

TONGAN - 'i: INCREASING TRANSITIVITY IN VALENCY AND ASPECT

CATHERINE MACDONALD
University of Toronto
cath.macdonald@utoronto.ca

The Tongan suffix - 'i has been variously analyzed as a transitivizer, a passive suffix, a perfective suffix, and a modifier of verbal semantics. It has a variety of effects on the valency and aspect of the verb to which it is affixed. The One Form/One Meaning Principle (Johns 1992) suggests that these various effects should be linked together. I show that the apparently divergent functions of - 'i can be unified under a single definition of the suffix as a transitivizer, and I present a proposal for how this analysis can be formalized in a representation of syntactic structure.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Overview of Tongan Syntax

Tongan is an ergative language whose basic word order is VSO. A nominal phrases or full pronominal argument thus occurs in postverbal position, preceded by a case marker 'e (ergative) or 'a (absolutive). In a transitive sentence, there is some flexibility to the order of arguments, but the ergative argument normally precedes the absolutive (Otsuka 2000:XX). Reduced or clitic pronouns illustrate a nominative-absolutive distribution: The single argument of an intransitive sentence or the ergative argument of a transitive may be realized as a reduced nominative pronoun which is usually enclitic on the clause-initial tense-aspect marker (TAM).

1.2. Verb Classes

Tongan has two classes of intransitive verbs and three classes of transitives. Following Churchward (1953), I class as transitive those verbs which are compatible with an ergative argument and as intransitive those which are not. The two classes of intransitive verbs are "canonical" intransitives which take a single, absolutive argument and "extended" intransitives¹ which take an absolutive argument and an oblique nominal². Intransitive verbs can be subdivided according to the reading

¹These are referred to in traditional descriptions of Tongan as "middle" verbs.

²Oblique case is marked with the particle 'i, glossed as "at, in, on, than, etc." in Churchward (1959) and as "to" in aOtsuka (2000). It remains an open question whether the the oblique case marker 'i and the locative/directional preposition 'i are a single morpheme (as I am inclined to believe) or two homonymous ones – or whether prepositions and case markers in Tongan form one syntactic class or two. For the purposes of this paper, I will treat

they receive when they appear with a single (overt) argument: Actor-focused, patient-focused, or voice-open.

The class of canonical intransitive verbs includes those with inherent passive or stative interpretations as well as verbs of motion, and other intransitive “activity”-type verbs. These verbs take a single argument, S (absolutive). Illustrative examples are presented in (1), below:

(1) a. *Na'e lavea 'a e tangata*³⁴
 PAST be.hurt ABS DET man
 “The man was wounded”

b. *Na'e ofa 'a e tangata*
 PAST love ABS DET man
 “The man loved” (i.e. “The man was a loving person”)

c. *Na'e 'alu 'a e tangata*
 PAST leave ABS DET man
 “The man left”

d. *Na'e lea 'a e tamasi'i*
 PAST speak ABS DET child
 “The child spoke.”

[Tchekhoff 1981:11-12]

Extended intransitives are typically psych or perception verbs or verbs with a patient/theme that is not significantly affected. They take a single absolutive argument (S) and an oblique “extension to core,” E (oblique) (see Dixon & Aikhenvald, 2000). These are illustrated in (2):

(2) a. *Na'e ofa 'a e tangata 'i he fefine.*
 PAST love ABSDEF man OBL DET woman
 “The man loved the woman.”

[Tchekhoff 1981:14]

b. *Na'e sio 'a e tangata ki he fefine.*
 PAST see ABSDEF man OBL DET woman
 “The man saw the woman.”

[Tchekhoff 1981:15]

oblique nominals essentially as prepositional phrases modifying the predicate (following Tchekhoff, 1981), although I do not believe that my analysis of the transitive suffix -'i hinges on this.

³Intransitive verbs such as *lavea*, which correspond to English passives, differ from “patient-focused” CT verbs in that while the latter can take an ergative agent argument (as illustrated in (1-9a)), these intransitive verbs cannot. An oblique nominal modifying a *lavea*-type predicate may be interpreted as an instrument, a locative, or a passive agent.

⁴Consistent with Tongan orthography and the conventions of linguistic literature on Tongan, an apostrophe will be used to represent the glottal stop.

- c. *Na'e tokoni 'a Sione ki he faiako.*
 PAST help ABS Sione to DET teacher
 "Sione helped the teacher."

[Otsuka 2000:51]

Actor-focused transitive verbs are those which when occurring in an intransitive construction with a single argument oblige that argument to be read as an agent. In the transitive construction, such a verb takes an ergative agent (A) and an absolutive object (O). In the intransitive construction, it takes an absolutive single argument, read as an agent (S=A). Dixon & Aikhenvald (2000) refer to such verbs as "S=A ambitransitives." In the example below, a transitive construction (3a) with the verb *tamate* "kill" is followed by an intransitive one with the same verb (3b):

- (3) a. *Na'e tamate 'e Mele 'a Sione.*
 PAST kill ERG Mele ABS Sione
 "Mele killed Sione"

- b. *Na'e tamate 'a Sione.*
 PAST kill ABS Sione
 "Sione killed." (* "Sione was killed.")

[Tchekhoff 1981:29]

Patient-focused transitive verbs are those which when occurring in an intransitive construction oblige their single argument to be read as a patient. In the transitive construction, such a verb takes an ergative agent (A) and an absolutive object (O). In the intransitive construction, such a verb takes a single absolutive argument, read as a patient (S=O); per Dixon & Aikhenvald, these are "S=O ambitransitives." Again, this is exemplified below with the verb *'ave* "take" in a transitive construction (4a) and an intransitive one (4b):

- (4) a. *Osi 'ave 'e Sione 'a e tamasi'i ki he falemahaki.*
 PERF take ERG Sione ABS DET child to DET hospital
 "Sione has taken the boy to the hospital."

- b. *'Osi 'ave 'a e tamasi'i ki he falemahaki.*
 PERF take ABS DET child to DET hospital
 "(Someone) has taken the boy to the hospital."
 "The boy was taken to the hospital."

[Otsuka 2000:235]

A voice-open transitive verb in an intransitive construction does not oblige its argument to be read as an agent or as a patient; it can be read as either, depending on (linguistic or extra-linguistic) context (Tchekhoff, 1981). As with the others, in a transitive construction, such a verb takes an ergative agent (A) and an absolutive patient (O). In an intransitive construction, it takes an absolutive single argument, read as either agent or patient (S=A or O). These are Dixon & Aikhenvald's (2000) "S=A or O ambitransitives." This is illustrated below with the transitive verb *'ui* "call" in a transitive construction (5a) and an intransitive one (5b).

(5) a. *Na'e 'ui 'e he fefine 'a Mele.*
 PAST call ERG DEF woman ABS Mele
 “The woman called Mele.”

b. *Na'e 'ui 'a Mele.*
 PAST call ABS Mele
 “Mele called” or “(x) called Mele.” [Tchekhoff 1981:9]

These two classes of intransitives and three classes of transitives will be significant in the discussion of the verbal suffix -*i*.

1.3. Theoretical Assumptions

I assume that VSO in Tongan is derived by predicate-fronting, as described for Niuean by Massam (2000). In this analysis, all arguments check their case in Spec, *v*P before the predicate (VP) is raised to Spec, IP.

I adapt this analysis somewhat by adopting the split-*v*P hypothesis (Bowers, 2002). According to this hypothesis, the case of all arguments is essentially still checked in Spec, *v*P, but this projection itself is expanded to Predicate Phrase (PrP) and Transitive Phrase (TrP). Bowers develops the theory for nominative-accusative languages, proposing that Nominative case is checked in Spec, PrP (present in all finite clauses) while Accusative case is checked in Spec, TrP (present only in transitive clauses). I will return to this proposal, and show one way that it might be adapted for ergative languages, in Section 3.

2. TONGAN -‘I: DESCRIPTION AND PREVIOUS ANALYSES

2.1. Valency Effects

When -*i* is added to an intransitive verb (canonical or extended), the verb becomes transitive – i.e., compatible with an ergative argument. Like other transitives, those to which -*i* has been affixed can occur in apparently intransitive constructions. In this case, the single argument (S) is obligatorily read as a patient, regardless of the role of a single argument with the same verb, without -*i*.

The valency of a canonical intransitive is increased by the addition of -*i* from S to A:O. With stative verbs, intransitive S corresponds to transitive O, and transitive A is an introduced argument; in these cases, the function of -*i* is causative one. With other canonical intransitives, intransitive S corresponds to transitive A, and O is an introduced argument; thus, -*i* functions as a “transitivizing applicative” (see Dixon & Aikhenvald, 2002). Any canonical intransitive verb to which -*i* has been affixed becomes patient-focused when it occurs with a single argument; intransitive S thus corresponds to ambitransitive S=O, yielding a “pseudo-passive” effect. These various effects are

illustrated below: causative in (6a), applicative in (6b), and pseudo-passive in (6c).

- (6) a. *teka* “roll” → *teka'i* “make roll”
tapu “be forbidden” → *tapu'i* “forbid” [Churchward 1953:241]

- b. *'E mohe 'a Sione.*
 FUT sleep ABS Sione
 “Sione will go to sleep”

'E mohe'i 'e Sione 'a e 'aho kakatoa.
 FUT sleep+ 'i ERG Sione ABSDEF day whole
 “Sione will sleep the whole day away” [Tchekhoff 1981:40]

- c. *Na'e fa'ele 'a Mele*
 PAST give-birth ABS Mele
 “Mele gave birth.”

Na'e fa'ele'i 'a Fifita
 PAST give-birth+ 'i ABS Fifita
 “(x) gave birth to Fifita.” “Fifita was born.” [Tchekhoff 1981:40]

As illustrated in (7), -*'i* increases the valency of an extended intransitive is increased from S:E to A:O. In this case, intransitive S corresponds to transitive A and intransitive E corresponds to transitive O, another transitivity applicative function. Again, the derived transitive verb can occur in an intransitive construction wherein the single argument must be read as a patient. The same “pseudo-passive” effect results. The former is illustrated in (7a) and the latter in (7b):

- (7) a. *Na'e sio 'a Sione ki he ta'ahine*
 PAST see ABS Sione OBLDEF girl
 “Sione saw the girl.”

Oku sio 'i e Sione a e ta'ahine
 PRES see+ 'i ERG Sione ABS DEF girl
 “Sione stares at the girl.” [Otsuka 2000:259]

- b. *Na'e sio 'a e tangata*
 PAST see ABS DEF man
 “The man saw.”

Na'e sio 'i 'a Sione
 PAST see+ 'i ABS Sione
 “(x) peered at Sione” [Tchekhoff 1981:12, 43]

When -'i is added to a transitive verb, there is of course no increase in valency. However, the pseudo-passive effect still holds: If -'i is added to any class of transitive, the derived verb is patient-focused. This is illustrated in (8):

(8) *Na'e tamate a Mele.*
 PAST kill ABS Mele
 "Mele killed." (*"Mele was killed.")

Na'e tamate'i a Mele
 PAST kill+'i ABS Mele
 "(x) killed Mele," hence "Mele was killed." (* "Mele killed") [Tchekhoff 1981:42]

These apparently diverse valency effects of -'i are summarized in Table 1, below:

Table 1: Valency Effects of -'i

	Without -'i	With -'i	Valency Effect
Canonical Intransitive	Absolutive S	Ergative A:O, S→A Ergative A:O, S→O Absolutive S (=O)	Applicative Causative Pseudo-Passive
Extended Intransitive	Absolutive (+Obl) S:E	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= O)	Applicative Pseudo-passive
Voice Open	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= A/O)	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= O)	n/a Pseudo-passive
Actor Focus	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= A)	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= O)	n/a Pseudo-passive
Patient Focus	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= O)	Ergative: A, O Absolutive: S(= O)	n/a n/a

2.2. Aspectual Effects

In addition to the valency alternations associated with -'i, the suffix also has a variety of aspectual effects. When combined with an extended intransitive verb, -'i derives a predicate which is more agentive (as in (9a)), more affecting (as in (9b)), or otherwise "more intense" than its underived counterpart (Otsuka, 2000:259; cf. Dukes, 1996). With transitive verbs, -'i is associated with an increase in affectedness of the direct object (10).

- (9) a. *Na'e sio 'a Mele 'i Sione.*
 PAST see ABS Mele OBL Sione
 Mele saw Sione

Na'e sio'i 'e Mele 'a Sione.
 PAST see+ 'i ERG Mele ABS Sione
 Mele peered at Sione⁵

[Tchekhoff 1981:43]

- b. *Na'e tokoi 'a Sione ki he faiako.*
 PAST help ABS Sione OBL DET teacher
 “Sione helped the teacher” (Lit: Sione helped to the teacher.)

Na'e tokoi'i 'e Sione 'a e faiako.
 PAST help ERG Sione ABS DEF teacher
 “Sione helped the teacher” (which was beneficial to the teacher).[Otsuka, 2000:51-52]

- (10) *Na'e fana 'e Sione 'a Mele.*
 PAST shoot ERG Sione ABS Mele
 “Sione shot Mele.”

Na'e fana'i 'e Sione 'a Mele.
 PAST shoot+ 'i ERG Sione ABS Mele
 “Sione shot Mele (and got her);” “Sione shot Mele down.”

[Tchekhoff, 1981:33]

2.3. Previous Analyses

Churchward (1953) and Otsuka (2000) refer to *-i* “transitive suffix,” but they do not present a formal definition of this function. Churchward (1953) notes that the suffix turns an intransitive verb, a noun, or an adjective into a transitive verb; he notes its causative effect with certain verbs; and he points out that with an already-transitive verb, *-i* emphasizes “the idea of carrying the action through to completion” calls this “executive force.” He describes the pseudo-passive (“semi-transitive” in his terminology) effect of *-i* when it occurs with a lone, absolute argument, but he states that such constructions are rare. Otsuka (2000) discusses the effects of *-i* on the valency of extended intransitive verbs, noting that “the action described by the latter is interpreted as more ‘intense’ in various ways.”

Tchekhoff (1981) describes *-i* as a “perfective suffix” in a sense consistent with Binnick (to appear) who states that “perfectivity... represents the eventuality as a single, complete whole” and “includes the entire eventuality, including initial and final bounds.” She notes that “an agent-incompatible verb + *-i* perfective becomes agent-compatible” and argues that this “follows from this

⁵For a similar sentence with *sio'i*, Dukes (1998:15) offers the translation “stared at/ watched”.

aspect's definition: the verbal operation must be a definite one, with a specific point of departure, as well as a point of application, one where it comes to rest." She acknowledges, however, that when -'i transitivizes an intransitive, "its perfective meaning is less important."

Tchekhoff (1981) further notes some co-occurrence restrictions of -'i, which vary among some native Tongan speakers: For some, the suffix can only occur with realis tenses (perfect, past); for some, it requires that agentive argument is definite and specific; and for some, it requires that patient argument is definite and specific. Moreover, for some, -'i requires that an ergative argument must be expressed (i.e., no pseudo-passive interpretation available).

Dukes (1996, 1998) describes -'i as a general modifier of verbal semantics. He notes that the suffix derives meaning changes "typically associated with a greater degree of agency...a greater degree of affectedness... or both," and he argues that its apparent transitivizing effects "only a side effect of the increase in object affectedness.... the alternation involving -'i is semantically rather than syntactically driven." In his analysis, a verb's lexical semantics (including the contribution of -'i) determine the predicate class that it belongs to and hence determine the case marking with which it is associated.

Lynch (1971) describes -'i as a passive morpheme. This analysis is based on the assumption that the absolutive argument the subject of a sentence and that an ergative argument is an oblique agent. Transitives with -'i are passive verbs (hence, the high degree of affectedness); transitives without -'i have lost the passive voice and become "ergative." This analysis does not account for the increase in agency often associated with -'i.

3. -'I AS A TRANSITIVIZER: UNIFYING THE VALENCY AND ASPECTUAL EFFECTS

3.1. *Unifying the Valency Effects*

The apparently disparate valency effects of -'i can be descriptively summarized thus: From any predicate, -'i derives a patient-focus transitive. When a verb with -'i occurs with two arguments, these are ergative A and absolutive O. When it occurs with what appears to be a single argument – obligatorily read as a patient – this is absolutive S=O. I propose that, in fact, with -'i there are always two arguments, an ergative A and an absolutive O. The pseudo-passive effect emerges when the ergative argument is null: With -'i, an apparent S=O absolutive is really an absolutive O.

Proposing the existence of a null argument is not unreasonable for Tongan. In fact, null arguments are very common in this language. While this may seem strange for a language without overt agreement markers, it not necessarily so: Null arguments not co-referenced by agreement are found in Chinese (Huang 1989) and French (Roberge & Cummins, ms.). According to Otsuka (2000) and Dukes (1996), ergative A is the most frequently deleted argument in Tongan (see examples in (11)). Churchward (1953), Shumway (1971), however, claim that it is absolutive S which is most often deleted (leaving a sentence with no overt arguments at all), as in (12). Although

absolutive O is rarely deleted, this is attested (see (13)). The consensus among these authors is that null arguments in Tongan are recoverable from discourse.

- (11) a. *'Oku 'i fee 'a Mele?*
 PRES LOC where ABS Mele
 “Where is Mele?”
- Na'e 'ave 'a Sione ki he ako.*
 PAST take ABS Sione LOC DET school
 “(She) took Sione to school.” [Otsuka, 2000:61]
- b. *'Oku ne 'ilo nai 'oku muimui'i 'e he polisi?*
 PRES 3SG.NOM know perhaps PRES follow+ 'i ERG DET police
 “Does he know that the police are following (him)?” [Dukes, 1998:155]
- (12) a. *Kuo 'osi 'alu.*
 PERF already go
 “(She) has already gone.”
- b. *'Oku sai'ia 'ia Mele.*
 PRES like OBL Mele
 “(He) likes Mele” [Otsuka, 2000:61]
- (13) a. *...na'e ha'u 'a Sesu mei Nasaleti 'i Kaleli, pea na'e papitaiso 'e Sione 'i Siotane.*
 PAST come ABS Jesus LOC Nazareth LOC Galilee and PAST baptize ERG Sione LOC Jordan
 “...Jesus came from Nazareth, in the region of Galilee, and Sione baptized (him) in the Jordan.” [Ma'ake/Mark 1:9]
- b. *...'o 'ahi'ahi'i ai 'e Setane... pea na'e tauhi 'e he kau 'anghelo.*
 and tempt PRN ERG Satan... but PAST uphold ERG DET PL angel
 “and Satan tempted him... but the angels helped (him)” [Ma'ake 1:13]

Support for the null-ergative proposal comes from the fact that with - *'i*, the ergative argument is obligatory for some speakers. One of Tchekhoff's (1981) consultants states that “With - *'i*, you have to say who did it.” Churchward (1953) likewise notes that “semi-transitive” constructions are rare. For other speakers, however, Tchekhoff (1981) says that “there is no need to express the agent *since it is implied anyway by the perfect aspect*. Perfectivity implies two participants, even when only one is expressed. *This renders the absolutive argument unambiguously a patient*” (emphasis added).

Further support comes from nominalizations. In Tongan, as in many other Polynesian languages,

there are two possession: *e*-type, or “subjective” possession denotes that the possessor dominates possessum, while *ho*-type, or “objective” possession denotes that the possessum dominates the possessor. With nominalized transitive sentences, the ergative A argument is encoded as an *e*-type possessor and the absolutive O as a *ho*-type possessor, as illustrated in (14a). With nominalized intransitives, S is always encoded as an *e*-type possessor, regardless of its theta-role (Otsuka, 2000) (see (14b,c)). However, with a nominalized verb + *-i*, a single absolutive argument (which is obligatorily a patient) is always encoded as a *ho*-type possessor. In (15), the single argument of extended intransitive *fa’ele* (“give birth”) is realized as an *e*-type possessor. In (16), with the same verb plus *-i*, an *e*-type possessor is not allowed to realize a single argument, and a *ho*-type possessor must encode a patient, implying the existence of an un-named agent. This suggests that the absolutive argument of a predicate with *-i* is not S but O. The sentence is underlyingly transitive with a null ergative A

- (14) a. *ko ‘ene t_ ‘a Pita*
 PRED POSS-3SG.SUBJ hit ABS Pita
 “It is his (subj) hitting of Peter” “He hits Peter”
- b. *‘ene lavea*
 POSS-3SG.SUBJ be-hurt
 “his being wounded”
- c. **hono lavea*
 Poss-3SG.OBJ be-hurt [Tchekhoff, 1981:49,54]
- (15) a. *Na’e fa’ele ‘a Mele*
 PAST birth ABS Mele
 “Mele gave birth”
- b. *‘ene fa’ele*
 3SG.POSS.SUBJ birth
 “her delivery” (she is the one giving birth)
- c. **hono fa’ele*
 3SG.POSS.OBJ birth [Tchekhoff, 1981:40, 56]
- (16) a. *Na’e fa’ele’i ‘a Fifita.*
 PAST birth+’i ABS Fifita
 “Someone gave birth to Fifita.” “Fifita was born.”
- b. *hono fa’ele’i*
 3SG.POSS.OBJ birth
 “his birth” (he is the one being born) [Tchekhoff, 1981:40, 56]

Thus, Table 1 can be recast as Table 2.

Table 2: Valency Effects of -*i*, Revised

	Without -<i>i</i>	With -<i>i</i>	Valency Effect
Canonical Intransitive	Absolutive S	Ergative A:O	Transitivizing
Extended Intransitive	Absolutive (+Obl) S:E		
Voice Open	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= A/O)		
Actor Focus	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= A)		
Patient Focus	Ergative A:O Absolutive S (= O)		

3.2. Aspectual Effects as Realization of Transitivity:

Hopper & Thompson (1980) describe transitivity as “a global property of an entire clause, such that an activity is ‘carried over’ or ‘transferred’ from an agent to a patient.” They outline ten correlates of “high transitivity;” the more of these that are present in a clause, the higher its transitivity. As Table 3 shows, many of these are associated with -*i* in Tongan.

Table 3: Correlates of High Transitivity (Hopper & Thomson, 1980)

	Correlate	Mandatory with -<i>i</i>?
Participants	Two or more, A and O	✓
Kinesis	Action	
Aspect	Telic	✓
Punctuality	Punctual	
Volitionality	Volitional	✓ (with some verbs)
Affirmation	Affirmative	
Mode	Realis	✓ (for some speakers)
Agency	A high in potency	✓ (with some verbs)
Affectedness	O highly affected	✓ (with most verbs)
Individuation of O	O highly individuated	✓ (for some speakers)

4. FORMALIZING THE ANALYSIS

4.1. Formalizing the valency effects: -'i as a Tr^0

Bowers (2002) proposes that transitivity is encoded in syntactic structure by the projection of a Transitive Phrase (TrP). This projection is dominated by a Predicate Phrase (PrP); together, they constitute what is elsewhere treated as a single projection, νP . Developing his analysis for nominative-accusative languages, he proposes that accusative case is checked in Spec, TrP and nominative in Spec, PrP.

To adapt split νP for an ergative System, I propose that PrP checks Absolutive Case and TrP checks ergative case. To account for Tongan word order, I further propose that TrP dominates PrP in this language. Transitive, unergative, and unaccusative structures are presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

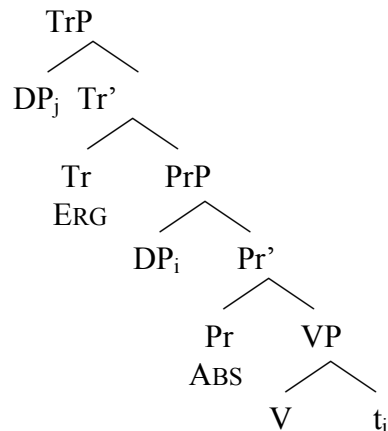
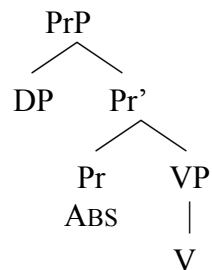
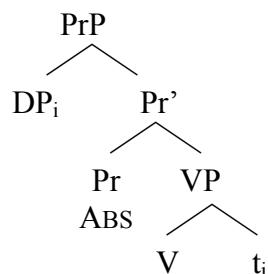
Figure 1: Split- νP , Transitive (adapted for ergative language)Figure 2: Split- νP , Unergative (adapted for ergative language)

Figure 3: Split-*v*P, Unergative (adapted for ergative language)

I propose that *-i*, the transitivity suffix, is one of two transitive heads. Both of these are merged in Tr^0 , and are thus associated with the presence of a second argument which checks ergative case. The first, *-i*, realizes a bundle of semantic and syntactic features – Hopper & Thompson’s (1980) transitivity correlates – which I will label [HIGH TRANS]. The other, which is phonologically null, represents general or unmarked transitivity. It is not necessarily associated with any of the features of [HIGH TRANS]. This null Tr^0 occurs by default with inherently transitive verbs; it is not an affix.

4.2. Towards a formalism of the aspectual effects

The aspectual effects of *-i* result from a semantic and syntactic feature bundle, [HIGH TRANS]. These features check qualities of the ergative argument (agency, individuation) and of T (realis) and select a PrP with certain characteristics (such as an affected/individuated internal argument).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The various valency-changing and aspectual functions of *-i* can be unified under analysis of the suffix as a transitivity suffix. There is evidence that *-i* mandates the presence of two arguments: one ergative, and the other absolutive. This in combination with the free availability of null arguments in Tongan yields the suffix’s “pseudo passivizing” effect. Its primary aspectual function, described as “perfective” or “executive” in the literature, is a correlate of high transitivity, as are the secondary aspectual functions – agency, individuation, realis, etc. For these reasons, I propose that it has a set of semantic and syntactic features I call [HIGH TRANS]. Adapting Bowers (2002) for an ergative system, I propose that the locus of *-i* is Tr^0 , where ergative case is checked.

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