB eat-DR-CAUS=1SG
 I fed *him*.

2.2. Direct and inverse marking

As was stated above, the formal encoding of the arguments is determined by the saliency hierarchy. This is to say, the formal differences between the two arguments do not, by themselves, indicate semantic roles, and we are not dealing with a case distinction here. Semantic roles are indicated through direct and inverse marking in Movima. Direct marking on the predicate, present in the examples given above, indicates that the salient participant (represented by the internal argument) is the actor and the nonsalient participant (represented by the external argument) is the undergoer in the event. Inverse marking indicates that the salient participant is the undergoer and the nonsalient one the actor. Direct is marked by the suffix **-na** or by its base-internal allomorph **-a-** (as in (2)-(7) above).⁶ The inverse is marked by the suffix **-kay**. The contrast between a direct and an inverse transitive clause is illustrated in (8) and (9).

- (8) **tikoy-na=us os mimi:di**
 kill-DR=3M.AB ART.N.PST snake
 He killed the/a snake.
- (9) **tikoy-kay-a=us os mimi:di**
 kill-INV-LV=3M.AB ART.N.PST snake
 The/a snake killed him.

⁶ The element **-a-** (or <a>) is inserted in second-syllable position of the base when the verb root is monosyllabic and consonant-final (CVC), when the verb root is followed by derivational material, and when the second-syllable position is not occupied by the multiple-event marker **-ka**. The suffix **-na** occurs in all other environments (see Haude 2006: 323ff.). In negative and subordinate clauses, whose predicates are nominalized, direct and inverse are marked by different types of reduplication (cf. Haude 2006: 360ff.).

The following sections will show that the external argument is encoded in the same way as the argument of an intransitive clause, and that this, due to the direct-inverse contrast, leads to a split-ergative pattern.

2.3. Argument encoding in intransitive clauses

Like the external argument in a transitive clause, the argument of an intransitive clause is not obligatorily expressed when it is known from the context. It is attached to the predicate through external cliticization when expressed by a bound pronoun, and not attached when expressed by a referential phrase. It can also be encoded by a free pronoun in clause-initial position. Examples (10)-(13) illustrate each of these points. (Note that /k/ is pronounced as a glottal stop in coda position; that it is pronounced as [k] in (11), where it is resyllabified with the bound pronoun, is further evidence of the cliticized status of the bound pronoun.)

- (10) **kuyna:nak**
 play
 [kujna:'naʔ]⁷
 (They) played.
- (11) **kuyna:nak--is**
 play--3PL.AB
 [kuj'na:nakis]
 They played.
- (12) **kuyna:nak is dichi:ye**
 play ART.PL child
 [kujna:'naʔ ʔis di'tʃi:je]
 The children played.
- (13) **isko kuyna:nak**
 PRO.PL.AB play
 ['ʔisko kujna:'naʔ]
 They played.

Thus, the single argument of an intransitive clause is encoded in the same way as the external argument of a transitive clause.

⁷ The stress on the last syllable is triggered by the glottal stop.

2.4. An alignment split

Since the external argument of a transitive clause, which aligns with the single argument of an intransitive clause, represents the participant that ranks lower in the saliency hierarchy, we can state that the Movima morphosyntax is organized on the basis of the saliency hierarchy, not on the basis of semantic roles. When the assignment of semantic roles through direct and inverse marking is considered, it can be observed that there is a split-ergative pattern: the direct construction, in which the privileged argument is the undergoer, patterns ergatively, and the inverse construction, in which the privileged argument is the actor, patterns accusatively. This is illustrated in Figure 1 (following Dixon 1994, the labels A and O stand for my 'actor' and 'undergoer', respectively, and S stands for the sole argument of an intransitive clause).

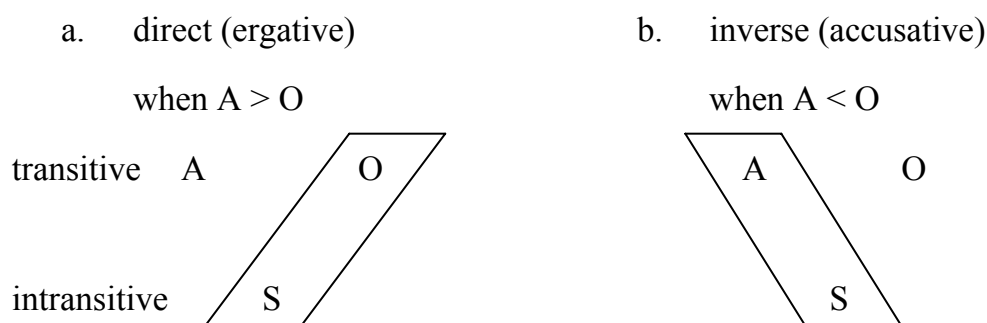


Figure 1. The split-alignment pattern (> stands for "ranks higher than")

Due to the fact that a prototypical actor is high in the saliency hierarchy, the direct construction is by far more frequent than the inverse construction in Movima (approximately 90% of transitive constructions with third-person participants are direct). Consequently, most transitive main clauses in a Movima text display an ergative pattern.⁸ However, my claim is that this is only a secondary effect of the general saliency-based syntactic organization, and, as will be argued in Section 3, of the underlying intransitive character of all Movima clauses.

⁸ The picture changes when negative and embedded clauses are taken into account. These involve nominalization, and the argument of an intransitive clause, being expressed like a possessor (see below), is internal to the predicative phrase.

2.5. The syntactic status of the external argument

The external argument of a transitive clause not only aligns formally with the argument of the intransitive clause, but it is also syntactically privileged. Evidence is provided by the marked-topic construction and by relative clauses, both of which favour the external argument. Other evidence of control properties of any of the two arguments has not been found so far. Reflexive verbs are intransitive. Purposive clauses, like all embedded clauses, involve nominalization; this, in turn, involves obligatory possessive marking, and hence, the argument of a purposive clause is always overtly expressed. As far as coordination is concerned, when an intransitive clause is coordinated to a transitive clause, its argument can be overtly expressed or omitted, no matter whether it is coreferential with the internal or with the external argument of the transitive clause. The imperative is marked by different suffixes for transitive direct (2>3), transitive inverse (2>1), and intransitive verbs, which means that not even here, there is a bias towards either of the arguments. Thus, although the evidence for a privileged status of the external transitive argument is restricted to only two constructions, it can be claimed that this argument does have control properties in certain constructions, while the internal argument does not have any. This fits with the underlying intransitive character of Movima clauses that will be argued for below. In the remainder of this section, I describe the marked-topic construction and the formation of relative clauses.

2.5.1. Topicalization and relativization

In the marked-topic construction, one argument is represented by a free form (usually a free pronoun) before the predicate. It is used to single out a participant that was just before introduced as the new topic, different from the former discourse topic. The following examples illustrate the marked-topic construction in transitive clauses, (14) with a direct and (15) with an inverse predicate. (For an example of an intransitive clause with a topicalized argument, see (13) above.)

- (14) **asko tikoy-na=us itila:kwa**
 PRO.N.AB kill-DR=ART.M man
 That (was what) the man killed.

- (15) **asko tikoy-kay-a=us itila:kwa**
 PRO.N.AB kill-INV-LV=ART.M man
 That (was what) killed the man.

While generally, the topicalized argument is the external argument, the internal argument can be topicalized in this way as well. Since it is obligatorily expressed internally to the predicative phrase, this means that the pronoun in topic position occurs in addition to the cliticized element. However, while this construction does occur in texts, speakers generally reject it in elicitation:

- (16) **?usko tikoy-na=us os mimi:di**
 PRO.M.AB kill-DR=3M.AB ART.N.PST snake
 He killed the snake.

In relative clauses, the privileged status of the external argument is more pronounced. Relative clauses follow the referential phrase they modify and are introduced by the particle **di'**. They may only have the external argument as their head, which is never overtly realized.

In a transitive relative clause, either the direct or the inverse construction is chosen depending on the semantic role of the participant encoded as the external argument. In (17), the external argument is the undergoer, as indicated by the direct marker on the predicate. In (18), the relativized participant is the actor, as indicated by the inverse morphology.

- (17) **os mimi:di di' tikoy-na=us itila:kwa**
 ART.N.PST snake REL kill-DR=ART.M man
 The snake that the man killed.

- (18) **os mimi:di di' tikoy-kay-a=us itila:kwa**
 ART.N.PST snake REL kill-INV-LV=ART.M man
 The snake that killed the man.

The intransitive relative clause in (19) illustrates that also in relativization, the external argument of a transitive clause behaves like the single argument of an intransitive clause.

- (19) **is dichi:ye di' kuyna:nak**
 ART.PL child REL play
 The children who played.

2.5.2. De-transitive voice: the particle *kaw*

As was shown in the preceding section, only the external argument can be relativized by the above construction, and it is also the preferred argument for topicalization. To relativize or topicalize the internal argument, a valency-decreasing operation is used.

The valency-decreasing particle is **kaw** (or **kwey**), which is located immediately before the predicate. The effect is that the clause becomes intransitive, with the former internal argument as its only argument. The former external argument becomes an (optional) oblique NP, marked by the prefix **n-**. The verb retains its direct or inverse marking.

The following examples show the detransitivized marked-topic construction, which is used to topicalize the salient participant in a two-participant event. In elicitation, speakers prefer this construction over the simple marked-topic construction illustrated in (16) above. Example (20) illustrates the direct construction, in which the topicalized participant is the actor (cf. (8) above), and (21) illustrates the inverse, where the topicalized participant is the undergoer (cf. (9) above).

- (20) **usko kaw tikoy-na (n-os mimi:di)**
 PRO.M.AB **kaw** kill-DR OBL-ART.N.PST snake
 He (was the one who) killed (the snake).

- (21) **usko kaw tikoy-kay (n-os mimi:di)**
 PRO.M.AB **kaw** kill-INV OBL-ART.N.PST snake
 He (was the one who) was killed (by the snake).

Examples (22) and (23) show the detransitive operation with a relative clause, again with a direct and an inverse predicate, respectively:

- (22) **us itila:kwa di' kaw tikoy-na (n-os mimi:di)**
 ART.M man REL **kaw** kill-DR OBL-ART.N.PST snake
 The man that killed (the snake).

- (23) **us itila:kwa di' kaw tikoy-kay (n-os mimi:di)**
 ART.M man REL **kaw** kill-INV OBL-ART.N.PST snake
 The man that was killed (by the snake).

Since the direct construction patterns ergatively and the inverse construction accusatively (see (2.4 above), the detransitivization has either an antipassive or a passive effect, depending on the construction on which

it operates: the antipassive effect occurs when **kaw** operates on the direct construction, as in (20) and (22), where the actor is promoted and the undergoer demoted; the passive effect occurs when **kaw** operates on the inverse construction, as in (21) and (23), where the undergoer is promoted and the actor demoted. Thus, the symmetry of the two transitive constructions that arise from a semantic-role analysis is also reflected in the valency-decreasing operation.

3. Clause structure and parts of speech

The above sections have shown that in a transitive clause, the argument that encodes the nonsalient participant in a two-participant event is encoded in the same way as the argument of an intransitive clause. Moreover, this argument is syntactically privileged. No evidence has been found so far that the argument that represents the salient participant has any syntactic control properties. This is an unusual and counter-intuitive pattern: normally, it would be expected that the privileged argument be the one that is both topical and high in the person/animacy hierarchy (cf. e.g. Aissen 1999).

In the following sections I will argue that this unusual syntactic pattern can be made plausible by looking at the syntactic distribution of nouns and verbs and the way in which possession is encoded. This analysis is inspired by accounts that were proposed for other non-accusative alignment patterns, e.g. by Sasse (1991) on Mayan and Himmelmann (1991, 2008) on Austronesian languages.

3.1. Differences between nouns and verbs

The morphological differences between nouns and verbs in Movima are quite subtle, due to the absence of 'typical' category-specific morphology: there is no tense/aspect/mood marking on verbs, and nouns are not marked for case or number. Still, there are means that distinguish verbs and nouns on the morphological level.

First, nouns can be incorporated, but verbs cannot: **sal-a-mo:ri** (search-DR-flower) 'to look for flowers' is fine, but ***sal-a-ilo:ni** [search-

DR-walk], with the intended meaning 'to look for the person who walks', or ***sal-a-lojna** (search-DR-wash.DR), with the intended meaning 'to look for my laundry' is not.

Second, while nouns and verbs share some derivational affixes, there are a number of affixes that attach to nouns, but not to verbs, and *vice versa*.⁹ For instance, nouns, but not verbs, can be combined with the suffix **-tik** to denote an activity typically associated with the denotatum of the noun (e.g. **ro:ya-tik** [house-VBZ] 'to build a house'). It would not be possible to find this suffix on a verb.

Third, verbs require direct or inverse marking for being combined with an internal argument. Nouns, in contrast, can be marked for possession without these markers (see 3.2 below).

Syntactically, however, nouns and verbs are almost entirely equivalent. Nouns can function as predicates, and verbs can be combined with an article to form a referential phrase. Furthermore, possessors are encoded in the same way as the internal argument of a transitive clause. Finally, the application of the particle **kaw** has the same effect on a possessed referential phrase as on a bivalent predicate: the noun is not marked as possessed anymore, and its referent is not the possessed entity, but the possessor. I will illustrate each of these points in turn.

3.2. Possessor encoding

A nominal possessor is encoded in the same way as the internal argument of a transitive clause: it is internally cliticized, as is illustrated by the insertion of the linking vowel **-a** in (24a), and, as illustrated in (24b), with obligatorily possessed nouns (kinship and body-part terms, but also more idiosyncratic cases such as **baytim** 'field' in (24)), the absence of an overt marker indicates the first person singular.

- (24) a. **as baytim-a=us**
 ART.N field-LV=3M.AB
 His field

⁹ The direct and inverse markers are not restricted to verbal bases alone, but can be attached to nouns, as in **lawajes-kay-a=ne** (remedy-INV-LV=3f) 'He/she/it/they etc. healed her.'

- b. **as bayɬim=Ø**
 ART.N field=1SG
 My field

On nouns that are not obligatorily possessed, the first person singular possessor is encoded by the marker **ɬ** on the article, as in (25). (This first-person marker can optionally occur also on obligatorily possessed nouns and on bivalent verbs.)

- (25) **aɬ ro:ya=Ø**
 ART.N.1 house=1SG
 My house

3.3. Valency-decrease on nouns

Nouns can be productively combined with the valency-decreasing particle **kaw** (cf. 2.5.2). Their referent is then the possessor of the entity denoted by the noun. In parallel to the effect of **kaw** on the argument structure of verbs, the noun in the **kaw**-construction is not marked as possessed anymore, and the possessed entity is optionally expressed by an oblique element (free pronoun or referential phrase). This process applies both to nouns that are obligatorily possessed, such as **bayɬim** 'field' in (26), and to nouns that are not, such as **ro:ya** 'house' in (27).

- (26) **us kaw bayɬim (n-a'ko)**
 ART.M **kaw** field (OBL-PRO.N)
 The owner of (that) field
- (27) **us kaw ro:ya (n-a'ko)**
 ART.M **kaw** house (OBL-PRO.N)
 The owner of (that) house

The examples show that the function of the particle **kaw** is that of reducing the valency of bivalent expressions, be they nominal or verbal. The parallel will become more evident in the following section, where predicate nominals are discussed.

3.4. Nouns as predicates

There is no copula in Movima. When not preceded by an article, a noun, therefore, functions as the predicate expressing equation or proper

inclusion. The following examples illustrate a noun, the Spanish loan **mayoro:mo** 'housekeeper', as the predicate of an intransitive clause. The clauses in (28)-(31) have a structure parallel to that of the verbal clauses in (10)-(13) above.

- (28) **mayoro:mo** (predicate alone)
housekeeper
(He) (is/was a) housekeeper.
- (29) **mayoro:mo--us** (predicate with external clitic)
housekeeper--3M.AB
He (is/was a) housekeeper.
- (30) **mayoro:mo us alwaj=Ø** (predicate with referential phrase)
housekeeper ART.M spouse=1SG
My husband (is/was a) housekeeper.
- (31) **usko mayoro:mo** (with free pronoun in topic position)
PRO.M.AB housekeeper
He (is/was a) housekeeper.

Possessed predicate nominals are similar to bivalent verbs, since they are combined with an internal constituent expressing the possessor (cf. 3.2). However, the external argument of such a clause can only be expressed in clause-initial position, as in (32a). The expression of the argument as an external enclitic is ungrammatical, as shown by (32b). Note that this is the only syntactic difference between a verbal and a nominal predicate.

- (32) a. **asko bayfim-a=us**
PRO.PL.AB field-LV=3M.AB
That (is/was) his field.
- b. ***bayfim-a=us--k-as**
field-LV=3M.AB--OBV-3N.AB¹⁰
(It is/was his field.)

The following examples illustrate the parallel between a predicate nominal (33) and a bivalent verb (34) combined with **kaw**. In both cases, the argument denotes the participant that would otherwise be expressed as the internally cliticized pronoun (cf. (32a) and (8) above).

¹⁰ When the internal argument is or includes a third person, the externally cliticized pronoun is redundantly marked as 'obviative' by a prefix **k-** (see Haude 2006: 279ff.).

- (33) **usko kaw bayɬim (n-asko)**
 PRO.M.AB **kaw** field (OBL-PRO.N.AB)
 He (is/was the) owner (of the field).
- (34) **usko kaw tikoy-na (n-asko)**
 PRO.M.AB **kaw** kill-DR (OBL-PRO.N.AB)
 He (is/was the one who) killed (it).

3.5. Verbs as arguments

As was shown above, nouns, both possessed and unpossessed, can function as predicates. We will now see that similarly, both mono- and bivalent verbs can also occur in a referential phrase and thus function as arguments of a clause. For this purpose, they only need to be combined with an article, as shown in (35)-(38). The referent of the resulting phrase is a participant of the event, whose role is predictable from the argument structure of the verb: it is the same participant that would be encoded as the external argument of the same verb in predicate function. In (35) and (36), this is illustrated for monovalent verbs: in (35), the external argument of the predicate (a) and referent of the verbal referential phrase (b) is the actor; in (36), the external argument of the predicate (a) and the referent of the referential phrase is the undergoer.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(35) a. kuyna:nak--is
 play--3PL.AB
 They played.</p> | <p>b. kis kuyna:nak
 ART.PL.AB play
 The (ones who) played.</p> |
| <p>(36) a. tikoy-'i--is
 kill-D--3PL.AB
 They were killed.</p> | <p>b. kis tikoy-'i
 ART.PL.AB kill-D
 The (ones that) were killed.¹¹</p> |

Examples (37) and (38) illustrate referential phrases containing a direct and inverse bivalent verb, respectively. When the verb is direct, the referent is the undergoer; when the verb is inverse, the referent of the phrase is the actor, in parallel to the role of the external argument of the verb in predicate function (cf. (8) and (9) above).

- (37) **is tikoy-na=us**
 ART.PL kill-DR=3M.AB
 The ones he killed.

¹¹ The ending *-i* is a phonologically conditioned dummy element: semantically transitive verb roots with this element are undergoer-oriented (cf. Haude 2006: 332).

- (38) **is tikoy-kay-a=us**
 ART.PL kill-INV-LV=3M.AB
 The ones that killed him.

Example (39) illustrates the occurrence of a referential phrase with a verb in a clause. As in this example, it is typically (though not exclusively) the case that the predicate of such a clause is represented by a noun, which shows that more research is needed on the pragmatic function of nouns as predicates and verbs in referential phrases.

- (39) **da'ra is tikoy-na=us**
 ostrich ART.PL kill-DR=3M.AB
 What he killed were ostriches.

The fact that verbs in referential phrases obviously characterize participants in an event, rather than denoting the event itself, makes it possible to assume that they do this also when functioning as predicates: all verbs can in fact be interpreted as actor- or undergoer-oriented nominals. The paraphrases in (40) serve as an illustration of this view:

- (40) a. She was a player. → She played. (intransitive)
 b. It was his killed (one). → He killed it. (transitive direct)
 c. It was his killing (one). → It killed him. (transitive inverse)

An interpretation of this type has also been proposed for Tagalog voice-marked verbs (Himmelman 1991, 2008: 287f.). The major difference between Movima and Tagalog in this respect is that the orientation of verbs in Tagalog is determined by the topicality of argument referents; in Movima, by contrast, the choice of direct or inverse marking is determined by the saliency hierarchy, of which topicality is only one component.

4. Conclusion

From the above discussion we can conclude the following:

- The internal argument of a synchronically transitive clause can be interpreted as a phrase-internal modifier rather than an argument, since it is encoded like a possessor and does not have syntactic control properties. From this perspective, all Movima clauses can

be interpreted as intransitive, with the external argument as their only argument.

- Verbs and nouns, despite being different lexical categories in Movima, are almost entirely equivalent on the syntactic level (with the only exception presented in (32)). Verbs in Movima do not denote events, but characterize the event participants. Therefore, all clauses can be interpreted as equational clauses with a bivalent/possessed or monovalent/nonpossessed predicate nominal.– Two-participant events are encoded in analogy to a prototypical possessive relation: like a prototypical possessor, the actor is salient, and like a prototypical possessed entity, the undergoer is nonsalient.

This interpretation helps to understand the peculiarities of Movima clause structure, namely the puzzling fact that the syntactically privileged participant is the one that ranks lower in the saliency hierarchy. The diachronic dimension of this phenomenon still requires further investigation.

Abbreviations

AB	absential	N	neuter
ART	article	OBL	oblique
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
D	dummy	PRO	free pronoun
DR	direct	PST	past
INV	inverse	REL	relativizer
LV	linking vowel	SG	singular
M	masculine	VBZ	verbalizer

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