

Demonstratives in Sumbawa

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This paper provides a general description of the demonstrative system in Sumbawa, a language spoken in the Western part of Sumbawa Island in Indonesia.

- The basic set of demonstratives consists of the following three bases: proximal *ta* ‘this’, mid-distal *nan* ‘that’, and distal *ana* ‘that’. These are differentiated by the distance from the speaker.
- In addition to reference in the scene of a speech event, *nan* is used anaphorically, and *ta* cataphorically. In narrative, *ta* refers to a key-entity in the scene, and helps the plot to be understood more easily.
- In addition to the three forms above, the form *tó*’, which also indicates the present time, may be used for reference in the scene of a speech event. It is used to introduce an entity which is new to the hearer; it is almost always accompanied with a pointing gesture in order to draw an attention to the hearer.

(1) *tó’ ada pió*
this/ that exist bird ‘Look! There is a bird.’

- The following pronominal forms are derived from the four demonstrative bases (*ta*, *nan*, *ana*, and *tó*’) by means of the nominalizing prefix *dè-*.

dèta ‘this’, *dèan* ‘that’, *dèna* ‘that’, *dètó* ‘this/ that’

- The pronominal forms refer to a concrete entity, while the base forms refer to non-entity, such as a situation or a state. The latter are often followed by a NP headed by *muntu* ‘time’, *lók* ‘way’, *léng* ‘words’.

(2) *ta muntu ku=nuja=padé.*
this time 1SG=pound=rice.
‘I am pounding rice’ (lit. This is the time I pound rice.)

(3) *ta lók tu=mongka.*
this way 1pl=cook.rice
‘We cook rice in this way.’ (lit. This is the way I cook rice.)

(4) *ta léng tau=nan.*
this words person=that ‘He said like this.’ (lit. These are his words.)