

Constituent order in Sumbawa  
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Sumbawa (indigenous designation Samawa, ISO-639-3 code SMW) is a language spoken in the western part of Sumbawa Island in Indonesia. Sumbawa belongs to the Bali-Sasak-Sumbawa subgroup in the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family (Adelaar (2005: 19) and Mbeté (1990)).

This research is an attempt to show the factors determining the constituent order of Sumbawa. As in all other languages in the world, the constituent order of Sumbawa can be seen as a realization of interplay between syntax and information structure.

The basic constituent order of Sumbawa is predicate initial (so-called VOS and VS type).

- (1) *teri tódé nan*  
fall child that  
V S 'The child fell.'
- (2) *kakan tepong ling tódé nan*  
eat cake by child that  
V O S 'That child ate cake.'

These orders can be seen as syntactically unmarked from the unmarked case forms appearing in it and the fact it is observed in the construction that is neutral as to the information structure (i.e. sentence focus structure or athetic sentence).

Sumbawa, however, exhibits a strong constraint for a sentence focus to appear in a clause initial position. The basic constituent order as in (1) and (2) is retained in sentence focus construction (as mentioned above) or a predicate focus construction, while in an argument focus construction, the deviation from the basic order is observed; the focus argument obligatorily appear before the predicate followed by one of the three focus marker (*mo* 'inchoative', *si* 'exclusive' or *po* 'condition').

- (3) *aku mo ya=kakan tepong nan*  
1sg INCH FUT=eat cake that  
'I will eat the cake' or 'It is I who will eat the cake'
- (4) *tepong si ka= kakan ling nya*  
cake EXCL PST=eat by 3  
'He ate **CAKE**.' or 'It is **cake** that he ate'
- (5) *nawar po ya=ku=bau molé.*  
tomorrow COND FUT=1SG=can go.home  
'**As for tomorrow**, I will be able to go home'

A cleft construction may be used in an argument focus clause. It is obligatorily used in an interrogative sentence with an interrogative noun.

- (6) a. *sai [adè ya=kakan tepong nan]*  
who REL future=eat cake that

- b.     *aku mo*  
      1sg inchoative  
a. 'WHO will have the cake?' b 'I will.'

Another type of deviation from the basic constituent order is observed in topicalization. A so-called new topic expression or reference-oriented topic expression (Lambrecht 1994: 187), which plays a role to announce a referent of a new topic, often but not obligatorily, appears before the predicate. Example (7) shows clauses that are typically observed in a folktale. Here, the main characters of the story (the old man and the old woman) are introduced in the story in the first clause, and then nominated as a new topic in the following two clauses that follows. Here, the expression denoting each of them occurs as topicalized argument, which appears before the predicate.

(7) (Once upon a time there lived an old man and his wife.)

*dè salaki lalo ko bao olat*  
REL man go to above mountain

*dè soai lalo mopo ko sumér*  
REL womango wash to well

**The old man** (lit. the male one) went to the mountains to cut firewood, and **the old woman** (lit. the female one) went to the well to do the washing.

From the facts above, we could characterize the constituent order in Sumbawa as follows.

- (1) It does exhibit VOS as a basic constituent order determined syntactically.
- (2) The deviation from the basic order in (1) is obligatorily observed in the argument focus construction.
- (3) The deviation from the basic order may also be observed in topicalization, in which a reference oriented topic expression occurs before the predicate.

The deviation from the basic order [(2) and (3)] is exclusively realized as left-dislocation of an argument. We can see that it is caused by a motivation to place a salient constituent in the information structure (i.e., the focus or the topic) in a position that is structurally salient (i.e., clause initial position).

The point (2) characterizes Sumbawa as focus prominent language. The paper, however, also will show the phenomenon seen as exception of the focus prominence, which is caused by the adhesion of the verb and argument in some conditions.

#### Abbreviation

COND condition, EXCL exclusive, FUT future, INCH inchoative, PST past, REL Relativizer, SG single

#### Reference

- Adelaar, Alexander. 2005. Malayo-Sumbawan. *Oceanic Linguistics* 44/2:357-388.  
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