Voice variation in Austronesian languages of Indonesia: Introduction

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The papers in this volume were presented at the *Workshop on Indonesian-type voice systems*, which took place in the Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in July 17-18, 2010. This was one of a series of workshops on 'Descriptive studies on Indonesian languages' organized by the Linguistic Dynamics Science Project (Lingdy). The languages presented in this particular workshop were all Austronesian languages spoken in Indonesia or very close to its borders.

While much has already been written about Austronesian voice systems, the topic has never ceased to fascinate syntacticians, and it is not hard to see why. In the last forty years some more or less clearly defined typological models have been proposed for Proto Austronesian verbal morpho-syntax and for the voice systems prevailing in various regions of the Austronesian-speaking world. Yet, the reality reflected by the languages in these regions is often very different and on the whole remains evasive.

This reality is also clearly reflected in the papers in this volume. Most of them belie some of the predictions that are routinely made on the basis of the prevailing Austronesian typological models, and they do so in their own idiosyncratic way, whether it concerns basic alignment structure (Artawa's paper), the function of the nasal prefix (papers by Austin, Soh and Nomoto), the exact (geographic) area where a certain model prevails (Nagaya's paper), or the essential nature of what normally would be identified as a local variety of the western Indonesian-type voice system (Jukes' paper) or even as voice oppositions (papers by Inagaki and Shiohara).

Artawa grapples with argument alignment in Balinese. This language has two transitive constructions, the basic verb construction which consists of a P-V-A order and lacks marking on the verb, and the nasal verb construction, which has an A-V-P order and marks the verb with a nasal prefix. While nasal verb constructions are marginally more frequent, both constructions have Actor and Patient as core arguments, thus defying the standard definitions of an accusative syntax as well as an ergative one.

Austin shows that in Sasak dialects nasal prefixes take on many different forms and functions. These functions go well beyond the usual syntactic one related to voice distinction as found in many other western Indonesian languages. Nasal prefixation happens through homorganic nasal substitution or homorganic nasal prefixation (or a combination thereof), and it sometimes takes place in conjunction with first-syllable reduplication or prefixation of *me-*. This results in four formal categories, which often co-occur in the same dialect and have varying semantic-pragmatic functions. In Northern Sasak, their functions also include some of those covered by different morphology in other Sasak dialects.

Inagaki examines voice and argument encoding in Kadorih, a West Barito language in Central Kalimantan. This language does not formally differentiate between Actor and Undergoer voice: *N-* and *<Vn>* are viewpoint changing rather than valency changing,

and are only voice affixes based on the evidence of their high token frequency. Furthermore, argument encoding is to some extent sensitive to person hierarchy. In Actor voice, Undergoer is more likely to be indefinite than Actor; in Undergoer voice predicates must satisfy the subject sharing constraint.

Makassarese has many verbal prefixes. Jukes is able to show that most of these specifically denote degrees of transitivity. This is in contrast to previous analyses assuming that the prefixes in question (or their cognate forms in other South Sulawesi languages) are markers of voice or focus. Only one prefix is voice related: *di-* is an undergoer marker. It contrasts with agent-oriented ø- as part of an assymetrical voice system which follows a mixed ergative / accusative alignment.

There is a general impression that the western Indonesian voice system with its grammaticalized voice contrast and symmetrical voice alternations does not occur among eastern Indonesian languages. Nagaya argues that Lamaholot in eastern Flores also has a symmetrical voice system with voice contrasts that are very similar to those found in western Indonesian languages. However, it is expressed through word order as Lamaholot has a very reduced morphology. Nagaya points out that Lamaholot is not the only eastern Indonesian language that has retained elements of this system and that it is time for a re-adjustment of western Indonesian voice typology.

Sumbawa is generally assumed to be among the languages that have an Indonesian-type voice system. However, while Sumbawa shares the formal aspects of this system, it does not have the expected voice oppositions, using undergoer incorporation and fronting to compensate for its absence. (Constructions with the nasal prefix are intransitive). Ross (2002) attributes this absence to an evolution away from the original Indonesian-type voice system. However, Shiohara speculates that in Proto Malayo-Polynesian, the nasal prefix was not yet a marker of active voice but one of activity (that is, dynamic and atelic aspect, in both transitive and intransitive verbs). She takes that as a historical vantage point for the independent evolution of both the Indonesian-type voice system and the Sumbawa system.

According to Soh, Malay *meN-* is an aspectual marker, and not a voice marker (not even a marker of both actor voice and aspect). Properties associated with *meN-* that have been attributed to its active voice status can be accounted for in different ways. Blocking effects of *meN-* are part of a more general phenomenon which also involves the intransitive prefix *ber-*.

Nomoto goes even further, arguing that in Malay and Indonesian, *meN-* is neither an active voice marker nor is it optional. It is not an active voice marker because it adds aspectual (eventive and atelic) notions to the verb, and, unlike with *di-*, the presence or absence of *meN-* is not subject to any well-defined licensing condition. Furthermore, as is also the case with classifiers and with plurality marking by means of reduplication, *meN-* is only 'ostensibly optional'.

Finally, Soriente gives a typological overview of undergoer voice markers in varieties of Punan, Penan, Kayan and Kenyah, which are spoken in eastern Borneo.

She also touches on the genetic position of Penan-Punan languages. While the latter have been classified together with Kenyah and Kayan languages on the basis of lexical evidence, their voice morphology suggests that they had a different history, which calls for a re-assessment of their classification. Penan and Punan languages, which are traditionally spoken by hunter-gatherers, usually express passive voice with an infix

(<*in*> or <*en*>), whereas Kayan and Kenyah varieties use periphrastic constructions instead.

References

Ross, Malcolm. 2002. *The history and transitivity of western Austronesian voice and voice-marking*. In: Fay Wouk and Malcolm Ross (eds), 17-62.

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