THE LINGUISTICS OF SITTING, STANDING, AND LYING

Edited by

JOHN NEWMAN

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Preface

The chapters in this volume were written in response to a call for papers in August 1999, inviting linguists to explore linguistic properties of verbs which are used to describe some key at-rest positions: sitting, standing, and lying. Such verbs are referred to as "posture verbs" in this volume, even though these verbs may have various uses in addition to being used to refer to human postures.

The volume was envisaged as being a continuation, in some ways, of the approach adopted in an earlier volume *The Linguistics of Giving* (Newman 1997). That volume contained a collection of papers exploring the concept of giving (and, to some extent, taking) and its expression in languages. The approach there was to identify an event familiar from our experience of ordinary experiential reality and proceed from there to an investigation of a range of linguistic phenomena associated with the verbs which denote that event. This included phenomena relating to the encoding of the giving event in different languages (the lexicalization of the 'give' concept and the varied morphosyntax which can accompany such verbs), as well as phenomena relating to figurative usage and grammaticalization involving 'give' verbs. The present volume attempts to do the same for the posture verbs. The first chapter of the volume, by **John Newman**, provides an overview of the range of linguistic phenomena associated with posture verbs across languages. It introduces the main ideas which are fleshed out in greater detail in particular languages in the remainder of the volume.

Posture verbs, even in their most literal uses as verbs describing human postures, are worthy of close attention and the chapters on Lao and Japanese/ English address issues relating to literal uses of the verbs, especially relating to the distinction between the action of entering into a posture and the state resulting from that action. This distinction is discussed by **N. J. Enfield** in a chapter on the Lao posture verbs which, interestingly, may be used in either an intransitive construction or a transitive-like construction. The latter would appear to be restricted to combinations of posture verbs with direct object nouns directly affected by the posture and/or nouns which refer to the kinds of entities which are typically associated with the posture. So, for example, the transitive use of the 'lie, sleep' verb is found with direct object nominals such as 'straw mat', 'ground', and 'bed', but not with 'tree' or 'roof'. **John Newman** and **Toshiko Yamaguchi** compare the aspectual devices available in Japanese and English for distinguishing the action and state meanings associated with the sitting posture. Japanese

aspectual marking with -*te iru* creates an unambiguously stative interpretation of 'be sitting', even though with some other verbs -*te iru* allows either a processual or stative interpretation. In English, the present participle -*ing* form is associated with a number of semantic effects. However, in actual usage *sitting* is more commonly used with a stative interpretation than a processual one. The authors relate the Japanese and English facts to the experiential realities of the act and state of sitting.

The posture states, while all aptly described as "at rest", have quite different roles to play in our lives. Sitting is generally associated with comfort and is a posture we can maintain for some hours while continuing to work with our hands, while continuing to talk etc. Standing in one position is not so comfortable and we are not inclined to stay in that position for so long, though it is a position with advantages for seeing at a distance, exerting force against others etc. Lying is the position associated, par excellence, with sleep, sickness, death etc. So, despite a commonality between the at-rest positions, there are also clear differences in their functions in our daily lives. The posture verbs encoding these states reflect these realities: with regard to some linguistic phenomena in a language (e.g. the basic syntax they occur with) they may appear a unified set, behaving in a parallel way, while in other ways (e.g. figurative extension of the posture meaning) the verbs may pattern differently. **Sally Rice** considers the posture verbs in Dene Sųłiné (Chipewyan), an indigenous language of Canada, from this point of view. Rice considers the behavior of each posture verb with respect to ten distinct lexical and grammatical properties. She finds that the 'stand' and 'lie' predicates behave in quite opposite ways while the 'sit' predicate is situated between 'stand' and 'lie', sharing some properties with the former and some with the latter. Rice sees her Dene Sųłiné data as lending support to the idea of a continuum 'stand' > 'sit' > 'lie', a continuum which is experientially based. **Michael Noonan** and **Karen Grunow-Hårsta** investigate the range of lexical and morphosyntactic differentiation found in posture verbs in Chantyal and Magar, two Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal. They consider the lexical items which convey the posture meanings and find that both languages lack a simplex verb for 'lie', whereas simplex verbs can occur for 'sit' and 'stand'. They argue that lying is the least agentive of the three postures, and this correlates with the lack of a simplex verb meaning 'lie'. Other semantic and morphosyntactic details of posture verbs in the two languages can differ, however. For example, Chantyal makes distinctions between active involvement versus non-active involvement (on the part of the subject) and assuming versus maintaining the posture. Neither of these distinctions is made in Magar.

The remaining chapters deal mainly with the use of these verbs in contexts where they are not simply referring to humans in certain bodily positions. Languages, in varying degrees, allow or require posture verbs to refer to the location and orientation of inanimates, what one might call a "locational" extension. The

verbs can be used quite extensively as locational or existential verbs or participles, in which case they function, in effect, like classifiers. Another major direction of extension of the posture verbs is their evolution into verbal auxiliaries with a tense or aspectual meaning, most commonly a progressive or habitual aspectual meaning.

Maarten Lemmens reviews the use of Dutch posture verbs as locational and existential predicates, a use which is significantly more widespread than in English. He finds that the extensions of 'stand' and 'lie' verbs to locational/existential uses in Dutch are largely motivated by images of verticality and horizontality, i.e., images relating to "orientation". The non-postural uses of Dutch 'sit', however, are best described in terms of "containment" and "contact". Lemmens makes use of a substantial corpus of Dutch to substantiate his analyses.

As in Dutch, so also in the Brazilian language Trumai (a genetic isolate), the posture verbs have been extended to non-postural uses. The Trumai posture verbs are discussed by **Raquel Guirardello-Damian**. She includes in her discussion a verb meaning 'be in water/liquid medium' and another verb meaning 'be in a closed place' since these verbs have similar formal and semantic properties to the 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie' verbs. These verbs occur as main verbs as well as auxiliaries referring to the posture of the entity that is the S or A argument of the clause. Guirardello-Damian pays close attention to the conditions of use of these verbs in locational/existential uses, systematically distinguishing the conditions on the figure, the ground, and the spatial orientation associated with each verb.

The chapter by **Alan Rumsey** deals with the posture verbs and the role they play as classificatory verbs in some Papuan languages, in particular Enga and Ku Waru. In these languages, 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie' verbs function as existential predicates, each one occurring with a particular range of subject nouns. Rumsey discusses the classificatory bases for the different classes of nouns which occur with the posture-based existential predicates. Some of the classifications are more transparent than others. In Enga, for example, "habitat" would appear to be the principal parameter distinguishing the animate noun classes occurring with three of the posture-based existential verbs: heavenly animates occur with 'stand', subterranean with 'lie inside', and aquatic with 'lie'. A less transparent classification is found with Ku Waru 'stand' which, as an existential verb, occurs with 'hand/arm', 'leg/foot', 'eye', 'ear', 'forehead', among others. Rumsey describes their commonality as involving body-parts which are "openly visible in face-to-face interaction with others". The use of 'sit' as a default existential verb in reference to women and 'stand' as the corresponding verb in reference to men, as suggested by the title of the chapter "Men stand, women sit" is an additional, intriguing distinction in a number of Papuan languages.

Two chapters deal with posture verbs in Australian languages. **Cliff Goddard** and **Jean Harkins**, in their chapter, describe the range of uses (including auxiliary

uses) of posture verbs in two Pama-Nyungan languages of Central Australia: Arrernte and the Western Desert language Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara (two closely related dialects of the same language). In both these languages, the posture verbs are used as locational and existential verbs (the most general one being 'sit' in Arrernte and 'stand' in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara), as well as having copula and auxiliary uses. They document the similarities and differences between the posture verbs within each language and between languages. Some Arrernte facts they mention reflect the special status of 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie' vis-a-vis other postural verbs: the three verbs *ane-* 'sit', *tne-* 'stand', and *inte-* 'lie', and only these three verbs, can occur with an intensifying suffix *-rtne*, and it is only these three verbs which can occur in a particular set of syntactic constructions. Similar observations can be made for Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara. Such facts lend support to the notion that precisely these positions are the key "at rest" positions, as reflected in the title of this volume. **Nicholas Reid** describes the behavior of posture verbs in Ngan'gityemerri, a non-Pama-Nyungan language of the Daly River region in Northern Australia. 'Sit', 'stand', and 'lie' are three of just six verbs that can function as simple intransitive verbs in Ngan'gityemerri, the other three being 'perch', 'go', and 'travel'. The posture verbs have a range of uses, including locational and existential, copula, co-verb, and serialised uses. In Ngan'gityemerri, the six simple intransitive verbs, including the posture verbs, can function as imperfective aspectual markers, cliticized to a verbal complex (a phenomenon which appears to have arisen only since the 1930s). In this capacity, the (incipient) aspectual use of the intransitive verbs appears to the right of the root + tense complex, an unusual ordering of tense and aspect with respect to the root (cf. Foley and Van Valin 1984:212). Reid speculates that the order of morphemes might switch to root + aspect + tense, in conformity to the cross-linguistic tendency, if the aspectual use of these verbs were to become more established. Ngan'gityemerri, then, is especially interesting in the way it offers us a view of an incipient grammaticalization of posture verbs.

Frantisek Lichtenberk reviews the linguistic facts pertaining to the posture verbs in Oceanic, a subgroup of Austronesian. Apart from carefully documenting the details of usage of the posture verbs in many languages, Lichtenberk reflects on some hypotheses about these verbs and the kinds of evolutions they might undergo. He finds evidence to support a kind of mini-hierarchy of STAND/SIT — LIE, in terms of how these verbs are used to refer to temporal extension, as happens in Oceanic. 'Lie' verbs will refer to the longest duration, or extendedness, when used to refer to temporal extension, while 'stand' and 'sit' verbs refer to periods of shorter temporal extension (languages vary as to which of 'stand' and 'sit' refers to a longer period of time). Lichtenberk also finds reason to support a grammaticalization path of POSTURE > LOCATIVE/EXISTENTIAL USE > ASPECTUAL use, an idea also advanced by Kuteva (1999).

Christa Kilian-Hatz, in her chapter on Kxoe, a Khoisan language of Namibia, argues for a particular path of evolution of posture verbs, drawing upon data from the contemporary language to illustrate the various evolutionary stages. She argues for a progression from main verb > copula (auxiliary) > aspectual auxiliary > aspectual suffix. This progression mimics an historically earlier development of postures into tense markers in the language. Here, too, the differences between the posture verbs are interesting, e.g., the 'stand' verb develops into a present tense marker, as well as a recent past tense marker meaning 'a short time ago'; the 'stand up' verb appears to have developed into a past suffix meaning 'today morning'; and the 'sit down on a tree (of birds)' verb has developed into the past tense suffix meaning 'yesterday'. **John Keegan** discusses posture verbs in another African language, Mbay (a Central-Sudanic language of the Nilo-Saharan family, spoken mainly in Chad and neighboring parts of the Central African Republic). The posture verbs *ndì* 'sit', *dà* 'stand', and *tò* 'lie' are unusual in so far as they have a phonological shape characteristic of grammatical morphemes rather than lexical verbs, consistent with the usage of these words as semi-grammatical morphemes. Keegan documents the use of these morphemes as main verbs, locational/ existential verbs, progressive auxiliaries, deictic adverbs, and demonstratives. Keegan also includes a discussion of the dynamic 'put', 'take', and 'fall' verbs and compares the ways in which the posture verbs subclassify subject referents and the ways in which these dynamic verbs subclassify their object referents. There are interesting differences between the posture verbs and these dynamic verbs. For example, while there is a distinction made between things which can 'sit' (mortars, cups, basins, pots, baskets) and things which can 'stand' (poles, walls, trees), there is no comparable division between things which can be 'stood' and things which can be 'set', with the one verb 'put' covering the positioning of mortars, cups, basins, pots, baskets, poles, walls, trees etc.

Jae Jung Song considers four posture verbs and their range of uses in Korean. The verbs are *se-* 'sit', *anc-* 'stand', and two 'lie' verbs: *nwup-* plain 'lie' and *cappaci-* vulgar 'lie'. Song demonstrates a difference in the ways in which these verbs extend to describing the position of inanimates. It appears to be only the 'stand' verb which can be extended in this way. When it comes to extension to progressive aspect marking, however, a different pattern emerges: it is only 'sit' and the vulgar 'lie' that can be extended in this way. Song's analysis would seem to cast doubt on the universality of the POSTURE > LOCATIVE/EXISTENTIAL USE > ASPECTUAL path of evolution as proposed by Kuteva (1999) and for which Lichtenberk in his chapter finds support. In Korean, the posture verb that does not extend to general locative/existential use is the one that extends to aspectual marking.

A final chapter by **Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr.** reports on an experimental study from cognitive psychology investigating the cognitive basis of the figurative uses of *stand*. The research is significant as an attempt to establish an experimental

methodology enabling a researcher to study the relevant cognitive parameters in the figurative extension of English *stand*. The chapter is an update on the research first reported in Gibbs *et al.* (1994). Although Gibbs' research is concerned only with the *stand* verb in English, his methodology is applicable to the other posture verbs and to posture verbs in any language.

Some explanations concerning the conventions adopted in this book are in order. Posture words in single quotes ('sit', 'stand', 'lie') are used to refer to posture expressions with these meanings, or approximately these meanings, cross-linguistically; the italicized posture words refer to particular forms of posture expressions in a language, e.g., English *sit*, *stand*, and *lie*. Posture words are normally glossed with their posture meanings ('sit', 'stand', 'lie' etc.) in this volume, even though the forms are sometimes used in other ways, e.g., grammaticalized uses. Different languages lend themselves to different representational formats. So, for example, languages with established romanized orthographies lend themselves to the usual orthographic conventions (capital letter at the beginning of a sentence, a full-stop at the end of a sentence etc.), whereas languages without established romanized orthographies lend themselves more to a phonemic representation without punctuation marks. These different preferences have been respected in the preparation of this volume, with the result that the formatting of example sentences does vary somewhat across chapters.

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Contents

A cross-linguistic overview of the posture verbs 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie'

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1. Introduction

The concepts which are the focus of this chapter are the stative meanings 'to be in a sitting position', 'to be in a standing position', and 'to be in a lying position'. I will refer to these meanings in an abbreviated way as 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie'. In this chapter I offer an overview of the properties of verbs with these meanings, or ones which approximate them, based on data drawn from many different languages. The properties I will be concerned with cover both the central meanings of these verbs, i.e., the postural senses, as well as figurative or grammaticalized extensions of these verbs. The three postures play a significant role in the course of our ordinary daily routines and the verbs which denote these postures are common sources for further semantic extension.

2. Central meanings

Taking English *sit, stand,* and *lie* as a convenient starting point for our discussion, we may proceed to identify more closely the components of the meanings of these verbs and the experiential realities which underlie them. I will consider the following properties which together make up the larger semantic frame: the spatio-temporal domain, the force dynamics domain, the active zone associated with each predicate, and the socio-cultural domain.

The spatio-temporal domain refers to the overall spatial configuration which presents itself and is maintained through time. With all three of these postures there is a strong sense of the extension of a state through time and a strong contrast between the spatial configurations involved: a compact shape associated with sitting; an upright, vertical elongation with standing; a horizontal elongation in the case of lying. These three distinct spatio-temporal configurations constitute strong spatial images in human conceptualization and often play a

part in motivating alternative categorizations of entities, as discussed below.

The force dynamics domain refers to the manner in which entities exercise force or are subjected to forces. All three states may be maintained with no physical movement on the part of the person involved. Nevertheless, there are clear differences between these states in terms of the sensorimotor control which is needed in order to maintain the position. In the case of standing, both upper torso and lower torso need to be sturdy and held vertical; with sitting it is the upper torso which needs to be held vertical while the lower torso can be quite relaxed, or even paralyzed; and with lying no part of the body needs to be exercising any muscular or sensorimotor control at all. In terms of degree of control needed, then, there is a gradation from standing (requiring most control), through sitting, to lying (requiring least control). Notice that this gradation in degree of control required corresponds, in reverse order, to stages by which children develop, namely lying, then sitting, then standing. And of the three, the standing position, without any additional support, is the one which humans are least able to maintain for long periods of time. The control which needs to be exercised is not just a matter of force being exerted upon any particular object, rather it is a combination of control over one's own body and the exercise of balance in a vertical position.

Langacker (1987:271–4) has proposed the term *active zone* for the salient subpart of the overall meaning which is most directly involved in the interaction of entities or maintenance of a state. For example, eyelids constitute the active

Table 1. Central meanings of English *sit*, *stand*, and *lie*

Spatio-temporal domain	*sit*	relatively compact position
	stand	vertical elongated position
	lie	horizontal elongated position
Force dynamics domain	*sit*	medium degree of control and balance (upper torso), easily maintained
	stand	highest degree of control and balance (upper and lower torso); most difficult to maintain
	lie	lowest degree of control and balance, no physical effort to maintain
Active zone	*sit*	buttocks (and upper torso)
	stand	legs (and upper torso)
	lie	whole body
Social/cultural domain	*sit*	comfortable position either for working or relaxing
	stand	potentially most physically powerful position
	lie	associated with tiredness, sickness, sleep, death

Note: *sit*, *stand*, and *lie*, as used here, all refer to the maintenance of a posture

zone of the predicate *blink*, while a foot would be the active zone of the predicate *kick*. In the case of *sit*, the active zone which suggests itself is the buttocks and, to some extent, the upper torso, these being the parts of the body which appear to be most relevant to maintenance of the sitting position. In the case of *stand*, it is the legs in particular which are crucial, along with the upper torso which needs to assume a particular vertical shape. With *lie*, a side of the body would be the active zone since it is a side that typically comes into contact with a flat surface.

The states play very different roles in the socio-cultural domain. Sitting is a relatively comfortable position and combines both the opportunity to work with the hands, to look ahead and around easily, to eat and drink normally, while at the same time not becoming tired through prolonged exercise of the leg muscles. Standing allows a greater exercise of physical power, vision over a greater distance, and is a prerequisite for walking, running etc. Lying is the least compatible with physical action and is associated with rest, sleep, sickness, and death. We can summarize the key features of the three states as in Table 1.

3. Lexicalizations

Examples of other kinds of posture encoded as morphemes in their own right can be found in English *squat* and *crouch* (which could be considered as variants of sitting), *lean* (a variant of standing), and *recline* (a kind of lying). *Kneel* might be described as a kind of 'standing on one's knees'. Languages differ in the ways in which postures may be described by single lexical items. In Manam (Austronesian), we have separate lexical items *soaʔi* 'sit' and *basaʔi* 'sit cross-legged', whereas in English we must use the circumlocution *sit cross-legged* to convey this sense. Mithun (1998: 165) reports five 'sit' verbs for Central Pomo (Amerindian): *čʰmáw* (used to describe a single person sitting on a chair), *bamáw* (used to describe a group sitting together on a bench), *ʔčʰáːw* (used to describe a single person sitting on the ground), *napʰów* (used to describe a group sitting on the ground, also 'to marry' in reference to a woman), and *cʰóm* (used to describe a container of liquid on a table).[1] Creek (Amerindian) distinguishes verbs of lying depending on whether the reference is to a round object, long object, flexible object, liquid, or living being (Haas 1948: 244).

In French, the human postures are not expressed as simple verbs on a par with intransitive verbs like *dormir* 'sleep' and *venir* 'come'. Instead, the postures are expressed as syntactically more complex phrases consisting of *être* 'be' plus a word with stative meaning. These are *être assis(e)* (adjective and past participle of *asseoir* 'to seat, to put on a seat') 'to be in a sitting position', *être debout* (adverb meaning 'upright, on one's feet') 'to be in a standing position', and *être allongé(e)* (adjective and past participle of *allonger* 'lengthen, to stretch') 'to be in a lying

position'. The lack of a simple verbal category is relatable to the strong stativity of the three posture verbs which present a stable configuration and hence rate high on Givón's time-stability scale (Givón 1984: 51–6). As such, they are less verb-like and being encoded as adjectives or past-participles is consistent with this. English *be recumbent* has a similar complex structure, there being no single verb like *to recumber.

Sitting, standing, and lying are postures we can maintain while engaged in various activities. For example, one can talk, lecture, write, read, and do most kinds of things while standing; similarly for sitting and lying, even though there may be some differences in the kinds of actions which can be carried out, depending upon the posture. Consistent with this experiential reality, posture may be expressed in language by means of verbal auxiliaries or verbal affixes accompanying a main verb, rather than as the main verb itself. In Diyari (Australian), for example, *ngama-* 'sit' participates in a compound verb construction in which it indicates that the action of the main verb is carried out in a stationary position (Austin 1998: 31). In Yuma (Amerindian), posture can be indicated in medio-passive verb forms by prefixes *t-* 'to do while sitting', *v-* 'to do while standing', and *a-* 'to do while walking or lying' (Halpern 1946: 274).

The dynamic postural meanings 'to sit oneself down', 'to move oneself into a standing position', and 'to lay oneself down' are closely connected semantically to the corresponding stative meanings and one and the same form may indicate either the dynamic or the stative meaning in languages. This holds in English to some extent. So, for example, *sit* can have dynamic or stative interpretations and *I sat on the chair* could mean 'I sat myself down on the chair' or 'I was sitting on a chair (and didn't move)'. Where there are distinct forms for the dynamic and stative, one of them may be derived from the other. The dynamic forms can be based on the stative verbs, as in the case of German: *sich setzen* 'to sit oneself down', the reflexive of *setzen* 'to set something/someone down', is historically derived from *sitzen* 'to sit (stative)'. Alternatively, the dynamic verbs may be the more basic ones, as in Usan (Papuan), where the dynamic verbs *bugâb* 'sit down', *naget* 'stand up', and *inâb* 'lie down' are basic. The stative meanings are expressed by putting the dynamic verbs into the continuative aspect (Reesink 1987: 132).

4.   Syntax of the central meanings

Where a language makes a clear syntactic or morphological distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs (or their constructions), the posture verbs will be typically intransitive. This can be seen in Tongan (Austronesian), where a transitive construction requires ergative case-marking of the subject and an intransitive construction will have absolutive marking of the subject. Tongan *tangutu* 'sit', *tu'u*

'stand', and *tokoto* 'lie' behave like typical intransitive verbs in that they require their subjects to be in the absolute case, marked by '*a* in (1a). This contrasts with transitive verbs such as *kai* 'eat', as used in (1b), where the subject of the verb appears with ergative case marking '*e*. In (1a), the locative preposition '*i* is optional in casual speech before the definite article *he*. Note, however, that the subject remains in the absolutive case typical of subjects of intransitive verbs even when the locative preposition is omitted. In other words, the omission of the locative preposition does not alter the basic intransitivity of the *tangutu* clause.

(1) a. 'Oku tangutu 'a   Mele ('i) he   sea.
       PRES sit   ABS Mele LOC ART chair
       'Mele is sitting on a chair.' (Tongan)
   b. 'Oku kai 'e   Mele 'a   e   ika.
       PRES eat ERG Mele ABS ART fish
       'Mele is eating the fish.' (Tongan)

Definiteness of reference may have a bearing on the presence or absence of an adposition in Swahili (Niger-Kordofanian) posture clauses as well. In Swahili (cf. Russell 1985:479–80), the posture verbs 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie' are basically intransitive predicates, occurring with locative complements, as in (2a), where the complement is marked with the locative suffix *-ni*. However, the locative suffix may be omitted as long as the location phrase has a definite reference, as in (2b).

(2) a. Juma a-li-kaa   kiti-ni.
       Juma he-PAST-sit chair-LOC
       'Juma sat on a/the chair.' (Swahili)
   b. Juma a-li-kaa   kiti hiki.
       Juma he-PAST-sit chair this
       'Juma sat on this chair.' (Swahili)

A locative adposition may be absent altogether, as in the case of Cantonese:

(3) Léih chóh nī   jēung yí   lā.
    you sit   this CL   chair PART
    'Sit on this chair.' (Cantonese, Matthews and Yip 1994:136)

There are instances where the 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie' verbs in a language are associated with different morphosyntax. In Manam, for example, *tui* 'stand' is distinguished from *soaʔi* 'sit' and *eno* 'lie' with respect to aspectual facts. The 'sit' and 'lie' verbs are classified by Lichtenberk (1983:219) as 'state' verbs which have 'patient' subjects. Semantically, these verbs describe states or changes of state. The class also includes verbs with meanings such as 'be big, grow big', 'be bad, become bad', 'be broken, break (intr.)'. With such verbs, according to Lichtenberk (1983:219), the continuative aspect of Manam can mean that the state continues

to change, that the state habitually, repetitively changes, or that the state itself is habitual, repetitive. The continuative aspect with the 'state' verbs can not, however, mean that the state is in progress at the time of the speech act or at the time of another event. Nor can such verbs appear with the aspect associated specifically with this meaning, i.e. the progressive aspect. State verbs contrast with 'active' verbs which have agentive subjects. Examples of active verbs in Manam are the verbs meaning 'go', 'work', 'jump', 'speak', 'hit', 'give' and *tui* 'stand'. Thus, in Manam, 'stand' is aligned with verbs of action involving agents, whereas 'sit' and 'lie' are aligned with verbs describing states without agents. This separation between 'stand' on the one hand and 'sit' and 'lie' on the other hand correlates with different polysemy networks of the three verbs (cf. Newman ms.). The 'sit' and 'lie' verbs have additional stative kinds of usages as general locational predicates, existential predicates, (immediate) possession verbs, progressive aspect auxiliary (in the case of 'sit') and persistive aspect auxiliary (in the case of 'lie'). 'Stand', on the other hand, does not show this kind of polysemy in Manam. The extensive polysemy found with 'sit' and 'lie' is presumably relevant to the different behaviors of 'stand' and 'sit'/'lie' with respect to morphosyntax.

Javanese (Austronesian) verbal morphology also presents us with a separation of 'stand' and 'sit'/'lie'. Javanese verbal morphology is quite complex (cf. the overview in Uhlenbeck 1978: 127–35; Suharno 1982: 19–22, 28–45; Robson 1992: 48–55), but here it will be enough to focus just on the presence or absence of a nasal prefix, represented as N-. This nasal takes on various forms, including *nge-* before monosyllabic roots (*cat* 'to paint' → *ngecat* 'paints'), a nasal substitution of an initial voiceless obstruent (*tulis* 'to write' → *nulis* 'writes'), and a nasal prefixed to a voiced obstruent or liquid or vowel (*gawe* 'to make, force' → *nggawe* 'makes, forces'). N- is strongly associated with more agentive, intentional meanings in Javanese. Most transitive verbs, for example, require N- in the active form, e.g. (*ng*)*ombe* 'drink', (*ng*)*anggo* 'use', (*ng*)*lorod* 'remove wax (in batik making)', *tulis*/*nulis* 'write', *cekel*/*nyekel* 'hold', (*ng*)*iris* 'cut', *colong*/*nyolong* 'steal', (*ng*)*rangkul* 'hug', but not the less agentive *weruh* 'see' and *krungu* 'hear'. Some intransitive verbs require the N-, such as *nari* 'to dance with particular type of movement' (cf. the corresponding noun *tari*), *njoged* 'dance, as a general term' (cf. the corresponding noun *joged*), *nembang* 'sing' (cf. *tembang* 'song'). Some other intransitive verbs can not occur with N-, such as *wahing* 'sneeze' and *watuk* 'cough'. The intransitive posture verbs behave as follows: the root *adeg* 'to stand' patterns like the agentive intransitive verbs, requiring N- (*ngadeg*); the roots *lungguh* 'to sit' and (*te*)*turon* 'lie', on the other hand, do not take N- in their intransitive uses. It is also worth noting that all three verbs *adeg*, *lungguh*, and (*te*)*turon* are used for either the action or state sense ('move into a position' or 'be in a position'). This makes it impossible to explain the different behaviors of the three verbs by reference to different polysemies of the