

## Voice System in Sumbawa

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Sumbawa is considered to be a member of the Sundic group of the Western Malayo-Polynesian Languages, in the Austronesian family (see Tryon (1995: 27)), but, as Wouk (2002) suggests, unlike other members within the group, it deviates from so-called ‘Indonesian-type’ voice system; Sumbawa lacks the contrast of actor voice/ undergoer voice opposition, as well as applicative construction.

Sumbawa has reflex of each voice construction of Indonesian-type voice system, but the function of each construction differs from the typical one that is observed in languages of this type. Here, the reflex of undergoer voice, that is, the construction with morphologically unmarked verb and person marker, is its one and only device for expressing full transitive proposition with the actor and the undergoer. Here, the actor is expressed by the prepositional phrase with *léng* ‘by’ and the undergoer is expressed by an unmarked NP (without any indication of semantic relation to the predicate), as in (1).

- (1) *ka=ku=inóm kawa nan léng aku.*  
PAST=1SG=drink coffee that by 1SG  
‘I drank the coffee.’

The reflex of actor voice, that is, the construction with a nasal-prefixed verb, is an intransitive construction, in which the transitive proposition cannot be fully expressed. In most of the cases, only the actor can be expressed, and the undergoer cannot be expressed in this construction, as in (2). The actor occurs in the form of unmarked NP, in the same form to the S in unmarked intransitive construction, as in (3).

- (2) *ka=ku=nginóm (\*kawa) aku.*  
PAST=1SG.LOW.AFFIX=drink (\*coffee) 1SG  
‘I drank (something).’

- (3) *ku=molé aku.*  
1SG=sleep 1SG  
‘I go home’.

In discourse, this construction (the nasal construction, hereafter) exhibits similar function to actor voice in Indonesian type, and anti-passive construction in other languages. First, the nasal construction cannot be used when P is definite. Generally speaking, the nasal prefixed verb is used when we do not have to mention the patient, for example, when we only intend to specify the action, or the patient is clear from so-called ‘encyclopedic knowledge’ or a context. Secondly, the nasal construction normally expresses imperfective situation.

In the absence of a voice system, Sumbawa has developed devices to mark definiteness or topicality of the participants, that is, ‘incorporation’ of the P and topicalization of core-NP. Example (4) is an example of the incorporation. This construction is syntactically intransitive. The NP expressing the undergoer is incorporated into the predicate, and the actor occurs as S, that is, in the form of unmarked NP, as in (4).

- (4) *inóm=kawa*                      *nya=Amén.*  
 drink=coffee                      title=Amin  
 ‘Amin drinks coffee.’

Example (5) and (6) are examples of the topicalization. Here, the topic NP is pre-posed to the predicate. Topicalized NP occurs in the form of unmarked NP, irrespective of its semantic role. (The marker of the actor *léng* cannot occur with the topicalized NP in (5).)

- (5) *aku*                      *ka=(ku=)inóm*    *kawa*    *nan*  
 1SG                      PAST=(1SG=)drink coffee    that  
 ‘I drank the coffee.’

- (6) *kawa*    *nan*    *(ka=)ku=inóm*    *léng*    *aku.*  
 coffee    that    past=3SG =drink    by    1SG  
 ‘I drank the coffee’.

### References

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