

AN UNNATURAL RESULT OF NATURAL PROCESSES: SPLIT TRANSITIVITY IN FIJIAN

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1 Introduction

Hopper and Thompson (1980) suggest that Transitivity, the viewing of an activity as carried over from one participant (agent) to another (patient), is a property of a clause as a whole, determined by a number of properties of the clause, rather than merely by the presence or absence of a direct object. They identify a number of components of Transitivity, each component having two variants or features, one high, the other one low in Transitivity; see Table I.

COMPONENTS OF TRANSITIVITY	DEGREE OF TRANSITIVITY	
	HIGH	LOW
A. PARTICIPANTS	2 or more participants, A and O	1 participant
B. KINESIS	action	non-action
C. ASPECT	telic	atelic
D. PUNCTUALITY	punctual	non-punctual
E. VOLITIONALITY	volitional	non-volitional
F. AFFIRMATION	affirmative	negative
G. MODE	realis	irrealis
H. AGENCY	A high in potency	A low in potency
I. AFFECTEDNESS OF O	O totally affected	O not affected
J. INDIVIDUATION OF O	O highly individuated	O non-individuated

Table I

Transitivity (from Hopper and Thompson 1980)

Hopper and Thompson suggest that these Transitivity components co-vary extensively and above all systematically in languages and put forth the following Transitivity Hypothesis (hereafter TH):

If two clauses (a) and (b) in a language differ in that (a) is higher in Transitivity according to any of the features A-J, then, if a concomitant grammatical or semantic difference appears elsewhere in the clause, that difference will also show (a) to be higher in Transitivity.

In other words, if in a language there is an obligatory pairing of two of the components of Transitivity, "*the paired features are always on the same side of the High-Low Transitivity scale*" (Hopper and Thompson 1980:254, original emphasis). Conversely, TH predicts that no language requires a pairing of two Transitivity features one of which is characteristic of high and the other one of low Transitivity.

The purpose of this paper is to present a counterexample to TH and to suggest an explanation for its existence. We will see that certain sentence types of Standard Fijian (henceforth Fijian) exhibit what may be termed 'Split Transitivity': an obligatory pairing of a feature characteristic of sentences low in Transitivity and a feature characteristic of sentences high in Transitivity. In fact, Fijian appears to provide two types of counterexample to TH, one of which crucially depends on a relatively recent reanalysis of certain aspects of Fijian transitive sentences.¹ The next section deals with this counterexample to TH; in the subsequent section the other counterexample to TH is presented; and in the concluding section an explanation for this violation of TH is suggested.

2 Indexing of objects

Fijian has two transitive suffixes (tr) used with verbs: a short suffix -CV and a long suffix -CakV, where C is one of a number of 'thematic' consonants or zero and V is a or i. Many Fijian verbs may take both transitive suffixes, the choice of the suffix depending on which participant in the event is viewed as the patient and thus encoded as the direct object; cf. *nima-ta* 'bail out (a canoe)' and *nima-taka* 'bail with' (i.e., 'use s.t. as a hailer'); *lua-ca* 'vomit on' and *lua-raka* 'vomit s.t.'. The type of thematic consonant is determined lexically, although Arms (1973) and Geraghty (1978) have argued that there exists a correlation between the meaning of a verb and the thematic consonant it requires (this suggestion was first made by Hazlewood (1914)). As the latter pair of

examples above demonstrates, the thematic consonants in the short and the long transitive endings used with a stem need not be the same. (For more detail concerning the forms as well as the semantics of the transitive suffixes see Arms 1973, 1974, Pawley 1975, and Geraghty 1978.) For simplicity, I will be concerned here only with the short suffix, but it should be borne in mind that what will be said about the short suffix in relation to TH applies equally well in the case of the long suffix.

According to what we may refer to (following Pawley 1975) as the standard analysis (SA) of Fijian, the (short) transitive suffix has two basic variants: *-Ca* and *-Ci* (Hazelwood 1914, Churchward 1941, Milner 1972). The *-Ca* variant is used with common specific objects, and the *-Ci* variant is used with proper-noun (personal and place names), pronominal and kinship-term objects (as well as in reciprocal and passive constructions). We may refer to this latter category as 'non-common objects'. However, while proper nouns and pronouns always behave as non-common objects, kinship terms may be treated either as non-common or as common objects; see examples below.² According to Milner (1972), the use of kinship terms as non-common nouns implies familiarity and close acquaintance, but my Fijian informant perceives no difference between pairs of sentences in which kinship terms are treated as common and as non-common nouns. The semantic difference between such sentences, if indeed there is any, has no bearing on the problem under discussion.

Arms (1973, 1974) and Pawley (1973, 1975) have independently proposed a reanalysis of the transitive suffix. According to their reanalysis (RA), the basic form of the suffix is *-Ci*. If the object is common specific, it is indexed in the verb by an object marker (om) *-a*, added after the transitive suffix. The *i* of *-Ci* is deleted before the object marker *-a*; that is the transitive suffix becomes *-C*. No object marker, on the other hand, is used before non-common objects; the form of the transitive suffix remains *-Ci*. Finally, if the object is non-specific,³ no transitive suffix appears on the verb; the verb is in its non-transitive form. Both SA and RA agree on this. By a 'non-transitive' form is meant the form of a transitive verb used with a non-specific object. The non-transitive form may but need not be the same as the intransitive variant of the verb: *gunu-vi* 'drink' (tr.), *gunu* (non-tr., intr.), but *sara-vi* 'watch' (tr.), *sara* (non-tr.), *sarasara* (intr.). The properties of the three types of object are given in a summary form in Table II.

	TYPE OF OBJECT		
	COMMON SPECIFIC	NON-COMMON	NON-SPECIFIC
SA	-Ca	-Ci	∅
RA	-Ci + a → -C + a	-Ci	∅

Table II

Properties of objects according to the standard analysis and Arms' and Pawley's reanalysis

Examples:

- (1) SA/RA e ā moku-ti Tōmasi/au/luve -na na yalewa
 she past hit-tr T. /me/child-her art woman
 'the woman hit Tomasi/me/her child'

but

- (2a) SA e ā moku-ta na gone/luve -na na yalewa
 she past hit-tr art child/child-her art woman

- (2b) RA e ā moku-t -a (← moku-ti-a) na gone/luve-na na
 -tr-om
yalewa

'the woman hit the child/her child'

Fijian has two words that can be translated as 'child': *luve* 'child, offspring' is a kinship term, while *gone* 'child, immature person' is not. Notice furthermore that in (1) the kinship term *luve* 'child' is treated as a non-common noun, while in (2) it is treated as a common noun (cf. discussion above).

- (3) SA/RA eratou ā rai-ci Viti
 they past see-tr F.
 (paucal)

'they saw Fiji' (Milner 1972:54)

but

- (4a) SA eratou ā rai-ca na vale
 they past see-tr art house
 (paucal)

- (4b) RA eratou ā rai-c -a (← rai-ci-a) na vale
 -tr-om

'they saw the house' (Milner 1972:54)

That is, SA and RA agree in their analyses of sentences with non-common objects, as in (1) and (3) above, but they differ in their treatments of sentences with common specific objects as in (2) and (4). In the latter type of case, SA

considers the *-Ca* ending to be one of the variants of the transitive suffix. According to RA, the ending is morphologically complex, composed of the transitive suffix *-Ci* (in its underlying form) and the object marker *-a*. The transitive suffix, when followed by *-a*, surfaces as *-C*.

As mentioned above, if the object is non-specific, the verb appears in its non-transitive form; furthermore, no article is used with the object. Compare:

- (5) keirau na gunu (no object)
 we (dl) fut drink
 (excl)
 'we will drink' (Arms 1974:60)
- (6a) SA keirau na gunu -va na wai (common specific
 we (dl) fut drink-tr art water object)
 (excl)
- (6b) RA keirau na gunu-v -a (←gunu-vi-a) na wai
 -tr-om
 'we will drink the water' (Arms 1974:60)
- (7) keirau na gunu wai (non-specific object)
 we (dl) fut drink water
 (excl)
 'we will drink water' (Arms 1974:60)

More examples of sentences with non-specific objects will be found in the next section.

Given Arms' and Pawley's reanalysis, according to which the final *-a* in transitive verbs is an object marker, a problem arises for TH. One of the components of Transitivity is the degree of individuation of the referent of the object, where 'individuation' "refers both to the distinctness of the patient from the A ... and to its distinctness from its own background" (Hopper and Thompson 1980:253). Following Timberlake (1975, 1977), Hopper and Thompson present several pairs of types of object with individuated versus non-individuated referents. These are given in Table III.

INDIVIDUATED	NON-INDIVIDUATED
proper	common
human, animate	inanimate
concrete	abstract
singular	plural
count	mass
referential, definite	non-referential

Table III: Individuation of objects (Hopper & Thompson 1980).

Sentences with individuated objects are high in Transitivity; those with non-individuated objects are low in Transitivity (cf. Table in Section 1).

In our discussion of Fijian we have encountered three basic types of object: common specific, non-common, non-specific. Objects of the first kind are individuated: they are specific, referential. Such objects require the transitive suffix and according to RA are indexed in the verb by means of the object marker *-a*. Objects of the third type, on the other hand, are non-individuated: they are non-specific, non-referential. They require the non-transitive forms of verbs and, of course, are not indexed in them. Objects of the second type--non-common objects--, like common specific objects are individuated. Personal pronouns require that their referents be recoverable, either from linguistic or extra-linguistic context. In other words, their referents are normally definite (but see discussion in Section 4). Furthermore, in Fijian, personal pronouns are normally used only in reference to animates, not inanimates. Kinship terms normally refer to specific individuals; they do so in the examples in this paper. And above all, proper names, *qua* 'names', uniquely identify individuals. Recall now that according to RA non-specific objects require the transitive form of the verb, however no object marker is used. In other words, the object is not indexed in the verb.

The properties of the three types of object are summarized in Table IV.

	TYPE OF OBJECT		
	Common Specific	Non-Specific	Non-Common
transitive form of verb	+	-	+
object indexed in verb	+	-	-

Table IV
Properties of objects according to Arms' and Pawley's reanalysis

In one respect, non-common objects are treated in the same way as common specific objects, but in another they are treated in the same way as non-specific objects, even though they are

specific. Sentences with non-common objects may be said to exhibit Split Transitivity: they obligatorily pair a feature characteristic of sentences high in Transitivity (the transitive form of the verb) and a feature characteristic of sentences low in Transitivity (the absence of the object marker). Consequently, they constitute a counterexample to TII.

3 Object incorporation

The other counterexample to TII is found in the behaviour of direct objects with respect to postverbal particles. Fijian has a number of postverbal particles, such as aspect and modality markers, directionals, etc. (for a full list of these elements and their order see Milner 1972:94).

For example:

- (8) erau lako mai (mai)
 they (dl) go hither
 'they come' (Milner 1972:29)
- (9) e levu tiko na ua (tiko)
 it be progr art tide
 big
 'there is a big sea running (at present)' (Milner 1972:29)
- (10) sā vosa oti na tūruga (oti)
 asp speak compl art chief
 'the chief has spoken' (Milner 1972:35)

If a sentence has a common specific object, the object follows the postverbal particle(s):

- (11) sā kau -t -a mai na kākana ko Mere
 asp carry-tr-om hither art food art M.
 'Mere brought the food'
- (12) sā kau -t -a tiko mai na kākana ko Mere
 asp carry-tr-om progr hither art food art M.
 'Mere is bringing the food'
- (13) sā vakasili-m -a oti na gone ko Mere
 asp wash -tr-om compl art child art M.
 'Mere has washed the child' (gone 'child' not a kinship term)
- (14) e sara-v -a tale tiko na yalewa na tagane
 he watch-tr-om again progr art woman art man
 'the man is watching the woman again'

If the object is non-specific, it directly follows the verb. None of the postverbal particles may intervene between the verb and the object. Such sentences may be said to exhibit object incorporation: the verb and the object behave as an inseparable unit. Recall furthermore that the verb appears in its non-transitive form and that no article is used with the object:

- (15) era kau kākana mai na yalewa (*...kau mai kākana...)
 they carry food hither art woman
 'the women brought food' (cf. (11) above)
- (16) era kau kākana tiko mai na yalewa
 they carry food progr hither art woman
 'the women are bringing food' (cf. (12))
- (17) e sara yalewa tale tiko na tagane
 he watch woman again progr art man
 'the man is watching women again' (cf. (14))

Compare also

- (18) sā talo-c -a rawa na tī ko Mere
 asp pour-tr-om able art tea art M.
 'Mere is able to pour the tea'

and

- (19) sā talo tī rawa ko Mere
 asp pour tea able art M.
 'Mere is able/knows how to pour tea (in general)'

Let us now consider non-common objects. If the object is non-common, the transitive form of the verb must be used, but the object *precedes* the postverbal particle(s). That is, sentences with non-common objects exhibit object incorporation:

- (20) sā kau -ti Tōmasi/koya/luve -na tiko mai ko Mere
 asp carry-tr T. /him /child-her progr hither art M.
 'Mere is bringing Tōmasi/him/her child' (cf. (12) and (16) (*...kau-ti tiko mai Tōmasi/koya/luve-na...))

In (20), *luve* 'child, offspring' (a kinship term), is treated as a non-common object. It can also be treated as a common specific object, in which case it follows the post-verbal particles:

- (21) sā kau -t -a tiko mai na luve -na ko Mere
 asp carry-tr-om progr hither art child-her art M.
 'Mere is bringing her child'

Further examples:

- (22) sā vakasili-mi Tōmasi/ira / tina -na oti ko Mere
 asp wash -tr T. /them/mother-her compl art M.
 'Mere has washed Tomasi/them/her mother' (cf. (13))
- (23) e sara-vi Mere/koya tale tiko na tagane
 he watch-tr M. /her again progr art man
 'the man is watching Mere/her again' (cf. (14) and (17))

Compare the following three sentences:

- (24) e rai-c -a tiko na gone ko koya
 he look-tr-om progr att child art he
 at
 'he is looking at the child' (gone 'child' not a kinship term)
- (25) na daurevuli sā rai vuli tiko
 art school asp look school progr
 inspector at
 'the school inspector is inspecting (lit.: looking at) schools'
- (26) e rai-ci Mere/au/ tama -qu tiko ko koya
 he look-tr M. /me/father-my progr art he
 at
 'he is looking at Mere/me/my father'

The behaviour of the three types of object is summarized in Table V.

	TYPE OF OBJECT		
	Common Specific	Non-Specific	Non-Common
transitive form of verb	+	-	+
object incorporation	-	+	+

Table V

Properties of objects

Sentences with non-common objects exhibit Split Transitivity. Like those with common specific objects, they require the transitive form of the verb. On the other hand, like those with non-specific objects, they require object

incorporation. In other words, they obligatorily pair a feature characteristic of sentences high in Transitivity and a feature characteristic of sentences low in Transitivity and thus violate TH.

4 Analogy vs. a universal

By way of conclusion, I will offer an explanation for the existence of Split Transitivity in Fijian. Recall that one type of object that exhibits Split Transitivity is personal pronouns. Pawley (1972) and Clark (1973) have suggested that Proto-Eastern Oceanic, of which Fijian is assumed to be a descendant, had what Clark calls co-occurrence of verb-phrase external (nominal) objects and corresponding verb-phrase internal pronouns. In other words, nominal objects were indexed inside the verb phrase by pronominal forms. By 'verb phrase' is here meant not the verb phrase of transformational grammar, which includes the object, but a verbal nucleus with a number of optional postposed or preposed particles. According to Pawley's (1972) reconstructions, the monosyllabic indexing pronouns were suffixes, and those that had more than one syllable were free immediately post-verbal forms. Instead of an Eastern Oceanic subgroup, Pawley now postulates a more restricted Remote Oceanic subgroup, which still includes Fijian (see e.g. Pawley 1981). I will assume in the subsequent discussion that the relevant features of the pronominal system originally reconstructed by Pawley for Proto-Eastern Oceanic are reconstructible for Proto-Remote Oceanic as well.

The system reconstructible for Proto-Remote Oceanic still partly exists in modern Fijian. Plural animate objects are indexed inside the verb phrase by the pronoun *ira* 'them'. In addition, human objects may be indexed for the dual and the paucal numbers by means of *rau* 'them (two)' and *iratou* 'them (few)' respectively. The object marker *-a*, posited by Arms' and Pawley's reanalysis, indexes 3rd person singular (animate or inanimate) and 3rd person plural inanimate common objects. Finally, the 3rd person singular pronoun *koya* may be used to index singular common objects. (Subjects, on the other hand, are indexed by preverbal pronominal forms.) In (27)-(30), the verb phrases are within # #:

- (27) le lutu-k -a# na vale na niu
 It, fall-tr-om art house art coconut
 they on
 'the coconut(s) fall(s) on the house(s)'
 (Arms 1973:568)

- (28) #e ā cumu-ri ira# na toa na gone
 he past chase-tr them art chicken art child
 'the child chased the chickens'
- (29) #e ā rai-ci ira/rau/iratou# na gone na yalewa
 she past see-tr them/them/them art child art woman
 (pl)/(dl)/(paucal)
 'the woman saw the children'
- (30) #au rai-ci koya# na gone
 I see-tr him art child
 'I see the child' (Milner 1972:81)

According to Milner 1972, "if the common [object] is in the singular, the objective pronoun is not always used" (p. 81).

Fijian then exhibits relics of the original system of verb-phrase internal indexing of nominal objects. The non-3rd person pronouns, which normally do not co-occur with nominal objects, would occupy the same postverbal position as the 3rd person forms by analogy.

Geraghty (1978) has argued that in Standard (Bauan) Fijian, as well as in many other Fijian dialects, the original object-indexing pronouns were lost at some point and were replaced by the original independent pronouns: "the independent pronoun forms have been pressed into service as postverbal object markers, occupying the vacant postverbal object-marking slot, but preserving their form as independent pronouns" (Geraghty 1978:218). This development may be the cause of the dual--referring and indexing--function of some of the object pronouns in modern Fijian.

Subsequently, by analogy to the objective pronouns, the same postverbal position came to be occupied by proper-noun and (optionally) kinship-term objects. This suggestion is not as farfetched as it might seem at first. In Fijian, both proper nouns and (optionally) kinship terms behave like personal pronouns in some other respects. For example, when used as subject, they all take the proper article *ko/o*, rather than the common article *na*:

- (31) e kilā vinaka sara na qoli vonu ko Mōsese
 he know well very art fish(ing) turtle art M.
 'Mosese understands turtle-fishing very well'
 (Milner 1972:31)

- (32) e tiko evei ko Tama -qu?
 he stay where art father-my
 'where is Father?' (Milner 1972:73)
- (33) ā qai tuku-n -a ko koya
 past then say-tr-om art he
 'he then continues [said]' (Milner 1972:102)

Compare:

- (34) sā moce na gone
 asp sleep art child
 'the child is asleep' (Milner 1972:13)

When 'motion to' is to be expressed, common nouns take the particle *ki* and the common article *na*. Personal names and pronouns, on the other hand, take the particle *vei*, optionally preceded by *ki* and no article; place names take the particle *ki* but no article:

- (35) ki na vale
 to art house
 'to the house' (Milner 1972:19)
- (36) (ki) vei Tīmoci
 (to) to T.
 'to Timoci' (person's name) (Milner 1972:59)
- (37) vei kedaru
 to us (dl)
 (incl)
 'to us' (Milner 1972:59)
- (38) ki vei kemudrau
 to to you (dl)
 'to you' (Milner 1972:60)
- (39) ki Suva
 to S.
 'to Suva' (Milner 1972:60)

As Geraghty puts it: "It is easy to envisage a rule which incorporated independent pronoun objects into post-verbal position being applied also to proper nouns; indeed, it is difficult to imagine how such a rule might exclude proper nouns, since in most respects independent pronouns and proper nouns function identically." (Geraghty 1978:218-219).

And since kinship terms may behave like proper nouns and the personal pronouns in some respects, they would have been subjected to the same analogical pressure as were proper nouns as far as the immediate postverbal position is concerned."

We thus have two quite natural historical processes: (1) the development of erstwhile independent personal pronouns into verb-phrase internal pronominal elements with both referring and indexing functions; and (2) an analogical realignment of proper-noun and kinship-term objects with pronominal objects. Through a combination of these processes, an unnatural synchronic state has arisen in Fijian, one which violates a putative universal or at least a strong general tendency.⁵

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NOTES

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²P. Geraghty (pers. comm.) has informed me that rank and occupation terms (e.g. *qasenivuli* 'teacher') also exhibit this behaviour.

³I will follow the traditional terminology and use the term 'non-specific' even though, at least in Fijian, non-specificity does not seem the only factor involved. For example, the sentence 'the women are bringing food (right now)' describes a particular event in progress (as opposed to 'women bring food

(in general)'). That is, the food is specific, nevertheless the object is treated as non-specific; see example (16) below. It seems that in sentences of this sort it is the activity itself that is being foregrounded, rather than the identity of the referent of the object: 'the women are food-bringing/are engaged in a bringing activity with respect to food'.

⁴There are a number of other Oceanic languages, both Remote and others, in which proper nouns and personal pronouns are treated alike. In Iaai (non-Remote), transitive verbs have special forms used with pronominal and proper-noun objects which are different from the forms used with common objects (Ozanne-Rivierre 1976). In Polynesian languages (Remote), "proper nouns and independent pronouns are marked with the pronominal-proper article *a*, under conditions varying slightly throughout Polynesian" (Chung 1978:24). In Rennellese (a Polynesian Outlier language), "direct objects of canonical transitive clauses exhibit two types of marking: common nouns are unmarked, ... but pronouns or proper nouns are marked with *i*" (Chung 1978:288). On the other hand, in Bugotu (non-Remote), proper nouns and kinship terms both require the article *a*, while common nouns take the article *na* (Ivens 1933-35). In Tigak (non-Remote), both proper and kinship nouns, when used as possessors, require possessive constructions that are different from those used with common-noun possessors (Beaumont 1979).

⁵I have not attempted to provide an explanation for the other type of counterexample to TII because it presupposes a relatively recent reanalysis of the transitive suffix(es). If one does accept the reanalysis, analogy is likely to have been the operative factor here as well. Since personal pronouns are not indexed in the verb by *-a*, by analogy proper-noun and (optionally) kinship-term objects are not either.