

## Grammatical relations in Sou Amana Teru

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Sou Amana Teru is a Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian language spoken on Ambon Island in the Maluku region of Eastern Indonesia. In this language, clitic pronouns are used extensively to index the most thematically prominent argument of the verb (Musgrave 2010). Such clitic pronouns occur with dependent verbs:

- (1) *Isi asik isi pahoi=si*  
3PL busy 3PL wash=3PL  
'They were busy washing themselves.'

and in multi-clausal constructions such as purpose clauses:

- (2) *Uma ute wake=ma e=tana=re ena e=pa'-ia=re*  
then bamboo joint=that 3SG=take=3NH for 3SG=CAUS-  
good=3NH  
'Then that bamboo joint, she took it to fix it.'

There is also weak evidence for any relative clause constructions in the language. In many cases, speakers use the Malay relativiser *yang* when translating prompts which include relative clauses, and the few exceptions which I have been able to elicit can be interpreted as sequences of independent clauses:

- (3) *Yau nau mansia-e si upa wa'a rete Waai*  
1SG see people-V 3PL stay LOC DIR Waai  
'I saw the people who live at Waai' OR 'I saw the people, they live at Waai'

These phenomena mean that the language has no pivot constructions which might provide evidence for a privileged grammatical relation (i.e. subject).

This paper considers other properties of the language which might be a diagnostic for grammatical relations, such as an asymmetry between clitic pronouns in O function and clitic pronouns in S and A function. While such properties provide some weak motivation for using grammatical relations as a tool when analysing this language, it is

argued that an adequate account of the syntactic patterns of the language can be given based on the semantics of verbs along the lines of Durie's analysis of Acehnese (Durie 1985).

References:

Durie, Mark. 1985. A grammar of Acehnese on the basis of a dialect of north Aceh. Dordrecht: Foris Publications (Volume 112 of *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*).

Musgrave, Simon. 2010 Reduced pronouns and argument coding in Sou Amana Teru, Ambon Island. In Michael C. Ewing & Marian Klamer (eds.) *Typological and Areal Analyses: Contributions from East Nusantara*, 143-164. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics