

## Some Aspects of Passivization in Bodo Language

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### Abstract

The aim of the paper is to describe some aspects of passivization systems of the Bodo language. Bodo belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The paper will focus on the morpho-syntactic process of the passivization. Morphologically, Bodo has a derivational passive suffix i.e. *-za* which affixes to the transitive verb stem to form a passive verb. In this paper, it will be described on passivization of transitive and ditransitive verbs, passivization of negative and interrogative sentences. It will be noticed in this paper the direct object and indirect object position of the passivization.

**Keywords:** Bodo language, passivization, morphological process of passivization.

### 1. Introduction

This paper discusses the passivization system of the Bodo language. It is a Tibeto-Burman language of the Bodo-Garo subgroup. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, Bodo has prefixation and suffixation system in the word formation processes. Crystal (2008: 353) mentioned, "In generative grammar, the transformation of a sentence from its active to its passive form is known as passivization." The passivization system in Bodo language forms by suffixation process by adding the derivational suffix *-za* to the transitive verb. In this paper, I will show passivization of transitive verb, ditransitive verb, passivization of negative sentences, interrogative sentences, and morphological process of passivization in Bodo language.

#### 1.1. Basic Characters of the Language

Bodo has six vowels i.e., *i, e, a, o, u, w* and sixteen consonants i.e., *p<sup>h</sup>, b, t<sup>h</sup>, d, k<sup>h</sup>, g, s, z, h, m, n, ŋ, j, r, l, w*. It is a tonal language. There are three types of lexical tones found in the language i.e., high, low, and level tones (M. K. Brahma, 2014). The basic word order of the language is SOV; it is a verb final language. It has three major types of word formation processes i.e., affixation, compounding, and reduplication. It has case marking systems; all the case markers are suffix forms in the language. Bodo has numeral classifiers systems, and these are prefix forms in the language e.g., *sa-se mansi* 'one man', *ma-se maozi* 'one cat' etc. It does not have grammatical gender.

### 2. Data Methodology

The major data of this paper are collected from the native speakers in standard variety of the Bodo language during the author's PhD research from 2010 to 2016, now recently cross checked. The data are collected from both male and female informants in different ages. The author being a native speaker of the standard variety, it becomes easy to collect data in the language.

### 3.1. Transitive Verb Passivization

The passivization of the Bodo language is indicated by the morpheme *-za* affixed to the verb stem. For example-

(1a) Active

aŋ      bi-k<sup>h</sup>uu      gʷʷsʷt<sup>h</sup>u-jʷ  
 1SG    3SG-ACC      love-HAB  
 'I love her'

(1b) Passive

bi-jʷ              aŋ-zʷaŋ              gʷʷsʷt<sup>h</sup>u-za-jʷ  
 3SG-NOM      1SG-ASS      love-PASS-HAB  
 'She is loved by me/she is being loved by me'

In the above sentence examples, (1a) is the active and (1b) is the passive sentence. The object in (1a) has become subject in (1b) passive construction by taking *-ju* nominative case (subject marker) and the subject in (1a) has become predicate in (1b) by adding *-zʷaŋ* (associative case maker). The verb stem in (1a) affixes the *-za* in (1b) to form passive construction in Bodo language. In the passivization system of the language, the direct object of the transitive verb becomes subject in the passive construction as shown in the above example (1a) and (1b). Sometimes, the agent of the subject is hidden in the passive construction in Bodo language as shown below in (2b).

(2a) Active

aŋ              bi-k<sup>h</sup>uu              bu-dʷaŋ  
 1SG            3SG-ACC            beat-RLS  
 'I beat him'

(2b) Passive

bi-jʷ              bu-za-dʷaŋ  
 3SG-NOM      beat-PASS-RLS  
 'He is beaten (by someone)'

(2c) Passive

bi-jʷ              aŋ-zʷaŋ              bu-za-dʷaŋ  
 3SG-NOM      1SG-ASS            beat-PASS-RLS  
 'He is beaten by me'

The preverbal noun phrase *bi-k<sup>h</sup>uu* ‘him’ in (2a) is the object of the active verb, whereas in (2b) in the passive form, by contrast, it occupies initial position and becomes the subject. The agent *aŋ* ‘I’ is omitted in the (2b) passive construction. The example (2c) is also grammatically correct in Bodo language but semantically, it is slightly different with (2b). In (2c), the agent of the subject is clearly mentioned and (2b) the agent is not mentioned.

### 3.2. Ditransitive Verb Passivization

In the ditransitive verb passivization, direct object (DO) of the active verb becomes subject in passive construction and indirect object of the active verb comes under predicate (comes in the verb phrase). Sometimes, the agent of the ditransitive verb and indirect object is omitted in passive construction as shown below.

- (3a) Active  
 bip<sup>h</sup>a-ja                      p<sup>h</sup>isazla-nuu      p<sup>h</sup>uisa-k<sup>h</sup>uu    hor-bai  
 his father-NOM              son-DAT              money-ACC      sent-PRF  
 ‘Father sent the money to (his) son’
- (3b) Passive  
 p<sup>h</sup>uisa-ja      p<sup>h</sup>isazla-ni-sim              hor-za-bai  
 money-NOM    son-GEN-ILL                      sent-PASS-PRF  
 ‘The money is sent (by father) to (his) son’
- (3c) Passive  
 p<sup>h</sup>uisa-ja      bip<sup>h</sup>a-zuuŋ-nuu              hor-za-bai  
 money-NOM    his father-ASS-UNP              sent-PASS-PRF  
 ‘The money is sent by father (unexpectedly)’
- (3d) Passive  
 p<sup>h</sup>uisa-ja      hor-za-bai  
 money-NOM    sent-PASS-PRF  
 ‘The money is sent (by someone)’

The above example (3a) is the active sentence and (3b), (3c) and (3d) are the passive sentences. The agent of the ditransitive verb is omitted in the above sentence example (3b) and (3d). The indirect object of the ditransitive verb is also dropped in the example (3c) and (3d).

### 3.3. Passivization in Negative and Interrogative Sentences

The passive construction of the negative and interrogative sentences in Bodo language is given below. Here also, the direct object of the active verb takes the subject position in the passive construction both negative and interrogative sentences as shown (4b) and (4d).

- (4a) Active  
 aŋ                      bi-k<sup>h</sup>uu                      suk<sup>h</sup>u-wa  
 1SG                      3SG-ACC                      like-NEG  
 ‘I don’t like him’

- (4b) Passive  
 bi-juu            aŋ-zuuŋ            suk<sup>h</sup>u-za-ja  
 3SG-NOM        1SG-ASS            like-PASS-NEG  
 ‘She is not liked by me.’
- (4c) Active  
 nuuŋ            omabedor-k<sup>h</sup>uu        za-guun-nama  
 2SG            pork-ACC            eat-FUT-INTR  
 ‘Will you eat the pork?’
- (4d) Passive  
 omabedor-a nuuŋ-zuuŋ    za-za-guun-nama  
 Pork-NOM    2SG-ASS        eat-PASS-FUT-INTR  
 ‘Will the pork be eaten by you?’

### 3.4. Morphological Process in Passivization

Morphologically, the passivization process of the Bodo language is ‘**verb + passive suffix = passive verb**’ (D. Brahma, 2017). In Bodo, the passive morpheme *-za* is a derivational suffix, which can derive new words in the language.

For example:

<b>Verb</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>Passive Suffix</b>	<b>&gt;</b>	<b>Passive verb</b>
(5a) suba	+	za	>	suba-za
slap	+	PASS	>	‘to be slapped’
(5b) zuu	+	za	>	zuu-za
kick	+	PASS	>	‘to be kicked’
(5c) bao	+	za	>	bao-za
forget	+	PASS	>	‘to be forgotten’
(5d) bu	+	za	>	bu-za
beat	+	PASS	>	‘to be beaten’
(5e) on	+	za	>	on-za
love	+	PASS	>	‘to be loved’

The above examples (5a) to (5e) passive verbs can derive nouns in Bodo language by adding nominalizer suffix *-gra* as shown below.

(6a) suba-za	+	gra	>	suba-za-gra
to be slapped	+	NZR	>	‘the one who is slapped (by someone)’
(6b) zuu-za	+	gra	>	zuu-za-gra
to be kicked	+	NZR	>	‘the one who is kicked (by someone)’
(6c) bao-za	+	gra	>	bao-za-gra
to be forgotten	+	NZR	>	‘the one who is forgotten (by someone)’
(6d) bu-za	+	gra	>	bu-za-gra
to be beaten	+	NZR	>	‘the one who is beaten (by someone)’

(6e) on-za + gra > on-za-gra  
to be loved + NZR > ‘the one who get loved (by someone)’

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper looked at the passivization system of the Bodo language. A passive sentence derives from the active sentence by adding derivational suffix *-za* to the transitive verb stem in Bodo. Here, it is shown that passivization of transitive verbs, passivization of ditransitive verbs, passivization of negative sentences, passivization of interrogative sentences and morphological process of passivization. The direct object of the transitive verb becomes the subject in the passive construction (see example (1a) and (1b)). Sometimes, the agent of the subject can be hided in the passive construction of Bodo language (see example in (2b)). In ditransitive verb passivization, the direct object of the active verb becomes subject in passive construction and the indirect object comes under the predicate (verb phrase). Here also sometimes, the agent of the ditransitive verb and indirect object can omit in passive construction (see examples (3b), (3c) and (3d)). The word order of the passive sentence in Bodo is also following the verb final types of word order. It is proof that morphologically passivization is a derivational character in Bodo language (see examples (5a), (5b), (6a) and (6b)).

#### Abbreviations

1SG	1 <sup>st</sup> Person Singular	2SG	2 <sup>nd</sup> Person Singular
3SG	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Singular	ACC	Accusative
ASS	Associative	DAT	Dative
FUT	Future	GEN	Genitive
HAB	Habitual	ILL	Illative
INTR	Interrogative	NEG	Negative
NOM	Nominative	NZR	Nominalizar
PASS	Passive/ Passive suffix	PRF	Perfect
RLS	Realis	UNP	Unexpected marker

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