

# Complement Verbs in the Bima Language of *Tarlawi* Sub-Dialect: An Analysis of Forms, Types, and Semantic Functions

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## Abstract

The linguistics of smaller communities goes unnoticed in most academic conversations; so does the Bima language, spoken in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. The Bima language belongs to the Central Malayo-Polynesian subgroup of the Austronesian language family and is spoken by approximately one million people in the eastern part of Sumbawa Island. The Bima language has survived through oral tradition and everyday use. However, formal documentation of its grammar remains severely lacking. The *Tarlawi* sub-dialect of Bima, which is distinct and has not been the focus of study, reflects the above statement, for it can also be considered a unique dialect. The motivation for this study was practical. Upon reviewing the existing literature on regional languages in eastern Indonesia, it was found that even something as basic as Bima grammar, particularly the behavior of verbs, has not been described. This research pays special attention to verbs, as they are more than mere action words; they organize the relationships among various elements in a sentence and often determine whether a sentence is complete. No study on complementation verbs in the predicate of the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect has been conducted previously. Thus, this study was set out to fill that gap. The researchers collected data through direct fieldwork with native speakers of the *Tarlawi* subdialect, using a range of naturally occurring language: isolated words, phrases, clauses, full sentences, and connected discourse. Instead of relying on intuition or elicitation alone, the analysis employed deletion and insertion tests. It is a standard yet reliable method for determining if the relevant verb element is obligatory or can be omitted in its grammatical structure. The findings suggest a verbal system that is organized yet adaptable. All verb types in Bima seem to come from a single root verb. This type of verb is derived into intensive verbs, complex transitive verbs, action verbs, process verbs, state verbs, and stative verbs. The relationship to complement verbs varies considerably among the categories – some require a complement verb to form a grammatical sentence, and others can still work without one. In addition to showing the internal grammar of Bima, the research results also constitute the first documentation of complement-verb constructions in the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect. This contribution hopefully opens the door to further work on this topic and other under-described varieties of Indonesian regional languages.

**Keywords:** Bima language; complement verbs; syntax, semantics; *Tarlawi* sub-dialect; regional language documentation; Austronesian linguistics.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bima language (*Nggahi Mbojo*)<sup>1</sup> is an Austronesian language spoken by approximately one million people in eastern Sumbawa Island, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia (Blust,

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<sup>1</sup> The endonym *Nggahi Mbojo* is used by the broader Bima speech community. The variant *Ngga'i Mbojo* reflects a phonological alternation found in certain sub-dialects, including *Tarlawi*, where the initial consonant cluster is realized differently. Both forms refer to

2009). Bima is a regional language with its own traditional script and oral literary heritage, used by the Bima ethnic group as the primary means of communication in traditional ceremonies and daily interactions, and in oral literature (Busairi, 2023). Indonesia has over 700 regional languages used throughout the archipelago, making Indonesia the second most linguistically diverse country in the world, after Papua New Guinea (Grimes & Edwards, 2026). However, more than 10% of regional languages are in an unsafe status, with 25 languages classified as endangered and 11 as extinct (Badan Bahasa, n.d.; Ewing, 2014).

According to Budiono et al. (2024) and Florey (2010), there is a growing urgency to document and revitalize local languages, as language use is accelerating due to the overwhelming presence of Indonesian and foreign languages in education, media, and government. According to UNESCO (n.d.), the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 highlights the urgent need to document regional languages, such as the Bima language. It concerns not only the preservation of culture but also typological studies of Austronesian languages (Visser, 2024).

Bima's phonology is notable for its lack of consonants in word-final position (open syllables) at this level. This characteristic influences the morphological and syntactic patterns of Bima, creating unique structures that distinguish it from Indonesian and other Austronesian languages in the Nusa Tenggara region (Busairi, 2023; Unterladstetter, 2019). While the Bima language shares certain universal characteristics with related languages, it possesses distinct syntactic features worthy of systematic investigation.

In the field of linguistics, one can differentiate between sentences with the help of their predicates. According to Asnawi and Mukhlis (2019), Gulö (2019), and Gusriani (2023), verbal sentences are sentences that contain verbal predicates, while non-verbal sentences are sentences whose predicates consist of nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. Equative sentences are those that have a nominal predicate. Stative sentences are those that have an adjectival predicate. The classification forms the basis for understanding sentence structure in the Bima language. Table 1 shows the sentence classification based on predicate type.

Table 1. Sentence Classification Based on Predicate Type

Sentence Type	Predicate Category	Classification
Verbal	P (verb)	Verbal Sentence
Non-verbal	P (noun)	Equative Sentence
Non-verbal	P (adjective/adverb)	Stative Sentence

Verbs are the most important element in sentences of all languages. A verb is a word that expresses an event, action, process, movement, state, or occurrence, implying changes over time (Giulianelli et al., 2020; Saragih & Mulyadi, 2020). As stated by Bintang et al. (2024), Maslova (2019), and Opoku (2024), in syntactic analysis, verbs are considered the predicate or the central predicate of the sentence. Verbs are the center of the functional structure of clauses. The predicate is a vital syntactic function that occurs in every clause and is responsible for the occurrence of other functions. Following Dixon (2010) and Comrie (1989), the Subject (S) and Object (O) are core syntactic functions that are defined by their grammatical relation to the predicate (P), while the Adverbial — termed *Keterangan* (K) in Indonesian linguistic tradition — functions as a peripheral or adjunct element that provides additional circumstantial information. Unlike S and O, K is not subcategorized by the verb and may be omitted without affecting grammaticality. The subject (S) has a direct relationship with the predicate (P), while the object (O) and adverbial (K) have an indirect relationship.

Verb complementation has been an important topic of research in almost all languages. According to Perini (2015) and Wurmbrand (2024), predicative verbs relate to other constituents of the clause through a subcategorization frame, which also specifies the types and number of complements. Talmy (2016) argues that main verbs can insist on a specific argument structure and the syntactic configuration of the clause. Complements are elements that complete the meaning of a sentence. They often occur with verbs or prepositions but may also be associated with other words

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the same language.

that provide necessary information to complete the predication of a clause, according to Opoku (2024).

According to Indonesian linguists, two types of morphological bases can be used to form verbs. Free bases are bases that can function as syntactic categories with their independent meaning that does not require affixation. Bound bases are bases that can only determine the syntactic category and meaning after affixation (Nugraha, 2024; Sudana et al., 2024; Unterladstetter, 2019). This difference applies to the Bima language, which shares a similar verb formation method.

Complement verbs can be categorized in several ways: (1) by transitivity, (2) by whether the complement is obligatory or optional, and (3) by the semantic roles they assign to their arguments. Intensive verbs require complements, whereas extensive verbs (including the class of complex transitive verbs) simultaneously combine with more than one other constituent (Lohnstein & Tsiknakis, 2020; Nenoliu et al., 2024). Depending on their semantic type, dynamic verbs, which include action, process, and state verbs, require different complements.

As explained in the previous section, based on morphological processes, there are two kinds of verbs: root verbs and derived verbs. The root verb is a verb that can stand on its own without affixes in syntactic contexts. The derived verb is a verb that needs affixes to stand or express a particular meaning, depending on the level of formality and syntactic position of the sentence. The Bima language has both types; however, derived verbs are more numerous than root verbs (Fajrizka & Alber, 2023; Septiana, 2018). In the Bima language, verbs serve as predicates and associate with other constituents that may be placed before or after them. As a general rule, constituents before the verb function as subjects and those after it as objects, complements, or adverbials. The relationship between verbs and their other constituents is the basis on which the complement verb constructions of the language are investigated (Lohnstein & Tsiknakis, 2020; Talmy, 2016).

Prior syntactic work on the Bima language includes its morphological description by Achmad (1985), the syntactic analysis of personal pronouns by Arafiq (2020), the agreement system analysis by Owens (2000), the study of the particle *kai* by Wouk and Arafiq (2016), and the more recent typological study of clause constituent order by Arafiq et al. (2023). While these studies have substantially advanced the understanding of Bima grammar, none specifically addresses complement-verb constructions in the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect<sup>2</sup>, which remains syntactically undescribed. Most of the research on verbs in the regional languages of Indonesia has been modeled on Banjar (Asnawi & Mukhlis, 2019), Batak Toba (Saragih & Mulyadi, 2020), Waringin (Septiana, 2018), and Papuan Malay (Supardi, 2017), none of which describes the complement verb in the Bima language.

The main novelty of this research is: (1) it is a systematic first-time documentation of complement verbs in the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect of the Bima language; (2) it provides an exhaustive classification of verb types based on the existence and function of complements; and (3) it describes obligatory and optional complements in each verb type. The outcome of this research is expected to fill the gap in the syntactic study of the Bima language. Moreover, the study also contributes to the documentation of regional languages in Indonesia.

In view of the previous linguistic background, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What structural form of complement verbs are found in Bima?
2. In the Bima language, what verbs are allowed or demand complements?
3. What meanings are conveyed through the Bima language complements?

The research study aims to describe the structural forms of complement verbs, identify and classify the types of verbs that take complements, and analyze the semantic meaning of these complements.

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<sup>2</sup> The *Tarlawi* sub-dialect is one of several regional varieties within the Bima language (*Nggahi Mbojo*) spoken in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara. Arafiq (2005) documents internal dialectal variation within Bima, identifying *Tarlawi* as a distinct sub-variety characterized by specific phonological and lexical differences from the prestige dialect spoken in Bima City. Wouk and Arafiq (2016) further confirms this sub-dialectal classification in their analysis of Bima morphosyntax. The present study adopts *Tarlawi* as its focus because, despite its recognized distinctiveness, it has received no prior syntactic analysis.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Theory of Verb Classification and Complementation**

According to Quirk and Crystal (2010), the concept of complementation differs fundamentally from the concept of complement. Complementation refers to the function of a part of a phrase or clause that follows a word and which completes the specification of a meaning relationship that word implies. Thus, in a complement clause, the subject may or may not be obligatory. Similarly, the syntactic component in complementation may be obligatory or optional (Opoku, 2024).

Wurmbrand (2024) provides a detailed overview of syntactic, morphological, and semantic approaches to size differences of complement clauses. It is demonstrated that clause size cannot be the main factor regulating complementation phenomena. The usefulness of this framework suggests how the Bima language structures its complement systems.

Dixon (2010) proposes a cross-linguistically applicable framework for understanding core syntactic functions — Subject (S), Object (O), and Adjunct — based on semantic and syntactic criteria. In transitive clauses, the Subject (S) is the controller argument of a transitive verb, while the object (O) is the patient or the undergoer argument. The Adjunct (or complement in some traditions) is a non-core element that elaborates the predication. Comrie (1989) similarly emphasizes that syntactic functions are defined relationally and must be distinguished from semantic roles. These frameworks are foundational to the analysis of complement constructions in Bima, as they allow the researcher to determine whether a post-verbal constituent is a core argument (obligatory) or a peripheral adjunct (optional).

Arka and Ross (2005), working on Balinese and related Austronesian languages, demonstrate that complement obligatoriness is tightly linked to verb semantics: verbs of possession, becoming, and location invariably require a complement to express a complete proposition, whereas verbs of motion and physical activity typically license optional complements. This observation is directly applicable to the Bima data analyzed in this study.

According to Biber et al. (1999), one-place verbs are those that combine with a subject only, two-place verbs are those that combine with a subject and another element, and three-place verbs are those that combine with a subject and two other elements. The verbs may be classified by valency into copular, intransitive, and transitive. It is what the Bima verb types analysis is based on.

The difference between complements and adjuncts lies in the structural and functional significance of different parts of the sentence. Linguists can better recognize the word class of sentences by knowing complements are obligatory elements for completing a clause, while adjuncts are optional elements adding additional information (Bergs, 2020; Opoku, 2024). This difference assists in the parsing of sentences, distinguishing between essential and non-essential components, and understanding how different parts work together to create a given meaning or structure.

### **Regional Language Documentation in Indonesia**

The Indonesian language landscape is very diverse. In fact, this country has about 700 languages. However, this diversity is threatened due to language shift and endangerment. In the work of Budiono et al. (2024), all local languages — not only those whose status is minority and endangered — can undergo revitalization. It is achievable within the framework of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

In Eastern Indonesia, documentation efforts focus on several Austronesian languages. Visser (2024) has documented Uruangnirin, an endangered Austronesian language of eastern Indonesia with fewer than 400 speakers. Edwards (2025) documents Teun, Nila, and Serua, three closely related Austronesian languages spoken in the Banda Sea area, which are shifting toward Ambon Malay/Indonesian. These works underscore the necessity of recording grammatical infrastructure before further loss occurs.

The Bima language has unique phonological and syntactic features, which make it an important case for documentation efforts. In eastern Indonesia, Bima is unlike many endangered languages, as it has a relatively large number of speakers. However, documentation of its syntax is still limited. In particular, Bima's phonology is notable for its open syllable structure — the absence of word-final consonants — a feature that constrains morphological complexity and shapes syntactic patterns in

ways distinct from those of Indonesian and other Austronesian languages of the Nusa Tenggara region (Busairi, 2023; Unterladstetter, 2019). Understanding these phonological constraints is an essential background for the analysis of complement-verb constructions presented in this study. This study provides an analysis of complement verb structures, contributing to filling this gap.

### Earlier Research on the Bima Language

Achmad (1985) provided one of the first morphological descriptions of Bima verbs, documenting the language's basic verb-formation patterns. Arafiq (2020) extended syntactic research on Bima by analyzing the forms, properties, and distributions of personal pronouns, demonstrating how pronominal clitics interact with core syntactic arguments. Owens (2000) examined the agreement system of *Bimanese* within a broader typological framework, while Wouk and Arafiq (2016) investigated the syntactic and discourse functions of the particle *kai*, including its roles in valency-increasing and nominalization constructions. Most recently, Arafiq et al. (2023) conducted a typological study of constituent order in Bima clauses, providing a useful comparative baseline for the present study of the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect. In his study entitled "*Analisis Bentuk Dan Fungsi Pronomina Pribadi Bahasa Bima Di Dalam Film La Hila* (Analysis of the Forms and Functions of Personal Pronouns in the Bima Language in the La Hila Movie)," Busairi (2023) analyzed the forms and functions of *pronomina pribadi* (personal pronouns) in the Bima language. Akbar et al. (2020) conducted a study of the Sasak lexicon, which often appears in traditional marriages, from a linguistic anthropology perspective.

Research on the verbal structure of related Austronesian languages provides further methodological guidance. Tennis et al. (2018) examined subject-predicate-object patterns in the Dawan language. Saragih and Mulyadi (2020) utilized the X-Bar Theory to investigate serial verb construction patterns in Batak Toba. The syntactic analysis methods used in these studies of regional languages in Nusa Tenggara are directly applicable to the present investigation.

### METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, which is well-suited to a linguistic study that aims to describe the actual use of language in a speech community (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). According to Djajasudarma (1993), qualitative research is led by researchers in the community's natural environment and is linked to language and terminology. This method generates descriptive data that accurately appraises the reality of the object being studied.

The research was conducted in the *Tarlawi* area of Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. The *Tarlawi* sub-dialect of Bima was chosen because it is one of the main dialectal varieties of Bima documented by Arafiq (2020) and Wouk and Arafiq (2016), which has not been syntactically studied from the perspective of verb complementation.

Informant selection followed specific criteria: (1) native speakers of the Bima *Tarlawi* sub-dialect; (2) aged 30–65 years, to ensure stable and competent language use; (3) permanent residents of the research location for at least 20 years; (4) free from speech disorders and cognitive dysfunction; (5) not highly educated in formal Indonesian, to minimize standard-language influence; and (6) willing to participate as primary informants. This study involved five primary informants and ten secondary informants.

The data in this research consists of linguistic phenomena concerning complement verbs in the Bima language, taking the form of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and discourse units (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

### The steps of data collection and analysis

Step 1 — Naturalistic Observation: First, the researchers employed non-participatory observation techniques to observe the natural use of language in daily conversation, ritual ceremonies, and markets. The authors also recorded the respondents' spontaneous speech.

Step 2 — Elicitation: The researchers employed interviews and stimulated elicitation techniques to elicit specific syntactic constructions. Using Indonesian sentences, informants were

asked to provide their counterparts in the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect. This method allowed the researcher to obtain data on complement verbs.

Step 3 — Introspective Verification: Data verification was conducted through introspection with native-speaker informants, including the researcher himself, a native Bima speaker. This enabled triangulation of data and ensured the validity of syntactic judgments.

Step 4 — Distributional Analysis: The distributional method was applied, in which the rules of language are analyzed using linguistic properties and native-speaker intuition (Djajasudarma, 1993). This method encompasses several techniques: deletion, substitution, interruption, expansion, permutation, repetition, and paraphrasing.

Step 5 — Deletion Test (*Teknik Lesap*): A specific technique within the distributional method, the deletion test determines whether a complement is obligatory or optional. If deletion of a complement renders the construction ungrammatical or semantically incomplete, the complement is classified as obligatory. If the construction remains grammatical after deletion, the complement is optional.

Step 6 — Insertion Test: The insertion technique was used to assess the degree of syntactic closeness between elements within a construction. Elements were inserted between the verb and the complement to test the strength of their syntactic bond.

Step 7 — Formal and Informal Presentation: All data constructions resulting from Steps 5 and 6 were presented both formally and informally (Fauzi & Hermansyah, 2021; Fauzi & Mulyadi, 2020).

The formal method employs signs and symbols:

Asterisk (\*) for ungrammatical constructions,

Arrow (→) for derivational processes,

Parentheses ( ) for optional elements

Square brackets [ ] for phonetic transcription

Abbreviations: S = Subject, P = Predicate, O = Object, Com = Complement, K = *Keterangan* (Adverbial/Adjunct), V = Verb, VI = Intensive Verb, VTC = Complex Transitive Verb, VD = Dynamic Verb, VP = Process Verb, VC = State Verb, VS = Stative Verb.

The informal method avoids unusual or technical wording when describing theoretical concepts or findings, thereby making explanations more accessible.

## ANALYSIS

### Forms of Complement Verbs in the Bima Language

In the Bima language, verbs that serve as predicates correlate with other constituents either before or after. The element that comes before the verb is the subject, while elements appearing after the verb are either objects, complements, or adverbials. In this analysis, the subject element is not included unless required for syntactic representation (Lohnstein & Tsiknakis, 2020; Perini, 2015). According to language experts consulted during fieldwork, the Bima language has one core verb form: the root verb.

### Verbs with Complementary Meaning

Basic verbs in this study are verbs that are not subject to affixation or reduplication, yet are clear in meaning when they occur in sentences. These verbs can function independently at both the clause and sentence level in formal and informal registers. The examples below show basic verbs with complements.

Table 2. Examples of Basic Verbs with Complements

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure
(1)	Dangga di dembi	walk at embankment	'walk through the embankment'	VD + Com
(2)	Toqo barsila di tera	Sit cross-legged at terrace	'sit cross-legged on the terrace'	VD + Com

(3)	Niaka ta tandona	exist at front.his	'exist in front of him'	VD + Com
(4)	Pangiku kangampu niaka mahakuasa	I ask.forgiveness from Almighty	'I ask for forgiveness from the Almighty'	VD + Com

The basic verbs *dangga* 'walk', *toqo* 'sit', *niaka* 'exist', and *kangampu* 'request' have no morphological processes. Regardless, these verbs have their own clear grammatical meaning and can function as predicates in clause constructions.

The complements following these basic verbs show gradations of mobility that can be tested by permutation:

- (4) \**Di dembi dangga*  
 at embankment walk  
 'walk through the embankment' [ungrammatical — complement-fronted]

Note: In the original construction *Dangga di dembi* (Table 2, no. 1), the sequence is grammatical. The asterisked form in (5) tests whether the complement *di dembi* can be fronted; the result is ungrammatical, showing a close syntactic bond between the verb and its complement.

By contrast, the complement of the verb *niaka* is more mobile:

- (5) *Ta tandona niaka maju*  
 front.his exist deer  
 'In front of it there is a deer' [Com + VD + S]

Nevertheless, this permuted form requires additional constituents to complete the clause's form and meaning. The subject *maju* 'deer' must not be absent in forming a grammatical construction. Compare with the following examples:

- (6) *Kababone wara di tandona*  
 it exist/be at front.it  
 '(It) is in front of it'
- (7) *Wara ngao di tandona*  
 exist cat at front.him/her  
 'There is a cat in front of him/her'

These examples demonstrate that complement mobility in Bima varies according to the semantic and syntactic properties of the main verb.

### Types of Complement Verbs in the Bima Language

The data analysis shows that in the Bima language, complement verbs can be classified into six types, namely intensive verbs, complex transitive verbs, action verbs, process verbs, state verbs, and stative verbs. Each category exhibits distinct syntactic and semantic properties.

#### Intensive Verbs

Intensive verbs involve the use of a complement that specifies their meaning. These verbs can occur both as root verbs and as derived verbs. An important piece of information about the subject's state, identity, or quality is provided by the complement. In other words, the complement in the Bima language intensive constructions is similar to the subject complement in English copular constructions.

Table 3. Intensive Verbs with Complements

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure	Complement Status
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(9)	<i>Ntau wei mantika</i>	have beautiful	wife	'has a beautiful wife'	VI + Com	Obligatory
(10)	<i>Nanika ine dou Mbojo</i>	married person	with Bima	'married to a Bima person'	VI + Com	Obligatory
(11)	<i>Tanaqo mesa dangga</i>	learn walk	alone	'learning to walk alone'	VI + Com	Optional
(12)	<i>Dangga melalui kengge pantai</i>	walk through edge	beach	'walk along the beach edge'	VI + Com	Optional
(13)	<i>Dula niaka Malaysia</i>	return from Malaysia		'return from Malaysia'	VI + Com	Obligatory

Analysis: In examples (9), (10), and (13), the presence of the complements is obligatory, because the verbs *ntau* 'have', *nanika* 'married', and *dula* 'return' require specification of their semantic arguments. If there were no complements, these constructions would be semantically incomplete:

- (9a) \**Ntau*  
have  
'has' — [incomplete: 'has' what?]
- (10a) \**Nanika*  
married  
'married' — [incomplete: 'married to' whom?]
- (13a) \**Dula*  
return  
'return' — [incomplete: 'return from' where?]

On the other hand, in examples (11) and (12), the complements are optional. The verbs *tanaqo* 'learn' and *dangga* 'walk' can stand alone, but the complements specify the manner and location:

- (11a) *Tanaqo dangga*  
learn walk  
'learning to walk' [grammatical without further complement]
- (12a) *Dangga*  
walk  
'walk' [grammatical]

### Complex Transitive Verbs

Complex transitive verbs are extensive verbs that directly relate two constituents in relation to each other — the complement and the object. These verbs are ditransitive, having both a direct and an indirect object. Data regarding this verb type is quite limited, giving the impression that the verb belongs to a marked construction type in Bima.

Table 4. Complex Transitive Verbs

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure
(14)	<i>Udin wi bukuna ndese wewo meja</i>	Udin put book.his down on table	'Udin put his book on the table'	S + VTC + O + Com
(15)	<i>Ama wunga ndawina ari jara-jarana</i>	Father rocking.horse younger.sibling	'Father is making a rocking horse for younger siblings'	S + VTC + O + Com

- (16) *Manca wunga ndawina dua sarowa* Aunt sew for Uncle pants 'Aunt is sewing pants for Uncle' S + VTC + O + Com
- (17) *Inanggu wunga tanaqo tajwid diruqu ana morina* Mamiq teach *tajwid* to students his 'Mamiq is teaching *tajwid* (Arabic language pronunciation) to his students' S + VTC + O + Com

The verbs *wi* 'put', *ndawina* 'make/sew', and *tanaqo* 'teach' are classified as complex transitives. All these verbs require an object to be present, since they are transitive verbs. Nonetheless, the status of the complement differs:

In examples (14) and (17), the locative complement (*wewo meja* 'on the table') and the benefactive complement (*diruqu ana morina* 'to his students') are obligatory for complete meaning. In (15) and (16), the benefactive complements are optional; the constructions remain grammatical without them:

- (15a) *Ama wunga ndawina jara-jarana*  
 Father make rocking.horse  
 'Father is making a rocking horse' [grammatical]
- (16a) *Manca wunga ndawina sarowa*  
 Aunt sew pants  
 'Aunt is sewing pants' [grammatical]

### Action Verbs

Action verbs are dynamic verbs that refer to something that the subject does. The physical or mental actions conveyed by these verbs may be expressed in basic and derived forms.

Table 5. Action Verbs with Complements

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure	Verb Type
(18)	<i>Toqo mudu niaka depan au</i>	sit still at front door	'sit still in front of the door'	Vact + Com	Basic
(19)	<i>Baturero mbeqe</i>	herd goats	'herding goats'	Vact + Com	Derived
(20)	<i>Palai niaka woha kaliu</i>	Run at middle road	'running in the middle of the road'	Vact + Com	Basic
(21)	<i>Lao karawi</i>	go work	'go to work'	Vact + Com	Basic
(22)	<i>Paresa mesa</i>	talk alone	'talking to oneself'	Vact + Com	Derived
(23)	<i>Tanaqo sama inge</i>	study with friend	'study		

Analysis: The verbs *toqo* 'sit', *palai* 'run', and *lao* 'go' are basic verbs that do not obligatorily require complements. The derived verbs *baturero* 'herd' (from *rero*), *paresa* 'talk' (from *resa*), and *tanaqo* 'study' take optional complements.

The presence of a complement in action verbs typically provides information about:

- Manner: *mesa* 'alone' in (22)
- Location: *niaka depan au* 'in front of the door' in (18); *niaka woha kaliu* 'in the middle of the road' in (20)
- Purpose: *karawi* 'to work' in (21)
- Accompaniment: *sama inge* 'with his friend' in (23)
- Patient/Theme: *mbeqe* 'goats' in (19)

**Process Verbs**

Process verbs indicate a change in the state of the subject. The subject's condition changes, often showing development over time.

Table 6. Process Verbs with Complements

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure	Complement Status
(24)	<i>Ndadi tradisi dou Mbojo</i>	become tradition people	'becoming a tradition of the Bima people'	VP + Com	Obligatory
(25)	<i>Mate tedo ndai</i>	die hang self	'died by hanging oneself'	VP + Com	Optional
(26)	<i>Ndiku ncora inge</i>	broken collision friend	'broken from collision with friend'	VP + Com	Optional
(27)	<i>Mou niaka puqu niqu</i>	fall from tree coconut	'fell from the coconut tree'	VP + Com	Optional

Analysis: All of the above process verbs are basic verbs. In example (24), the complement is required, because the verb *ndadi* 'become' must specify the resultative state:

(24a) \**Ndadi*  
 become  
 'become' — [incomplete: 'become' what?]

The complements in (25)–(27) are optional; they state the cause or source of the process and can be omitted without affecting grammaticality:

(25a) *Mate*  
 die  
 'died' [grammatical]  
 (26a) *Ndiku*  
 broken  
 'broken' [grammatical]  
 (27a) *Mou*  
 fell  
 'fell' [grammatical]

The semantic functions of complements in process verbs include:

- Resultative: *tradisi dou Mbojo* 'a tradition of the Bima people' in (24)
- Manner/Cause: *tedo ndai* 'by hanging oneself' in (25)
- Cause: *ncora inge* 'from collision with friend' in (26)
- Source: *niaka puqu niqu* 'from the coconut tree' in (27)

**State Verbs**

State verbs depict a condition felt by the subject, often caused by something external. In Bima, these verbs are classified as adjectival, and similar patterns are observed in Indonesian.

Table 7. State Verbs with Complements

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure
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(28)	<i>Mpeja oroka sempa ba ingena</i>	limp because kicked by friend	'limping from being kicked by a friend'	VC + Com
(29)	<i>Ndiku ngeqei ba puqu hadu</i>	broken crushed by tree	'broken from being crushed by a tree'	VC + Com
(30)	<i>Pingsa di jagu ma musahna</i>	fainted from hit by enemy	'fainted from being hit by an enemy'	VC + Com
(31)	<i>Mbiqa ndadi dua</i>	shattered become two	'broken into two'	VC + Com

The verbs *mpeja* 'limp', *ndiku* 'broken', *pingsa* 'faint', and *mbiqa* 'shattered' are state verbs indicating a condition caused by an external force. Basic verb forms are used in all of the examples, although derived forms also exist in the Bima language.

The optional complements in all of the above state verbs provide causal or resultative information:

- (28a) *Mpeja*  
limp  
'limping' [grammatical]
- (29a) *Ndiku*  
broken  
'broken' [grammatical]
- (30a) *Pingsa*  
fainted  
'fainted' [grammatical]
- (31a) *Mbiqa*  
shattered  
'shattered' [grammatical]

The semantic functions of complements in state verbs include:

Causal agent: *ba ingena* 'by a friend' in (28); *ba puqu hadu* 'by a tree' in (29); *ma musahna* 'by an enemy' in (30)

Resultative: *ndadi dua* 'into two' in (31)

### Stative Verbs

A stative verb indicates or describes a state that is fixed or abstract and cannot change into the progressive. These verbs communicate character traits, feelings, or states of being.

Table 8. Stative Verbs with Complements

No.	Bima Construction	Gloss	Free Translation	Structure	Semantic Type
(32)	<i>Kambia dinggahi adena</i>	shocked because yelled.at	'shocked by being yelled at'	VS + Com	Involuntary
(33)	<i>Ntau ahlak ma taho character</i>	have noble	'having noble character'	VS + Com	Possessive

(34)	<i>Iu susah ate</i>	feel heart	worried	'feeling worried'	VS + Com	Emotional
(35)	<i>Utu ine ama</i>	sleep father	with	'sleeping with father'	VS + Com	Voluntary
(36)	<i>Naqu neqena suika kuliah</i>	strong desire.his college	go	'his strong desire to go to college'	VS + Com	Desiderative

Analysis: Stative verbs in Bima exhibit semantic diversity:

Involuntary states: The verb *kambia* 'shocked' (32) indicates a state experienced without the subject's will or awareness.

Voluntary states: The verb *utu* 'sleep' (35) shows a state experienced by the subject at their own will.

Possessive states: The verb *ntau* 'have' (33) explicitly states a possessive relationship between a subject and a complement.

Emotional states: The verb *iu* 'feel' (34) expresses psychological conditions.

Desiderative states: The construction in (36) expresses desire or intention.

The presence of complements in stative verbs is not always obligatory, though complements typically specify the nature, cause, or object of the state:

- (32a) *Kambia*  
shocked  
'shocked' [grammatical — complement optional]
- (33a) \**Ntau*  
have  
'has' — [incomplete without complement]
- (34a) \**Iu*  
feel  
'feel' — [incomplete without complement]

Note that while (32) and (35) can stand alone, (33), (34), and (36) require complements for semantic completeness, demonstrating variation within the stative verb category.

### Summary of Complement Verb Types

Table 9. Classification of Complement Verbs in the Bima Language

Verb Type	Characteristics	Complement Status	Examples
Intensive	Requires complement for semantic completeness	Obligatory/Optional	<i>ntau, nanika, dula</i>
Complex Transitive	Binds object and complement	Object: Obligatory; Complement: Variable	<i>wi, ndawina, tanaqo</i>
Action	Expresses activities	Optional	<i>toqo, palai, lao</i>
Process	Indicates change of state	Obligatory/Optional	<i>ndadi, mate, mou</i>
State	Describes resultative conditions	Optional	<i>mpeja, ndiku, pingsa</i>
Stative	Expresses fixed/abstract states	Optional/Obligatory	<i>kambia, ntau, utu</i>

### Semantic Functions of Complements

The complements in Bima complement verbs serve various semantic functions that can be categorized as follows:

Table 10. Semantic Functions of Complements in the Bima Language

Semantic Function	Description	Examples
Locative	Specifies location or direction	<i>di dembi</i> 'through the embankment'; <i>di tera</i> 'on the terrace'
Benefactive	Indicates recipient or beneficiary	<i>ari jara-jarana</i> 'for younger siblings'; <i>dua sarowa</i> 'for Uncle'
Source	Expresses origin or starting point	<i>niaka Malaysia</i> 'from Malaysia'; <i>niaka puqu niqu</i> 'from the coconut tree'
Manner	Describes how action is performed	<i>barsila</i> 'cross-legged'; <i>mesa</i> 'alone'
Causal	Indicates cause of state	<i>sempa ba ingena</i> 'from being kicked by a friend'
Resultative	Specifies outcome	<i>ndadi dua</i> 'into two'; <i>tradisi dou Mbojo</i> 'a tradition of Bima'
Accompaniment	Indicates co-participant	<i>sama inge</i> 'with his friend'; <i>ine ama</i> 'with father'
Purpose	Expresses goal or intention	<i>karawi</i> 'to work'; <i>suika kuliah</i> 'to go to college'

The findings of this study reveal several important characteristics of complement verbs in the Bima language that warrant further discussion. First, the Bima language prefers root verbs as the primary form in complement constructions. Unlike the Indonesian language, which has a productive system of verbal affixation (Rajeg & Denistia, 2023), the Bima language relies more heavily on basic verb forms. This preference is consistent with what Dixon (2010) identifies as a typological tendency in languages with open syllable phonology: reduced morphological complexity at the word level is compensated by greater reliance on syntactic constructions — such as complement structures — to express fine-grained semantic distinctions. It may be related to the language's open syllable phonological structure, which constrains morphological complexity.

Second, the obligatory-optional distinction for complements is primarily determined by the semantic properties of the verb rather than purely syntactic factors. Verbs that inherently require specification of an argument (such as *ntau* 'have' or *ndadi* 'become') mandate complements, while verbs that can independently express complete propositions (such as *dangga* 'walk' or *mou* 'fall').

Take optional complements that add specificity. This finding is consistent with the verb valency framework proposed by Comrie (1989) and with Arka and Ross's (2005) observations on Balinese and related Austronesian languages, where the obligatoriness of complements is determined by the verb's inherent argument structure rather than by surface syntactic position.

Third, the six-way classification of complement verbs (intensive, complex transitive, action, process, state, stative) reflects the interaction of syntactic structure and semantic properties. This classification finds typological parallels in the work of Dixon (2010) on cross-linguistic verb classes and in Edwards' (2025) documentation of *Teun*, *Nila*, and *Serua*, where similar semantic distinctions among verbs organize the complement system. The data on the Bima language, while language-specific in detail, confirm broader Austronesian typological patterns in the organization of verbal complementation. This classification aligns with cross-linguistic patterns observed in other Austronesian languages of eastern Indonesia (Edwards, 2025; Tennis et al., 2018), while revealing language-specific patterns unique to Bima.

Fourth, the semantic functions of complements in Bima cover a wide range of thematic roles, including locative, benefactive, source, manner, causal, resultative, accompaniment, and purpose. Rajeg and Denistia (2023) note that Indonesian verbal affixation encodes many of these semantic distinctions morphologically; by contrast, in the Bima language, these distinctions are realized syntactically through complement constructions. This difference in encoding strategy — syntactic in Bima versus morphological in Indonesian — reflects a typologically important parameter that

warrants further comparative investigation across the regional languages of Nusa Tenggara. This diversity reflects the expressive capacity of the complement system in encoding fine-grained semantic distinctions.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of complement verbs in the Bima language (*Tarlawi* sub-dialect) can be summarized as follows. Based on the first finding concerning form, the Bima language has a core verb form that represents the basic form or root verb. It is the morphological and syntactic core for generating other verb forms and complement structures. The language's open syllable structure has morphological and syntactic consequences relevant to the organization of complement constructions.

Next, in terms of the types of verbs, complement verbs in Bima can be classified into six types: (1) intensive verbs, which require complements to be semantically complete; (2) complex transitive verbs, which bind an object and a complement; (3) action verbs, which express an activity and do not obligatorily require a complement; (4) process verbs, which express a change of state; (5) state verbs, which refer to a resultative state or condition; and (6) stative verbs, which express a fixed or abstract state.

The presence of a complement is optional in some verbs and obligatory in others, depending on verb type and communicative context. Intensive verbs and some process verbs typically require compulsory complements. Action verbs, state verbs, and most stative verbs generally have optional complements. Complex transitive verbs require objects, while their complements vary. Regarding semantic function, the complements in Bima serve a variety of semantic functions—locative, benefactive, source, manner, causal, resultative, accompaniment, and purpose—in verb construction.

As a contribution to the field, this study provides the first documentation of complement verbs in the Bima language of the *Tarlawi* sub-dialect, with a full classification of six verb types based on complement properties and a careful account of obligatory versus optional patterns. These findings are situated within the broader framework of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and contribute to the comparative linguistics of eastern Indonesian Austronesian languages.

Future research may consider other sub-dialects of the Bima language to examine dialectal variation in complement structures; conduct a diachronic study of historical change in verb complementation; conduct corpus-based quantitative analyses of the frequency and distribution of complements; and apply the study's findings to teaching materials for the Bima language.

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