REFERENCE TRACKING AND VOICE CHOICE IN TOTOLI DISCOURSE

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Totoli is a western Austronesian symmetrical voice language, i.e. it has three basic transitive constructions - an actor voice and two formally distinct but functionally equivalent undergoer voices. Voice alternations in symmetrical languages do not decrease transitivity, but are a means to rearrange the linking of arguments and select different core arguments as syntactic pivots (i.e. subjects). Thus, unlike the agent in a passive construction in a language like English, which if expressed at all is realized as an oblique, the agent in the undergoer voice in a symmetrical voice language is core argument just like an undergoer in an actor voice sentence.

In some contexts, voice choice can be straightforwardly predicted, as there are number of syntactic operations (e.g. questioning and relativization) that are exclusively accessible to the subject argument. In most cases, however, voice selection does not depend on any syntactic constraints. Furthermore, unlike in a number of other Austronesian languages where factors such as animacy, definiteness or specificity may effectively determine voice choice, in Totoli these restrictions are at best weak. The research question addressed in this paper is thus: What determines voice choice in Totoli discourse?

It is clear that this question can only be answered by looking at a larger amount of natural discourse data. It is also clear that a corpus study of Totoli discourse will only reflect tendencies rather than hard constraints. This paper presents first results of such a corpus study. We used the GRAID (Grammatical Relations and Animacy in Discourse) schema developed by Haig and Schnell (2014) to annotate a substantial part of our corpus of spoken Totoli. This included annotating nominal referring expression for form, syntactic function, and animacy, as well as verbal predicates for voice. Furthermore, we used RefIND (Referent Indexing in Natural-language Discourse, Schiborr, Schnell and Thiele 2018) for tracking referents through the discourse and determine their information status. We will present first statistical analyses and correlations of the above mentioned factors, and compare our findings to the only other available study on symmetrical voice languages we are aware of, i.e. the study by Brickell and Schnell (2017) on Tondano. We will also provide a cross-genre comparison, something that has been neglected in most discourse studies, which usually only provide information about (traditional) narratives.

Brickell, Timothy C. and Stefan Schnell. 2017. Do grammatical relations reflect information status? Reassessing Preferred Argument Structure theory against discourse Data from Tondano, *Linguistic Typology*, 21(1), 177-208.

Haig, Geoffrey and Stefan Schnell. 2014. Annotations using GRAID (Grammatical Relations and Animacy in Discourse): Introduction and guidelines for annotators (version 7.0). (https://lac.uni-koeln.de/en/multicast/) (Accessed 2018-03-01.)

Schiborr, Nils N., Stefan Schnell and Hanna Thiele. 2018. RefIND — Referent Indexing in Natural-language Discourse: Annotation guidelines (v1.0). Unpublished manuscript.