3. The Basic Syntax of Fluid Verbal Clauses

3.1   A verbal clause in Rawàng Ata requires an overt or implicit verb, and either one or two core arguments. The number of arguments required, their semantic role, their case marking and their position in the word order depend upon the species of the verb, and so each verb species must be examined in turn.

A crucial distinction will be maintained in terminology: verb species *requiring* one core argument are said to be *monadic,* while those requiring two core arguments are said to be *dyadic*. This relates to the *minimum* number of arguments a verb of a given species may have, and is distinct from the question of the *maximum* number of arguments a verb of that species may take. Regarding the latter, verbs may be said to be *univalent*, *bivalent*, or *trivalent*. Both these systems of classification stand apart from the issue of *transitivity*. The transitive is a verb species, and conveys a particular semantic relationship between verbs and arguments – transitive verbs must be dyadic, but not all dyadic verbs are transitive.

3.2   The *active* is perhaps conceptually the simplest of the species. Active verbs are monadic (they require only one argument) but bivalent (they may take up to two arguments). We may call these two arguments the *subject* (required) and the *indirect object* (optional).

The subject's semantic relation to the verb is straightforward: the subject performs, undergoes or experiences the action of the verb. Morphologically, it may be said to be in the *direct* case, by which we mean that it takes no overt case markings. So:

> *ex. 19 a)*   ***kòma   bày***
> girl   blink
> *the girl blinks*
>
> *b)*   ***bolày   ra-yondu***
> turtle   AN-crawl
> *the turtle crawls/swims*
>
> *c)*   ***akaì   sa-yaùng***
> berry-tree   INAN-fall
> *the berry tree falls*
>
> *d)*   ***sujota   wa***
> elder   travel.upstream
> *the elder travels upstream*

As in these examples, the subject always precedes the verb in unmarked word order, prior to topicalisation and/or focusing (which will be discussed below).

The semantics and case marking of the indirect object, if present, depend upon the individual verb, though they are largely a matter of predictable semantic plausibility. The indirect object follows the verb, and takes any of five cases.

3.3   The direct (i.e. unmarked) case has a meaning that varies considerably depending on the verb in question – it most often indicates a destination, but may indicate a location inside which, or near which, the action occurs. Thus:

> ***ex. 20 a)***   ***sujota wa***   ***taìli***
> elder   travel.upstream   forest
> *the elder travels upstream <u>through</u> the forest*

> ***b)***   ***kòma itu   taìli***
> girl   go   forest
> *the girl goes <u>into</u> the forest*

> ***c)***   ***faòlu   sa-fūka   taìli***
> bird   INAN-fly   forest
> *the bird flies <u>over</u> the forest*

> ***d)***   ***dattà   ū   taìli***
> sailor   pass   forest
> *the sailor passes <u>by</u> the forest*

Relatively few non-compound verbs take indirect objects in the direct case (although several postpositive particles create compound verbs of this type). However, *locative nouns*, such as ***taìli***, may be used in the direct case as indirect objects of any active verb – in which case, if their role is not specified by the verb, they are treated as locations in which the event occurs. So:

> ***ex. 21 a)***   ***sujota bày   taìli***
> elder   blink   forest
> *the elder blinks (while) in the forest*

In this example, ***bày*** does not usually take direct case indirect objects, so imposes no semantic role upon them, but the locative noun ***taìli*** is privileged in being able to stand as the indirect object of any active verb, and, as the verb does not impose a role in this instance, it takes its default locative role.

3.4   Some active verbs are also (or instead) able to take indirect objects in the ergative case. Ergative indirect objects are generally of one of three types: they indicate a *medium*, an *instrument*, or a *matter*. Ergative media can stand as indirect objects of verbs of motion, indicating what something moves through or on. This can also apply to atmospheric conditions and prevailing circumstances. So:

> ***ex. 22 a)***   ***bolày   ra-yondu   ùla-ya***
> turtle   AN-crawl   seawater-ERG
> *the turtle swims through seawater*

b) **bolày** **ra-yondu** **hàrung-ya**
turtle AN-crawl sand-ERG
the turtle crawls over sand

c) **sujota** **wa** **òjulu-ya**
elder travel.upstream war-ERG
the elder travels upstream amid the ongoing war

d) **faòlu** **sa-fūka** **boron-ya**
bird INAN-fly night-ERG
the bird flies through the night

Instrumental ergative indirect objects typically may *not* be tools or implements in the conventional sense. They typically are used instead to specify, by means of an integrally-involved item, the nature or method of the action – they are often better translated into English as *by way of* or *by means of*, rather than as *using*, and are less concerned with how an action was made possible than with its specific nature. Thus:

ex. 23 a) **kòma** **itu** **ku-sàk-ya**
girl go POSS-foot-ERG
the girl goes on foot

b) **sujota** **yalura** **ra-òyasu-ya**
elder show.unhappiness POSS-word-ERG
the elder complained
[lit. "the elder expessed his unhappiness by means of his speech"]

c) **dattà** **wa** **kuru-ya**
sailor travel.upstream canoe-ERG
the sailor travels upstream in a canoe

Material ergative indirect objects may denote the 'topics' or 'subjects' or 'contents' of a discussion, typically translated into English with 'of', 'on' or 'about', or, with factitive verbs, may indicate the substance out of which something is made. So:

ex. 24 a) **kòma** **òyasu** **sujota-ya**
girl speak elder-ERG
the girl speaks about the elder

b) **dattà** **kuruburu** **songà-ya**
sailor make.canoe rock-ERG
the sailor makes a canoe out of stone

Aside from these broad, systematic functions, the ergative case may also be used with indirect objects in more idiomatic contexts – indeed, a small but important function of the ergative appears to be to create idioms, often by transforming a transitive verb into an active verb. Thus:

ex. 25 a)   **dattà buà   kùhu-n**
sailor hold   pot-ACC
the sailor holds the pot
[transitive]

b)   **dattà buà   kùhu-ya**
sailor hold   pot-ERG
the sailor suffers from gastrointestinal difficulties
[active]

In **ex. 25 a)**, the verb is transitive, with an accusative direct object; in **b)**, we instead have an active verb with an indirect object in the ergative, specifically to indicate that a non-literal meaning is implied – and, in particular, that there is no definite, realis object.

3.5   More straightforwardly, indirect objects may also be in the lative. Lative objects of verbs of change of place are usually destinations, indicating motion up to or onto, but not into, the indirect object. Where the verb does not indicate a change of place, or is a change of place verb that is primarily stative in sense, a lative object instead indicated a temporal limit. Lative objects of change of place verbs may also be temporal in sense where the semantics of the noun itself are non-physical. In this way:

ex. 26 a)   **kòma wa   taìli-nu**
girl   travel.upstream   forest-LAT
the girl travels upstream up to the edge of the forest

b)   **bolày ra-yondu   ùla-nu**
turtle AN-crawl   seawater-LAT
the turtle crawls up to the seawater

c)   **dattà yaùng rūta-nu**
sailor fall   table-LAT
the sailor falls onto the table

d)   **dattà òyasu ku-yalura-nu**
sailor speak POSS-complaint-LAT
the sailor speaks until she complains

e)   **kòma wa   boron-nu**
girl   travel.upstream   night-LAT
the girl travels upstream until nightfall

3.6   A similar duality of spatial and temporal senses is found with the use of the prolative. Prolative objects most literally indicate motion along or beside a route or object, as well as motion across the surface of an object; however, with a temporal indirect object, or with a verb not

denoting either contact or change of place, it instead indicates a duration, either directly or by comparison. Thus:

ex. 27 a)   ***kòma***   ***wa***   ***shìtuyi-ki***
                    girl   travel.upstream   stream-PRO
                    the girl travels upstream along the stream

b)   ***bolày***   ***ra-yondu***   ***layànatu-ki***
                    turtle   AN-crawl   lettuce-PRO
                    the turtle crawls around the lettuce

d)   ***suttù***   ***sa-yondu***   ***kòma-ki***
                    caterpillar   INAN-crawl   girl-PRO
                    the caterpillar crawls over the girl's skin

e)   ***kòma***   ***bày***   ***bolày-ki***
                    girl   blink   turtle-PRO
                    the girl blinks as long as the turtle does

f)   ***kòma***   ***bày***   ***boron-ki***
                    girl   blink   night-PRO
                    the girl blinks all night

The prolative may also by extension be used with more abstract objects to indicate methods, stages and preliminary actions:

ex. 28 a)   ***dattà***   ***alāku***   ***ra-tùfu-ki***
                    sailor   succeed   POSS-push-PRO
                    the sailor succeeds through pushing

3.7   The fifth and final case in which the indirect object may be found is the avertive. Avertive objects typically indicate negative motivations – often translatable as 'for fear of', although goading pains and their sources also qualify – although with verbs of motion they may sometimes be used simply to indicate points of origin. Even in this latter sense, however, it is rare for a negative connotation to be absent. Thus:

ex. 29 a)   ***kòma***   ***bay***   ***ràni-jna***
                    girl   blink   light-AVR
                    the girl blinks due to (the pain or fear of) the light

b)   ***dattà***   ***wa***   ***sujota-jna***
                    sailor   travel.upstream   elder-AVR
                    the sailor travels upstream for fear of the elder

c)   ***dattà***   ***wa***   ***taìli-jna***
                    sailor   travel.upstream   forest-AVR

the sailor travels upstream for fear of the forest
OR: *the sailor travels upstream away from (the menacing) forest*

3.8 The *transitive*, found only with agentive verbs, is the most semantically restricted species. Transitive verbs are dyadic: they require two core arguments – a subject and a direct object. A small number of verbs are trivalent, optionally also taking a second object.

In order for the transitive species to be permitted, a strict set of criteria must be met:

- there must be a subject;
- there must be a physical action;
- the action must be real – neither irrealis nor negative verbs can be transitive;
- the action must not be involuntary – either the subject voluntarily initiates the action, or else the subject is semantically incapable of volition or non-volition (e.g. a tool);
- there must be an object;
- the action must aim at some change of state or location of the object;
- the action must succeed in its aim – that is, the object must be materially affected by the action, in a way that is inherent to a successful action of this kind (i.e. not in an accidental or coincidental way);
- the subject must not be of lower animacy than the object. Pronominal arguments are considered to be of higher animacy than any non-pronominal arguments; among pronominal arguments, the second person is of the highest animacy, followed by the first and then the third; among non-pronominal arguments, those in the vocative have the highest animacy; amongst non-vocative, non-prominal arguments, intelligent animates outrank non-intelligent animates, which outrank inanimates; among inanimates, count nouns outrank mass nouns.

3.9 The subject of a transitive verb takes the direct case. The direct object of a transitive verb takes the accusative case in most instances. Thus:

ex. 30 a)	*kòma*	*ku-sàkkanga*	*dattà-m*
	girl	F-kick	sailor-ACC
	the girl kicks the sailor		

b)	*bolày*	*ra-ha*	*layanàtu-m*
	turtle	AN-eat	lettuce-ACC
	the turtle eats the (portion of) lettuce		

3.10 Sometimes, however, the direct object may instead be in the ergative. This occurs when a partitive sense in intended: that is when the action affects only a part of the object. This is most often found when the object is a mass noun, but may also occur when the verb is ambiguous as regards completion. So:

ex. 31 a)　　**kòma　bàru　fùninga-ya**
　　　　　　　girl　　drink　freshwater-ERG
　　　　　　　the girl drinks (some of the) water

　　　　b)　　**djàdjang　　ra-ha　bolàj-a**
　　　　　　　djadjang　　　AN-eat　turtle-ERG
　　　　　　　the djadjang eats part of the turtle

The ergative is not used with mass nouns that are modified by a counter. Thus:

ex. 32 a)　　**kòma　bàru　yadù　　　funìnga-m**
　　　　　　　girl　　drink　handful　　　water-ACC
　　　　　　　the girl drinks the handful of water

In the case of nouns that may be considered either mass nouns or countable nouns (mostly foodstuffs), the choice of the accusative (without a counter) indicates a countable interpretation and a reference to a definite quantity, while the ergative, less marked, indicates a mass noun and an unspecified quantity. Thus:

ex. 33 a)　　**bolày　ra-ha　　　layanàtu-m**
　　　　　　　turtle　AN-eat　　　lettuce-ACC
　　　　　　　the turtle eats the (portion of) lettuce

　　　　b)　　**bolày　ra-ha　　　layànatu-ya**
　　　　　　　turtle　AN-eats　　lettuce-ERG
　　　　　　　the turtle eats (some (of the)) lettuce

3.11　　A small number of transitive verbs are trivalent, optionally taking a second object. These second objects are typically donors or recipients. The second object invariably takes the accusative. So:

ex. 34 a)　　**sujota　kā　　bolàj-ma　　　kòma-n**
　　　　　　　elder　give　turtle-ACC　　girl-ACC
　　　　　　　the elder gives the turtle to the girl

However, except where the second object is a pronoun, it is much more common to avoid such constructions, by instead employing a topical construction (regarding which, see later). Thus:

ex. 35 a)　　**kòma,　sujota　kā　　bolàj-ma**
　　　　　　　girl　　elder　give　turtle-ACC
　　　　　　　as for the girl, the elder gives her a turtle

3.12　　As may be seen from the above examples, the default syntax for transitive verbal clauses is for the subject to precede the verb, and the object to follow it. Where two objects are present, the

primary and secondary objects are both placed after the verb – typically, the more focused of the two objects will be placed after the other, though this is not grammaticaly compulsory.

3.13   The *detransitive* is employed when an agentive verb, not otherwise marked as concrete, antipassive, stative, or disynthetic, fails to be transitive, in accordance with the restrictions outlined above. Detransitives are, like active verbs, monodic (they require only one argument, the subject), but bivalent (they may optionally take a second argument, the indirect object). In practice, detransitive verbs therefore are generally employed when an agentive verb *fails to succeed* (which may indicate either total failure to occur, or simply failure to affect an object), or when it the subject is of lower animacy than the object.

3.14   The subject of a detransitive is placed in the ergative. The object of a detransitive may be placed in the direct, lative, or prolative cases. The lative and prolative cases have more or less the same temporal and spatial senses as for verbs in the active species, except that the lative is more broadly used to indicate the direction or target of a failed action; the direct case is used for all remaining indirect objects. Thus:

> ***ex. 36 a)***   ***djàdjang***   ***ra-ha***   ***bolàj-ma***
> djadjang   AN-eat turtle-ACC
> *the djadjang eats the turtle*
> [transitive]
>
> ***b)***   ***djàdjang-ya***   ***ra-ha***   ***sujota***
> djadjang-ERG   AN-eat   elder
> *the djadjang eats the elder*
> [detransitive, as the object is more animate than the subject]
>
> ***c)***   ***à***   ***djàdjang***   ***tu-hà-n***   ***sujotà-m***
> VOC   djadjang   AN-eat-INT   elder-ACC
> *O djadjang, you eat the elder*
> [disynthetic due to vocative argument, obviating the need for a detransitive]
>
> ***c)***   ***kòma***   ***ku-sàkkanga***   ***dattà-m***
> girl   F-kick   sailor-ACC
> *the girl kicks the sailor*
> [transitive]
>
> ***d)***   ***kòma-ya***   ***sàkkanga***   ***dattà-nu***
> girl-ERG   kick   sailor-LAT
> *the girl kicks out at the sailor (but does not hurt him)*
> [detransitive for failure; note that the sailor is now an indirect object, so does not trigger the feminine subject agreement requirement]

<table>
<tr><td>e)</td><td>dattà-ya</td><td>mandu</td><td>kùhu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>sailor-ERG</td><td>carry</td><td>pot</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">the sailor tries to carry the pot (but drops it)</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>f)</td><td>dattà-ya</td><td>sò</td><td>mandu</td><td>kùhu</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>sailor-ERG</td><td>NEG</td><td>carry</td><td>pot</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">the sailor does not carry the pot</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>g)</td><td>kòma-ya</td><td>sàkkanga</td><td>dattà</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>girl-ERG</td><td>kick</td><td>sailor</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">the girl accidentally kicks the sailor</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">OR: the girl fails to kick the sailor</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">[the former is more likely, given the semantics of the verb and the availability of the lative construction]</td></tr>
</table>

The syntax of detransitives mirrors those of other species: the subject precedes the verb, with any indirect object following the verb.

3.15   The objective species is the default species for patientive verbs. Like the active and the detransitive, it is monodic (only one argument is obligatory) and bivalent (up to two arguments are permitted). Unlike those other species, however, the obligatory argument of the objective is the direct object.

To forestall objections, it should be noted at once that it is indeed possible to reanalyse the primary arguments of objective verbs as being 'subjects' rather than direct objects, and such an analysis may perhaps be preferred on technical grounds. However, for most purposes it is easiest to understand these arguments as objects, as they in most regards pattern with the direct objects of transitive and disynthetic verbs, both in word order and in verbal agreement marking. This also streamlines the syntax of serial verb constructions. Consequently, here we will indeed analyses these arguments as direct objects.

Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that many 'direct objects' of objective verbs are semantically equivalent to subjects in many other languages, and that this may lead to confusions in translation. Thus:

<table>
<tr><td>ex. 37</td><td>a)</td><td>tu</td><td>ruìnga</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>see</td><td>freeholder</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">the freeholder sees</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>b)</td><td>sunu</td><td>ruìnga</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>owe</td><td>freeholder</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">the freeholder owes (/is in debt)</td></tr>
</table>

In both these instances, **_ruìnga_** is the direct object (as here analysed), though the freeholder is the subject of the English translation. For ease of expression in English, the means of patientive verbs

will be given throughout as though the direct object were indeed the subject – that is, **tu** will be translated 'to see', and not 'to be seen by', and so forth.

Semantically, the direct objects of objective verbs are generally undergoing or entering a state described by the verb; the subjects, if present, either bring about that state, or specify to what that state relates.

3.16   Verbs in the objective species agree with the direct object, as described in an above section; those direct objects are placed in the direct case. The subjects of objectives verbs are placed in the ergative. Hence:

> ***ex. 38   a)***   ***dattà-ya***   ***tu***   ***ruìnga***
> sailor-ERG   see   freeholder
> *the freeholder sees the sailor*
>
> ***b)***   ***sujota-ya***   ***sunu***   ***ruìnga***
> elder-ERG   owe   freeholder
> *the freeholder is in debt to the elder*
>
> ***c)***   ***sujota-ya***   ***ruà-sa***   ***kùhu***
> elder-ERG   be.blue-INAN   pot
> *the elder makes the pot blue*

Again, the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows the verb.

3.17   The stative species fulfills many of the roles carried out in other languages by the passive voice; unlike the canonical passive, however, the stative does not 'promote' a direct object to a subject. Rather than changing the role of the semantic patient, the stative changes the agreement of the verb, making the verb agree with the object, rather than with the subject (which, in the process, becomes optional – the stative is monodic, but bivalent). Those who prefer an analysis in which the objects of patientive and stative verbs are in fact the true subjects (but with aberrant word order and verbal agreement) would then consider the stative to indeed be a canonical passive, at least of agentive verbs.

In effect, the stative causes an agentive verb to act as a patientive verb – the direct object is in the direct case, the subject, if present, is in the ergative, and the verb agrees with the object. Thus:

> ***ex. 39   a)***   ***(koma-ya)***   ***tùfu-ku***   ***dattà***
> girl-ERG   push-STAT   sailor
> *the sailor is pushed (by the girl)*

Counterintuitively, it is also possible to place patientive verbs into the stative species, although doing so alters neither the morphosyntactic marking nor the broad semantic roles of the participants. In general, stative patientives are used to de-emphasise the involvement of the object, and stress their passivity – particularly when the subject is not overt. So:

ex. 40 **a)** **dattà-ya** **tu-ku** **ruìnga**
sailor-ERG   see-STAT   freeholder
the freeholder is made to see the sailor

b) **kashisha** **kùhu**
shatter   pot
the pot shatters
[objective]

c) **dattà-ya** **kashisha** **kùhu**
sailor-ERG   shatter   pot
the sailor makes (i.e. helps) the pot shatter
[objective]

d) **kashisha-ku** **kùhu**
shatter-STAT   pot
the pot is shattered
[objective]

c) **dattà-ya** **kashisha-ku** **kùhu**
sailor-ERG   shatter-STAT   pot
the sailor shatters the pot
[objective]

As can be seen in these examples, the stative, unlike the species described above, is overtly marked through the verbal suffix **-ku**.

3.18   Like the stative, the antipassive is formed overtly through a verb suffix – in this case, **-tu**. The antipassive may be formed from verbs of any class, and is monodic but bivalent. Its primary argument is its subject, which as usual by default precedes the verb, and it shows subject agreement on the verb. Semantically, the subject is most often the agent or experiencer. The patient, meanwhile, as an indirect object is marked in the same way as the indirect object of active verbs (which is to say, in variously the direct, lative, prolative, ergative or avertive cases); however, only locative verbs can take the direct as the indirect object of antipassive verbs, and the 'default' case for indirect objects becomes the ergative.

When the antipassive is applied to patientive verbs, it de-emphasises the patient and re-orients the semantics of the verb toward the subject. The indirect objects of patientive verbs in the antipassive are always in the ergative, with the exception of locative nouns, which may be in the direct with a locative meaning. So:

ex. 41 **a)** **ruìnga** **tu-tu** **(dattà-ya)**
freeholder   see-ANT   (sailor-ERG)
the freeholder is seen (by the sailor)

b) ***ruìnga   sunu-tu   (dattà-ya)***
freeholder   owe-ANT   (sailor-ERG)
the freeholder is owed (by the sailor)

c) ***ruìnga   kashisha-tu   (kùhu-ya)***
freeholder   shatter-ANT   (pot-ERG)
the freeholder shatters something (/the pot)

d) ***ruìnga   kashisha-tu   taìli***
freeholder   shatter-ANT   forest
the freeholder shatters something (while) in the forest

When the antipassive is instead applied to an agentive verb, the emphasis is already on the subject, but the use of the antipassive further de-emphasises the patient – indeed, although an indirect object can be used, it is more common for no patient to be overt. These antipassives typically bear an aspectual implication, indicating a a continued or repeated action, and often one performed with little regard or attention. Thus:

ex. 42 a) ***dattà   sàkkanga-tu***
sailor   kick-ANT
the sailor keeps on kicking away

b) ***ruìnga   ha-tu***
freeholder   eat-ANT
the freeholder goes on eating

Similarly, when the antipassive is applied to a subjective verb, the semantic result is primarily to stress this aspectual sense. So:

ex. 43 a) ***dattà   wa***
sailor   travel.upstream
the sailor travels upstream

b) ***dattà   wa-tu***
sailor   travel.upstream-ANT
the sailor keeps on trudging upstream

Subjective and agentive verbs in the antipassive, just like patientives, only take indirect objects in the ergative, with the exception of locative nouns in the direct.

3.19   The agentive disynthetic species is formed from either an agentive or (with a reflexive object) a subjective verb, and is distinguished by double marking (including mandatory reflexive objects on subjective verbs). Case marking on the arguments is the same as for transitive verbs. The agentive disynthetic can therefore be seen simply as a double-marked form of the transitive/detransitive (the disynthetic may be used in place of either transitive or detransitive – the semantic limitations of the transitive do not apply to the disynthetic).

The use of the disynthetic in place of the transitive may be triggered either socially or grammatically. Socially, the disynthetic is considered much more formal than the transitive; it is more common between strangers, or where there is a considerable difference in the status of speech-participants (including prominent third-party witnesses of markedly higher or lower class, when they are not members of the household). It is also more common in official or ceremonial contexts.

The disynthetic is also directly grammatically triggered whenever the speaker desires to use a first- or second-person pronoun or agreement affix with an agentive verb. Again, this can be associated with formality, and is very widespread in written texts, but it may also be associated with directness, and is commonly found between family members and close friends. In most other cases where semantically first- or second-person participants are found, this is obscured through the use of common nouns in place of pronouns. So:

> **ex. 44** **a)** **wa-mandu-sa**
> 1.inc-carry-INAN
> *we carry it*
>
> **b)** **luò** **tu-vòvom-sutta**
> 2 2-wobble-REFL
> *you wobble, sir*
>
> **c)** **kàya** **mana-bày-sutta**
> 1.F 1-blink-REFL
> *I, a female, yet presenting myself in a non-sexual, relatively informal and yet somewhat distant context, blink*
>
> **d)** **shuru** **ōtu-bày-sutta**
> 2 2.FORM-blink-REFL
> *you, whom I am addressing as though I had some authority over you, yet in a formal and respectful fashion, blink*
>
> **e)** **kòma** **bày**
> girl blink
> *the girl blinks*
> OR: *I blink* [said by a girl or young woman]
> OR: *you blink* [said to a girl young woman]
> [**kòma** is frequently employed as a pseudopronoun, with its reference determined by context]
>
> **f)** **à** **kòma** **tu-bày-sutta**
> VOC girl 2-blink-REFL
> *O girl, you blink*

As seen in the first of these examples, the disynthetic allows the subject to be dropped when the subject is first- or second-person. The example **f)** shows how the disynthetic species is also automatically triggered when a non-pronominal argument is promoted to the second person through the use of the vocative (as this requires the triggering second-persona agreement affixes).

3.20   The patientive disynthetic is almost exactly the same as the agentive disynthetic; it is formed from patientive verbs in the same situations as those in which the agentive disynthetic is formed from agentive or subjective verbs, and displays exactly the same double marking. It is distinguished from the agentive disynthetic by the fact that the arguments it assigns to cases are the same as those of the objective species. So:

> *ex. 45* *a)*   **kòma-ya**   **ra-tù-n**   **dattà**
>   girl-ERG   AN-see-HM   sailor
>   *the sailor sees the girl* [formal]
>
>   *b)*   **sa-tu-ma**   **kàytō**
>   INAN-see-1   1.FORM
>   *I, a woman of high status, see it*
>
>   *c)*   **kòma-ya**   **kùn-tu-sutta**
>   girl-ERG   F.AN-see-REFL
>   *the girl sees herself* [formal]

However, a significant complication can arise with first- or second-person arguments. A verb that would otherwise be in the agentive disynthetic is instead placed in the patientive disynthetic if the object is a pronoun. Conversely, a verb that would otherwise be in the patientive disynthetic is instead placed in the agentive disynthetic if the subject is a pronoun. In this way:

> *ex. 46* *a)*   **sujota-ya**   **sunu**   **dattà**
>   elder-ERG   owe   sailor
>   *the sailor is in debt to the elder*
>   [patientive verb in objective species]
>
>   *b)*   **sujota-ya**   **ra-sunù-n**   **dattà**
>   elder-ERG   AN-owe-INT   sailor
>   *the sailor is in debt to the elder* [formal]
>   [patientive verb in patientive disynthetic species]
>
>   *c)*   **ka-sùnu-n**   **dattà**
>   1.F-owe-INT   sailor
>   *the sailor is in debt to me*
>   [patientive verb in patientive disynthetic species]
>
>   *d)*   **kàya**   **ka-sùnu-n**   **dattà-m**
>   1.F   1.F-owe-INT   sailor-ACC
>   *the sailor is in debt to me*
>   [patientive verb in agentive disynthetic due to to pronominal subject]
>
>   *e)*   **kòma**   **ku-tokuìtsi**   **ruingà-m**
>   girl   F-hug   freeholder-ACC

the girl hugs the female freeholder
[agentive verb in transitive species]

f) **kòma   ku-ra-tokuìtsi-tu**
girl   F-AN-hug-2
the girl hugs you (a male)
[agentive verb in agentive disynthetic due to second-person participant]

h) **kòma-ya   ra-tokuìtsi-tu   kàmatuya**
girl-ERG   AN-hug-2   2.F.FORM
the girl hugs you, my lady
[agentive verb, but in patientive disynthetic due to object pronoun]

i) **kòma-ya   ra-tokuìtsi-n   dàn**
girl-ERG   AN-hug-3   3.INT
the girl hugs them (and they are female)
[ibid.]

As can be seen, this inversion of species can be interpreted as a rule preventing pronouns from appearing outside the direct case. Accordingly, no clause may have a pronoun as both its subject and its object – this must be resolved if necessary by rewording, or by pronoun dropping, particularly when the dropped pronoun is of the first- or second-person.

As was mentioned long ago, some verbs have both patientive and agentive variants, with distinct meanings but the same appearance; unfortunately, these can become ambiguous in the disynthetic when pronouns are employed:

ex.47   a)   **kòma-ya   ra-oluà-n   dàn**
girl-ERG   AN-accept/reject.suggestion-INT   3.INT
the girl accepts a suggestion from them
OR: *the girl rejects a suggestion from them*

Where the meaning is not clear from context, some variety of syntactic or lexical alternative may be preferred.