

## Voice in “eventive” coordinate clauses in standard and colloquial Indonesian and Sumbawa Malay

It is widely known that the discourse function of the passive voice in Malay deviates from what is typically observed cross-linguistically, that is, it may be used when the topicality of the agent is considerably high. This deviation is mainly observed in what Cumming (1988: 128) calls “eventive” coordinate clauses, that is, clauses that include “predicates which denote punctual, sequenced events or changes of state, particularly in main clauses.” Cumming (1988), in her discussion of a functional change in Malay, suggests that the clause of a *di-*prefixed verb, which she labels PT (Patient Trigger) clause, is the unmarked choice in the eventive clauses in Classical Malay, but not in modern standard Indonesian.

Sentence (1) is an example of a *di-*prefixed verb clause in Classical Malay. This *di-*prefixed verb clause is used to describe a situation in which the topicality of the patient (a fish that was so beautiful) is clearly lower than the agent (the woodworker).

(1) “*maka diperbuat oleh pandai kayu itu seekor ikan terlalu indah-indah...*”

“The woodworker made a fish that was so beautiful.” (Hikayat Inderaputera, 2007: 6)

This study attempts to clarify the realities of voice selection in the eventive clauses of the current standard and colloquial varieties of Indonesian and a vernacular variety of Malay spoken in the Sumbawa district of NTB province (hereafter, Sumbawa Malay).

To achieve this goal, I conducted an experiment using short movies as stimuli, which induced the participants to create eventive transitive clauses. The results showed that the active voice is dominant in standard Indonesian, confirming Cumming’s observation, while the passive voice is dominant in colloquial Indonesian and Sumbawa Malay.

The pragmatic environment in which the passive clause occurs varies among varieties and individual speakers. Speakers of colloquial Indonesian and some of the Sumbawa Malay speakers consider the information status of the patient when they use the passive voice; a passive clause is observed only when the topicality of the patient is higher than, or as high as, that of the agent. On the other hand, the remaining Sumbawa Malay speakers use the passive clause in the same way in which it is employed in Classical Malay; a passive clause is used irrespective of the topicality of the patient, as seen in sentence (2).

(2) “*seorang anak memecahkan telur kemudian di-aduk, di-kocok, kemudian di-taruh susu*”  
“A girl broke an egg, mixed it, beat it, and then **poured milk** in it.”