The Sinama derived transitive construction

JUN AKAMINE

1 Introduction

This paper describes two types of transitive sentences in Manuk Mangkaw Sinama (henceforth MNK). MNK is spoken in Manuk Mangkaw Island, Tawi-Tawi Province, in the south-west of the Philippines and is a dialect of Southern Sulu Sinama. Discussion of the typology of Sinama vis-à-vis other Philippine languages is beyond the scope of the paper. However, it will be shown below that Sinama is a morphologically ergative language.

In MNK, there are two kinds of construction that appear to be semantically passive. One, marked by the verbal infix -pin, seems to be similar to what Filipinists call the goal-topic construction. The second construction contains a prefix-like form leq attached to the verb.3 To my knowledge, this construction has not yet been the subject of any discussion, except in Akamine (1996). In that work I analysed the leq construction within the framework of ‘traditional grammar’ in Philippine linguistics, employing the traditional concepts of grammatical subject, active voice and passive voice. In the present analysis, I will re-analyse the construction from the viewpoint of discourse transitivity and show the semantic differences between the two constructions.

1 The data presented here are results of several periods of fieldwork in Manuk Mangkaw Island. I am grateful to Hadji Amilbansjm S. Jaaini who accommodated me. This research was supported in part by (a) the Asian Studies Scholarship Program from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Japan and (b) a separate grant from the same ministry for the special project ‘Culture-Ecological Structure of Network Society in Wallacea’ (8070410577), headed by Tanaka Koji of Kyoto University. I want to express my special thanks to Lawrence Reid for his many comments on an earlier version of the paper. I also would like to thank participants in the workshop on ‘Transitivity and Ergativity/Agentivity in Syntactic Typology’ at ILCAA, Tokyo University for Foreign Studies, who gave me deeper insight into the topic of this paper.

2 Abbreviations used: AF actor focus; D dual person; DET determiner; PUT future; GEN genitive; GF goal focus; IMP imperative; IMPF imperfective; MN minimal; NML non-minimal; NOM nominative; PERF perfective; PRD predicative.

3 The form is homophonous with the preposition which marks genitive NPs.

In §2, I will illustrate the Sinama case marking system for prepositions and pronouns. Lexical NPs have no distinctive morphological case marking — case identification depends upon word order. Verbal affixes are described in the first part of §3. The main part of the third section is devoted to presenting the so-called \( (\text{leg} \cdot \text{N}) \)-construction. In the fourth section, I will describe the semantic differences between \( \text{an} \)-type sentences and \( \text{leg} \cdot \text{N} \)-type sentences.

# 2 Sinama case marking system

For the sake of brevity, I will use the traditional terms of Philippine linguistics in the present analysis. By the term *subject*, I mean ‘grammatical subject’ — that is, the equivalent of the *ang* phrase in Tagalog. However, I stay with the term *focus* as used by Schachter and Otanes (1972:69) to refer to the feature of a verbal predicate that determines the semantic relationship between that verb and its grammatical subject.

## 2.1 Prepositions

MNK has five case-marking prepositions, namely *leg*, *ma*, *ni*, *min*, and *maka*. Some linguists label such forms as *case markers* because they indicate the semantic relationship between the verb and its complements. Such an interpretation, however, ignores an important aspect of the language. These forms often appear as the predicates of non-verbal sentences (see example (1)); in these positions, they are not functioning as case markers. To ignore this fact leads to a misunderstanding of their function.

(1) *Ma aku duyan.*

at 1.NOM durian

'The durian is mine.'

Even when such forms function to mark case, the question of determining their lexical category remains. There are two possible categories for those forms: prepositions or determiners. They can be distinguished syntactically — prepositions typically precede any type of NP, including pronouns, as in (2), while determiners typically do not precede pronouns.

(2a). *leg ku*  'by me'

b. *leg si Abdul*  'by Abdul'

c. *leg anak-anak*  'by the child'

There is only one determiner in Sinama, *si*, which occurs before every proper noun regardless of its case. It is not a nominative case marker as in Tagalog.

Though I have rejected the term case marker above, I will reserve the term case for the semantic relationship between the verb and its complements. Each preposition in MNK carries case-meaning: *leg* ‘agent’, *ma* ‘location’, *ni* ‘goal’, *min* ‘source’, *maka* ‘instrument’. Their English translations are ‘by’, ‘at/in’, ‘to’, ‘from’, and ‘with’ respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Prepositions in MNK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>case relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>leg</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preposition *leg* marks an NP as being the agent of a transitive construction.

(3) *K-in-akan leg tabi duyan nu.*

GF-eat by we GEN durian your

'We ate your durian.'

The preposition *ma* marks an NP that indicates location.

(4) *Bey aku ngiskul ma UP.*

PERF 1.NOM AF-study at 1.UP

'I studied at the University of the Philippines.'

The preposition *ni* marks an NP that indicates the end point of the event.

(5) *Bey aku piiq ni Sabah.*

PERF 1.NOM go here to Sabah

'I have been to Sabah.'

The preposition *min* marks an NP that indicates the starting point or source of the event.

(6) *Bey b-in-ill ni leg na tinapay min danakan ku.*

PERF GF-buy by she GEN bread from sister LOGEN

'She bought the bread from my sister.'

The preposition *maka* marks an NP that indicates instrument.

(7) *Si Abdul bey mappot kayu maka bariq.*

DET Abdul PERF AF-cut wood with bush.knife

'Abdul cut wood with a bush knife.'

## 2.2 Personal pronouns

MNK Sinama has three basic sets of pronouns as shown in Table 2: nominative, predicative and genitive.4

Nominal pronouns occur as the grammatical subject of a sentence. Their function is almost the same as that of the *ang* form pronouns in Tagalog. Predicative pronouns occur as the predicate of equational or identificational sentences. They also follow all prepositions

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4 Like many other Philippine languages, Sinama pronouns have *dual* person forms that include the one spoken to. The dual person is an independent personal category that always contains more than one person. This is why I have avoided the binary opposition of singular and plural and have used the term *minimal* and non-minimal instead. The minimal set refers to the minimal number of members in the set, while non-minimal refers to anything above what is required of the minimal set. For instance, the minimal set for the dual person is the speaker and the hearer. Anyone added to this minimal set is called the non-minimal set. In traditional Philippine linguistics, a pronoun in the first person non-minimal set is called the *first person plural exclusive* and the dual person non-minimal form *first person plural inclusive*. The same dichotomy as suggested here was probably first coined by Harold Conklin (Lawrence Reid, pers. comm. 1998).
other than *leg. All of the predicative pronouns except the second person are the same as those in the nominative set. The genitive pronouns occur as the possessor in a possessive construction. In addition, the genitive pronoun may appear as the agent of a transitive construction preceded by the preposition *leg.

Table 2: MNK personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>Predicative</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>aku</td>
<td>aku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>kaw</td>
<td>kagaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>kita</td>
<td>kita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>iya</td>
<td>iya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-minimal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>kami</td>
<td>kami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>kam</td>
<td>kagam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>kitabi</td>
<td>kitabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>sigala</td>
<td>sigala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second person predicative pronouns are exemplified below.

   2.MNFRD the AF-pay
   *You are the one who is going to pay.

(9)a. Ili ma *kaw, sikeya itu.
      that at 2.MNFRD not this
   *That (one) is yours, not this (one).

2.3 Word order in MNK

In Sinama, basic clauses are generally predicate-initial. There seems to be no fixed order of argument occurring after the verb as shown in (10a) and (10b).

(10)a. Bey niqadjal manuk *leg si Abdul.
      PERF *in-cook chicken by DET Abdul
   *Ali cooked the chicken.

b. Bey niqadjal *leg si Aliq manuk.
      PERF *in-cook by DET Aliq chicken
   *Ali cooked the chicken.

The subject of the transitive sentence can be topicalised (11). The subject of an intransitive can also be topicalised (12a) or remain untopicalised (12b).

(11) Manuk bey niqadjal *leg si Abdul.
    chicken PERF *in-cook by DET Abdul
   ‘Abdul cooked the chicken.’

(12)a. Anak-anak *leg nengge.
      chPerf PERF N-stand.up
   ‘The child stood up.’

b. *leg nengge anak-anak.
   PERF N-stand.up child
   ‘The child stood up.’

A complete discussion of word order would require text analysis, as subjects are often omitted in texts. However, such a study has not yet been carried out.

2.4 MNK as an ergative language

It is not my purpose to discuss whether Sinama is syntactically ergative or accusative. In this section, however, I will discuss morphological ergativity in Sinama.5 Let us consider the actancy system.

(13) Bey iya paragan digilaw.
      PERF he:NOM pa-run yesterday
   ‘He ran yesterday.’

(14) Bey iya b-in-onoq *leg si Markos.
      PERF he:NOM mi-kill by DET Markos
   ‘Markos killed him.’

In sentence (14), the patient iya ‘he’ in the transitive sentence is nominative, just as the subject in the intransitive sentence in (13). On the other hand, the agent of the transitive sentence is marked by the preposition *leg. These data indicate that Sinama has a morphologically ergative case-marking pattern. In the following section, I will refer to an agent complement, genitive NP marked by *leg as an ‘ergative complement’.6

3 The (*legN-) construction

3.1 Sinama verbal affixes

To begin with, I will summarise the verbal affixes in Sinama that I have encountered so far.

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5 There has been a long history of discussion about whether Philippine languages are accusative, ergative, or neither of the two, as argued by Shibatani (1988). A fuller study of the issue lies outside the scope of the paper but a few words should be said. De Guzman (1988) supports an ergative analysis (EA) of Philippine languages. Within EA, the so-called actor focus is considered intransitive or antipassive. The main reason is that both intransitive and antipassive verb forms appear to be morphologically unified in contrast to transitive ones; i.e. mag- and -um- occur with the intransitive and antipassive group and -in-, -en, and -i- with the transitive in Tagalog (De Guzman 1988:340-341). The EA would provide reason to think that the Sinama *legN- prefix derives a transitive from an intransitive N- verb.

6 The term ‘nominative’ is traditionally used only in the analysis of accusative languages. I will, however, employ this term, rather than ‘absolutive’, in the present analysis.
Table 3: MNK verbal affixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indicative</th>
<th>Aptative</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>pa-· N-</td>
<td>maka-</td>
<td>N-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>-in-</td>
<td>ta-</td>
<td>-un</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>paN-·-an, -in-·-an</td>
<td>kapaN-</td>
<td>*paN-·-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary</td>
<td>-in-·-an</td>
<td>ka-</td>
<td>-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>paN-</td>
<td>tapaN-</td>
<td>paN-·-un</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The symbol N- represents a prefixed nasal that assimilates in various ways to the initial phoneme of the stem. It simply indicates that the grammatical subject of the sentence is an actor NP (15). Some motion verbs such as palasig ‘to jump’, palasay ‘to pass by’, palasig ‘to lie down’ are marked by the prefix pa- as seen in the sentence (13) above. An infix -in marks goal-focus (16).

(15) Bey ngadjal ingkalla.
PERF N-cook bachelor
'The bachelor cooked.'

(16) Bey ni-ngadjal deing kurapung leq ingkalla.
PERF in-cook fish grouper by bachelor
'The bachelor cooked the grouper fish.'

The infix -in never indicates perfective aspect, as it does in most Philippine languages, but it simply indicates goal-focus. As seen below, the -in construction can carry a future sense.

(17) P-in-abilihan leq ku halong pahalu.
-insell by IGEN charcoal tomorrow
'I will sell charcoal tomorrow.'

Instead, Sinama employs auxiliary verbs to show aspect: i.e. bey perfective (18), lay imperfective (19) and song contemplated (20).

(18) Bey ni-liqis leq na pinggiq kayu.
PERF in-grate by he.IGEN tuber wood
'He grated the cassava.'

(19) Lay na matey.
IMPF already N-die
'(He) died already. ('He is already in the state of being dead.')

7 The notation (·) indicates that this form is quoted from Pallesen (1985:99) because I have no direct data a present.

8 Preceding t, b, s, k, q, y, N- assimilates to the place of articulation of the stem initial consonant and that consonant is deleted. In other environments it has the following realizations: q- occurs preceding t, s, k, q, y, but t/q drops, n-g occurs preceding b, s, k, n-g occurs preceding b/s/k. Some examples are as follows: atag > ngaq ‘to get/take’ (AF); binang > ngabinang ‘to work/make’ (AF); linggiq > ngaqapalinggiq ‘to throw affixing net’ (AF); doloq > ngaqapandoq ‘to hang’ (AF); janaj/q > ngaqajaj/q ‘to promise’ (AF); janaj > ngaqapgamor ‘to grow’ (AF).

9 It has an alloform ai- preceding l and q.

(20) Song aku tau nganad Sinama inut-inut.
FUT I.NOM know how to N-learn Sinama slowly
'I will learn to speak the Sama language slowly.'

The difference between the perfective and imperfective senses is illustrated in (21).

(21) Lay aku lango byei nginum bir.
IMPF I.NOM drunk PERF N-drink beer
'I am (still) drunk (because I have) drunken beer.'

3.2 [LeqN-] construction

In MNK, there are cases where a form leq occurs with an actor-focus verb, which is marked by N-. This form is preposed to the verb, appearing similar to a prefix, and gives the sentence a perfective sense.

(22) Leq ngadjal leq ku manuk itu.
leq N-cook by I.GEN chicken this
'I have cooked the chicken.'

Compare this with (23), which is an actor-focus sentence whose prefix is symbolised by N-.

(23) Ngadjal aku manuk.
N-cook I.NOM chicken
'I cook chicken.'

Although the verb ngadjal (< N-ngadjal) in (22) appears to be actor focus, marked by N-, the grammatical subject in the sentence is not the actor. The agent is marked by the preposition leq while the unmarked grammatical subject is manuk 'the chicken'. It should be noted that the notional object in this sentence is definite whereas the notional object of an actor-focus N-verb is indefinite as in (23).

The most appropriate interpretation of (22) in English would be 'I have cooked the chicken', but not 'I cooked the chicken', 'I cook the chicken', or 'I will cook the chicken'. The perfective interpretation is apparently triggered by the prefix-like form leq preceding the N-marked verb. This suggests that the verbal affix is made up of leqN-

This hypothesis seems to be supported by examples (24) and (25), showing a modification relation between a noun and a verb. Thus, when a verb modifies a noun, leqN- functions like a past participle in English.

(24) deing legmilu
fish leq-N-split
'split fish'

(25) Bilahi aku isi sapi leqgalaluk.
like I.NOM flesh cow leq-N-soften
'I like tenderised beef.'

If leqN- functions as a real prefix, it should not occur separated from the verbal stem. Consider the following examples. The perfective aspect marking auxiliary verb bey can occur with the leqN- construction as in (26a). Example (26b) indicates that leqN- is a combined
verbal form. Thus, the form *leg is to be interpreted as a prefix, which attaches to the N-stem or legN-.

(26a). *Leq beyl mong stya leg si Abdul.
   PERF legN-break chair by DET Abdul
   'Abdul has broken the chair.'

b. *Leq bey mong siya leg si Abdul.

There are sentences, however, which appear to contradict the foregoing observation. In sentence (27), *leg seems to be separated from the verb by clitic pronoun *ku.

(27) Leq ku ngadjal manuk.
   leq 1NOM N-cook chicken
   'I have cooked the chicken.'

One might assume that *leg in (27) is a kind of auxiliary verb, since a clitic pronoun follows right after it. However, there are data that indicate the *leg in (27) is neither a verbal prefix nor an auxiliary verb, but simply a preposition. In sentence (28), a proper noun phrase occurs between *leg and the verb. An auxiliary verb allows only pronouns to be cliticised to it and not a proper noun, nor a common noun.

(28) Leq si Abdul mong stya.
   by DET Abdul N-break chair
   'Abdul has broken the chair.'

Sentences like (27) and (28) thus show the same case marking pattern as (22), an unmarked patient and an ergative complement with an actor-focus verb. What is missing is the *leg- prefix. I argue that (27) and (28) are the same construction as (22), and that the missing prefix can be explained as follows. Sentence (27) may be derived from sentence (29a) by preposing the ergative complement *leg ku 'by me' before the verb. In such cases, the verbal prefix *leg- is obligatorily dropped to yield sentence (27) as indicated in (29b) and (29c).

(29a). Leqngadjal leg ku manuk.
   Leq ku ngadjal manuk. (= 27)
   *Leq ku leqngadjal manuk.
   'I have cooked the chicken.'

The grammatical subject, manuk 'chicken', can be topicalised as shown in (30a) without affecting the *leg- prefix. When an ergative complement precedes the verb, the prefix *leg- must be dropped as shown in (30b) and (30c).

(30a). Manuk leqngadjal leg ku.
   b. Manuk leq ku ngadjal.
   c. *Manuk leq ku leqngadjal.

Dropping of the verbal prefix happens whenever an ergative complement is preposed to the verb, as in (31a), where the ergative complement is a proper noun.

(31a). Leq si Jam ngadjal manuk.
   by DET Jam N-cook chicken
   *Leq si Jam leqngadjal manuk.
   'Jam has cooked the chicken.'

Note that in the usual goal-focus sentence, an ergative complement cannot be topicalised as shown in (32a). It must occur in post-verbal position (32b). This is one of the characteristics that makes the *legN- construction unique.

(32a). *Leq si Abdul bey sinipag kambing.
   ay *DET Abdul PERF din-kick goat
   b. Bey a-in-ipaq leq si Abdul kambing.
   PERF din-kick by DET Abdul goat
   'Abdul kicked the goat.'

The synchronic general rule goes something like this. An ergative complement, once preposed to the verb, will trigger the deletion of the prefix *leg-. It is evident, therefore, that *leg- can only be a verbal prefix attached to the N-stem and this is the reason I call the construction a 'derived' transitive sentence.

In both *legN- and din constructions, the agent can be omitted. But, as observed above, topicalisation of the ergative complement in the *legN- construction is unique in that it requires that the prefix *leg- be omitted. Thus, the *legN- construction is syntactically different from the goal-focus sentences.

4 Semantic functions

In this section I investigate some of the features of *legN- constructions from the standpoint of scalar transitivity proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980). Of the ten criteria for transitivity which they proposed, I will discuss four.

11 It is not my purpose to speculate how the construction is diachronically derived. The *leg- prefix and the *leg prepositions are possibly both derived from an earlier verb via different grammaticalisation paths.
12 Comrie (1988:18) states that "in the prototypical cases, the agent is not omissible in the ergative construction, but is omissible and is in fact normally omitted from the passive construction." Shibatani (1988:9-19) also states that in the passive sentences, the agent is normally dropped but in the Philippine type goal-focus sentences, the agent is less likely to be omitted than is observed in the passive constructions of other languages. He claims that this is one of the important differences between Philippine goal-focus constructions and passive constructions. I have only limited information from text analysis but my impression is that both din-type construction and *legN- type construction normally require the ergative complement to appear.
13 These criteria are (a) participants, (b) kinesis, (c) aspect, (d) punctuality, (e) volitionality, (f) affirmation, (g) mode, (h) agency, (i) affectedness of O(object), and (j) individuation of O.
4.1 Aspect

As previously noted, the construction is periphrastic.

(33)  Kakan-un intollo ku.  Leqmalla na.
      eat-IMP egg  1GEN leq-N-cook already
      'Eat some of my eggs. (They are) already boiled.'

4.2 Mode

The leqN- construction seems to be restricted to realis mode. Thus, only adverbs with a past sense can occur in leqN- construction (34) and (35).

(34)  Leq ku milli iti ma Sambuwangan digilaw.
       by 1GEN N-buy this at Zamboanga yesterday
       'I bought this one at Zamboanga yesterday.'

(35)  *Ayan leq nu milli pahalu?
       what by you 1GEN N-buy tomorrow
       'What are you going to buy tomorrow?'

4.3 Affirmation

The construction seems not to occur in negative sentences. This may bear some relation to  mode as discussed above. This would explain why leqN- construction cannot be negated by the auxiliary verb maha (36). In the case of negatives, the ain- type goal-focus construction will be employed (37).

(36)  *Maha leqmong siya leq si Abdul.
       not leq-N-break chair by DET Abdul
       'Abdul did not break the chair.'

(37)  Maha bey p-in-ong siya leq si Abdul.
       not PERF ain-break chair by DET Abdul
       'Abdul did not break the chair.'

4.4 Affectedness of patient

The grammatical subjects of leqN- constructions are interpreted as being totally affected while the grammatical subjects of the 'goal-focus' sentences are only partially affected.

(38)  Leqmangan leq kuting.
       leq-N-eat by cat
       'The cat has eaten (it) up.'

(39)  K-in-akan leg kuting.
       ain-eat by cat
       'The cat ate (some of it).'

Table 4 compares the two constructions with respect to semantic transitivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Affirmation</th>
<th>Affectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>leqN-</td>
<td>+telic</td>
<td>+realis</td>
<td>+affirmative</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ain-</td>
<td>-telic</td>
<td>-realis</td>
<td>-affirmative</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this table, it can be seen that these constructions are both syntactically transitive but they differ in degrees of semantic transitivity. The leqN- construction is higher in transitivity than the ain- infix transitive one.

5 Concluding remarks

I have described two kinds of transitive constructions in Sinama. Of these two, the leqN- type construction is higher in semantic transitivity than the ain- infix type construction. The present descriptions of these constructions are entirely synchronic. I will comment here on three problems for future study:

(a) text analysis is needed,
(b) the dialectal distribution of the construction is not well known, and
(c) a diachronic explanation of the evolution of the constructions is necessary.

Quantitative text analysis is necessary to clarify the situations in which the leqN- construction appears instead of the ain- construction. Whether the preferred position of the ergative phrase is preverbal or postverbal also requires text analysis.14

Cross-dialectal distribution of the construction needs investigation because not all Sinama dialects have this construction. For example, Sitangkay Sinama does not have the leqN- construction. It employs only the infix ain for all transitive expressions. Both Sikubung Sinama and Sapa-Sapa Sinama have the prefix leqN- with the infix ain. Texts from the Sibatu Sinama indicate that it also has the leqN- construction as well as ain- infix type transitive sentences (Allison 1977). Though Pallesen (1985) gave no clear statement on differences between Central Sulu Sinama and Southern Sulu Sinama, it seems to me that they form a 'dialect chain'. The leqN- construction, however, will be one of the criteria which distinguishes the two.

Surprisingly, the leqN- construction is also found in Indonesian Sinama around Dondo Bay in the Buol-Toli-Toliarea (40) and (41).15

14 As for productivity, it appears that the leqN- construction is a productive sentence pattern in MNK. It also occurs in causative sentences.

Leq ku maragan ma anak-anak.
legg 1GEN N-pa-run at child
'I have made the child run.'

15 I conducted research on Indonesian Sinama in twenty-one speech communities. Only two of them have the leqN- prefix. All the others have the prefix di- that appears to function like the ain- infix in the Philippine-type Sinama.
Some aspects of ‘focus’ in Sama Bangindi

JOANN GAULT

1 Introduction

Sama Bangindi' (also called Balangindi') is one of several Sama languages which are spoken throughout the Sulu Archipelago in the south-western Philippines. The Bangindi' language is spoken from the Samal Island Group south of Basilan Island north to the coastal areas and islands of Basilan and the southern Zamboanga Peninsula including the coastal areas of Zamboanga del Sur. It is a member of the Sama-Bajau subgroup of Malayo-Polynesian, which includes also the Sama-Bajau languages of Sabah and Sulawesi (Palleusen 1985:3-2).

Bangindi' is an ergative language which shares many of the features of ‘focus’ that are characteristic of Philippine languages, but which also evidences some features of grammar and discourse similar to Bahasa Malay, especially the language as it was spoken in the last century as analysed by Hopper (1983). Historically, the Bangindi' have had extensive contact with speakers of Bahasa Malay, being traders and pirates until this century, ranging in their exploits from Sulu to Singapore and east to the Moluccas (Palleusen 1985:9).

2 Case marking

2.1 Pronouns

The Sama Bangindi' nominal system distinguishes three cases: absolute, ergative and oblique. These cases are most easily seen in the three pronoun sets given in Table 1 below.

References


\[ Footnote: This understanding of focus (as yet incomplete) is a result of contact with and study of the language which began in 1974. Many Bangindi' have had input into that study. The examples in this paper have been given or checked by Mr Abdulmahir (Beng) B. Kasim of Talukasangay, and Mrs Jana Amping of Campo Islam, both in Zamboanga City.\]

\[ Footnote: Abbreviations used: ABS absolute case; ERG ergative case; GEN genitive case; OBL oblique case; AGT agent focus; PF patient focus; RF recipient focus; LF location focus; SG singular; DU dual (i.e. 1+250 person); PL plural; ABL ablative mood; CP completive particle; DET determiner;\]


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