Voice in the Sumbawa Besar Dialect of Sumbawa

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This paper deals with the voice system in Sumbawa, a language spoken in the western part of Sumbawa Island. Adelaar (2005) classifies the language as a member of the Malayo-Sumbawan subgroup, which belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of Austronesian languages. Malayo-Sumbawan languages, such as Malay, Sundanese, and Balinese, generally exhibit an Indonesian-type voice system, which is characterized by an opposition between actor voice and undergoer voice. This opposition underscores the pragmatic status of the undergoer and/or the discourse topic in these languages, as shown by Arka and Ross (2005). Sumbawa retains reflexes of each of the Indonesian-type voice constructions, but, as Wouk (2002) points out, they do not form an Indonesian-type voice opposition. Two grammatical devices in Sumbawa (noun incorporation and fronting of the topic NP) seem to compensate for the lack of a voice opposition.

1. Introduction

Sumbawa is a language spoken in the Western part of Sumbawa Island in Indonesia. Mahsun (1999) distinguishes four main dialects (see Figure 1), using lack of mutual intelligibility as a criterion:
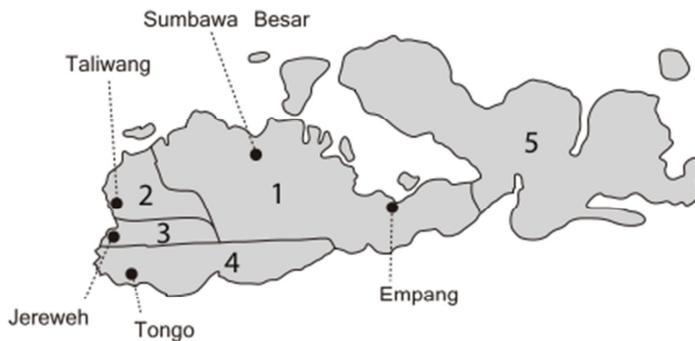

Figure 1: The distribution of the Sumbawa language and its dialects[1] (Based on Mahsun (1999))

(1) The Sumbawa Besar dialect which is widely used in Sumbawa.
(2) The Taliwang dialect spoken around Taliwang Town in the northwestern part of West Sumbawa.

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[1]   Number 5 on the map indicates the Bima-speaking community in East Sumbawa.

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(3) The Jereweh dialect spoken around Jereweh Town in the central-eastern part of West Sumbawa.

(4) The Tongo dialect spoken around Tongo town in the southern part of West Sumbawa.

This study is based on the Sumbawa Besar dialect[2], which functions as a means of communication between speakers of different dialects throughout the Sumbawa-speaking area.

According to Adelaar (2005), Sumbawa belongs to the Malayo-Sumbawan subgroup, which is a (western) member of the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family. Most of the languages of this subgroup, such as Malay, Sundanese and Balinese, share an Indonesian-type voice system, which is characterized by an opposition of undergoer voice construction and actor voice construction. In section 2, we will show that Sumbawa does not exhibit this type of voice system, although it retains the reflexes of the two voice constructions observed in 'Indonesian-type' languages. In section 3, we will focus on two grammatical devices (noun incorporation and fronting of the topic NP) that Sumbawa has independently developed to compensate for the lack of an 'Indonesian-type' voice opposition. In section 4, we will discuss the historical background to the lack of an 'Indonesian-type' voice system in Sumbawa.

2. The voice system in Sumbawa

2.1. Basic construction and nasal construction

As is shown in Arka and Ross (2005:7), the 'Indonesian-type' system has two voices: active voice and undergoer voice. An outline of the Indonesian-type system is shown in Table 1. In the undergoer voice construction, the undergoer NP is the syntactic subject, while in the actor voice construction, the actor NP is the syntactic subject.

Undergoer voice	Actor voice
person marker or passive marker + verb stem	nasal prefix +verb stem

Table 1: 'Indonesian-type' system

Sentences (1)-(4) are examples from Indonesian, all cited from Sneddon (2010:256-258). Examples (1) and (3) are undergoer voice constructions. The verb stem is marked by the person marker in (1), and marked by the passive marker *di-* in (3). (2) and (4) are actor voice construction. In it, the verb stem is marked by the prefix *meN-*. (See Sneddon (2010: 255-262) for details of the Indonesian voice system.)

(1)   *Dia   kami=jemput.*
       3   1PL.EXCL=meet
       'We met him.'

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(2) *Kami   men-jemput   dia.*
     1PL.EXCL   AV-meet   3SG

     'We met him.'

(3) *Saya   di-jemput   oleh dia.*
     1SG   PASS-meet   by   3SG

     'He met me.'

(4) *Dia   men-jemput   saya.*
     3SG   AV-meet   1SG

     'He met me.'

As Wouk (2002) suggests, Sumbawa has reflexes of these voice constructions, but the function of each of them differs from those of the Indonesian-type. In Sumbawa, the reflex of the undergoer voice, that is, the construction with a morphologically unmarked verb (hereafter referred to as the 'basic construction'), is the only transitive construction and is employed as a device for expressing a transitive proposition with an actor and an undergoer argument. The reflex of the actor voice, that is, the construction with nasal prefix (*N-*) (hereafter the 'nasal construction'), is an intransitive construction with only one argument. In most cases (68 out of 77 verbs in my data), the single argument corresponds to the actor.

The prefix *N-* is realized in different ways depending on the number of syllables and the first sound of the base. The following realizations occur: [3]

- When the base is a monosyllable, *nge-* is prefixed to it, e.g. *N- + jét* becomes *nge-jét* 'to sew'.
- When the base has more than one syllable, *N-* becomes:
    - *ng-* before a vowel. e.g. *N- + inóm* becomes *ng-inóm* 'to drink';
    - *me-* before initial *l* or *r*, e.g. N- + *lòkèk* becomes *me-lòkèk* 'to peel';
    - a palatal nasal substitutes initial *s*;
    - a homorganic nasal substitutes other initial consonants:

  e.g. *N- + kali*   →   *ngali* 'to dig'
        N- + gambar   →   *ngambar* 'to draw (a picture)'.
        N- + turit   →   *nurit* 'to follow'
        N- + còba   →   *nyòba* 'to try'
        N- + sólé'   →   *nyólé'* 'borrow'

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[3] The transcription employed here basically follows the orthography of Indonesian, using the following conventions: *ng* for [ŋ] , *ny* for [ɲ], *c* for [tʃ], *j* for [dʒ], *y* for [j], and *e* for [ə]. There are also some additional distinctions in the transcription of some vowels, as in open-mid unrounded front vowel *è* [ɛ], the close-mid unrounded front vowel *é* [e], a the open-mid rounded back vowel *ò* [ɔ], and the close-mid rounded back vowel *ó* [o]. Finally, an apostrophe (ʹ) is used to show word-final stress when it is heavier than usual (e.g., *sólé'* 'borrow').

	Basic construction	**Nasal construction**
Verb form	person marker/passive marker +verb stem	nasal prefix +verb stem
Indonesian-type	undergoer voice	actor voice
Sumbawa	(one and only) transitive construction	Intransitive construction with only one argument

Table 2: 'Indonesian-type' and Sumbawa Voice Systems

Example (5) is an example of the basic construction using the verb *inóm* 'to drink'. The constituent expressing the actor is marked with the preposition *ling* 'by', while the constituent expressing the undergoer occurs in the form of a morphologically unmarked NP, that is, without any case marking.

(5)   *ka=ku=inóm   kawa=nan[4]   ling   aku.*
      PST=1SG=drink   coffee=that   by   1SG

      'I drank the coffee.'

Example (6) is an example of the nasal construction based on *nginóm* (← N- + *inóm*). In this construction, the constituent expressing the actor occurs in the form of an unmarked NP.

(6)   *ka=ku=nginóm   aku.*
      PST=1SG=drink   1SG

      'I drink (something).'

The verb *nginóm* may not occur with a constituent expressing the undergoer. A sentence like (7) is not grammatical.

(7)   **ku=nginóm   kawa(=nan)*
      1SG=drink   coffee(=that)

      (expected meaning) 'I will drink (the) coffee.'

The nasal construction exhibits the same property as an ordinary intransitive construction in that it occurs with only one morphologically unmarked NP. Compare (6) with (8), an example of the morphologically unmarked intransitive verb *tunung* 'sleep'.

(8)   *ka=ku=tunóng   aku.*
      PST=1SG=sleep   1SG

      'I will sleep.'

In section 2.2, we examine details of the two constructions, giving special attention to the behavior of the person marker within the predicate and the function of the nasal construction.

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4   When a noun is modified by the demonstrative *nan* 'that' or *ta* 'this', the NP normally forms a phonological word, with only one word stress in the last syllable of the NP.

2.2. Person marker within the predicate

The behavior of the person marker in Sumbawa differs from that in the Indonesian-type voice system. In Indonesian-type languages, the person marker only appears in the transitive predicate, functioning as an indicator of undergoer voice, while in Sumbawa, person markers are not limited to transitive predicates and are not involved in voice oppositions, although there are some exceptions observed in the third person, as will be mentioned below.

First and second person markers occur either in the transitive construction, as in (5), or in the intransitive construction, whether the predicate verb has the *N-* prefix, as in (6), or not, as in (8). The third person marker *ya=*, however, occurs only in transitive constructions (see example (9).

(9) *ya=inóm*   *kawa=nan*   *ling*   *nya=Amén.*
     3=drink   coffee=that   by   TITLE=Amin

     'Amin drinks the coffee.'

It does not occur with an intransitive verb. Thus, example (10) and (11) are not grammatical.

(10) **ka=ya=mólé*   *nya=Amén.*
      PST=3=go.home   TITLE=Amin

      (expected meaning) 'Amin went home.'

(11) **ka=ya=nginóm*   *nya=Amén*
      PST=3=drink   TITLE=Amin

      (expected meaning) 'Amin drank something.'

In Sumbawa, as will be shown in section 3, an NP may be fronted for topicalization, and the fronted NP may influence the occurrence of the person marker.

When the actor NP is fronted, the first- and the second-person marker is optional, while the third person marker *ya=* cannot occur. Compare (12) with (13).

(12) *Aku*   *ka=(ku)=inóm*   *kawa=nan.*
      1SG   PST=1SG=drink   coffee=that

      'As for me, I drank the coffee.'

(13) *nya=Amén*   **ya=inóm*   *kawa=nan*
      TITLE=Amin   3=drink   coffee=that

      (expected meaning) 'As for Amin, he drinks the coffee.'

From what we have seen so far, we could say that the person marker in Sumbawa basically is not involved in marking voice opposition, though the third-person marker *ya=* in Sumbawa exhibits a similarity to the passive marker of Indonesian-type languages (e.g. *di-* in Malay), in that it occurs neither in intransitive constructions, nor when the actor is the topic of the discourse.

2.3. Function of the nasal construction

Nasal derivations are less regular in Sumbawa than they are in other Indonesian-type languages; only 77 transitive bases among 123 bases in my data (62.6%) can take the nasal prefix[5].

Syntactically, the actor voice of Indonesian-type languages is similar to what is called an anti-passive construction in other languages; the undergoer NP, the subject of the alternative transitive construction (undergoer voice), occurs as non-subject in the actor voice. We could say that the nasal construction of Sumbawa exhibits a functional similarity with actor voice in a more extended way: the undergoer NP totally disappears from the construction.

The nasal construction in Sumbawa also shares some properties with anti-passive constructions in other languages with regard to its semantic functions.

First, the nasal construction in Sumbawa cannot be used when the undergoer is definite.

(14)   (The response of a mother to her children asking for food.)

   (a) *aò'*   *anak*   *é,*   *ta*   *muntu*   *ku=nepé.*
       yes   child   INTERJ   this   PROG   1SG=winnow

   (b) *ka*   *mò*   *suda*   *ku=tuja'*   *padé=ta.*
       PST   MM   finish   1SG=polish   rice plant=this

   (c) *ta*   *muntu*   *ku=tepé* (**nepé*).
       this   PROG   1SG=winnow

   (a) All right, my children, I am now separating rice from its husk.

   (b) I have pounded the rice.

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5   Another prefix competing with the nasal prefix is *bar-* (r is dropped before a consonant). It is cognate to *ber-* in Malay. *N-* and *bar-* have similar functions when occurring with a transitive base; out of 122 transitive verbal roots in my data, 57 can be detransitivized by *bar-*, and 77 by *N-*, whereas 8 cannot take either *bar-* or *N-*. Note that out of the verbs that can be detransitivised, 20 verbs are compatible with both *bar-* and *N-*.

For example, the transitive verb *antat* 'take, carry' is only made intransitive by bar-, thus *bar-antat* 'take someone, carry something' (**ngantat* is not accepted); on the other hand, the verb *tanam* 'plant' is only made intransitive by the nasal prefix, thus, *nanam* 'plant' (**ba-tanam* does not occur). In the case of *ajak* 'invite', both *ngajak* 'invite' and *barajak* 'invite' are accepted. The condition for the choice between the two prefixes to a particular base is uncertain in the present stage of my research. Sneddon (2010; 71-72) points out a similar situation in Indonesian between the corresponding prefixes *meN-* and *ber-*, but they occur with adjective bases, not transitive ones.

In a few cases, a nasal prefix may be attached to a non-verb base, such as bound morphemes and nouns. There are two examples of its occurrence with a bound morpheme and three with nouns in my data.

   (i) with bound morphemes: *nguléng'* 'lie down' (the base *-guléng* is attested in the compound noun *galang-guléng* 'pillow'); *nangés* 'cry' (the base *-tangés* is attested in the compound noun *turén-tangés* 'the middle of the eyebrows')
   (ii)   with nouns
     entén 'knee' ~ *ngentén* 'kneel'
     entét 'gas' ~ *ngentét* 'break wind'
     surat 'letter' ~ *nyurat* 'write a letter'

(c) Now I am separating the rice from its husk.

In all the clauses of (a)-(c), the patient of the action is *padé* (rice). In both (a) and (c), the action of winnowing (separating rice from husk) is expressed. The action is expressed in (a) by the nasal construction with the nasal prefixed verb *nepé*, while it is expressed in (c) by the basic construction with the unmarked transitive verb *tepé*. According to the speakers, the nasal prefixed verb *nepé* cannot be used in (c), apparently because the patient of the action has already been expressed in the previous clause (b) and is clearly definite.

In addition, when the patient of the action is clear from the context, and therefore is definite, the action can only be expressed by a basic construction. For example, if someone is shown a fresh fish and asks by whom it was caught, he or she might use a sentence like (15), but not the nasal construction in (16).

(15) *sai   adè   ka=tumpan'   jangan=ta.*
      who   NMLZ   PST=get   fish=this.
      'Who caught the fish?'

(16) *sai   adè   ka=numpan'?*
      who   NMLZ   PST=get
      'Who already had a catch?'

The nasal construction is typically used when the patient is not referential. In contrast, sentence (16) may be used by a member of a fishing party who would like to know how the others are faring. In this situation, the patient is not referential.

The second feature shared between the nasal construction and anti-passive constructions in other languages is that it often expresses an imperfective aspect (Dixon 1994:149, Cooreman 1994:57-58). When Sumbawa native speakers are asked the meaning of an individual nasal prefixed verb, they will usually answer that 'it expresses the action that we are doing now' and will typically give examples expressing present progressive, as in (14)a. However, it should be noted that this aspectual feature is just an implication, not the core meaning of the verb form itself, and therefore can be canceled by the past tense marker *ka*, as in (16). In addition, some nasal prefixed verbs are often used attributively, indicating a habitual or an ongoing situation, as in (17) and (18).

(17) *tau=nyòrò*
      person=N-steal (sòrò)   'a thief'

(18) *tau=ngapan*
      person=N-chase (apan)   'pursuers'

Most nasal verbs cannot be used in imperative sentences. A possible explanation for this is that the aspectual feature of the nasal verbs (imperfective) and the imperative tend to be semantically incompatible. If a transitive activity is required, people normally expect the completion of the activity, the referent of the P being affected to the expected extent.

3. Syntactic devices that are independently developed in Sumbawa

3.1 The function of the voice opposition in Indonesian-type voice systems

Ross (2002b:458) and Arka and Ross (2005:7-11) outline how the opposition of actor/undergoer voice functions in Indonesian-type languages. In main clauses, it is a device to indicate (i) the pragmatic status of the undergoer (actor voice tends to be used when the undergoer is indefinite), and/or (ii) the topicality of the actor or undergoer. In the latter case, the speaker chooses a referent with higher topicality as the subject, that is, if the actor is the topic, actor voice tends to be used, while if the undergoer is the topic, undergoer voice tends to be used, although details of the conditions vary among individual languages.

As shown in the previous section, Sumbawa lacks an Indonesian-type voice opposition. However, as a result of an independent syntactic innovation, Sumbawa has two devices to indicate the pragmatic distinctions related to (i) and (ii) above. These are incorporation of the undergoer NP and fronting.

3.2 Incorporation of the undergoer NP

Incorporation of the undergoer NP obligatorily occurs when the undergoer is indefinite. It is accompanied by phonological and syntactic changes. In Sumbawa, word stress normally occurs on the last syllable of each word. In an ordinary transitive clause, the verb and the undergoer NP each have their own stress. In contrast, when incorporation occurs, the stress falls on the final syllable of the incorporated noun. Incorporation is shown in (19); here, stress falls on the last syllable of the word *kawa* 'coffee', while in the corresponding transitive construction in (20) (also occurring as (5) above), stress falls on the last syllable of both *inóm* 'to drink' and the undergoer NP *kawa=nan* 'coffee'. (Stressed syllables are underlined in the two sentences.)

(19) *ka=ku=inóm=kawa*   *aku*.
      PST=1SG=drink=coffee   1SG
      'I drank coffee.'

(20) *ka=ku=inóm*   *kawa=nan*   *ling*   *aku*.
      PST=1SG=drink   coffee=that   by   1SG
      'I drank the coffee.'

This incorporated construction can be considered an intransitive construction, as the actor NP occurs in a morphologically unmarked form, that is, the same form as S in an intransitive clause[6], as in example (8) above.

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6 This incorporation can be analyzed as an advanced stage of what Ross (2002a:54-55) calls "bonding between verb and P". A very similar phonological and syntactic phenomenon is observed in actor voice in Gayo (Eades (2005: 122-124)), a Indonesian-type language in northern Sumatra. (Incorporation occurs between the nasalized verb and the P in this language). It is also observed in Kambera (Klamer: 85), a non-Indonesian-type language. In both languages, however, the status of A is not changed by the bonding. In Malay, a few *ber*-prefixed intransitive verbs may form a similar construction (e.g. *ber-jual kuda* 'sell a horse', *ber-tanam padi* 'plant rice'). However, unlike in Sumbawa, the attachment of *ber-* to a transitive base in Malay is not a regular derivational process.

3.3 Fronting

The unmarked word order of Sumbawa is predicate-initial, but NPs may be fronted. (21) and (22) basically have the same meaning as (20) but show a fronted NP. In (21), the undergoer NP is fronted, while in (22), the actor NP is fronted.

(21)   **kawa=nan**   ku=inóm   ling   aku.
       coffee=that   1SG=drink by   1SG

       'As for the coffee, I drink it.'

(22)   **aku**   (ku=)inóm   kawa=nan.
       1SG   1SG=drink   coffee=that

       'I drink the coffee.'

The actor NP, which occurs with *ling* in the basic transitive construction, as in (20), appears without any preposition when fronted, as in (22). A PP with the preposition *ling* may not appear in the clause-initial position. Thus, example (23) is ungrammatical.

(23)   *ling   aku   ku=inóm   kawa=nan.
       by   1SG   1SG=wait coffee=that

       (expected meaning) 'I drink the coffee.'

In so-called ditransitive constructions, a recipient NP, as well as the actor NP and the undergoer NP may be fronted. Examples (24)-(27) are examples of the verb *bèang* 'give.' In (25) the actor NP expressing the agent is fronted, while in (26), the undergoer NP expressing the theme is fronted. In (27), the recipient NP *tódé=ta* 'this child,' is fronted. The recipient constituent is introduced by the preposition *lakó* 'to' in post predicate position, as in (24)-(26), but in (27), the corresponding constituent is fronted and occurs as a bare NP.

(24)   ka=bèang   lamóng=nan lakó tódé=ta   léng   ina'
       PST=give   clothes=that to   child=this by   mother

       'The mother gave this child the clothes.'

(25)   **ina'**   ka=bèang   lamóng=nan lakó   tódé=ta
       mother PST=give   clothes=that to   child=this

       'As for the mother, she gave this child the clothes.'

(26)   **lamóng=nan** ka=bèang   lakó   tódé=ta   léng   ina'
       clothes=that   PST=give   to   child=this by   mother

       'The mother gave this child the clothes.'

(27)   **tódé=ta**   ka=bèang   lamóng=nan léng ina'
       child=this   PST=give   clothes=that by   mother

       'As for this child, the mother gave him the clothes.'

A fronted NP is rare in spontaneous utterances. (Example (22)-(27) are all elicited sentences.) We examined the frequency of a transitive clause with a fronted NP observed in two texts. One is a written text (text II, tentatively entitled 'The story of Pomponge' here) selected from Jonker (1935), the other is an oral account of

Sumbawa history collected by the present author. Table 1 shows the frequency of a clause with/ without a fronted NP in each text.

	Sumbawa history (Shiohara 2012)		*Story of Pomponge* (Jonker 1935)
Number of Clauses	272		114
Number of Transitive clauses	92		64
With a Fronted NP	9	(9.8%)	7 (10.9%)
With post predicate argument(s)	37	(40.2%)	47(73.4%)
Without an argument	46	(50.0%)	10 (15.6%)

Table 1 Statistics regarding a fronted NP in two short stories

These figures suggest that transitive clauses with a fronted NP are far less frequent than transitive clauses with a post-predicate NP[7]. Now, let us consider the function of the fronted NP in discourse.

A clause with a fronted NP is often occur either when it indicates a contrast or appoint a entity to a new topic, or in other words, to foreground an entity which is already introduced in the discourse in the previous part of the text. Example (28) and (29), are examples of the former. In (28), fronted NPs *aku* '1SG' and *sia* '2SG' indicate a contrastive topic, respectively, and in (29), a fronted NP *bosang sopo* 'a basket' in the third clause, shows a contrast to the other basket.

(28) **Aku** tutir, **sia** senengé.
   1SG   tell   2 SG   listen
   'I will talk, you will listen.'

(29) *ia-tumpan-mo bosan, dua bosang,*
   3-find-MM   basket two basket

   ia-olo   tau   sopo bosang,
   3-put   person one   basket

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7   Wouk (2002) considers clauses in which A occurs with *ling* in post-predicate position as passive. Sentence (i)-(ii) are examples from Sumbawa Besar dialect cited by Wouk (2002: 302-303). Glosses and translations are as they originally appear:

   (i)   *Andi   pukil   ling   Iwan.*
       Andi   hit   by   Iwan
       'Andi was hit by Iwan.'

   (ii) *ka-ajak-ku   ling   dengan-ku lalo   ko   Moyo.*
       pass-invite-1sg   by   friend-1sg go   to   Moyo
       'My friend invited me to go to Moyo.'

   However, judged from its frequency, this type of clause involving *ling* in post-predicate position is unmarked. It would not be appropriate to call them passive, which implies the clause is marked. We should rather consider *ling* as a default marker of the transitive agent and assume that Sumbawa exhibits an ergative case frame.

bosang   sopo   ia-sangisi batu.
basket   one   3-fill   stone.

'He found two (baskets); in one he put the girl, and the other he filled with stones'.   (Jonker 1935: 224)[8]

In example (30), which is a passage from the story of Pomponge, a fronted NP in (i) is used to foreground its referent, that is, a buffalo in the discourse.

(30) (a)   *Ia-bawa-mo   **deneng   nan**,*
            3-bring-MM   pounder   that

      (b)   *ia-sangaro   lako   tau   rabara-kebo:*
            3=entrust   to   person   herd-buffalo

      (c)   *'Sangaro   gama   **deneng   kaji**ʼ*
            entrust   I hope   pounder   1SG

      (d)   *'Na   nè   Pomponge, kena   ia-rik   **ling   kebo**!ʼ*
            PROH   TITLE   Pomponge   affected 3=step   by   buffalo

      (e)   *'No-si*ʼ
            NEG-MM

      (f)   *Mengka   mulé-mo   nè   Pomponge*
            when.PST   return-MM TITLE   Pomponge

      (g)   *Mé   nya   dènèng   kaji*
            where 3   pounder 1SG

      (h)   *Ka   ia-rik   **ling   kebo***
            PST   3=step   by   buffalo

      (i)   ***Kebo   ta**-mo   ku-ete*
            buffalo this-MM   1SG=take

      (j)   *Dadi ia-bawa-mo   **kebo   nan**   ling   nè   Pomponge*
            then   3=bring-MM   buffalo that   by   TITLE   Pomponge

(a-b) He took **the pounder** with him and gave [it] to someone who was herding buffaloes to mind:

(c)   'Please mind **my bamboo pounder**'.

(d)   'Let's not do that, Mr Pomponge, [as] **a buffalo** might step on it'.

(e)   'No [don't worry]'.

(f)   Mr Pomponge returned

(g)   'Where is my bamboo pounder?'

(h)   'It got trodden on **by a buffalo**'.

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8   In citing from Jonker (1935), the original orthography is retained. The text is translated by Stuart Robson from the original Dutch and is glossed by the present author.

(i)   'I'm taking **this buffalo**!'

(j)   Mr Pomponge then took **the buffalo** with him.

<div align="center">(Jonker 1935: 222)</div>

In this story, the main character Pomponge first obtains white ants; he subsequently exchanges the white ants for a chicken, the chicken for a pounder, the pounder for a buffalo, the buffalo for a bread fruit, and the bread fruit for a woman. In example (30) *Pomponge* is at the stage where he exchanges the pounder for a buffalo. The two relevant items (*deneng* 'pounder' and *kebo* 'buffalo') are basically either referred to by a post-predicate NP, as in (a)-(c), (h), (g), and (j) or left unexpressed, as in (a). But the item in question is referred by a fronted NP only when Pomponge claims his ownership of the item, and it is appointed to a new topic in the next passage, as in (h). The same pattern is observed throughout the text.

We could say that the discourse function of a clause with a fronted NP is similar to the left-detached construction in other languages, for example *Me, I'm hungry* in English, or *Moi j'ai faim* in French (Lambrecht (1999: 183, 291-295)).

A similar construction in which a topic NP is marked by fronting is seen in some Indonesian-type languages, such as Gayo (Eades: 2005: 127-128), and Austronesian languages in the wider area, such as Kimaragan (Dusunic, Kroeger 2005: 409), Buol (Gorongalo-Mongondic, Zobel 2005: 630), Makassarese (South Sulawesi, Jukes 2005: 667), and Tukang Besi (Donohue 2005: 88-90).

4 Historical background of the Sumbawa system

Wouk (2002: 307) and Ross (2002b:470-471) consider the lack of Indonesian-type voice opposition in Sumbawa to be a result of a collapse of the Indonesian system that existed in the proto-language. The assumption seems plausible, given that the majority of the languages of the same subgroup have an actor/undergoer voice opposition. In that case, we may assume that the Sumbawa system has developed in the following way. The syntactic and semantic demotion of the P in the actor voice has advanced so extremely that the construction can no longer code a fully transitive proposition. As a result of this, Sumbawa has developed another way to indicate differences related to the information structure of transitive clauses, as is described in section 3.

With regard to the proto-system, however, an alternative possibility is conceivable; it is almost certain that the undergoer voice is the original transitive construction of the two voices (see Kikusawa 2000), but it is not clear how and when the construction of nasal prefixed verbs was established as the actor voice, forming the voice opposition of the Indonesian type. The nasal prefix in proto-languages may not have been used as an established voice marker as it is in the present Indonesian-type system. In most Indonesian-type languages, the correspondence between the nasal prefix and the actor-oriented transitive construction is not one-to-one. The nasal prefix not only functions as an indicator of the active voice, but also forms intransitive verbs denoting activity, that is, dynamic and atelic situations (e.g., *meng-alir* 'to flow', and *mengambang* 'to float' in Indonesian, and *nambung* 'to fly,' *ngelangi* 'to swim,' *ngorta* 'chat,' and *ngeling* 'cry' in Balinese, See Artawa (1998: 58-60) and Arka (2008: 31-39) for the details of the Balinese nasal prefix.) We could consider this function indicating activity to be the original function of this prefix, from which both the Sumbawa system and the Indonesian-type system have diverged.

Abbreviations

AV	actor voice	PASS	passive
EXCL	exclusive	PL	plural
INTERJ	interjection	PROG	progressive
IRR	irrealis	PROH	prohibitive
MM	mood marker	PST	past
NEG	negator	SG	singular
NMLZ	nominalizer	TITLE	particle introducing a personal name

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