

Voice Syncretism in Takituduh Bunun

This paper discusses voice marking on transitive verbs in Takituduh Bunun based on a list of 160 verbs, covering different verb classes (Tsukida & Zeitoun 2023, Ross 2015), semantic categories (Levin 1993) and degrees of transitivity (Li and Thompson 1980). I show that a subset of transitive verbs in Takituduh Bunun lack an expected Patient Voice form *-un*, and that this function is instead fulfilled by the Locative Voice *-an*. This is illustrated in example (1a-b) & (2a-b), where the verb *kulut* ‘cut’ exhibits both Patient and Locative Voice forms, with Patient and Location as clause Pivot, respectively, and the verb *tabal* ‘chop’ exhibits the same alternation in terms of semantic role of the pivot (Patient and Location, respectively), but fulfills both functions with the LV form, constituting a kind of voice syncretism. The same pattern is attested across different verb classes, semantic categories and degrees of transitivity, illustrated in (3a-c), where the verbs to the right lack an expected PV form, showing that the use of LV in examples such as (2a) is not to signal a lower degree of transitivity (cf. Puyuma, Teng 2008: 111). There appear to be no phonological explanations either; Li (1988) proposes that reflexes of Proto-Austronesian /ə/ are mapped to /u/ as a default in Bunun, and to /a/ when adjacent to uvular /q/ (cf. **bituqən* → *bintuqan*, ‘star’), contradicted by *ludaqun* in (3b), and when adjacent to vowel a (**Sajak* → *saak* ‘smell’), contradicted by the form *tan’aun* in (3a).

I propose that this is a strictly lexicon phenomenon, and that (1a) & (2a) exhibit the same clause structure, and that the surface differences should be accounted for using post-syntactic spell-out rules in a late-insertion framework, such as Distributed Morphology (Halle 1997, Marantz 1997). Within Distributed Morphology, it is standardly assumed that irregular inflectional forms can be accounted for via ordering in spell-out rules, as illustrated in (4a), where lexical forms with specific realizations must be listed. A subset of the verbs in the Takituduh Bunun lexicon (approximately 30% in the present verb list) are listed as having Patient Voice spelled-out as *-an*; verbs not specified in this list realize Patient Voice with the elsewhere form *-un*. Since Locative Voice still retains its prototypical function throughout the verbal lexicon, it is necessary for it to retain separate spell-out rules for such clauses, illustrated in (4b). Evidence for this analysis is found in (5a-b), where the verb *patas* lacks a PV form, but when the distinctive voice morphology of the clause is instead hosted by an adverbial verb (Holmer 2012), the voice form reverts back to the default *-un* form, since the voice marker is no longer attached to a lexical root specified as having the *-an* form. Furthermore, there is both intra- and interspeaker variation for some verbs, with some speakers using the forms *painukun/painukan* ‘to wear’ interchangeably, while others prefer *painukan*, further corroborating the claim that this is a lexical phenomenon.

While the patterns discussed here in principle are compatible with several different analyses of the Austronesian Voice System, I argue the patterns discussed here falls in line with the kind of analysis developed by Ross & Teng (2005) & Teng (2008) for Puyuma, where the different Undergoer Voices constitute different transitivity markers, with Locative and Circumstantial Voice also being used as applicatives. However, a crucial difference that is that CV appears to be limited to its applicative use in Takituduh Bunun. The voice system in Takituduh Bunun could therefore better be characterized as having two transitive forms (*-un* PV and *-an* LV), and two applicatives (*-an* LV and *is-CV*), with syncretism between one of the transitive and applicative forms. This would put Takituduh Bunun somewhere in between the patterns exhibited in the Formosan languages Tsou, with two distinct applicative forms (Chang 2011) and Puyuma, with both applicative forms also used in monotransitive clauses (Teng 2008, 110f). This thus constitutes a relevant case-study into a language variety with Austronesian Voice System exhibiting an interesting kind of Voice Syncretism, where the formal distinction of PV and LV are lost within a subset of the verbal lexicon, without impacting their function, providing valuable insight into how to analyze the Austronesian Voice System, as well as into the morphology-syntax interface, while also providing novel data for an under-studied language variety.

Examples

- 1a. *kulut-un uva'az ca sanglav*
cut-PV child NOM vegetables
'The child cut the vegetables.'
- 1a. *kulut-an uva'az sanglav ca pitdidai'an*
cut-LV child vegetables NOM kitchen
'The child cut vegetables in the kitchen.'
- 2b. *tabal-an uva'az ca lukic*
chop-LV child NOM wood
'The child chopped the wood.'
- 2b. *tabal-an uva'az lukic ca quma*
chop-LV child wood NOM field
'The child chopped wood in the field.'
- 3a. Perception: *tan'aun/tan'aan* 'hear' ---/sadu'an 'see'
3b. Physical Impact: *ludaqun/ludaqan* 'hit' ---/lintauzan 'push'
3c. Movement: *sinapun/sinapan* 'chase' ---/pavazan 'leave'
- 4a. Patient Voice \leftrightarrow -an/___{VTABAL, VSADU, VPATAS, VLINTUAZ, VPAVAZ,...}
 \leftrightarrow -un
4b. Locative Voice \leftrightarrow -an
- 5a. *patas-an uva'az ca tingami*
write-LV child NOM letter
'The child wrote a letter.'
- 5b. *uqna-un uva'az ma-patas ca tingami*
again-PV child AV-write NOM letter
'The child wrote a letter again.'

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