

The Syntax of Personal Pronouns in the Bima Language

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Abstract

This article aims at describing the syntactic properties and distributions of Personal Pronouns in the Bima Language, a language spoken by approximately 9000 people who inhabit the eastern part of Sumbawa Island. This number of speakers does not include those who live in Reo Pota Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara. The Bima Language is grouped into Sumba-Bima Subgroup of Central Malayo-Polynesian (CMP) branch of Austronesian Language. Data in this study are the linguistic units from morphemes level to clausal level. The data were taken from conversations and monologues recorded in the real situations in which the Bima Language is used. The focus of this paper is to describe the personal pronoun system of the Bima Language, describing types of personal pronouns and their syntactic properties and distributions. Based on the analysis, the Bima Language has a set of morphologically independent personal pronouns (full pronouns) and a set of clitics. Both sets of personal pronouns show the same syntactic properties and distributions. These two sets of personal pronouns are able to occur as independent clausal arguments of both intransitive and transitive constructions. In addition to their distributions, these two sets of personal pronouns can occur with numerals, relatives, and NPs. However, only full personal pronouns can combine with demonstratives.

Keywords: personal pronoun, clitics, syntactic distribution, the Bima Language

1. Introduction

The Bima Language is grouped in the Bima-Sumba-Flores Subgroup by Blust (2008). However, this grouping is rather based on geographical consideration than anything other (Donohue & Grime, 2008). The Bima Language is spoken by approximately 9000 speakers inhabit the eastern part of Sumbawa Island. The research documentation in the Bima Language has increased dramatically these days. With the speakers who are still significant in numbers, the preservation of the language in form of documentation is crucially important. The investigation has attracted a lot of attention of scholars, especially linguists who focus on the grammar analysis. The studies by Owen (2000) and Wouk and Arafiq (2016) are the latest done on the language aiming at analyzing the grammar. These two studies made great contributions to a clear description of The Bima Language grammar, particularly the Bima Language syntax.

Personal pronouns in the Bima Language have never been specifically studied. They are only understood as language entities labeled as subjects or objects in some studies. For instance, personal pronouns in the Bima Language must be cross-referencing with the clitics in phrasal level and the clitics can represent the personal pronouns. Another issue regarding the personal pronouns in the Bima Language is the fact that the distribution of the pronominal clitics vary within the clauses (Arafiq, 2005). These facts shows that personal pronouns in the Bima Language is quite complex. In this case, Dixon (2017) argues that pronouns should be described in terms of facts and principles of their functional uses due to the grammatical behaviors of pronouns is not entirely determined by their syntactic relations but also by other factors. Meanwhile, regarding to the distributions of pronouns, Baggaley (1998) stated that the exploration of syntactic category or pronouns should consider not only the possibility that pronouns are nouns, but that they may belong to other grammatical categories which make up noun phrases. This view is based on the assumption that even the simplest noun phrases have a complex internal structure and contain more than just one.

The pronouns in the Bima Language, might set a new light into theories on Pronouns (Baggaley 1998) and Dixon (2010 & 2017) which suggest that subjective and objective full pronouns are dominant in human languages while clitics are not. In more specific issue about Personal Pronouns, Balukh (2015) stated that personal pronouns can be morphologically independent and bound forms. This study will examine if the case in the Bima Language

contributing the fact that clitic pronouns have unique syntactical properties, distribution, and functions worthy of revisiting the current views of personal pronouns.

Pronouns are words used to refer other nouns (Alwi, Dardjowodjodjo, Lapoliwa, & Moeliono, 2008: 249). In other words, they are used to replace people and things because their function is to replace the nouns (see also Chaer, 1998: 91). In fact, pronouns can serve syntactic subject, object, and also predicate. Further (Alwi, et.al. 2008) sated that another characteristics of pronouns are closely related to their references which are flexible depending on who speaks to whom or who speaks what and categorized pronouns into (1) personal pronouns, (2) possessive pronouns, (3) demonstrative pronouns, (4) interrogative pronouns, (5) relative pronouns, and (6) indefinite pronouns.

Pronouns are language units to replace the full noun phrases. Therefore, they take syntactic positions similar to what the noun phrases do (Baggaley, 1998:1). Baggaley (1998) believed that pronouns should be projected as Determiner Phrases (DPs). However, this approach still remains a debate among linguists, especially at the word level. Abney (1987) and Ritter (1991) proposed that pronouns are categorized into Determiners (Ds) and Numerals (Nums), so that they belong to functors. Meanwhile Noguchi (1997) and Zwarts (1994) argued that they are Nouns (Ns), and they belong to lexical items. In line with the later claim, Dixon (2017) stated that pronouns behave more like complete Noun Phrases (NPs) which can fill an argument slot in the phrases.

1.1 The Properties of Personal Pronouns

With regard to their forms, personal pronouns in all languages exhibit alternations. Personal pronouns may realize into *full pronouns*, *reduced pronoun*, or *clitic pronouns* and even in form of dependent affixes. In this case, the language like Rote Ndao can be a good example of this phenomenon. In Rote Ndao, all personal pronouns can have their reduced forms, clitics, and affixes, accept the second singular which does not have its reduced forms (Balukh, 2015). Unlikely, the Sambori language is lack of the paradigm where personal pronouns only have full forms and clitics, without having reduced pronouns and affixes (Arafiq, Hanafi, Mu'adz, & Yusra, 2018). The following Table 1 shows the personal pronouns paradigm in Rote Ndao and Sambori Language.

Table 1. Personal Pronouns Paradigms in Rote Ndao and Sambori Language

		Pron	Full	Reduced	Clitics	Affixes		
					Pre	Enc	Pref	Suf
RN	First	1SG	<i>ja'a</i>	<i>Ja</i>	<i>Ku</i>	-	<i>kU-</i>	<i>-ku</i>
		1PL-ex	<i>ji'i</i>	<i>Ji</i>	<i>(nga)3</i>	-	<i>ngA4-</i>	<i>-'a</i>
		1PL-in	<i>Edhi</i>	<i>(ti)</i>	<i>Ti</i>	-	<i>tA-</i>	<i>-ti</i>
SL	First	1SG	<i>Rae</i>	-	<i>ka-</i>	<i>-nggu</i>	-	-
		1PL-ex	<i>ame(re)</i>	-	<i>ma-</i>	<i>-ma</i>	-	-
		1PL-in	<i>Inta</i>	-	<i>ta-</i>	<i>-ta</i>	-	-
RN	Second	2SG	<i>Eu</i>	-	<i>Mu</i>	-	<i>mU-</i>	<i>-mu</i>
		2PL	<i>Miu</i>	<i>(mi)</i>	<i>Mi</i>	-	<i>mI-</i>	<i>-mi</i>
SL	Second	2SG	<i>Oe</i>	-	<i>Ma-</i>	<i>-ma</i>	-	-
		2PL-hon	<i>Eme</i>	-	<i>Ta-</i>	<i>-ta</i>	-	-
RN	Third	3SG	<i>Nenggu</i>	<i>Nu</i>	<i>na/ne</i>	-	<i>nA-</i>	<i>-'e</i>
		3PL	<i>Renggu</i>	<i>Ru</i>	<i>Ra</i>	-	<i>rA-</i>	<i>-si</i>
SL	Third	3SG	<i>re e</i>	-	<i>na-</i>	<i>-na</i>	-	-
		3PL	<i>re er(a)</i>	-	<i>na-</i>	<i>-na</i>	-	-

1.2 The Distributions of Personal Pronouns

It is widely claimed that the distributions of pronouns and their positions in morphosyntactical context and setting. Based on this approach, the distributions of pronouns are their co-occurrences with other categories. In Japanese, pronouns are to co-occur with the plural nouns and adjective freely in all three persons. Difference from the ones of English, Hebrew, and Dutch (Baggaley, 1998: 53-55).

(1) a. *Watasi-tati gengogakusya*

1pl linguist

'We are linguists'

b. *Anata-tati ronrigakusya*

- 2pl logician
 ‘You are logicians’
 c. *Kare-ra tetugakusya*
 3mpl philoshoper
 ‘They are philosopher’
 (2) a. *Tissai kare*
 small 3sg
 ‘small he’
 b. *Sinsetuna anata*
 kind 2sg
 ‘kind you’

Based on the above examples, (1)a, (1)b, and (1)c, it is suggested that Japanese has single class of pronouns, which includes first, second, and third person pronouns. Meanwhile, (2)a & (2)b show that Japanese pronouns can actively co-occurrence with adjectives.

2. Method

The data used in this study were mainly taken from conversations and monologues in real situations in which the Bima Language is used. These data were transcribed firstly before elicited. In addition, as the writer is the speaker of the Bima Language, some data came from the writer’s repertoires of the language. Some data from the prior researchers were also presented to support particular issues in this study. These data were analyzed qualitatively by using distributional methods, utilizing the language parts as the instrument of analysis which was done by omitting, replacing, advancing, inserting, repositioning, reformatting, and reduplicating the language units (Sudaryanto, 1993 & Mahsun, 2015).

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Personal Pronouns Paradigm in The Bima Language

The Bima Language has two sets of personal pronouns. The first set of personal pronouns is full pronouns which are morphologically independent. Meanwhile, the second set of personal pronouns is identified as clitics which are morphologically bound. Full personal pronouns appear to exhibit in one to two words, while clitic personal pronouns exhibit in one syllabic morphemes which occur before the predicates (preclitic) and after the predicates (enclitic). The former seems in line with the Rote Ndao, but the later does not because clitics in Rote Ndao tend to be independent (Balukh, 2015). The paradigm of personal pronouns of the Bima Language is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The Bima Language Personal Pronoun Paradigms

	Pron.	Full	Clitics	
			Preclitic	Enclitic
First	1SG	<i>Nahu</i>	<i>ku-/ka-</i>	<i>-ku/-ka</i>
	1SG-hon	<i>Mada</i>	<i>ku-/ka-</i>	<i>-ku/-ka</i>
	1PL-hon	<i>Mada doho</i>	<i>mu-/ma-</i>	<i>-mu/-ma</i>
	1PL-ex	<i>Nami</i>	<i>mu-/ma-</i>	<i>-mu/-ma</i>
	1PL-in	<i>Ndai</i>	<i>ta-</i>	<i>-ta</i>
Second	2SG	<i>Nggomi</i>	<i>mu-/ma</i>	<i>-mu/ma</i>
	2SG-hon	<i>Ita</i>	<i>ta/ta</i>	<i>-ta/ta</i>
	2PL	<i>Nggomi doho</i>	<i>mu-/ma</i>	<i>-mu/ma</i>
	2PL-hon	<i>Ita doho</i>	<i>ta/ta</i>	<i>-ta/ta</i>
Third	3SG	<i>Sia</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>-na</i>
	3PL	<i>Sia doho</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>-na</i>

It can be seen in the above table that the personal pronouns are categorized into person and number. The Bima personal pronouns have first, second, and third number. The plural form of the first person is involved with exclusive and inclusive. Honorific is also distinguished in the first and the second, but not in the third. Gender in

the Bima Language is absent. Generally, clitic pronouns and full pronouns do not show any similarities in forms. However, the 2SG-hon and 2PL-hon clitic pronouns seem to reflect the form of the full pronouns. This suggests that the historical relations between full pronouns and clitics are restricted to certain pronouns.

3.2 The Distributions of Personal Pronouns in The Bima Language

Personal pronouns in the Bima Language can take the slot of full Noun Phrases (NPs) as clausal arguments, which functions either as subject (S) or object (O), or as the complement of preposition. The next section is devoted to the description of full personal pronouns and their distribution in argument position.

3.2.1 Full Pronoun as Subject of Intransitive Predicates

Intransitive constructions are constructions which only require one core argument (+ term). In the Bima Language, the slot of core argument can be taken by both verbal and non-verbal predicates. Having such predicates, peripheral arguments (-term) are marked, for example with preposition. Consequently, the semantic roles that the subject argument of intransitive predicates may have, are different from one argument to another, depending on the meaning or semantic properties of the verbs in the constructions. The pronoun as subject may have a semantic role of agent as shown in example (3) or (4) or patient as in (5). In (3) a peripheral argument is marked with preposition *aka* 'LOC', which is optional in the clause.

- (3) a. *Nahu lao-ku aka Mbojo.*
 1SG go -1SGCLT LOC Mbojo
 'I went to Mbojo'
- b. *Aka Mbojo nahulao-ku.*
 LOC Mbojo 1SG go-1SGCLT
 'I went to Mbojo'
- (4) a. *Bala ai sanai, name tu'u-mu.*
 Day time after, 1EX/PI start-2EXCLT/PI
 'The day after, we started'
- b. *Nami tu'u-mu bala ai sanai.*
 1EX/PI start-2EXCLT/PI day time after,
 'The day after, we started'
- (5) *Sia wa'ura made.*
 3S already die
 'He/she died already'

The subject argument in the Bima Language tends to be so flexible for it can take pre-verbal position or post-verbal position. In example (6), the verb *made* 'die' is intransitive verb, which syntactically needs a single patient core argument which is *mada* labeled as 1SGHON. This argument is semantically the same person with the clitic argument *Ku* labeled as 1SGCLT in the clause. This evidence suggests that the Bima Language operates the split alignment properties of the verbs. As Dixon (2010:140) stated that a language which belongs to split alignment, is the one whose intransitive subject argument acts as a transitive object argument in terms of syntactic position.

- (6) *Ku- made-ra mada ina -e*
 1SGCLT- die -PERF 1SGHON mother -INTEN
 'I would be in trouble, mother' (I die, mother)

As already stated above, the predicates in the Bima Language can be taken by non-verbal categories like nouns, adjectives, adverb, numeral, or prepositions. These categories exhibit various syntactical unit may refer to as attributes, location, and existence. . In this case, Pyne (1997) stated that this phenomenon is common for some the languages in the world, especially the language whose argument can be expressed in the forms of bound forms. The subject argument of intransitive non-verbal predicates does not have a fixed position in sentences. It can come before or after the predicate. Example (7), (8), and (9) below show that the predicates of non-verbal sentences occur with a full pronoun as subject argument.

- (7) a. *Sia [dou Dompu]_{NP}*
 3SG [people Dompu]

- ‘He is Dompunese’
 b. [*Dou Dompu*]_{NP} *Sia*
 [People Dompu] 3SG
 ‘He is Dompunese’
- (8) a. *Sia [ta sabae ele]*_{PP}
 3SG [LOC side south]
 ‘She/he is at the south side’
 b. [*Ta sabae ele*]_{PP} *sia*
 [LOC side south] 3SG
 ‘She/he is at the south side’
- (9) a. *Sia [na’e]*_{Adj}
 3SG [big]
 ‘She/he is big’
 b. [*Na’e*]_{Adj} *Sia*
 [Big] 3SG
 ‘She/he is big’

3.2.2 Full Pronoun as Argument Transitive Predicates

In the Bima Language, transitive constructions can have one or more verbs in a clause. Like intransitive, the arguments of transitive verbs do not take a definite position. Both argument subject and object can take pre-verbal or post-verbal positions interchangeably. Let’s consider the following examples.

- (10) *Nahu ra- poke -ku fo’o*
 1SG PERF- pick -1SG/CLT/PAST mango
 ‘I picked mango’
- (11) *Fo’o ra- poke -ku nahu*
 Mango PERF- pick -1SG/CLT/PAST 1SG
 ‘Mango which I picked’
- (12) *Nami nono mpoa mu oi*
 1PL-EX drink only 1PL/CLT water
 ‘We only drank water’
- (13) *Oi nono mpoa mu nami*
 Water drink only 1PL/CLT 1PL-EX
 ‘Water which we drunk’

3.2.3 Clitic Pronouns

Like full pronouns, clitic pronouns in the Bima Language also do not have fixed position in clauses, both in intransitives, and in transitives. Clitic pronouns also mark the aspects or tenses of sentences with their positions in a sentence. In intransitive constructions, the clitics of argument subject take the pre-verbal position indicating that the construction has a futurative aspect/tense. However, when it takes the post-verbal position, the clitic shows resultative aspect/past tense. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon.

- (14) *Ku lao*
 1SG go
 ‘I will go’
- (15) *Lao ku*
 Go 1SG

‘I went’

(16) *Ku- poke fo'o*
 1SG- pick mango
 ‘I will pick mangoes’

(17) *Poke -ku fo'o*
 Pick -1SG mango
 ‘I picked mangoes’

(18) *Mu nono mpoa oi*
 2SG drink only water
 ‘You will drink water only’

(19) *Nono mpoa mu oi*
 Drink only 2SG INT water
 ‘You drank water only’

3.2.4 Pronoun and other Constituents

This subsection describes the distributions of pronouns in the constructions with other constituents in a clause. The constituents which are seen are demonstratives, numerals/quantifiers, relative clauses, and Noun Phrases (NPs).

Pronouns with Demonstratives

Like full noun phrases (NPs), full pronouns in the Bima Language can be followed by demonstratives as modifiers. The use of these demonstratives is to evaluate and appraise one. The demonstratives follow the full pronouns which functions as subject and object. All personal pronouns can take modifiers whatever the number they exhibit. All types of full pronouns with their plural counterparts can go with demonstratives. Third person singular *Sia* ‘she/he’ and its plural counterpart *Sia doho* ‘they’, First person singular *Nahu* ‘I’ and its plural counterparts *Nami* ‘we’, *Nggomi* ‘you’ and its plural counterpart *Nggomi doho* ‘you’ can go well with demonstratives *ede*, ‘that’ and *ake* ‘this’ as seen in the followings.

(20) *Sia ede wati loa -na nefa taho ndai ntoina*
 3SG Det NEG able -3SG/CLT forget good 1Ink past
 ‘She cannot forget our generosity in the past’

(21) *Sia doho ede wati loa na nefa taho ndai ntoina*
 3PL Det NEG able 3SG/CLT forget good 1Ink past
 ‘They cannot forget our generosity in the past’

(22) *Nahu ake ana dou ma da- wara*
 1SG Det child person RE NEG- rich
 ‘I am a poor person’

(23) *Nami ake ana dou ma da- wara*
 1Eks Det child person REL NEG- rich
 ‘We are poor persons’

(24) *Nggomi ede ari nahu*
 2SG Det young sibling 1SG
 ‘You are my young brother’

(25) *Nggomi doho ede ari nahu*
 2PL Det young sibling 1SG
 ‘You are my young brothers’

The distribution of clitics in the Bima Language is different from full pronouns. Clitics cannot be followed by demonstrative as modifiers. Example (26a) shows that the full pronoun *Sia* ‘3SG’ is followed by demonstrative

ede. When clitic *na* ‘3SG’ is used to substitute the full pronoun *Sia* ‘3SG’ as shown in (26b), the sentence is not acceptable in the grammar of the Bima Language. The sentence is acceptable only if the clitic *na* ‘3SG’ is not modified as shown in (26c).

- (26) a. *Sia ede wati loa na nefa taho ndai ntoina*
 3SG Det NEG able 3SG/CLT forget good 1PL-Ink past
 ‘She/he cannot forget our good conduct in the past’
- b. **Na ede wati loa na nefa taho ndai ntoina*
 3SG/CLT Det NEG able 3SG/CLT forget good 1PL-Ink past
- c. *Na loa nefa taho ndai ntoina*
 3SG/CLT able forget good 1PL-Ink past

Pronouns with Numerals/Quantifiers

Pronouns in the Bima Language can co-occur with numerals and quantifiers without regarding their number. In other words, both plural and singular pronouns can take numerals. The first plural pronoun *Nami doho* ‘we’ takes numeral *dua* ‘two’ as its modifier in (27). The first singular *Nahu* ‘I’ and *sia* ‘she/he’ each take numeral *kese* ‘the one’ as their modifier in (28) and (29).

- (27) *Nami doho dua mu lao awa lombo*
 1PL-Eks two 1-CLT go prep Lombok
 ‘Two of us will go to Lombok ‘ (Lit: We, two are going to go to Lombok)’
- (28) *Nahukese mpa ma da- ntau piti*
 1SG alone only REL NEG- have money
 ‘I am, the only one who does not have money’
- (29) *Sia kese ede na lao awa lombo*
 3SG alone Det 3CLT go Prep Lombok
 ‘She/he is alone who is going to go to Lombok’

Pronouns with Relative Clauses

In the Bima Language, only full noun phrases (NPs) can be followed by relative clauses. The relative clauses are marked with *ma* ‘REL’. However, this relative marker needs further and deeper analysis regarding its syntactic property that signs both relative and progressive. As a relative, *ma* in (30) follows the full pronoun 2SG ‘*Nggomi*’ and with the verbal clause. However, as a progressive marker of a verb, *ma* does not require any verbal clause to construct a good sentence as shown in (31).

- (30) *Nggomi [ma kani baju monca] mai ja pu ta ake.*
 2SG [REL wear shirt yellow] come SOFT SOFT prep here.
 ‘You who are wearing the yellow shirt, come here, please?’
- (31) *Nggomi [ma kani baju monca]*
 2SG [Prog wear shirt yellow]
 ‘You are wearing a yellow shirt’

Pronouns with NPs

The occurrence of personal pronouns with the NPs is governed by discourse situation. This situation suggests the speakers to employ the construction to avoid the contextual ambiguity considering that only the speakers themselves who are able to identify the referents. All types of personal pronoun (full personal pronouns) behave similarly regarding to their occurrences with NPs. *La Duru* in (32) and (33) requires an NP to precede or to follow it as a topic of the construction. Similarly, the second plural pronoun *sia doho* and the first plural pronoun *ndai* require *dou siwe aka labo dou mone aka* ‘Those girls and those boys’ as shown in (34) and (35) and *dou mone* ‘The male’ as shown in (36) and (37) below.

- (32) *[La duru] sia wati loa -na lao ese tio abu-na*
 [La duru] 3SG NEG able -3SG go LOC see abu-3POS

‘La Duru, he cannot go to see his father’

(33) *Sia [La Duru] wati loa -na lao ese tio abu-na*
3SG [La duru] NEG able -3SG go LOCsee abu-3POS

‘He, La Duru, he cannot go to see his father’

(34) *[Dou siwe aka labo dou mone aka] sia doho wunga nuntu -na.*
[Person female Det with people male Det] 3PL PROG speak -3PL/CLT

‘The female person and the male person, they are talking’

(35) *Sia doho [dou siwe aka labo dou mone aka] wunga nuntu -na.*
3PL [Person female Det with person male Det] PROG speak -3PL/CLT

‘They, the female person and the male person are talking’

(36) *Ndai [dou mone] na- hari -kai -ku ba dou wati si Loa ta kanggihi.*
1PL-ink [person male] 3SG- laugh -CAUS-INT AGT other NEG COND able 1PL-ink/CLT farming

‘We, as male will be laughed by others if we cannot do farming’

(37) *[Dou mone] ndai na- hari -kai -ku ba dou wati si loa ta kanggihi*
[person male] 1PL-ink 3SG-laugh -CAUS -INT AGT other NEG COND able 1PL-ink/CLT farming

‘As male, we will be laughed by others if we cannot do farming’

Dixon (2017) also found out that personal pronouns in English can occur with specific nouns both as the subjects and objects. However, this occurrence is encountered less frequently with the singulars.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusions

Personal pronouns in the Bima Language are realized into two forms, namely full pronouns and clitic pronouns. Both full pronouns and clitic pronouns can stand in any position in sentences, both as argument subject and object. Clitic pronouns cannot occur as an independent NP argument. The clitic pronouns can only serve as cross-references of the full NPs. However, in discourses, clitic pronouns can occur as an independent NP argument where the referent has been introduced before in a discourse, or mentally is understood. Only pronouns can co-occur with demonstratives, numerals/quantifiers, relative clauses, and other NPs but not the clitics.

4.2 Suggestions

Personal pronouns in the Bima Language are quite unique that viewing them with the syntactical point of views is not adequate. Other aspects of linguistics should be involved in order to get a comprehensive understanding on Personal Pronouns in the Bima Language in the future study.

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