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Investigating Valency Decreasing Verb Operational Devices: A Case Study of the Oromo Language

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ABSTRACT

The purpose was to examine and analyze the mechanisms used in the Oromo language to decrease the valency (or argument structure) of verbs. Specifically, it aimed to understand how valency-decreasing operational devices are employed, their semantic motivations, and their implications for linguistic theory. To assess the valency-decreasing devices, the first corpus analysis was used to collect a representative corpus of Oromo texts containing valency-decreasing verbs. Next, linguistic annotation was used to involve tagging verbs, identifying their valency properties (such as transitivity), and noting any derivational devices used to decrease valency. Then, interviews with native speakers were carried out to provide valuable insights. Finally, an in-depth qualitative analysis of selected examples was conducted to only explore the semantic motivations behind specific operational devices regardless of considering cultural and pragmatic factors. The valency-decreasing operations in Oromo are the passives with *-am-* suffix, the anticausatives with *-at-* suffix, the inchoatives with *-a(a)t-*, *-a(a)h-* and *-o(o)m-* suffixes and the impersonal inflections of syntactic constructions. The findings revealed how these devices function in Oromo verbal operations. This study seeks to contribute to (i) providing a comprehensive analysis of valency-decreasing mechanisms in the Oromo language; (ii) identifying universal patterns or language-specific variations in valency decrease strategies; (iii) informing linguistic theories by examining how operational devices impact verb valency; (iv) offering insights for language documentation, language teaching, and natural language processing (NLP) systems.

Key Terms: *Oromo, Valency, Valency-decreasing devices, Basic verbs, Derived verbs.*

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INTRODUCTION

Among the Cushitic languages of the Afro-Asiatic phylum, Oromo has the highest number of native speakers and others in Ethiopia and some significant number of speakers in Kenya and Somalia.[1] It belongs to the branch of Lowland East Cushitic within the Cushitic family.[2] Among the various Oromo dialects in Ethiopia, the most common varieties are Arsi-Baale, Borana, Guji, Harargee, Maccaa, and Tuulama; the dialects in Kenya and Somalia are Borana, Gabra, Garre, Orma, Munyo and Waata.[3]

[1] Gene Gragg et.al., *Oromo Dictionary* (East Lansing: Michigan University Press, 1982); Raymond G. Jr. Gordon, *Ethnologue, Languages of the World*, 15th ed. (Texas: Sil International, 2005), http://www.ethnologue.com/.
[2] Marvin L. Bender et al., *Language in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 14, 43.
[3] Giorgio Banti, "Two Cushitic Systems: Somali and Oromo Nouns," *Autosegmental Studies on Pitch Accent*, 1988, 11–50;Gragg, *Oromo Dictionary*; Ali Mohammed and A. Andrzej Zaboriski, *Handbook of Oromo Language* (Wroklaw: Zaklad Narodowy and Ossolinskich-Wydanictwo, 1990); Jonathan Owens, *A Grammar of Harar Oromo (Northeastern Ethiopia)*, vol. 4 (Buske, 1985).

The Arsi-Baale variety is the target of the current study. This variety is generally known as the Arsi dialect of Oromo, which is spoken by the Arsi people of both Arsi and Baale regional occupancies. For example, linguistic scholars such as Gragg, Stroomer and Mohammed Ali and Zaborski, label the Oromo variety spoken in the Arsi and Baale areas as an Arsi dialect based simply on the tribal name, Arsi.[4] However, regarding fewer regional linguistic differences and the feeling of dialectal uniqueness by the Baale people, the current researcher uses a compound name, Arsi-Baale (hereafter, AB) dialect, which comprises the two regional names, Arsi and Baale. So, the study uses "Arsi-Baale" to "Arsi" to refer to this dialect because the researcher as a speaker of the dialect from the Baale region, the people of Baale regard themselves as the Baale dialectally different even though they do not deny that they belong to the Arsi tribe. This is because the two regions have their own longtime separate administrations, which contribute to the feeling of uniqueness.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate and document the various valency-decreasing verb derivational devices in Oromo. This includes identifying and classifying these devices, analyzing their syntactic and semantic functions, and exploring their theoretical implications within the broader context of linguistic typology. Thus the study aims to fill gaps in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive and detailed account of these mechanisms, contributing to a deeper understanding of the Oromo language and its grammatical structures.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the mentioned objectives, the study employed a qualitative research methodology. In the data qualitative approach, descriptive and functional analyses were implemented.

Data Collection

Corpus Analysis: A corpus of Oromo texts, including both written and spoken materials, is compiled and analyzed to identify instances of valency-decreasing devices.

Fieldwork: Interviews and elicitation sessions with native Oromo speakers were conducted to gather additional data and validate findings from the corpus analysis. Five informants were deliberately selected for the interview based on the target dialect (Arsi-Baale Oromo) they speak. Three were postgraduate students and two of them were lecturers at Jimma University. A view of ethics and ethical practice in linguistics is broad and continuously evolving. In accordance with the ethical considerations towards the informants and the research, the informants' consent and confidentiality were taken into account during the fieldwork.

Data Analysis

In this study, detailed descriptions of the identified valency-decreasing devices were provided, including their morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties. Besides, the functional roles of these devices in different linguistic contexts were examined, with a focus on their impact on sentence structure and meaning.

By employing this comprehensive methodology, the study aims to provide a thorough and nuanced understanding of valency-decreasing verb operational devices in the Oromo language, contributing valuable insights to the field of linguistics.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Oromo Morpho-syntax

Nominal Morphology

As in many Cushitic languages, including Oromo, a gender marker is the affix *t* inflection occurs in few nominal words to identify gender typically sex-oriented in persons; for example, *ǰaar**sa*** _ *ǰaar**tii*** 'old man' _ 'old woman', *dull**ačča*** _ *dull**attii*** 'old (masc.)' _ 'old (fem.)', *dargagg**eessa*** _ *dargagg**eettii*** 'young man' _ 'young woman'. In the Arsi-Baale Oromo dialect, the concepts in plurality and littleness

[4] Gene Gragg, " Oromo of Wollega," in *The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*, ed. M. Lionel et.al Bender (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1976), 166–95; Harry Stroomer, "A Comparative Study of Three Southern Oromo Dialects in Kenya: Phonology, Morphology, and Vocabulary," *(No Title)*, 1987; Mohammed and Andrzej Zaboriski, *Handbook of Oromo Language*.

of some collective or common nouns are prominently feminine; for instance, *mit'ii* 'ants', *ijoollee* 'children', *ǰera / tuuta* 'people', *faradoo* 'horses', *barattoota* 'students', etc. are feminine cross-referenced by the feminine *-t-* suffix inflected in verbs. Consider the following examples of sentences in which gender markings are used in syntactic subjects and pronominal verbs:

(1)	*mit'ii-n*	*yaa-t-e*
	ants-NOM	come out-F-PRF 'The ants came out.'
(2)	*faradoo-n*	*guluf-t-e*
	horses-NOM	race-F-PRF 'The horses raced.'
(3)	*saree-n*	*dut-t-e*
	dog-NOM	bark-F-PRF 'The dog barked.'
(4)	*tuut-ti*	*gal-t-e*
	people-NOM:F	return home-F-PRF 'The people returned home.'

The Oromo verbal arguments are expressed in grammatical relations of the Subject, the Direct Object and the Postpositional or Indirect Object as entailed by the verb. The evidence for the grammatical relations is that the subject agreement, as person + number, is cross-referenced or marked on the verb, but the morphological case is marked on NPs in syntactic structure. Furthermore, the system of grammatical relations in basic (affirmative/declarative) clauses is organized according to a nominative/ absolute.

The Nominative case is suffixed with *-n* (or its variants *-ni,* and *–i*) or the allomorphs [*-ri*] and [*-li*] of the /*-ni/* morpheme to mark the nominative. The nominative case in Oromo is usually known for morphological marking while the absolute form is unmarked and the basic nominal form, as used in a dictionary. The nominative function is restricted and specifically formulated to mark the subject of a clause. Consider the following examples of nominative cases:[5]

Subject of Adjectival Clause

(5) *híd'ii-n díim-tuu d'a*
lip-
NOM
'A lip is red.'

Non-agent or patient subject of intransitive clause

(6) *ňaan-ni hín nyaat-am-a*
food-NOM FOC eat-PASS-3SG:M:IPV
'The food is eaten.'

Agent subject of verbal clause

(7) *sárée-n adíi-n iyy-i-t-e*
dog-NOM white-NOM bark-3SF-PFV
'The white dog barked.'

As shown in the examples above, the subject arguments are marked as the nominative of the adjectival clause, the non-agent or patient of the intransitive clause, and the agent of a transitive clause. However, the absolute case lacks morphological marking, and it is a base for morphological processes such as genitive marking and coordination marking. Another syntactic argument is an indirect object in the dative (marked with *-f* suffix) and the instrumental (marked with *-n* suffix) cases. The indirect objects, for example, in the dative case in (8) and in the instrumental case in (9) are dependently entailed by the verbs *erg-uu* 'to send' and *ur-uu* 'to pierce' respectively:

(8) *naničč-i isa-âf birrii erg-e*
man-NOM him-DAT birr:ABS send-3SG:M:PRF
'The man sent money for him'

(9) *an-i kop'ee billawa-ân ur-e*

[5] Jonathan Owens, "The Oromo Causative: Lexical Grammar without Lexical Rules," 1985, 100 - 101.

I-NOM shoes: ABS knife-INST pierce-1SG:PRF
'I pierced the shoes with knife'

Verbal Morphology

The morphology of Oromo verb inflections is through suffixation in order to mark person, number, mood/tense, and infinitive. The mood marking inflections include the perfect and imperfect indicatives, the imperative, the jussive and the negative moods. [6]

Table 1 demonstrates the main verbal inflections using the paradigmatic basic verb *deem-uu* 'to go'. In fact, the paradigm given illustrates one set of 'perfect', 'imperfect' and 'dependent' labels of non-negative verbs. In the paradigm, a designated 'dependent' refers traditionally to the jussive or subjunctive.[7] It should be noted that a perfect marking *-e*, imperfect *-a* and dependent *-u* suffixes alternate paradigmatically with the plural suffix *-an*, which occurs only in 2PL and 3PL.

Table 1: Perfect and imperfect and dependent inflectional paradigms (Owens 1985: 70)

Person	*Singular*			*Plural*		
1	*deem-e*	*deem-a*	*deem-u*	*deem-ne*	*deem-na*	*deem-nu*
2	*deem-te*	*deem-ta*	*deem-tu*		*dem-tan*	
3.m	*deem-e*	*deem-a*	*deem-u*		*deem-an*	
f	*deem-te*	*deem-ti*	*deem-tu*		*deem-an*	

As shown in the table, a morphologically different form in the imperfect paradigm is the third-person singular feminine marking suffix *-i* in the indicative, if those unfamiliar with Oromo may wish to note that.

Morphophonemic Changes in Verbs

A brief overview of the inflectional verbal system of Oromo is presented for the benefit of non-Oromo learners (or non-Oromo linguists). It is important to realize, however, that the variations represented in Table 3 are almost completely predictable from sets of 16 rules (based on the A-B variety), according to Lloret, which cover the behavior of the patterns when labialization, assimilation, glottalization, and stop deletion are present in all the attested combinatorial possibilities of morphophononemic changes involving consonant clusters, giving rise to phonotactically motivated changes, (or morphophonological adjustments).[8] Thus, conjugations in the sense of groups of verbs are inflected (or derived).

Furthermore, morphophonemic change with derivational causative */-s-, -si(i)s-/* and middles */-a(a)t-/, /-a(a)h-/* suffixes when morpheme /s/ changes to [*č*] preceded by word-final *l* and *t* consonants and to [*f*] followed by the passive *-am-* suffix. The middle inchoative */-a(a)t-/* and */-a(a)h-/* morphemes when followed by the causative /*-s-*/ suffix change to an allomorph [*-e(e)s-*]; besides, the */-a(a)t-/* morpheme changes to the allomorph [*-a(a)č-*] when followed by the causative-*si(i)s-* suffix. Finally, the middle */-a(a)h-/* morpheme, when followed by the causative -si(i), *s-* suffix changes to allomorphe [*-o(o)y-*].

(10) a. */gal-s-uu/→* *[gal-č-uu]*

b. */bit-siis-uu/→* *[bičč-i-siis-uu]*

c. */bit-at-siis-uu/→* *[bit-ač-čiis-uu]*

d. */kaas-am-uu/→* *[kaaf-am-uu]*

e. */d'eer-at-s-uu/→* *[d'eer-es-s-uu]*

[6] Catherine Griefenow-Mewis, "A Grammatical Sketch of Written Oromo," 2001, 81; Owens, *A Grammar of Harar Oromo (Northeastern Ethiopia)*, 66-69.
[7] Owens, *A Grammar of Harar Oromo (Northeastern Ethiopia)*, 66.
[8] Maria-Rosa Lloret, *Oromo Phonology* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1997), 502 - 517.

f. */d'eer-at-siis-uu/→* *[d'eer-ač-čiis-uu]*

g. */beel-ah-s-uu/→* */beel-es-s-uu/*

h. */beel-ah-siis-uu/→* *[beel-oy-siis-uu]*

Oromo Verb Stems Morphological Patterns

Oromo verbs, like that of many other Cushitic languages, consist of a stem and suffixes that represent person, gender, number, tense-aspect, mood, and voice. The verb stem structures in Oromo are very complex because verbal stems are formed through various verb-deriving affixes in complex verbal structures. This approach of stating or writing every repeated verbal stem with different patterns is time-consuming and tiring unless their morphological patterns are shortly coded and symbolized according to and classified into patterns of basic and derived verbal stems. Using coded symbols CS1, CS2, and CS3 for respective verbal stems is so simple; the concept of Griefenow-Mewis is used to codify Oromo verb stems, but the symbols and classification verb stem morphology, except for base stem, were designed and used only by current researcher.[9] As a result, coding (or symbolizing) and labeling their morphological patterns might be important here to save time for the writer and reader and thereby, and introduce the classification of Oromo verbal stem morphological patterns and the codes of corresponding patterns. Therefore, the researchers attempted to code nine morphological patterns for Oromo verbal stem classification, as demonstrated in the following table (2):

Table 2: Morphological verbal stem patterns in Oromo verb formation

No.	Morphological Verbal pattern	Code	Remarks
	Basic (or root) stem	[BS]	B = basic/root, S = stem
	Stem affixed with single causative *-s-* suffix	[CS1]	CS1 = single causative stem of *-s-* suffix
	Stem affixed with double causative *-si(i)s-* suffix	[CS2]	CS2 = double causative verb stem of *-si(i)s-* suffix
	Stem affixed with triple causative *-sisiis-* suffix	[CS3]	CS3 = triple causative stem of *-sisiis-* suffix
	Stem affixed with passive *-am-* suffix	[PS]	PS = passive verb stem of *-am-* suffix
	Stem affixed with middle *–at-* suffix	[MS]	M = middle verb stem of *-at-* suffix
	Stem affixed with inchoative *–a(a)t-* suffix	[ATIS]	AT = *-a(a)t-* suffix, I = inchoative middle, S = stem
	Stem affixed with inchoative *-a(a)h-* suffix	[AHIS]	AH = *-a(a)h-* suffix, I = inchoative middle, S = stem
	Stem affixed with inchoative *-o(o)m-* suffix	[OMIS]	OM = *-o(o)m-* suffix, I = inchoative middle, S = stem

Valency Framework and Oromo Verbal Valency Patterns

Valency Framework

The valency of a verb is considered to be lexically specified according to the number of elements it must be accompanied by in order for a sentence to be grammatically complete. These elements may include the subject and both direct and indirect objects. Tesnière states that the verbal valency of simple verbs is classified into avalent, monovalent, bivalent and trivalent verbs.[10] Verbs of zero valency are found in English with an 'empty' subject for which no other noun phrase may be substituted as in (11):[11]

[9] Griefenow-Mewis, "A Grammatical Sketch of Written Oromo."
[10] L. Tesnière, *Elements de Syntaxe and Structurale.* (Paris: Klinksieck, 1959), 258.
[11] D.J. Allerton, *Valency and the English Verb* (London: Academic Press, 1982), 5.

(11) It is raining.

Verbal valencies ranging between one and three, in which the elements contributing to valency, are common in English and many other languages, include Oromo. Consider the following examples of sentences of which arguments are indicated in bold type:

(12) a. **Samuel** slept
{1} [monovalent]
b. **Boris** hit **the ball**
{1} {2} [bivalent]
c. **John** put **the book** **on the table**
{1} {2} {3} [trivalent]

In each of these examples, the deletion of any one of the elements renders the sentence ungrammatical, thus Haspelmath & Hartmann call these elements obligatory arguments.[12] A prepositional phrase may also be an obligatory argument, as demonstrated in example (13):

(13) She told her address **to her friend**[13]
{1} {2} {3} [trivalent]

These are elements that contribute to valency but may optionally be deleted without violating grammaticality, such as the underlined elements in (14) and (15):

(14) He was reading a book
{1} {2} [bivalent]
(15) She told her address to her friend.[14]
{1} {2} {3} [bivalent]

Because the optional arguments in both (14) and (15) are lexically specified as to their form for the verb in question (respectively a direct object noun phrase and a prepositional phrase with ''to'), they must be considered part of the valency structure of the verb. These arguments, although deletable, are thus distinctly different from adjuncts, which are typically adverbial and may take a wide range of forms. Furthermore, Haspelmath and Hartmann draw attention to what Allerton calls 'contextual deletion'.[15] For example, in (15) the underlined argument of the verb 'tell' is only contextually optional, i.e. rendering the usage monovalent by deleting the argument is only possible if the context makes it clear what is being told to.

As for zero-valency like English, the weather verbs in Oromo are contextually zero-valent/avalent since the overt subject is removed. Thus, verbs such as *roob-uu* 'to train', *č'aam-uu* 'to stop raining'and *bubbis-uu* 'to get windy' are avalent intransitives because the verb, for example, *roob-uu* 'to rain' and the nominal subject *roob-ni* 'rain' are from the same root *roob-*, so the omitted subject is understood from their common root and their syntax is contextual impersonal. However, these verbs instead emerge syntactically with time or place adverbials, as shown in examples (16) and (17):

(16) *barana* *roob-uu* *did-e*
this year rain-INF refuse-3SG:M:PERF
'It refused to rain this year.'
(17) *as* *baay'ee* *roob-a*
here much rain-3SG:M:IMPERF
'It rains here so much.'

[12] Martin Haspelmath and Iren Hartmann, "Comparing Verbal Valency across Languages," *Valency Classes in the World's Languages* 1 (2015): 41–71. For clarity, the terminology throughout is that of Haspelmath & Hartmann (2015), though other authors may prefer different nomenclature
[13] Haspelmath and Hartmann, "Comparing Verbal Valency across Languages," 7.
[14] Haspelmath and Hartmann, "Comparing Verbal Valency across Languages," 16.
[15] Haspelmath and Hartmann, "Comparing Verbal Valency across Languages"; Allerton, *Valency and the English Verb*, 68-69.

Allerton writes the existence of tetravalent structures for verbs although he says 'it is usually assumed that there are none in English."[16] However, the transitivity of Oromo base verbs does not recognize more than three valency arguments.

Oromo Verbal Valency Patterns

The basic verbal classes of Oromo are generally divided into intransitive and transitive. The basic intransitive verbs are divided into two: the unaccusative/stative and active/agentive. The stative intransitives are usually monovalent verbs of valency structure code [1A] (i.e., they involve only a subject). However, base meteorological intransitives can be avalent/zerovalent when adverbials of place or time are used in the event structure, i.e. no argument involved or they have [0A] structure code. The capital letters in the code A, B, C, D, etc. represent a presence of valency. Code A excludes direct object (d.o.), regardless of subject or indirect object (i.o.) involvement, code B includes one d.o.; code C represents two d.o.; D is three d.o., etc.

The valency structure codes of active/agentive intransitive verbs may be monovalent [1A] involving only a subject or bivalent [2A] involving a subject and an indirect object. Here, our simple identification of the Oromo intransitive verbs is the absence of an absolutive case in the syntactic valency structure. Transitive verbs are usually bivalent of the code [2B] in valency structure, which involves a subject and a direct object. Ditransitive verbs are trivalent of [3B], as they involve a subject, a direct object and an indirect object. However, we have come across a basic trivalent transitive verb, *dib-uu* 'to anoint, smear' to have [3C] involving two direct objects and a subject and/or [3B] of a subject, a direct object and an alternate indirect object. This is, either two direct object NP's are in the absolutive case, or it is a ditransitive of which one is an indirect object in the postpositional phrase (PP).

Valency-Decreasing Verbal Processes

Middle Derivations

Regardless of many semantic subcategories of the middle of the ATIS pattern (suffixed *-at-* morpheme), this middle pattern is labelled semantically into three: the autobenefactive (derived as transitivized middle), the anticausative and the incoative middles. Of course, different scholars use different terms for the verbal derivatives; for example, they are termed as the "autobenefactive" by Griefenow-Mewis, the "subject-reflexive" by Owens, and the "reflexive-middle" by Gragg, as these scholars seemingly followed the singular approach.[17] However, the pluralist approach is applied by Mous, using various semantically subcategorical middle verbs, such as body care/grooming, (inchoative) non-control/spontaneous action, auto benefactive, body motion, motion of hands, motion activity, body state, body posture, and negative connotations middles.[18] This pluralist approach of the middle voice is also used by Lyons, as he classifies middle voice semantics at least into two categories: the auto beneficiary and the affected middles.[19] This is because the subject of the middle verbs is either beneficiary of its action or affected by its internal activity. Thus, the middle category of this study would incorporate middle categories by recognizing Griefenow-Mewis's auto-benefactive and Mous's inchoative subcategories, but differently the anticausative derives from verbal stem patterns while the inchoative patterns derive from non-verbal stems of the BS pattern.[20]

For example, the middle verbs such as *uff-at-uu* 'to wear', *rif-at-uu* 'to fear' are deponents as they are derived from frozen word roots *uff-*, *rif-* and *konkol-* respectively. In general, based on the word class of roots in the middle derivation, Mous suggests three types of middle derivatives: derived, denominal, and deponent:[21]

(i) middle derived from a verbal stem (derived)
(ii) middle derived from a nominal stem (denominal)

[16] Allerton, *Valency and the English Verb,*116 .
[17] Griefenow-Mewis, "A Grammatical Sketch of Written Oromo," 65; Owens, "The Oromo Causative: Lexical Grammar without Lexical Rules," 170; Gragg, " Oromo of Wollega," 185.
[18] Maarten Mous, "The Middle in Cushitic Languages," in *Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society 27,Special Session on Afro-Asiatic Linguistics*, 2004, 75–86.
[19] J. Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
[20] Griefenow-Mewis, "A Grammatical Sketch of Written Oromo,"65; Mous, "The Middle in Cushitic Languages," 58.
[21] Mous, "The Middle in Cushitic Languages," 77-78.

(iii) frozen derived middles (deponents)

Since the *-at-* suffix is both a denominative and a deadjective verbaliser, he might have intended to include adjectival stems in a nominal category, but it is still problematic as he defines the inchoatives as denominal and deadjectival verbs derived from base nominal and adjectival stems.[22] To solve this ambiguity and other formal and semantic issues, the researcher would thus prefer to include inchoatives in derivational middles because the study argues that denominal and deadjectival inchoatives are derivational middles. Hence, the inchoative verb is semantically a middle subcategory.[23]

The Inchoatives of the ATIS patterns

The inchoatives in the ATIS pattern are derived from non-verbal roots of the BS pattern, which can be nominal (including adjectives) and deponent (root of frozen word) roots.[24] The nouns of the BS pattern, such as *kolol-oo* 'spool', *muč'uč'-a* 'mudslide', *hank'-uu* 'lack of fullness' are used to derive intransitive inchoative verbs *kolol-aat-uu* 'to spool', *muč'uč'-aat-uu* 'to slide', *hank'-at-uu* 'to lack fullness' in ATS pattern through the de-transitivizing *–at-* suffix. The number of valency of these verbs is determined by the number of valency of nominal predicates in their underlying nouns. For example, *kolol-oo* 'roller' is monovalent nominal predicate, but *hank'-uu* 'lacking fullness' is the bivalent nominal predicate, as shown in the sentences of examples (1) and (2).

(17) *korboo-n* *kololoo* *d'a*
curved stick-NOM roller:ABS be:COP
'The curved stick is a spool'

(18) *baaldii-n* *bišaan* *hank'uu* *d'a*
barrel-NOM water:ABS lack of fullness be:COP
'The barrel is in lack of fullness with water.'

The nominal predicate, *kololoo,* of the sentence in example (17), is a one-place or monovalent predicate as it involves a single argument, *korboo-n*, in the nominative case of the subject slot. However, the noun predicate, *hank'uu,* in example (18) is a two-place (bivalent) predicate since it involves two syntactic arguments, *baaldii* 'barrel' and *bišaan* 'water' in the nominative and absolute cases respectively. As a result, their derived intransitive middle verbs have the same number of valency, as in the sentences of examples (19) and (20).

(19) *korboo-n* *kolol-aat-te*
curved stick-NOM roll-MID-3SG:F:PRF
'The curved stick has rolled'

(20) *bišaan* *baaldii* *hank'-at-e*
water:NOM barrel:ABS lack of fullness-MID-3SG:F:PRF
'The water lacked filling the barrel.'

The middle inchoative, *kololaatuu* 'to roll', in example (19) is a monovalent verb as it involves a single argument *korboo* 'roller' in subject slot, while the middle inchoative, *hank'atuu* 'to get not full', in (20) is a bivalent intransitive verb involving two arguments *bišaan* 'water' in a subject slot and *baaldii* 'barrel' in a direct object position. Besides, the *-at-* suffix occurs in frozen base stems to derive deponent middles. These middles are detransitivised, which are semantically referred to as the translational motion.[25] Such Oromo middles are verbs like *holl-at-uu,* 'to tremble' and *konkol-aat-uu* 'to rotate'. They are classified in the [1A] valency structure code, which only involves a stative subject that spontaneously undergoes the action. Consider the following examples, shown in (21) and (22):

(21) *d'agaa-n* *konkol-aat-e*
stone-NOM rotate-MS-3SG:M:PRF

[22] Maarten Mous, "The Middle and Passive Derivations in Konso," in *Omotic and Cushitic Language Studies: Papers from the Fourth Cushitic Omotic Conference, Leiden*, ed. A. Amha, M. Mous, and G. Savà (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2007).
[23] Mous, "The Middle and Passive Derivations in Konso," 63.
[24] Mous, "The Middle in Cushitic Languages," 61
[25] Mous, "The Middle in Cushitic Languages," 64.

'The stone has turned over'

(22) *gurbaa-n* *holl-at-e*
boy-NOM shiver-MS-3SG:M:PERF
'The boy shivered'

The *-at-* suffix as an intransitivising device, it is deadjective inchoative verbalizer since it derives deadjective intransitive verbs in the middle pattern. They includes verbs such as *d'eer-at-uu* 'to become tall', *diim-at-uu* 'to become red' and *ǰab-aat-uu* 'to become strong' are derived from base adjectives *d'eer-aa* 'tall', *diim-aa* 'red', *ǰab-aa* 'strong'.

(23) *diim-at-uu* [MID] [ANTIC] [INTR] [1A]
'to become hungry'

Inchoatives of the AHIS Pattern

The AHS middle verbs such as *beel-ah-uu* 'to become hungry' and *haaf-ah-uu* 'to become greedy' are derived from base corresponding nouns *beel-a* 'hunger' and *haaf-a* 'greediness', but AHIS inchoatives such as *boor-ah-uu* 'to become impure' and *k'uk'ull-aah-uu* 'to become pure' are derived from base adjectives *boor-uu* 'impure' and *k'uk'ull-uu* 'pure' respectively.

(24) a. *k'uk'ull-uu* [BS] [ADJ] [1A]
'pure'
b. *k'uk'ull-aah-uu* [AHIS] [STAT] [INTR] [1A]
'to become pure'

(25) a. *beel-a* [BS] [N [1A]
'hunger'
b. *beel-ah-uu* [AHIS] [STAT] [INTR] [1A]
'to become hungry'

Inchoatives of the OMIS Pattern

The OMIS inchoative middle verbs such as *k'ar-oom-uu* 'to become wise' and *goww-oom-uu* 'to become fool' are in [1A] classification, which derive from the corresponding nominal base stems of *k'ar-oo* 'wise' and *goww-aa* 'fool', which are syntactically monovalent predicative adjectives. However, other OMIS inchoatives, like *oll-oom-uu* 'to become a neighbor' and *nam-oom-uu* 'to become a good person' are [2A] and [1A] verbs that derive from nominal base stems in *oll-aa* 'neighbor', *nam-a* 'person' respectively. This is based on their respective nominal predicates, while *ollaa* 'neighbor' is the bivalent predicate, *nama* 'person' is monovalent nominal predicate. They are derived in stative aspects since they involve unaccusative subject, as in other inchoative ATMS and AHIS forms. Consider the following examples of the OMIS inchoative derivation.

(26) a. *oll-aa* [BS] [N] [2A]
'neighbor'
b. *oll-oom-uu* [OMIS] [INC] [INTR] [2A]
'to be a neighbor (of s.o.)'

(27) a. *goww-aa* [BS] [ADJ [1A]
'foolish'
b. *goww-oom-uu* [OMIS] [INTR] [1A]
'to become foolish'

Anticausatives of the ATS pattern

Through affixation, the anticausatives of the ATS pattern are intransitive verbs derived from simple transitive verbs of BS and S1S patterns. The anticausative is the most radical agent-decreasing category of the middle verbs which applies morphological mechanism through affixation and/or lexicalization to completely remove the agentive subject argument from its syntactic structure. Like the passive, the

anticausative removes the agent argument; however, semantically, the agent is entirely removed in the anticausative, but it is implied, although not expressed, in the passive.[26]

In Oromo, the anticausatives derive formally from some simple transitive verbs through affixation and lexicalization: with the *-at-* suffix and the suppletive (lexical) forms. The de-transitivisation of Oromo transitive verbs, to derive anticausative, is in three ways: (i) suffixing verbs in the base stem (hereafter, [BS]) pattern to form the middle in the [ATS] pattern (i.e., middle derived with *–at-* suffix here known as the [ATS] pattern), (ii) suffixing the causative verbs with *-s* suffix in the (hereafter, [S1S]) pattern to form the [ATS] pattern and (iii) lexically deriving middle suppletive in the BS pattern.

To demonstrate a valency-decreasing mechanism, the simple bivalent transitive verbs in the BS pattern of [2B] class and their derived counterparts, intransitive [INTR] Anticausatives [ANTIC] in the middle stem of ATS pattern (with *-at* suffix), are classified in monovalent [1A], as shown below:

(28) a. *gub-uu* (+ d.o.) [BS] [TR] [2B]
'to burn (s.o. / s.th.)'
b. *gub-at-uu* [ATS] [ANTIC] [INTR] [1A]
'to burn'

(29) a. *d'aab-uu* (+ d.o.) [BS] [TR] [2B]
'to stop (s.b.)'
b. *d'aab-at-uu* [ATS] [ANTIC] [INTR] [1A]
'to stop'

(30) a. *d'al-uu* (+ d.o.) [BS] [TR] [2B]
'to give birth (s.o / s.th.)'
b. *d'al-at-uu* [ATS] [ANTIC] [INTR] [1A]
'to be born'

The above chart shows the simple transitive verb stems are the base to derive their anticausative counterparts through the middle suffix, *-at-*. Hence, a lexical valency of the bi-valent transitive verb decreases to one in the derived anticausative verb. For example, the clause constructions involving a verb, *d'al-uu* 'to give birth', indicate the middle construction as a valency-decreasing device in the morphological derivation of anticausative, as shown in (31):

(31) a. *saa-ni* *waatii* *d'al-e*
cow-NOM calf: ABS give birth-3SG:M:PERF
'The cow gave birth to a calf'
b. *waatii-n* *d'al-at-e*
calf-NOM give birth-MIDD-3SG:M:PERF
'A baby calf was born'

(31a) exemplifies the canonical transitive clause pattern of Oromo. The clause has two arguments bearing an agent (NOM) and a (patient (ABS), and the verb is not marked for valency. (31b) illustrates the middle marked anticausative counterpart of (31a); the verb bears a middle suffix, which decreases verb valency by one. The external agent is demoted as a subject, and the patient (internal argument) in the object position is promoted to the subject slot (i.e., the patient undergoes the action spontaneously while there is no an agent all in all). In (31b), the subject is characterized by the nominative marking and the ability to trigger verbal agreement, and the clause structure corresponds to the basic intransitive clause pattern of Oromo. The only (minor) difference is that (31b) illustrates a derived intransitive clause construction.

De-Idiophonic Verb Formation

In Oromo, the de-idiophonic verb is a formation of verbal intransitivisation. It happens in two ways: the affixal CS1 pattern and the lexical BS verb *ǰed'-* 'say'. The de-idiophonic of the CS1 pattern is deriving an intransitivised verb through affixing the idiophones with the single causative *-s-* suffix; for example, from idiophones *barrr*, *dідid*, and *ňaaw* , de-idiophonic verbs *barri-s-uu* 'to fly (with intensive power)',

[26] Martin Haspelmath and Taylor Bradley, *Valence Change* (Leizpig: MPI & Universität Mainz, 2001).

didiy-s-uu 'to move (with intensive sound)' and *ňaaww-i-s-uu* 'to mew (for cat)'are formed respectively. The *-s-* suffix is a de-ideophonic verbalizer to form an intensive/iterative intransitive verb, as it derives a verb from base ideophonic stems). The reduplication of root syllable is usually an expression of the intensive aspect. For example, the verb *barr-i-s-uu* 'to fly with intensive waving of wings' is a de-ideophonic form of a sound concept *barrrrrr* 'a flying bird'; the verb *himim-s-uu* 'to horselaugh' is derived from ideophone of a sound concept *himəməməm* 'a laughter of a horse'. Alternatively, a de-idiophonic verb intransitivisation is formed with the verb *ǰedh-* 'say' as a composite verb; for example, *barr ǰedhuu* 'to fly (with intensive power)', *didid ǰedhuu* 'to move (with intensive sound)', *ňaaw ǰedhuu* 'to mew (for cat)/ to say mew'.

Kulikov notes that a causative morphology can also derive for the intensive aspect expression although it is not common.[27] In Oromo, the ideophone concept expressed with this intensive aspect through reduplication is thus verbalized with the single causative *-s-*, which can therefore make a de-ideophonic and de-transitivised (and transitivised) verb expressing reflexive causative.

(32) a. *barr-* idiophone BS
'Sounding intensive wing waving'
b. *barr-i-s-uu* [CS1] [CAUS] [INTS] [INTR] [1A]
'to fly with intensive waving of wing'

(33) a. *gigig-* ideophone BS
'Sounding intensive thunder storm'
b. *gigiiy-s-uu* [CS1] [INTS] [INTR] [1A]
'to fly with intensive waving of wing'

The following sentence in example (34), where de-ideophonic CS1 is a de-transitivising as involved in intransitive clause:

(34) *sama'ii-n* *gigiiy-s-te*
sky-NOM thunder storm-CS1-3SG:F:PERF
'The sky is thunder storming'

The subject argument is realized as a direct agent of the intensive action in intransitivising in (34). The 'sky' an intransitive subject acts to emit *gigiiy-s-uu* 'thunder storming' without involving another participant in that intransitive clause. The subject of intransitivised verb acts the emissive action by itself and on itself, i.e. the action is not undergone by others.

Passive Derivation

In this section, the derivation of the passive is discussed. The Oromo passivization is usually a morphological derivation in which the passive *-am-* suffix of the PS pattern occurs in any transitive verbs of base or derived stems. Using the data obtained from the corpus, the derivational passive verb stem, which derives from transitive verbs of five verbal patterns: the base stems BS, the middle stems MS of *-at-* suffix, the single causative CS1 of *-s-* suffix, the double causative CS2 of *-si(i)s-* suffix and the triple causative CS3 of *-sisiis-* suffix as they are paired to their corresponding passive stems through *-am-* suffix.

Passivizing Transitives in the BS Pattern

A base transitive verb, which has a valency pattern of a subject argument and a direct object argument, is in [2B] classification unless it is further extended with deriving suffixes or combining with pre-verbal adpositional case clitics. A base bi-transitive verb inherently involves a subject and two object arguments including a direct object (d.o.) and an indirect object (i.o.), and it has a valency structure code [3B]. As the passive *–am-* suffix is usually assumed a de-transitiving device, the passivised base transitive verb is left only with the patient argument placed in the subject slot classified in [1A], and the passivised base ditransitive verb is classified in [2A] since it occurs with the patient argument placed in the subject slot

[27] Leonid Kulikov, "Causatives," in *Language Typology and Language Universals: An International Handbook*, vol. 20 (Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 891-93.

while the indirect object stays as it is. For example, consider the following passivised base transitive verb *ban-uu* 'to open' and ditransitive verb *erg-uu* 'to send', as shown in (34) and (35):

(34) a. *ban-uu* (+ d.o.) [BS] [TR] [2B]
'to open (s.th.)'

b. *ban-am-uu* [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [1A]
'to be opened'

(35) a. *erg-uu* (+ d.o.) (i.o.) [BS] [TR] [3B]
'to send (s.o./s.th.) (to/for s.o./s.th.)

b. *erg-am-uu* (i.o.) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [2A]
'to be sent (to/for s.o./s.th.)

In the passive construction, the subject argument of the base transitive verb is usually omitted, and the object argument becomes the subject. The object argument in the active construction is in the absolutive case, and it takes the subject slot of the nominative form in passive construction, as shown in (36):

(36) a. *inni* *sangaa* *gurgur-e*
He:NOM ox: ABS sell-3SG:M:PERF
'He sold an ox.'

b. *sangaa-n* *gurgur-am-e*
ox-NOM sell-PS-3SG:M:PERF
'The ox was sold.'

In passivizing di-transitive verbs, only the direct object in the absolutive case can passivizes as it the subject position, as shown in (37):

(37) a. *Jaarso* *birrii* *naa(f)* *erg-e*
Jaarso:NOM birr: ABS me: DAT send-3SG:M:PERF
'Jaarso sent money for me.'

b. *birrii-n* *naa(f)* *erg-am-t-e*
birr-NOM me: DAT send-PS-3SG:F-PERF
'The money was sent for me.'

In (37a), the base active di-transitive verb involves three arguments an agent (NOM), a theme (ABS) and a recipient (DAT). The theme is the direct object upon which the act of sending takes place while the subject is a sender and the indirect object is a receiver of what is sent (the theme). In (37b), the passivized clause construction exemplifies that when the base di-transitive verb is passivized, it decreases the number of valency to two as it assigns a theme (NOM) and a recipient (DAT). Therefore, only the theme, which directly receives an action, can passivize as it holds the subject slot, and the indirect object in the dative can stay as it is in both active and passive constructions.

Passivization of Transitives in MS Pattern

In Oromo, while some transitive middles are passivised, other transitive middles are not.

(38) a. *laall-at-uu* (+ d.o.) [MS] [MIDD] [TR] [2B]
'to view (s.o. /s.th.) for oneself'

b. *laall-at-am-uu* (+ d.o.) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [1A]
'to be viewed'

(39) a. *darb-at-uu* (+ d.o.) (i.o.) [MS] [MIDD] [TR] [3B]
'to throw (s.o./s.th.) (towards s.o./s.th.)

b. *erg-at-am-uu*.) (i.o.) [PS] [PASS] [TR] [2A]
'to be thrown (towards s.o./s.th.)

There is a slight difference between the two passive clauses in the above examples. In the example of (38a) and (39a), the passivizing subjects are patients who undergo the event. The agent was a beneficiary which is inferred from the underlying autobenefactive form of the verb.

This is because of the derived auto benefactive middle. In (38b) and (39b), agents behind the passivizing patientive subject are thought to be any initiator (or agent) of the action regardless of its benefit.

(40) a. *hattuu-n* *mana* *ban-at-te*
thief-NOM house:ABS open-MS-3SG:F:PERF
'A thief opened the house (for theft).'

b. *man-ni* *ban-at-am-e*
house-NOM open-MS-PS-3SG:M:PERF
'The house was opened (by someone).'

(41) a. *Waaqo* *sangaa* *bit-at-e*
:NOM ox:ABS buy-MS-3SG:M:PERF
'Waaqo bought the ox (for own benefit).'

b. *sangaa-n* **bit-at-am-e*
ox-NOM open-MS-PS-3SG:M:PERF
'The ox was bought (*by someone).'

From the transitive clause of auto benefactive middle verb *ban-at-uu* 'to open for own benefit' in (a), the intransitive clause is derived with a passivised middle verb *ban-at-am-uu* 'to be opened (by someone intending benefit)', as exemplified in (b). The subject arguments in (40a) and (41a) are beneficiary agents of the 'opening' and 'buying' events of the autobenefactive verbs, but the subject arguments of the passivised aoutobenefactive verbs in (40b) and (41b) are not equally perceived to be; while patient 'house' in the subject argument of the clause in (b) denotes that there is intentionally somebody unexpressed behind the act of opening, as *ban-uu* 'to open' has a semantic property [±human] verb; the passivisation of autobenefactive is hence used to imply there is [+human] beneficiary agent behind the passivised *bit-at-am-uu*.

Passivization of Transitives in CS1 Pattern

In this causative passivisation, the researchers examined the hierarchical decrease of numerical valency between the S1S and PS patterns. In this case, the transitivised S1S verb is detransitivised in the passive. The introduced or added agentive subject argument in the BS-CS1 pairing pattern derivation is removed again in the CS1-PS derivation, as valency decreased by one; for example, the CS1 verb *č'ab-s-uu* 'to break (TR)' is a transitive of [2B] code, and its passivised PS verb *č'ab-s-am-uu* 'to be broken' is a intransitive of [1A] code.

(42) a. *čab-uu* [BS] [INTR] [1A]
'to break'

b. *čab-s-uu* (+ d.o.) [CS1] [CAUS] [TR] [2B]
'to break (s.th.)'

c. *čab-s-am-uu* (+ d.o.) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [1A]
'to be broken'

(43) a. *gal-uu* (+ i.o.) / (+ d.o.) [BS] [INTR] [1A/2A/2B]
'to return home (from somewhere)'

b. *gal-č-uu* (d.o.) (+ i.o.) / (+ d.o.) [CS1] [CAUS] [TR] [2B/3B/3C]
'to make (s.th/s.o.) return home (from somewhere)'

c. *gal-f-am-uu* [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [1A/2A]
'to be returned home (from somewhere)'

Passivisation of Transitives in CS2 Pattern

Owens identifies double (or indirect) causatives and autobenefactive middles as impossible derivative transitive verbs for passivisation.[28] He suggests that causatives of two or more direct objects are not passivised for the presence of causee as a direct object in the absolutive form prevents a passivisation of other (patient) direct objects.[29] However, the study argues that is possible to passivise indirect causatives of CS2 (and CS3) and autobenefactive middle because a causee in the direct object argument is passivized, but an interesting point here is that this passivised verb is still a transitive. The following examples consider the passivisation of the CS2 double causative verbs and transitivisation of the corresponding passivised verbs along with their valency structure codes, as shown in (44), (45) and (46):

(44) a. *deem-sis-uu* (d.o.) (+ i.o.) / (+ d.o.) [CS2] [CAUS] [TR] [2B/3B/3C]
'to cause (s.o.) to go (s.w.)'

b. *deem-sif-am-uu* (+ i.o.) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [1A/2A]
'to be caused to go (s.w.)'

(45) a. *ban-siis-uu* (+ d.o) (+ d.o.) [CS2] [CAUS] [TR] [3C]
'to cause (s.o.) to open (s.th.)'

b. *ban-siif-am-uu* (+ d.o.) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [2B]
'to be caused to open (s.th.)'

(46) a. *itt nay-siis-uu* (+ d.o.) (+ d.o.) (+ i.o.) [S2S] [CS2] [TR] [4C]
'to cause (s.o.) to add (s.th.) (into s.th.)'

b. *itt nay-siif-am-uu* (+ d.o.) (+ i.o.) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [3B]
'to be caused to add (s.th.) (into s.th.)'

Passivization of Transitives in CS3 Pattern

Consider the following passivisation in the CS3 causative-passive syncretism.

(47) a. *ban-si-siis-uu* (+ d.o) (+ d.o) (+ d.o.) [CS3] [ICAUS] [TR] [4D]
'to cause (s.o.) to cause (s.o.) to open (s.th.)'

b. *ban-si-siif-am-uu* (+ d.o) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [2B]
'to be caused to open (s.th.)'

(48) a. *nay-si-siis-uu* (+ d.o) (+ d.o) (+ d.o.) (+ i.o.) [CS3] [ICAUS] [TR] [5D]
'to cause (s.o.) to cause (s.o.) to add (s.th.) (into s.th.)'

b. *nay-si-siif-am-uu* (+ d.o) [PS] [PASS] [INTR] [3B]
'to be caused to add (s.th.) (into s.th.)'

(49) a. *ahmad* *ana* *hintala* *kitaaba* *ban-sisiis-e*
: NOM me:ABS girl:ABS book:ABS open-CS3-3SG:M:PERF
'Ahmad caused me to make the girl open the book'

b. *hintal-ti* *kitaaba* *ban-sisiif-am-te*
girl-NOM:F book:ABS open-CS3-PS-3SG:F:PERF
'The girl was caused (by two causers) to open the book'

In (49a), the causative verb in the CS3 pattern, *ban-sisiis-* (suffixed with the *-sisiis-* morpheme), is a quatrivalent transitive classified as [4D]. It introduces a causer of causer, where it involves four arguments: one subject as a causer (NOM) and three direct objects (a caused causer (ABS), a causee (ABS) and a patient (ABS)). In (49b), the counterpart *ban-sisiifam-* is a passivized bivalent verb decreasing the number of valency by two as it involves only a caused direct agent and a patient while removing the two causers (causer1 one and causer2) of the underlying clause in (49a).

[28] Owens, *A Grammar of Harar Oromo (Northeastern Ethiopia),* 173.
[29] Owens, *A Grammar of Harar Oromo (Northeastern Ethiopia).*

Impersonal Constructions

The De-subjective -an and -a Suffixes

In the AB variety, a third person plural (3PL) *-an* and a third person singular masculine (3SG:M) *-a* suffixes are impersonal (or de-subjective) markings as they occur in verbs representing unspecified subject in a sort of active sentences. According to Khulikov, an impersonal verb is any verb whose subject does not refer to any specific person or thing. In Oromo, the conjugative third person plural (3PL)- *an* suffix is used to referring the unspecified subject argument. However, in the Maccaa dialect a counter passive with *–am-* suffix is for unspecified subject marking; for example, the impersonal clauses *sireerra osoo raf-an-ii* 'better if slept in the bed' (AB dialect) vs. *sireerra osoo raf-am-ee* (Maccaa dialect) 'better if slept in the bed' have same concept but the AB dialect is in the active clause construction with impersonal *-an* while the Maccaa variety is in the passive clause construction with passive *-am-* suffix.

According to Siewierska, impersonal verbs are primarily associated with intransitives though transitive verbs are also constructed as impersonal.[30] However, while the *-a* suffix marking an unspecified agentive subject is an impersonal morpheme that occurs with first transitive verbs, the impersonal 3PL *-n* suffix occurs with both transitive and intransitive verbs. Consider the following examples (from own data):

(51) a. *nu* *amma* *osoo* *deem-n-ee* *wayya*

we: NOM now if go-1PL-PERF better

'It is better if we go now.'

b. *amma* *osoo* *deem-an-ii* *wayya*

now if go-3PL better

'It is better if it is gone go now.'

(52) a. *k'illens-i* *har'a* *na* *beel-es-s-a*

weather -NOM today me:ABS hunger-AHIS-CS1-3SG:M:IMPRF

'Today's weather makes me hungry.'

b. *har'a* *na* *beel-es-s-a*

today me:ABS hunger-AHIS-CS1-3SG:M:IMPRF

'It makes me hungry today.'

In (51) & (52), the clause constructions exemplify the subjectless intransitive clause of [0A] and transitive clause of [1B]. In (52), the impersonal intransitive sentence with the de-subjective marked verb, *deem-an* is an avalent (zerovalent) that lacks a subject or an object argument since impersonal marking *-an* suffix refers to unspecified subject in the clause construction, and in (51) transitive *beel-es-s-a* 'it makes hungry' is used as impersonal verb being marked with the 3SG:M: IMPRF *-a* suffix, in the clause construction in (52), is involved in the clauses. As this intransitive verb is impersonalized with the suffix *-an*, it stops specifying any argument and ends up avalent. Therefore, the valency of the subject of any verb is decreased in this case. Notably, the impersonal verb (suffixed with *-an*) is ambiguous that it is indistinguishable from the normal verb of the same form, except contextually in clause construction; for example, *deem-an* is basically a conjugated verb whose pronominal reference is 'they' marked with 3PL, *-an*, but in clause construction, it can be both an impersonal avalent verb whose subject nothing and a basic monovalent intransitive conjugated verb whose subject is specified unless the context is understood.

In addition, in a subject-decreasing impersonal verb construction, the base and derived transitive verbs are also used as impersonal verbs decreasing the subject valency, but other core complements (arguments) are expressed in their usual structural forms, as shown in (53):

(53) *asi-tti* *siǰaaraa* *hin* *aar-s-an*

here-LOC cigarette: ABS NEG smoke-CS1-3PL

[30] Anna Siewierska, *The Passive: A Comparative Linguistic Analysis* (Taylor & Francis, 2024), 96.

'Cigarette is not smoked here.' (lit., they don't smoke cigarette here)

In (53), the clause construction illustrates the impersonal or passive-like clause from the base transitive verb. The negated impersonal or passive-like transitive verb, *hin aarsan* 'no one to smoke', is used as an impersonal verb being marked with *-an*. Although this transitive verb is basically bivalent, it is impersonalized with *-an* suffix, not to specify the subject argument, and it ends up a monovalent impersonal verb assigning the direct object *siǐaaraa* 'cigarette' in the absolutive case. Therefore, the transitive verb decreases the valency by one even though it seems in the active voice construction.

The Impact of this Study on Language Preservation

This study can impact language preservation efforts in several ways:

Documentation and preservation: The study helps preserve an essential aspect of the Oromo language by thoroughly documenting valency-decreasing devices. This detailed linguistic data can be invaluable for future generations and for efforts to maintain the language's richness and diversity.

E**ducational resources:** The findings can be used to develop educational materials and resources for teaching the Oromo language. This can include grammar books, language courses, and digital resources that incorporate the study's insights, making it easier for learners to understand and use the language correctly.

Linguistic Awareness: This research raises awareness about the unique features of the Oromo language, both within the community and among linguists. This increased awareness can foster a sense of pride and encourage more people to learn and use the language.

Revitalization programs: The study's insights can inform language revitalization programs by providing a deeper understanding of the language's structure and usage. This can help in designing effective strategies to promote the use of Oromo in various domains, such as education, media, and daily communication.

Comparative Studies: By comparing Oromo with other languages, the research can highlight its unique characteristics and contribute to a broader understanding of linguistic diversity. This can support efforts to preserve not just Oromo, but other endangered languages as well.

Technological Applications: The detailed linguistic data from the study can be used in developing language technologies, such as speech recognition systems, translation tools, and language learning applications. These technologies can make the Oromo language more accessible and usable in the digital age.

Overall, this research can play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the Oromo language and ensuring that it continues to thrive for future generations. This study's findings seek to fill specific gaps in understanding how valency-decreasing mechanisms operate in the Oromo language. Some potential gaps that the study might address are as follows:

Language-Specific Features: The research might focus on uncovering unique features of valency-decreasing operations in Oromo that distinguish it from other languages, particularly within the Cushitic language family.

Descriptive Data: The study could aim to provide detailed descriptive data on valency-decreasing verbs in Oromo, filling a gap in the existing linguistic literature.

Identification and Classification: The study might aim to identify and classify the various valency-decreasing devices used in Oromo, which may not have been comprehensively documented before.

Functional Analysis: It could seek to analyze the functional roles of these devices in different syntactic and semantic contexts, providing a deeper understanding of their usage.

Theoretical Implications: It might explore the theoretical implications of valency-decreasing devices in Oromo for broader linguistic theories, such as those related to syntax and morphology.

Practical Applications: The research could also address practical applications, such as implications for language teaching, translation, and computational linguistics.

By addressing these gaps, the study would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic structure and functionality of the Oromo language, particularly in the area of valency-decreasing verbs.

CONCLUSION

The Oromo valency-decreasing verb derivational devices are the passive, the anticausative, inchoatives, the de-ideoponic and the de-subjective mechanisms. The researchers have noted that transitivity in Oromo must be treated as more than a binary opposition, i.e. transitive versus intransitive, leading to an examination of valency as a more adequate model. Therefore, valency-decreasing morphological verb derivations, and different valency structures have been analysed and far been attempted to define degrees of transitivity within the same number of valencies. The de-transitivizations of the middle verbs derived through the denominative and deadjective inchoative *-a(a)t-*, *-a(a)h-* and *-o(o)m-* suffixes in their respective ATIS, AHIS and OMIS stem patterns and through the verbally derived anticausative *-at-* suffix, stative intransitives are usually derived as unaccusative verbs. They are in the valency structure codes [1A] and [2A]; for example, the inchoative *bal'-at-uu* 'to become wide' and the anticausative *d'al-at-uu* 'to be born' in the [1A] code and the inchoative *oll-oom-uu* 'to become neighboring' in the [2A] code are good examples. The passivization in Oromo is by affixing with the *-am-* suffix, and it is the most complex valency-decreasing verb derivational operation, through which both transitive and intransitive passives occur. While the passive intransitive are derived from transitive verbs of the BS, MS, CS1, CS2 patterns, the passive transitive verbs are derived from the transitive of the CS3 pattern. The passive intransitive derivation includes [1A], [2A] and [2B], but the passive transitive derivations are in [2B] and [3B] codes, interestingly decreasing valency by two. In the de-idioponic verb formation is more de-transitivization mechanism by affixing the agentivizing *-s-* suffix to idiophones to derive emissive intransitive verbs in the CS1 pattern such as *barr-i-s-uu* 'to fly by moving wings intensively', *didiiy-s-uu* 'to run by hitting ground intensively'. These verbs are agentive in [1A] code, as they only involve a subject acting upon oneself. The last valency decreasing verbal derivation is the syntactic de-subjective. It involves two suffixes: the first person plural marker *-n* and the third person singular masculine marker *-a* suffix. In a sentence, a specific subject is missing as it is crossreferenced with the de-subjective *-an* and *-a* suffixes without referring to anyone; however, adverbs of time are used instead of subject, yet they are not arguments but adjuncts.

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