

Sinama Passive Constructions

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0. Introduction

This paper describes two kinds of passive constructions in Sinama Manuk Mangkaw (henceforth Sama MNK). Sama MNK is one of the dialects belonging to the Southern Sinama language. It is spoken in Manuk Mangkaw island, in the Southern part of the Philippines and is said to be a Philippine type language.¹

There has been a long history of discussion about sentences with non-agentive subjects in Philippine languages. They are sometimes called as *goal-topic* sentences or simply passive sentences. To my understanding, the prevailing opinion is that Philippine type languages have no subjects but topics. The issue is important for typological linguistics because it involves two inter-related controversies, (i) the typology of Philippine languages, i.e. whether Philippine languages are ergative languages or accusative languages and (ii) the status of the subject in these languages.

In the case of Sinama MNK, there are two kinds of constructions that appear to be passive. One seems to be similar to what Philipinists call goal-topic constructions. The second construction, to my knowledge, has not yet been the subject of discussion by any article. The construction contains a verb which is actor-topic in form but surprisingly carries a passive sense. The construction,

¹ The Southern Sinama language is widely spoken not only in the Sulu Archipelago, in the Philippines, but also in the east coast of Borneo island, including Sabah, Malaysia and East Kalimantan, Indonesia. King and King (1984) report that some Sinama languages are spoken in the east coast of Sabah and the present author has verified the existence of Southern Sinama there during a short visit. While there is little information on the East Kalimantan, data collected during my short trip is good enough to identify that the language in Derawan island is Southern Sinama. Furthermore, most of the residents in Derawan island are descendants of the settlers from Simunul island in the Philippines. Simunul is one of the main islands where Southern Sinama is spoken. The immigration seems to have started about 100 years ago.

however, also contains a prefix-like particle *leq* attached to the verb.²

1. Subject in Sama MNK

As I mentioned earlier, opinions vary whether Philippine languages have subjects or not. Those who claim that there is no subject in Philippine languages like to label the syntactic prominent NP in the sentence as *topic* (Schachter 1976, 1977). Thus there are actor-topic sentences but no active sentences in Philippine languages. Another school considers actor-topic sentences as active and non-actor topic sentences as passive.

This paper favors the latter school. From here on, the term *subject* is employed in lieu of Schachter's *topic*, because *topic* to me is another syntactic process of putting an NP in a prominent position, i.e. in the beginning of the sentence. However, I have stayed with the term *focus* as used by Schachter and Otnes (1972:69) to refer to the feature of a verbal predicate that determines the semantic relationship between a predicate verb and its subject. I understand that other linguists use the term *voice* and *case* to refer to this relationship.

Opinions vary in the number of passives in Philippine languages. For example, Bloomfield (1917:154) and Blake (1925) establish three kinds of passives compared to six by Constantino (1965) in Tagalog.

I have classified Sinama subjects into five categories, depending on the semantic roles they perform in the sentence, i.e. *actor*, *goal*, *locative*, *benefactive*, and *instrument*.³ It is the verbal affixes which principally determines what NP is to be hailed and what semantic role this NP is to play. The sentence with an actor subject is an active sentence and one with other subject, passive. Thus Sinama has four kinds of passives.

There are two moods in Sinama: *indicative* and *imperative*. There are cases when the same focus affix forms are employed to express different semantic roles in the indicative mood. For instance, *locative* and *benefactive* seem to share

² The particle is homophonous with the agentive marker in the language, which is similar to *ng* in Tagalog.

³ The terms used are those employed generally by Philippinists, who use the terms 'actor' and 'goal' in lieu of 'agent' and 'patient'. The category actor and goal take in more than agents and patients. For the purposes of the present discussion, 'actor' and 'agent', and 'goal' and 'patient' may be regarded as synonymous.

the same form {-in- -an}. Their focus forms in the imperatives, however, are different from each other. Sama MNK has two kinds of suffixes for the imperative mood: -un for goal subject and -in for benefactive. Compare sentence 3 with 6. The followings are the examples of different kinds of subjects (subject boldfaced).

1.1 Actor subject

1. Ngadjal **si Shoko**.

N-qadjal si Shoko⁴

AF-cook ptl Shoko

Shoko is cooking.

1.2. Goal subject

2. Niqadjal **daqing kohapoq** leq si Shoko.

ni-qadjal daqing kohapoq leq si Shoko

GF-cook fish grouper by ptl Shoko

Shoko cooks **the grouper fish**.

3. Pattaqun.

GF-pattaq-un [imp.]

take picture

⁴ The symbol *N-* represents a prefixed nasal that assimilates in various ways with the initial phoneme of the stem. Preceding /p, b, t, s, k, (g)/, *N-* assimilates to the point of articulation of the stem initial consonant and that consonant is deleted. In other environments it has the following realizations:

ng-: occurs preceding /q/, but /q/ drops

nga-: occurs preceding /h, l, m, n/

ngan-: occurs preceding /d, j/ and

ngang-: occurs preceding /g/.

Examples:

qaq	>	ngaq	'to get/take' AF
hinang	>	ngahinang	'to work/make' AF
deen	>	pangandeenan	'to hand in' GF
gamot	>	nganggamot	'to grow' AF

Take pictures.

1.3. Locative subject

4. **Anakqanak** iya bay binillihan leq na durian.

anak-anak iya bay billi-in- -an leq na durian.

child the perf LF-buy by him durian

The child is the one from whom he bought durian.

1.4. Benefactive subject

5. **Si Shoko** iya binallahan buwas leq si Aliq.

si Shoko iya balla-in -an buwas leq si Aliq

ptl Shoko the BF-cook rice by Ali

Shoko is the one for whom Ali cooks rice.

6. **Pattaqin aku.**

pattaq-in aku

BF-take picture I [imp]

Take a picture of **mine**.

1.5. Instrumental subject

7. **Bay pangaqan sigala ili boheq.**

bay paN-qaq-an sigala ili boheq

perf IF-get they that water

They get water by **that**.

2. {leq+N-} Construction

In Sama MNK, there are cases when the particle *leq* occurs with an actor focus verb. This particle is preposed to the verb and appears similar to a prefix and gives the sentence a perfective as well as 'passive-like' sense.

8. **Leq ngadjal leq ku manuk.**

leq N-qadjal leq ku manuk

ptl AF-cook by I chicken

The chicken has been cooked by me.