Intransitive-based Applicatives in *Bahasa Indonesia*

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**Abstract**

As there has not been research specifically focused on the meanings of intransitive-based applicative in *bahasa Indonesia*, this research was carried out as an effort to uncover the meanings of Indonesian intransitive-based applicative constructions. To reach the goal, we use Dixon’s framework of four broad categorizations of applicative meanings. The research is descriptive and qualitative in nature, and the approach used is that of structural typology. Data were collected using library research, document analysis, and purposive sampling. Intransitive-based applicative in bahasa Indonesia has four meanings; they, ordered based on the frequency of occurrences, are locative, stimulus for a stative verb (G-stimulus), stimulus for corporeal activities (G-corporeal), and comitative. There are, however, *-kan intransitive-based applicative constructions that cannot neatly fall into Dixon’s meaning categorization. We then proposed another applicative meaning of *-kan*. In conclusion, we hold that Dixon’s categorization of applicative meanings is a framework quite exhaustive to understand the semantic elements of Indonesian transitive-based applicative.

**1. Introduction**

Applicative is defined with reference to “a construction found in certain languages, notably Bantu languages, in which an underlying indirect or oblique object is realized as a surface direct object” (Trask, 1996). Applicative, in other words, is formed when a peripheral argument or an oblique is promoted to the position of object or patient. Applicative constructions, as Trask (1996) and Dixon (2012) put it, do not exist in all languages in the world, yet *bahasa Indonesia* ‘Indonesian language’ is among those certain languages that have applicatives (Arka et al., 2009; Blake, 2005; Dixon, 2012; Kikusawa, 2012; Sawardi et al., 2021; Shiohara, 2012; Song, 2014; Willemsen, 2017). *Bahasa Indonesia* has two suffixes used to form an applicative, i.e. *-kan* and *-i* (e.g. Arka et al., 2009; Dixon, 2012; Shiohara, 2012). The suffixes can attach to both transitive and intransitive clauses, the results of which can be ditransitive or monotransitive. Examples (1.a, b), taken from Song (2014, p. 192), show that the attachment of the suffix *-kan* to a transitive base changes the clause from a monotransitive (1.a) into a ditransitive one (1.b). Clause (1.a) is monotransitive, consisting of two core arguments, namely Ali (subject) and *pintu* ‘door’ (object), and the NP *guru* ‘teacher’ functions as the object of the preposition *untuk* ‘for’. In (1.b), the NP *guru* is advanced to the position of a direct object, whereas the former direct object *pintu* is removed further away, hence becoming an indirect object. The outcome is a ditransitive clause (1.b), which has two object arguments, i.e. the noun phrases *guru* and *pintu.*

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1) a. Ali mem-buka-kan pintu untuk guru
   Ali meN-open- teacher door
   ‘Ali opens the door for the teacher’.

   b. Ali mem-buka-kan guru pintu
   Ali meN-open- teacher door
   BEN
   ‘Ali opens the door for the teacher’. (Glosses ours)

   In the following (1.d), nevertheless, the suffixion of -kan to a transitive verb menikam (1.c)
does not increase valency, for the generated clause remains monotransitive (1.d); meanwhile, in (1.f),
attaching the applicative suffix -kan to an intransitive verb herbicara ‘talk’ (1.e) increases valency, thus
promoting the peripheral argument usul Anda ‘your suggestion’ (1.e) to a core object (1.f):

c) Dia menikam perut harimau dengan belati
   Dia meN-tikam perut harimau dengan belati
   S/he meN-stab belly tiger with knife
   ‘S/he stabbed the tiger’s belly with a knife’

d) Dia menikamkan belati ke perut harimau
   Dia meN-tikam-kan belati ke perut harimau
   S/he meN-stab- knife to belly tiger
   INSTR.
   ‘He thrust the knife into the tiger’s belly’
   (Sneddon, Adelaar, Djenar, & Ewing, 2010, p. 83, glosses ours)

e) Kami belum ber-bicara tentang usul Anda
   We not (yet) ber-talk about suggestion your
   ‘We haven’t discussed your suggestion yet’

f) Kami belum mem-bicara-kan usul Anda
   We not (yet) meN-talk-kan. suggestion your
   ‘We haven’t discussed your suggestion yet’
   (Moeliono, Lapoliwa, Alwi, Sasangka, & Sugiyono, 2017, p. 105, translation &
glosses ours)

Research on Indonesian applicatives has been conducted by Arka et al. (2009), Kikusawa (2012),
Shiohara (2012), and Willemsen (2017). However, none of these studies focuses on revealing the
meanings of intransitive-based applicatives. They explain the general meanings of applicatives formed
by attaching suffixes -kan and –i but not specific meanings inherent in applicative constructions derived
from intransitive. This is the reason we are interested in conducting further research on the meanings of
Indonesian intransitive-based applicatives. To reach the goal, we use Dixon’s “four broad categories of
applicative meanings” (2012), which we consider to be reasonably exhaustive. Dixon proposes “Goal,
Instrumental, Comitative, and Locative” as the major or broad categories of meanings (2012, p. 301).
The goal and instrumental meanings are detailed into four and five subdivisions, while the comitative
and locative are not (Dixon, 2012, pp. 301-312):

1) Goal
   “The applicative argument may refer to the ‘goal’ of the activity or state described by the verb of
   the applicative construction” (Dixon, 2012, p. 301). This category is specified into four sub-
   divisions, which are a) additional argument or G-addition; b) recipient or G-recipient; c)
   stimulus for a stative verb, G-stimulus; and d) stimulus for corporeal verb or G-corporeal
2) Instrumental
“The applicative argument may refer to some actual or notional instrument” (Dixon, 2012, p. 306). Dixon divides the instrumental meaning into five sub-divisions, i.e.: a) Implement or I-Implement; b) Surface effect, I-Surface; c) Something which assist, I-Assist; d) Materials used, I-material; and e) Reason or cause or I-reason.

3) Comitative
In a comitative applicative, the subject argument is accompanied by a person or thing mentioned in the oblique (Dixon, 2012). Concerning comitative applicative meanings, Dixon (2012, p. 309) states that:

A Comitative applicative construction can refer to a major participant accompanied by a minor one (for example, ‘Mother walked to the river with the baby’) or to a number of people joining together in an activity, as in ‘John played with his cousins’. Other examples in the literature include ‘dance with’, ‘work with’, and ‘talk with’.

4) Locative
A locative applicative is produced when an oblique providing locational information is moved into the object function.

Then Dixon concludes that the most common meanings of intransitive-based applicatives are “Locative, Comitative, I-reason, G-stimulus, and G-corporeal” (2012, p. 312).

2. Methods

This research is descriptive and qualitative in nature, and the approach used is that of typology. The data are in the form of clauses, and they were collected using library research, document analysis, and purposive sampling. Data sources were Tata bahasa baku bahasa Indonesia (Moeliono et al., 2017), Indonesian reference grammar (Sneddon et al., 2010), A student’s guide to Indonesian grammar (Djenar, 2003), and Ajaklah Tuhan ke Tanah Jawa (Asmara, 2020). Also, we created some data that we considered necessary but could not be located in the aforementioned references. We relied on our knowledge, sense, and intuition as native speakers of bahasa Indonesia, yet we consulted Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Daring ‘Online Comprehensive Indonesian Dictionary’ (“Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia V 0.4.0 Beta (40," 2016-2020) as well to cross-check the validity of the data. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using structural typological approach, within which we used Dixon’s basic linguistic theories (2012) to investigate the meanings of Indonesian applicative constructions.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of our research are in line with Dixon’s perspective to the meanings of intransitive-based applicatives, except for I-reason. The meanings of intransitive-based applicatives in bahasa Indonesia are G-stimulus, locative, comitative, and G-corporeal, but there is no datum relevant to I-reason meaning. G-stimulus and locative applicatives are numerous, but applicatives with comitative and G-corporeal meanings are few. These results are described in detail below, but, for ease, we do not present our description based on whether or not such and such an applicative meaning is frequently discovered. Rather, we outlined our presentation following Dixon’s order of meanings, i.e. Goal (3.1.), specified into G-stimulus (3.1.1.), G-corporeal (3.1.2); comitative (3.2.); and locative (3.3.). We add one more section, entitled ‘Another function of -kan’ (3.4.), to give space to a discussion of applicatives that does not fit into any of Dixon’s categorization.
3.1. Goal

3.1.1. Stimulus for a stative verb, G-stimulus

Dixon (2012) writes that there are applicative constructions in some languages in which the predicate are stative verbs. These applicatives may stand alone or may have an object that expresses what stimulates the states described in the verbs (anger, worry, hatred, etc.). Their non-applicative counterparts are also headed by a stative verb, and the stimulus for the verb is specified in an oblique object, such as “Mother is always worrying about Michael” (Dixon, 2012, pp. 304-305). The oblique ‘Michael’ refers to “what motivates the worry” or the stimulus for the worry.

In bahasa Indonesia, G-stimulus applicative is formed by a group of stative verbs that can function as both adjectives and verbs (Moeliono et al., 2017). Such words as benci ‘hate’, dengki ‘envy’, cinta ‘love’, marah ‘angry’, suka ‘like’, kagum ‘admire’, sayang ‘to be fond of; in love with’, rindu ‘miss; long for’, cemas ‘anxious’, bangga ‘proud’, and risau ‘worry’ are the so called adjektiva sikap batin, literally meaning ‘inward feeling adjectives’. This type of adjectives is used to portray emotions (“adjectiva yang menggambarkan suasana hati atau perasaan”) (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 201). Yet, they are also simple intransitive verbs, which we can use to produce intransitive clauses without adding any suffix (Sneddon et al., 2010). With this type of verbs, we can form an applicative construction with goal-stimulus meaning by attaching suffix -i or -kan. However, in stems having [i] sound ending, such as benci (1.a) and dengki (1.b), the -i suffix is either omitted or dropped, leaving the verbs without suffix (Ø). This applicativization is presented in detail as follows: 1) Ø suffix, 2) -i suffix, and 3) -kan suffix:

1) Ø suffix

a) Bianca sangat benci pada Aisha
   Bianca really hate to Aisha
   ‘Bianca really hates Aisha’ or ‘Bianca hates Aisha very much’.

b) Bianca sangat membenci Aisha
   Bianca really meN-hate Aisha
   ‘Bianca really hates Aisha’ or ‘Bianca hates Aisha very much’.

c) Rebecca selalu dengki pada Kinan
   Rebecca always envy with Kinan
   ‘Rebecca always envies Kinan.’

d) Rebecca selalu men-dengki Kinan
   Rebecca always meN-envy Kinan
   ‘Rebecca always envies Kinan’.

Both verbs, benci and dengki, need peripheral arguments that stimulate the negative feelings expressed by the verbs. In (1.a) it is the oblique Aisha that motivates or becomes the stimulus for Bianca’s hatred, but in (1.b), the oblique is moved to the position of object. The simple intransitive verb benci (1.a) is converted into a transitive membenci by attaching MeN- prefix. This applicativization process also applies to the intransitive verb dengki (1.c), thereby producing a monotransitive applicative verb mendengki (1.d).

2) -i suffix:

a) Aku cinta pada bahasa Indonesia
   I love to language Indonesia
   ‘I love Indonesian language’. (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 106)
b) Aku men-cinta-i bahasa Indonesia
   ‘I love Indonesian language’.

c) Andi marah kepada teman-nya
   Andi angry to friend-his
   ‘Andi is angry with his friend’.

d) Andi me-marah-i teman-nya
   Andi me-scold-i friend-his

e) Saya suka akan film itu
   I like at film that
   ‘I like that film’.

f) Saya menyukai fil itu
   Saya meN-suka-i fil itu
   ‘I like that film’ (Djenar, 2003, p. 58)

Attaching suffix -i turns the intransitive and stative verbs cinta, marah, and suka into transitive. The erstwhile obliques in (2.a, c, and e) become core object arguments in (2.b, d, and f). Like those in (1), the objects of the prepositional phrases and the applicative objects in clauses (2) are those arousing the emotions mentioned in the verbs. In (2.a), bahasa Indonesia, an oblique, is the stimulus for my love (cinta), while in (2.b) the former oblique bahasa Indonesia is put into the object function. The meaning of the clauses (2.a. and 2.b) is slightly different, however. Unlike in (2.a), in (2.b) the subject is “interpreted as manifesting a relation (the stative predicate) toward the Object” (Willemsen, 2017, p. 13). The subject aku in (2.b) is not an experiencer but an actor, meaning that aku ‘I’ do take some actions to manifest my love for bahasa Indonesia. Consequently, the object is to some extent affected by the subject’s action (Willemsen, 2017). A clearer meaning difference occurs in clauses (2.c and d). Clause (2.c), Andi marah kepada temannya, may be interpreted as the subject does not do any action to express his anger; as a consequence, the object may not know or may not be influenced by his anger. In opposition, (2.d) suggests that the subject Andi expresses his anger verbally so that his friend (temannya) knows it and/or is affected by it.

3) -kan suffix

Moeliono et al. (2017, p. 138) argue that merindukan ‘miss, long for’, mencemaskan ‘worry’, and membanggakan ‘boast’ are verbs used to create clauses in which “Subjek (bernyawa) mengalami sikap atau perasaan yang dinyatakan oleh verba” (animate subjects experience attitudes or feelings expressed by the verbs). With these three verbs, suffix -kan is the outcome of the grammaticalization of the preposition akan (Kikusawa, 2012; Moeliono et al., 2017). Grammaticalization is a process by which a language unit having lexical meaning is converted to a unit with grammatical meaning (Moeliono et al., 2017).

In the following, Moeliono et al. (2017, p. 138, glosses and translation ours) provide examples of the uses of the aforementioned verbs in clauses:
Clauses (3.a, b, and c), as we shall readily see, show that the applicative objects (ibu-nya, anak-nya, and istri-nya) are what arouses the attitudes or feelings described by the verbs. In other words, the applicative objects function as the stimulus for the mental states specified by the verbs, i.e. longing, worry, and boast. Within this context, it is relevant to argue that applicative suffix –kan is used, among others, to specify the verb object as the cause of emotion (Kikusawa, 2012). The three verbs in (3.a, b, c) thus correspond to the following non-applicative constructions:

\[\text{d) Dia } \text{rindu akan ibu-nya.} \quad \text{‘S/he longs for her/his mother.’}\]
\[\text{e) Dia } \text{cemas akan keadaan anak-nya.} \quad \text{‘S/he is worried about her/his child.’}\]
\[\text{f) Dia } \text{bangga akan istri-nya yang ahli memasak.} \quad \text{‘He is proud of his wife, who is good at cooking.’}\]

Interestingly, Indonesian grammaticalization process, by which the preposition akan are turned into -kan suffix, does not apply to the succeeding intransitive, stative verbs. With the following verbs, the preposition akan are replaced by suffix –i, instead of -kan, to form a transitive:

- suka akan → menyukai ‘like’
- sadar akan → menyadari ‘be aware of; realize’
- gemar akan → menggemari ‘take pleasure in; be fond of’
- kagum akan/ terhadap/ pada → mengagumi ‘admire’

but:

- risau akan → merisaukan ‘worry/ anxious about’

This suggests that the grammaticalization of the preposition akan does not follow any strict or clear rule.

3.1.2. Stimulus for corporeal verb, G-corporeal

Dixon (2012) contends that in almost all languages, corporeal activities, such as laughing, crying, weeping, or sobbing, are expressed in intransitive. In bahasa Indonesia, such corporeal activities as laughing and crying are also communicated through intransitive verbs, as in (1) and (2) below:

1) Budi tertawa. ‘Budi is laughing’
2) Siti menangis. ‘Siti is crying’

The intransitive verbs, according to Dixon (2012), can be used alone, without taking any peripheral argument referring to the reason for or cause of the activities. Yet, they can as well be
accompanied by a prepositional phrase that conveys the stimulus for the activities mentioned in the verb. Clause no (1) above can take a prepositional phrase indicating the stimulus for Budi’s laughing, which is illustrated here in (1.a):

1) a) Budi ter-tawa karena gurauan Umar
   Budi laugh of jokes Umar
   ‘Budi is laughing because of Umar’s jokes.’

This intransitive clause (1.a.), nevertheless, can be altered into a monotransitive using the applicative suffix –kan, as is shown in (1.b) below. The erstwhile peripheral argument gurauan Umar (Umar’s jokes) is shifted to the object of the transitive verb menertawakan (laughed at):

b) Budi menertawakan gurauan Umar
   Budi laugh-kan jokes Umar
   ‘Budi is laughing at Umar’s jokes’

A similar process of applicativization applies to the verb menangis, which takes –i as the suffix to form a transitive menangisi. In the following (2.a) clause, the prepositional phrase refers to what provoked Siti to cry, and in (2.b) the peripheral kematian Tono (Tono’s death) is promoted into the core object of the verb menangisi (cry over). The meaning of the applicative construction is almost similar to that of the non-applicative, i.e. stimulus for a corporeal activity menangis (cry).

2) a) Siti menangis karena kematian Tono. ‘Siti is crying because of Tono’s death’
   b) Siti menangisi kematian Tono. ‘Siti is crying over Tono’s death’

3.2. Comitative

There are not many comitative applicatives that we could find in bahasa Indonesia. In Moeliono et al. (2017, p. 105, glosses and translation ours), we located the following comitatives:

a) Tim-nas Indonesia sudah beberapa kali ber-hadap- an dengan tim-nas Malaysia
   Team-national Indonesia already several times ber-face- an with team-national Malaysia
   ‘Indonesian national team had several times faced Malaysian national team.’

b) Tim-nas Indonesia sudah beberapa kali meng- hadap-i tim-nas Malaysia
   Team-national Indonesia already several times meN-faced-i team-national Malaysia
   ‘Indonesian national team had several times faced Malaysian national team.’

c) Ayah ber-temu dengan teman bisnis-nya
   Ayah ber-meet with friend business-his
   ‘Father met his business partner.’ (lit. Father met with his business partner)

d) Ayah menemui teman bisnis-nya
   Ayah meN-temu-i teman bisnis-nya
   Father meN-meet-i friend business-his
   Father met his business partner.’
Both clauses (a) and (c) are comitative in that they convey what Dixon (2012, p. 309) states as “a number of people joining together in an activity”. In (a) the subject, timnas Indonesia, and the oblique, timnas Malaysia, joined together in a competition. The oblique is then promoted to an applicative object in (b), and the intransitive verb berhadapan is changed into a transitive menghadapi. Circumfix ber-an in the verb berhadapan indicates that the two groups “stand in the same relationship” (Sneddon et al., 2010, p. 113); it can be replaced by the affixes meN- and -i to form a monotransitive verb menghadapi, thereby producing an applicative construction (b). Likewise, the subject and peripheral arguments in (c) joined together in a likely business meeting, and in (d), the non-core argument teman bisnisnya (his business partner) is upgraded into a core object argument by altering the verb through applicativization. Prefix ber- in berterima (c) is used to form an intransitive; its meaning, however, is unclear, as Sneddon et al. (2010, p. 66) put it: “It is difficult to assign a meaning to ber- with such (verbal) bases other than that its presence is necessary to produce a well-formed verb”. In (d), ber- is replaced by meN- -i affixes so as to create a monotransitive.

3.3. Locative

Bahasa Indonesia has many locative applicative constructions, all of which use applicative suffix -i. This is in line with the previous finding, viz. one of the functions of suffix -i is to provide locative information (Arka et al., 2009; Dixon, 2012; Kikusawa, 2012; Shiohara, 2012; Sneddon et al., 2010; Willemsen, 2017). Clauses (1.b) and (2.b) are locative applicatives, which are derivations from (1.a) and (2.a). In both (1.a) and (2.a), a peripheral argument providing location is not optional, as both verbs tinggal (stay) and datang (come) require an oblique of locative function, without which the clauses will not make any sense. Many locative prepositional phrases in bahasa Indonesia, including those in (1.a) and (2.a), can be advanced into direct objects by adding meN- -i affixes to the verbs.

1) a. Dian tinggal di rumah ibu saya
   Dian stay at house mother my
   ‘Dian stayed at my mother’s house.’

   b. Dian meninggali rumah ibu saya
   Dian meN- tinggal-i
   meN-stay-i house mother my
   ‘Dian dwelled in my mother’s house.’

2) a. Ari datang ke rumah kami kemarin
   Ari come to house our yesterday
   ‘Ari came to our house yesterday.’

   b. Ari men-datang- rumah kami kemarin
     meN- come-i house our yesterday
     ‘Ari came to our house yesterday.’

These also serve as examples of applicative constructions with locative function:

3) a. Ayah duduk di sofa.
   Father sat on the sofa.

   b. Ayah menduduki sofa.
   ‘Father sat on the sofa. (lit. Father occupied the sofa)

4) a. Aku tadi lewat di depan rumahmu.
   I passed your house’ (lit. I passed at your house)

   b. Aku tadi melewati depan rumahmu.
   ‘I passed your house’

5) a. Mereka berkunjung ke rumah
   They visited the hospital (lit. They paid a visit to
sakit.

b. Mereka mengunjungi rumah ‘They visited the hospital’ (Arka et al., 2009, p. 95)
sakit.

With verb *jatuh*, a locative applicative can have not only an animate subject but also an inanimate one. For example, in (6), an inanimate subject mango is the subject of both the intransitive *jatuh* (fall) and the monotransitive *menjadi jatuh* (fall onto).

6) a. Mangga yang besar jatuh ke rumah-nya mango REL big fall onto house-his
   ‘A big mango fell onto his house.’

   b. Mangga yang besar menjadi jatuh-nya mango REL big meN-fall-onto house-his
   ‘A big mango fell onto his house.’ (Arka et al., 2009, p. 95)

With such verbs as *tahu*, *menikah*, and *percaya*, the meaning of location is not very clear, as they do not take a prepositional phrase specifying a place or space as an adjunct. In this context, we propose Sneddon et al.’s (2010) argument that with these verbs, the locative meaning should be understood figuratively:

7) a) Saya tidak tahu tentang anugerah itu. ‘I don’t know (about) the award.’
   b) Saya tidak mengetahui anugerah itu. ‘I don’t know the award.’
   (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 105)
   c) “Ya, aku mau menikah denganmu, Isaac” ‘Yes, I will get married with you, Isaac’
   (Asmara, 2020, p. 13).
   d) Ya, aku mau menikahimu, Isaac. ‘Yes, I will marry you, Isaac.’
   e) Ia percaya pada keterangan saksi (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 96).
   f) Ia mempercayai keterangan saksi. ‘She trusted the witness’s testimony’

3.4. Another function of -kan

There are, however, -kan derived applicatives whose meaning does not easily fall into any of Dixon’s categorizations. With these applicatives, we propose Sneddon et al.’s (2010, p. 74) argument that “With many verb bases -kan has no other function than identifying the object as the patient of the action”.

1) a) Saya berpikir tentang masalah itu (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 96).
   b) Saya memikirkan masalah itu. ‘I thought about the problem.’
   c) Kami belum berbicara tentang usul Anda (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 105).
   d) Kami belum membicarakan usul Anda (Moeliono et al., 2017, p. 105).
   e) Tim penyidik ragu akan kesaksian Dano ‘The investigative team was doubtful about Dano’s testimony.’
   f) Tim penyidik meragukan kebenaran kesaksian Dano ‘The investigative team doubted Dano’s testimony.’

4. Conclusions
The distribution of applicative meanings in bahasa Indonesia can be specified as follows. A number of applicatives have a G-stimulus meaning. G-stimulus applicative constructions have stative verbs and objects indicating the stimulus for the emotions or feelings expressed by the verbs. This type of applicatives is formed by using Ø suffix, suffix –i, or suffix –kan. Locative applicatives are also quite common in bahasa Indonesia, and the locative function can be both literal and figurative. Locative applicatives are derived from intransitive verbs undergoing -i suffixation; no applicative with this meaning has a -kan suffixed verb. Some verbs undergoing -kan suffixation, such as memikirkan, membicarakan, and meragukan (3.4. Another function of -kan), have what we call ‘patient-identifying function’. The function of -kan is thus to specify the objects as the patients of the actions. Applicatives with G-corporeal and comitative meanings are few. The G-corporeal verbs are of –i and –kan suffixes, while those of the comitative have -i suffix. In conclusion, we argue that Dixon’s perspective to the meanings of applicatives is quite exhaustive to understand Indonesian intransitive-based applicatives.

References


