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The Sinama derived transitive construction

JUN AKAMINE

1 Introduction¹

This paper describes two types of transitive sentences in Manuk Mangkaw Sinama (henceforth MNK).² 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 <in>, 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.

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² Abbreviations used: AF actor focus; D dual person; DET determiner; FUT future; GEN genitive; GF goal focus; IMP imperative; IMPF imperfective; MN minimal; NML non-minimal; NOM nominative; FERF 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 {*leqN-*} construction. In the fourth section, I will describe the semantic differences between *in*-type sentences and {*leqN-*} 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 *leq*, *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 I.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.

- (2)a. *leq ku* 'by me'
b. *leq si Abdul* 'by Abdul'
c. *leq 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: *leq* 'agent', *ma* 'location', *ni* 'goal', *min* 'source', *maka* 'instrument'. Their English translations are 'by', 'at/in', 'to', 'from', and 'with' respectively.

Table 1: Prepositions in MNK

	<i>leq</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>maka</i>
case relations	agent	location	goal	source	instrument

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

- (3) *K-in-akan leq 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 I.NOM AF-study at 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 piqiq ni Sabah.*
PERF I.NOM go.there 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-illi leq na tinapay min danakan ku.*
PERF GF-buy by she.GEN bread from sister I.GEN
'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

Nominative 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

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 *leq*. 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 *leq*.

Table 2: MNK personal pronouns

	Person	Nominative	Predicative	Genitive
Minimal	1	<i>aku</i>	<i>aku</i>	<i>ku</i>
	2	<i>kaw</i>	<i>kaqaw</i>	<i>nu</i>
	D	<i>kita</i>	<i>kita</i>	<i>ta</i>
Non-minimal	3	<i>iya</i>	<i>iya</i>	<i>na</i>
	1	<i>kami</i>	<i>kami</i>	<i>kami</i>
	2	<i>kam</i>	<i>kaqam</i>	<i>bi</i>
	D	<i>kiabi</i>	<i>kiabi</i>	<i>tabi</i>
	3	<i>sigala</i>	<i>sigala</i>	<i>sigala</i>

The second person predicative pronouns are exemplified below.

- (8)a. *Kaqaw iya mayad.*
2.MN.PRD the AF-pay
- b. **Kaw iya mayad.*
2.MN.NOM the AF-pay
'You are the one who is going to pay.'
- (9)a. *Ili ma kaqaw, sikeyya itu.*
that at 2.MN.PRD not this
- b. **Ili ma kaw, sikeyya itu.*
that at 2.MN.NOM 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 leq si Abdul.*
PERF *in*-cook chicken by DET Abdul
- b. *Bey niqadjal leq 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 niadjal leq si Abdul.*
chicken PERF *in*-cook by DET Abdul
'Abdul cooked the chicken.'

- (12)a. *Anak-anak bey nengge.*
child PERF *N*-stand.up
- b. *Bey 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 diqilaw.*
PERF he.NOM *pa*-run yesterday
'He ran yesterday.'
- (14) *Bey iya b-in-onoq leq si Markos.*
PERF he.NOM *ni*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 *leq*. 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 *leq* as an 'ergative complement'.⁶

3 The [*leqN*-] construction

3.1 Sinama verbal affixes

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

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-*, *-an-*, and *i-* with the transitive in Tagalog (De Guzman 1988:340-341). The EA would provide reason to think that the Sinama *leqN-* 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 affixes⁷

	Indicative	Aptative	Imperative
Actor	<i>pa-</i> , <i>N-</i>	<i>maka-</i>	<i>N-</i>
Goal	<i>-in-</i>	<i>ta-</i>	<i>-un</i>
Locative	<i>paN-</i> <i>-an</i> , <i>-in-</i> <i>-an</i>	<i>kapaN-</i>	* <i>paN-</i> <i>-in</i>
Beneficiary	<i>-in-</i> <i>-an</i>	<i>ka-</i>	<i>-in</i>
Instrument	<i>paN-</i>	<i>tapaN-</i>	<i>paN-</i> <i>-un</i>

The symbol *N-* represents a prefixed nasal that assimilates in various ways to the initial phoneme of the stem.⁸ It simply indicates that the grammatical subject of the sentence is an actor NP (15). Some motion verbs such as *palaksu* 'to jump', *palabey* 'to pass by', *palege* 'to lie down' are marked by the prefix *pa-* as seen in the sentence (13) above. An infix *in* marks goal-focus (16).⁹

- (15) *Bey ngadjal ingkalla.*
PERF *N*-cook bachelor
'The bachelor cooked.'
- (16) *Bey ni-qadjal deing kurapuq 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-abillihan leq ku halong pahalu.*
in-sell by I.GEN 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.GEN 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 at present.

⁸ Preceding /p, b, t, s, k, (g)ʎ, *N-* assimilates to the place of articulation of the stem initial consonant and that consonant is deleted. In other environments it has the following realisations: *ng-* occurs preceding /q/, but /q/ drops, *nga-* occurs preceding /h, ʎ, *ngan-* occurs preceding /d, j/ and, *ngang-* occurs preceding /g/. Some examples are as follows: *qaq* > *ngaq* 'to get/take (AF)'; *hinang* > *ngahinang* 'to work/make (AF)'; *linggiq* > *ngalinggiq* 'to throw a fishing net (AF)'; *doleq* > *ngandoleq* 'to anger (AF)'; *janjiq* > *nganjanjiq* 'to promise (AF)'; *gamot* > *nganggamot* 'to grow (AF).

⁹ It has an allomorph *ni-* preceding / 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 Sama language slowly.'

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

- (21) *Lay aku lango bey 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-qadjal*) 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 leqmila*
fish *leqN*-split
'split fish'
- (25) *Bilahi aku isi sapi leqngalunok.*
like I.NOM flesh cow *leqN*-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 *leq* is to be interpreted as a prefix, which attaches to the *N-* stem or *leqN-*.

- (26)a. *Bey leqmong siya leq si Abdul.*
 PERF *leq-N-break* chair by DET Abdul
 'Abdul has broken the chair.'

b. **Leq bey mongsiya leq si Abdul.*

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

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

One might assume that *leq* in (27) is a kind of auxiliary verb, since a clitic pronoun follows right after it.¹⁰ However, there are data that indicate the *leq* in (27) is neither a verbal prefix nor an auxiliary verb, but simply a preposition. In sentence (28), a proper noun phrase occurs between *leq* 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 siya.*
 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 *leq-* 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 *leq ku* 'by me' before the verb. In such cases, the verbal prefix *leq-* is obligatorily dropped to yield sentence (27) as indicated in (29b) and (29c).

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

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

¹⁰ This phenomenon is widely observed in most of the Philippine languages. In basic sentences, an enclitic pronoun normally follows the first word of the predicate clause. The following pairs of examples from Tagalog quoted from Schachter and Otnes (1972:183), indicate that the third person singular genitive pronoun *niya* obligatorily occurs right after the verb.

- a. *Nakita niya si Ben.* 'He saw Ben.'
 a' **Nakitasi Ben niya.* 'He saw Ben.'
 b. *Hindi niya nakita si Ben.* 'He didn't see Ben.'
 b' **Hindinakita niya si Ben.* 'He didn't see Ben.'

- (30)a. *Manuk leqngadjal leq 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.

- (31)a. *Leq si Jam ngadjal manuk.*
 by DET Jam *N-cook* chicken
 b. **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 *leqN-* construction unique.

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

The synchronic general rule goes something like this.¹¹ An ergative complement, once preposed to the verb, will trigger the deletion of the prefix *leq-*. It is evident, therefore, that *leq-* 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 *leqN-* and *in-* constructions, the agent can be omitted.¹² But, as observed above, topicalisation of the ergative complement in the *leqN-* construction is unique in that it requires that the prefix *leq-* be omitted. Thus, the *leqN-* construction is syntactically different from the goal-focus sentences.

4 Semantic functions

In this section I investigate some of the features of *leqN-* constructions from the standpoint of scalar transitivity proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980). Of the ten criteria for transitivity which they proposed,¹³ I will discuss four.

¹¹ It is not my purpose to speculate how the construction is diachronically derived. The *leq-* prefix and the *leq* preposition 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 (1988:91-94) 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 *in-* type construction and *leqN-* type construction normally require the ergative complement to appear.

¹³ These criteria are (a) participants, (b) kinesic, (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 perfective.

- (33) *Kakan-un intollo ku. Leqmalla na.*
eat-IMP egg I.GEN *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 diqilaw.*
by I.GEN *N-buy* this at Zamboanga yesterday
'I bought this one at Zamboanga yesterday.'
- (35) **Ayyan leq nu milli pahal?*
what by you.GEN *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 *in>* 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 *in>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 leq kuting.*
in>eat by cat
'The cat ate (some of it).'

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

Table 4: Semantic transitivity

	Aspect	Mode	Affirmation	Affectedness
<i>leqN-</i>	+telic	+realis	+affirmative	total
<i>in></i>	-telic	-realis	-affirmative	partial

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 *in>* infixed 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 *in>* infix type construction. The present descriptions of these constructions are entirely synchronic. I will comment here on three problems for future study:

- text analysis is needed,
- the dialectal distribution of the construction is not well known, and
- 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 *in>* 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 *in>* for all transitive expressions. Both Sikubung Sinama and Sapa-Sapa Sinama have the prefix *leqN-* together with the infix *in>*. Texts from the Sibutu Sinama indicate that it also has the *leqN-* construction as well as *in>* 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-Tolitoli area (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.
leq I.GEN *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 *in>* infix in the Philippine-type Sinama.

- (40) *Dayah ore lemarikkit le anaq ku.* (Santigi)
fish that *le-N-cook* by child I.GEN
'My child has cooked that fish.'
- (41) *Munihi ore lengadakaq leq polisi.* (Labuan Lobo)
person that *le-N-catch* by policeman
'Policeman has caught that man.'

I am not yet sure whether there is complementary distribution between the *leqN-* construction and the goal-focus construction in Indonesian Sinama (the Indonesian Sinama *di-* prefix being equivalent to the *in* infix in Sinama) as observed in MNK. Note that MNK and Indonesian Sinama are different languages — speakers from each speech community cannot understand speakers from the other. However, the presence of the *leqN-* construction in two speech communities in Northern Sulawesi suggests a period of close contact between the speakers of Southern Sulu Sinama and some speakers of Indonesian Sinama after the separation of the two languages. Further study of Indonesian Sinama would be useful, for socio-linguistic and descriptive-linguistic purposes.

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Some aspects of 'focus' in Sama Bangingi'

JOANN GAULT

1 Introduction¹

Sama Bangingi' (also called Balangingi') is one of several Sama languages which are spoken throughout the Sulu Archipelago in the south-western Philippines. The Bangingi' language is spoken from the Samales 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-Bajaw subgroup of Malayo-Polynesian, which includes also the Sama-Bajaw languages of Sabah and Sulawesi (Pallesen 1985:2-3).

Bangingi' 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 Bangingi' 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 (Pallesen 1985:9).

2 Case marking

2.1 Pronouns

The Sama Bangingi' nominal system distinguishes three cases: absolutive, ergative and oblique.² These cases are most easily seen in the three pronoun sets given in Table 1 below.

¹ This understanding of focus (as yet incomplete) is a result of contact with and study of the language which began in 1974. Many Bangingi' have had input into that study. The examples in this paper have been given or checked by Mr Abdulmashir (Bong) B. Kasim of Taluksangay, and Mrs Jana Amping of Campo Islam, both in Zamboanga City.

² Abbreviations used: ABS absolutive case; ERG ergative case; GEN genitive case; OBL oblique case; AF agent focus; PF patient focus; RF recipient focus; IF instrument focus; LF location focus; SG singular; DU dual (i.e. 1+2SG person); PL plural; ABL abilitative mood; CP completive particle; DET determiner;