

# 3 *Split intransitivity in Timugon Murut*

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## 1 Introduction

Timugon Murut is a Western Austronesian language spoken in the Tenom valley around the town of Tenom, Sabah, Malaysia. There are two dialects corresponding to the two main rivers that flow through the valley they inhabit, Poros and Kapagalan. The estimated number of speakers is 9,000. Prentice's thesis (1971) remains to date the only published grammar of any language indigenous to Sabah. The help we have received from this contribution has been considerable, due to its accuracy and consistency. Prentice (1971) described the morphology of Timugon Murut using the Tagmemic model.<sup>1</sup> In his first analyses (1965, 1969) he attempted to establish verb classes on the basis of focus potential. This proved '... unsatisfactory as a basis for a syntactical classification, as it included in one class verbs which were syntactically quite different ...' (1971:33). Following Pike (1964) and Longacre (1964) he then established verb classes as determined by the potential range of situational roles possible for each stem. This he remarked '... forms the primary criterion in determining stem class membership' (1971:35).

Since 1971 though, other syntactic models have been proposed that have advanced our understanding of how Philippine-type languages are organised, one of these being Role and Reference grammar (RRG) by Foley and van Valin (1984). Among the innovations of RRG in comparison to Tagmemics are the notions of the 'macroroles' Actor and Undergoer.

This paper will show that understanding the feature of Split Intransitivity is essential for a clearer analysis of the verbal morphology of Timugon Murut,<sup>2</sup> that is the contrast between

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1 The phonemes of Timugon Murut are: four vowels /a i o u/ and fifteen consonants /b d g j k l m n N p r s t w y/ as well as a glottal stop /ʔ/ represented in the orthography by the apostrophe '. The phonemes w and y occur only word finally and are written as u and i respectively.

2 Thanks are due to Ivan Lowe and Paul Kroeger of the Summer Institute of Linguistics for their assistance in analysis of the data. Thanks are also due to three Timugon Murut speakers, Tipor Brahim, Silipah Majius and Mantun Morris, without whose excellent help the task would have been infinitely more difficult.

An acknowledgement is also due to Jack Prentice, who read an earlier draft of this paper. I include an excerpt from his letter to me in February 1992:

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unaccusative and unergative roots with intransitive verbs — unergatives having a single core argument as Actor and unaccusatives having a single core argument as Undergoer. We will then demonstrate how this applies to intransitive clauses by comparing the use of the affixes *(-u)m-* Active Voice (AV) and *paG-* Agentiviser (AG).

### 1.1 Case marking

Timugon Murut is a language with both nominal case markers and verbal voice markers. Case markers indicate the relationship of nominal arguments to the verb. The prepositions used are not as extensive as in many other Philippine-type languages such as Ivatan (Prentice 1971:32).

Nominal arguments are divided into common and personal sets. Nominative (NOM) marks Subject, Genitive (GEN) marks Actor as Non-Subject and Dative (DAT) marks Non-Actor as Non-Subject (Oblique).

**Table 1:** Case markers of arguments

	Nominative	Genitive	Dative
Common	∅	<i>ru</i>	<i>ra</i>
Personal	<i>i-</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ra</i>

Timugon Murut has four sets of pronouns:

**Table 2:** Pronoun sets

	Emphatic	Nominative	Genitive	Dative
1S	<i>aku</i>	<i>aku</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>raki'</i>
2S	<i>okou</i>	<i>kou</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>rirun</i>
3S	<i>io</i>	<i>io</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>riso</i>
DUAL	<i>ito</i>	<i>ito</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>rito</i>
1PIN	<i>itakau</i>	<i>takau</i>	<i>takau</i>	<i>ritakau</i>
1PEX	<i>akai</i>	<i>akai</i>	<i>mai</i>	<i>ramon</i>
2P	<i>akau</i>	<i>kau</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>ramuyun</i>
3P	<i>ilo</i>	<i>ilo</i>	<i>nilo</i>	<i>risilo</i>

There are also two referent pronouns for second person singular and plural, *tokou* (1SNOM + 2SDAT) and *takamin* (1SNOM + 2PDAT). In these pronouns, the reference to both speaker and referee are combined, having the resultant meaning 'I (vb) to you'. Nominative case pronouns only occur following the verb. If the Subject is topicalised (left dislocation) the emphatic pronoun set is used. However, the emphatic pronoun set may also be used post-verbally instead of the nominative pronoun set (Brewis & Levinsohn 1991:30).

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In view of my health and work problems, it may be a few weeks before you receive my annotated copy. But I can already say that, although I have some problems with your terminology (unfamiliar to me), your analysis is lucid and accurate. Were I to revise my 1971 description, I should certainly take the same tack as you (though whether we'd end up at the same destination is a different question!).

## 1.2 Voice

Like Tagalog and other Philippine-type languages Timugon Murut has a ‘verbal focus’ system (here referred to as ‘voice’). The semantic role of the sole nominative argument is reflected in an affix that occurs on the verb. These verbal affixes we call voice markers; see Table 3.

**Table 3:** Voice markers

	Voice marker	Semantic role
Active voice (AV)	<i>(-u)m-</i>	agent, effector, experiencer
Objective voice (OV)	<i>-on</i>	patient
Dative voice (DV)	<i>-in</i>	recipient, beneficent
Instrumental voice (IV)	<i>paG-R</i> <sup>3</sup>	instrument
Locative voice (LV)	<i>-an</i>	location, time, reason

Unlike English, many Philippine-type languages are patient-oriented. The Undergoer is the unmarked choice for subject and patient is the default Undergoer (Kroeger 1996:42). Every basic verb clause must have at least one definite core argument. Timugon Murut demonstrates the following scale for subject selection: Undergoer > other core argument > non-core argument. The core arguments of agent, patient and recipient of a ditransitive verb can be selected as Subject (if definite and with preference to the Undergoer) and occur post-verbally, i.e. in normal position. The non-core arguments of instrument, location, time, and reason under normal Subject selection rules are not selected.

The identification of *m-* as the full-marking with the Subject, and the absence of *m-* as the equivalent reduced-marking follows Kroeger’s analysis of Kimaragang verb affixation (Kroeger 1988). Prentice recognised sets of ‘Subject focus inflections’ which included the forms in Table 4 (ignoring morphophonemic changes):

**Table 4:** Full and reduced Subject marking

Aspect	marking	root	<i>PaG</i> -root	<i>PaN</i> -root
Imperfective	(full)	<i>(-u)m-</i>	<i>m-(p)aG-</i>	<i>m-(p)aN-</i>
Perfective	(full)	<i>(-imi)n-</i>	<i>n-(p)aG-</i>	<i>n-(p)aN-</i>
Atemporal	(reduced)	∅	∅- <i>paG-</i>	∅- <i>paN-</i>

## 1.3 Basic Word Order

The unmarked order of constituents for verbal clauses is verb–arguments. Particles occurring immediately after the verb are adverbial modifiers and these may be separated from the predicate only by a pronoun. Full phrases occur after the adverbial modifiers with the Subject usually first and then other elements following.

There are four factors which determine constituent order in Timugon (see also Prentice 1971:154–157).

<sup>3</sup> *R-* = syllable reduplication.

1. The overall order is: verb–pronouns–adverbial modifiers–full phrases.
2. If there is more than one pronoun or if the roles of the oblique phrases are ambiguous, then the order is according to the following hierarchy: actor–patient–recipient–instrument–locative.
3. Long phrases are usually final, especially when modified by a relative clause.
4. With full phrases, Subject precedes non-Subject, except where the Subject of the last sentence is restated.

## 2 Eventive viewpoint

Prototypical events can be characterised as perfective, punctiliar, realis and occurring on the main event line of the story.<sup>4</sup> Any departure of an event from any of these characteristics makes that event less prototypical.

Verb roots and stems affixed for Eventive Viewpoint describe events that are strongly prototypical; some will be exact prototypes, others less so. We discuss here two affixes that occur as prefixes with typical events, *(-u)m-* (AV) and *paG-* (AG). Both *(-u)m-* and *paG-* require that the overall clause structure be intransitive, i.e. only one core argument is permitted. Unergatives include both unergative roots and unergative stems. Section 2.1 discusses unergative roots, whereas §3 discusses unergative stems.

### 2.1 Unergatives

Unergative verb roots are agentive; that is, the single argument present is Actor (typically a volitional agent). In Eventive Viewpoint, intransitive clauses which have unergative verb roots are marked with the affix *(-u)m-* (AV). The sole argument takes the macrorole Actor and is marked as Subject.

The *(-u)m-* affix has various forms.

With roots beginning with a non-labial consonant, it has the form of an infix *-um-*, for example:

<i>(-u)m-</i> + <i>subol</i>	∅	<i>sumubol</i>	'enter';
<i>(-u)m-</i> + <i>tindak</i>	∅	<i>tumindak</i>	'leap/jump'.

With roots that begin with a labial consonant /p/ or /b/, it replaces that initial consonant by *m-* (the *u* of the affix being deleted); note:

<i>(-u)m-</i> + <i>baya'</i>	∅	<i>maya'</i>	'follow';
<i>(-u)m-</i> + <i>palit</i>	∅	<i>malit</i>	'exchange places with someone'.

With roots beginning with a vowel, it simply prefixes the root with *m-* (the *u* of the affix again being deleted), as in:

<i>(-u)m-</i> + <i>ongoi</i>	∅	<i>mongoi</i>	'go';
<i>(-u)m-</i> + <i>uli'</i>	∅	<i>muli'</i>	'go home'.

<sup>4</sup> Hopper linked foreground information with the event line of narrative discourse (Hopper 1979). The clauses which relate events falling on the main event line are foreground clauses, while those which do not fall on the main event line are the background ones.

Examples (1)–(3) show *(-u)m-* affixed to unergative roots.

- (1) *S-um-ubol aku (ra baloi).*<sup>5</sup>  
 \*-AV-enter 1SNOM DAT house<sup>6</sup>  
 ‘I enter the house.’
- (2) *Migor [(-u)m-bigor] aku (ra giti).*  
 AV-stand 1SNOM DAT here  
 ‘I stand here.’
- (3) *M-ongoi aku (ra kadai).*  
 AV-go 1SNOM DAT shop  
 ‘I go to the shop.’

## 2.2 Unaccusatives

The affix *(-u)m-* (AV) occurs in all Eventive Viewpoint verb forms, both transitive and intransitive, when the macrorole Actor is Subject. The same affix *(-u)m-* also occurs in unaccusative constructions with adjective, noun and unaccusative roots. These form non-agentive change of state verb forms (the achievement verbs of Foley and van Valin 1984:36). Intransitive clauses with such verbs have a single argument which is an Undergoer. Thus *(-u)m-* may not be described as always marking Actor Subject because it also marks Undergoer Subjects in the clauses just mentioned.<sup>7</sup> *(-u)m-* (AV) marks Actor as Subject in unergative eventive clauses (1)–(3) and also marks Undergoer as Subject in unaccusative eventive clauses (4).

- (4) *L-um-apak ø-luton no.*  
 \*-AV-lapak NOM-firewood that  
 ‘The firewood splits.’ (It has been exposed to the sun.)

When *(-u)m-* is affixed to adjective and noun roots the resultant verb form has the meaning ‘change of state’. We can say that *(-u)m-* + Adj/Nn root has the meaning ‘BECOMES state or condition’.

Other adjective roots that produce the same change of state verb forms include:

<i>ma-tukal</i>	‘ST-thin’	<i>t-um-ukal</i>	‘becomes thin’
<i>ma-kapal</i>	‘ST-thick’	<i>k-um-apal</i>	‘becomes thick’
<i>ma-salui</i>	‘ST-cool’	<i>s-um-alui</i>	‘becomes cool’
<i>ma-sawat</i>	‘ST-high’	<i>s-um-awat</i>	‘becomes high’
<i>ma-lami’</i>	‘ST-soft’	<i>l-um-ami’</i>	‘becomes soft’
<i>ma-gana’</i>	‘ST-low’	<i>g-um-ana’</i>	‘becomes low’
<i>mo-totoi</i>	‘ST-slow’	<i>t-um-otoi</i>	‘becomes slow’
<i>mo-lomok</i>	‘ST-fat’	<i>l-um-omok</i>	‘becomes fat’

<sup>5</sup> Examples (1)–(3) have optional non-core locative phrases marked by *ra* ‘DAT’.

<sup>6</sup> The \* represents the initial consonant of a root or stem that is separated by an infix.

<sup>7</sup> In previous analyses the *-um-* affix has usually been glossed as Actor Pivotal. This overlooks the use of *-um-* with achievement verbs. We note that Kroeger (1990) writing on Kimaragang Dusun, referred to the *m-* affix as voice-marker 1 whose thematic role was logical subject.

### 2.3 Transitives

Furthermore, *(-u)m-* derives reflexive verb forms from certain transitive roots. This fits neatly the constraints of both *(-u)m-* and the transitive root. On the one hand, *(-u)m-* requires that the overall clause structure be intransitive, allowing only a single core argument nominal. On the other hand, a transitive root requires both an Actor and an Undergoer. To satisfy both of these constraints the resultant verb form must be a reflexive. A reflexive has a single participant that is both Actor and Undergoer. Thus, the overall clause structure is intransitive and the single argument present is marked as Subject with a coreferential Patient.

Examples of *(-u)m-* deriving reflexive verbs from transitive roots:

- (5) *S-um-igot io.*  
 \*-AV-hang 3SNOM  
 'He hangs himself.'
- (6) *T-um-obok io.*  
 \*-AV-stab 3SNOM  
 'He stabs himself.'

### 3 Agentiviser (AG)

The affix *paG-* (AG) can be prefixed to unergative, unaccusative and transitive verb roots. The resultant forms are intransitive verb stems which have exactly one core argument. When *paG-* (AG) is applied to an unergative root, it forms an unergative stem. Both the old root and the new stem form verbs that take one core argument, which is an Actor with the semantic role of agent, but the new unergative stem requires a plural agent. When *paG-* (AG) is applied to an unaccusative root, it forms an unergative stem. The old verb formed from the unaccusative root took one core argument, an Undergoer. The new verb formed from the unergative stem also takes one core argument, which is an Actor with the semantic role of agent. When *paG-* (AG) is prefixed to transitive roots, it forms reciprocal stems, thus fulfilling the requirement that the new stem take exactly one core argument. The old transitive root formed the verb in a clause with two macroroles, an Actor and an Undergoer, realised by two different nominals. The new reciprocal stem, however, forms a verb in a clause with only one surface nominal; this nominal refers to a plural participant set whose participants are both Actors and Undergoers. The one core argument has the semantic role of agent and patient.

Thus, we see that in all three cases the *paG-* (AG) stem verb occurs in a clause with exactly one core argument, and that the semantic role of that core argument is either agent or contains agent (the reciprocal case), hence, the gloss 'Agentiviser'.

The prefix *paG-* (AG) has different forms, depending on the phonological environment offered by the root. With roots beginning with a consonant, *paG-* (AG) has the form *paN-*, where N is a nasal consonant that assimilates to the point of articulation of the root initial consonant.<sup>8</sup> Thus:

<i>paG-</i> + <i>siab</i>	∅	<i>pansiab</i>	'fly'
<i>paG-</i> + <i>kiwa'</i>	∅	<i>pangkiwa'</i>	'climb'
<i>paG-</i> + <i>busul</i>	∅	<i>pambusul</i>	'descend'

<sup>8</sup> Although *paG-* has allomorphs ending in a nasal consonant, note that it is quite distinct from the transitivity prefix *paN-* (which is not discussed further in this chapter).

With roots beginning with a vowel it has the form *paG-*:

<i>paG-</i>	+ <i>aloi</i>	∅	<i>pagaloi</i>	'go up'
<i>paG-</i>	+ <i>iru'</i>	∅	<i>pagiru'</i>	'flee'
<i>paG-</i>	+ <i>ilong</i>	∅	<i>pagilong</i>	'look at'

### 3.1 Agentiviser with unergatives

Of the following four examples, (7) and (9) are clauses whose verbs are formed from unergative verb roots. Such clauses have a single core argument, realised by a singular (non-collective) nominal in the semantic role of agent. By contrast, examples (8) and (10) are clauses whose verbs are formed from unergative verb stems made by prefixing the same unergative roots with *paG-* (AG). Such clauses also have a single core argument but this is a plural (and collective) agent.

- (7) *T-um-uun aku ra tukar.*  
 \*-AV-go.down 1SNOM DAT steps  
 'I go down the steps (of the house).'
- (8) *Mantuun [(-u)m-paG-tuun] ilo ra Tonom.*  
 AV-AG-go.down 3PNOM DAT Tenom  
 'They all go to Tenom (town) together.'
- (9) *S-um-ubol aku ra baloi.*  
 \*-AV-enter 1SNOM DAT house  
 'I enter the house.'
- (10) *Mansubol [(-u)m-paG-subol] ilo ra bajang.*  
 AV-AG-enter 3PNOM DAT sheet  
 'They all get under the sheet.'

### 3.2 Agentiviser with unaccusatives

In examples (11) and (13), the unaccusative verb roots *aloi* 'to rise' and *siab* 'to be blown' have the Undergoers *balun no* 'the balloon' and *apol no* 'the chaff' as their respective single core arguments. These Undergoers are marked as Subject with nominative case marking. In examples (12) and (14), when the same roots are prefixed with *paG-* (AG), they form the unergative stems *pagaloi* 'to go up' and *pansiab* 'to fly'. These unergative stems have the Actors *aku* '1SNOM' and *susuit no* 'the bird' as their respective single core arguments marked with nominative case.

- (11) *M-aloi ∅-balun no.*  
 AV-rise NOM-balloon the  
 'The balloon rises.' (unaccusative root)
- (12) *Magaloi [(-u)m-paG-aloi] aku ra tukar.*  
 AV-AG-rise 1SNOM DAT steps  
 'I climb the steps (of the house).' (unergative stem)

- (13) *S-um-iab*  $\emptyset$ -*apol* *no*.  
 \*-AV-blown NOM-chaff the  
 ‘The chaff is blown away.’ (unaccusative root)
- (14) *Mansiab* [(-u)m-*paG-siab*]  $\emptyset$ -*susuit* *no* *ra* *tataun*.  
 AV-AG-blown NOM-bird the DAT tree  
 ‘The bird flies to the tree.’ (unergative stem)

### 3.3 Agentiviser with transitives

When transitive verb roots are prefixed with *paG-* (AG), the resultant stems occur in reciprocal clauses. It is important to note that *paG-* (AG) only allows one core argument in the clause. In other words, the occurrence of a verb with a *paG-* (AG) stem is restricted to intransitive clauses. When *paG-* (AG) is prefixed to a transitive root, it requires that the overall surface clause structure be intransitive. But transitives have both an obligatory Actor and Undergoer, and, if we are to preserve relationships between participants, the Undergoer cannot be simply deleted. Therefore, the two possible options that satisfy both the requirements of *paG-* (AG) (single core argument) and the transitive root (obligatory Actor and Undergoer) are reflexive and reciprocal.

The inherent semantic content of some verbs, (e.g. ‘argue’) make reflexivisation impossible (for one does not argue with oneself), so the only option left for such verbs is reciprocalisation.

Reciprocal forms have at least two participants which are both Actors and Undergoers. Reciprocals form surface intransitive clauses that have a single core argument which is plural (minimum of dual). Since in a reciprocal construction every member of the participant set will be an Actor at some time during the interaction described by the verb, there is a sense in which we can say that Undergoers are promoted to Actors. (Conversely, we can equally say that Actors are demoted to Undergoers.)

Examples (15)–(17) show the transitive roots *sangor* ‘argue’, *lamba* ‘hit’ and *tobok* ‘stab’ prefixed with *paG-* (AG).

- (15) *Mansangor* [(-u)m-*paG-sangor*] *ilo*.  
 AV-AG-argue 3PNOM  
 ‘They argue with each other.’
- (16) *Manramba*’ [(-u)m-*paG-lamba*]’ *ilo*.  
 AV-AG-hit 3PNOM  
 ‘They hit each other.’
- (17) *Montobok* [(-u)m-*paG-tobok*] *ilo*.  
 AV-AG-stab 3PNOM  
 ‘They stab each other.’

The affix *paG-* (AG) also produces reciprocal verb forms when prefixed to nouns such as *andu* ‘wife’ (18) and *kubayau* ‘sweetheart’ (19). Both of these nouns express a transitive relation and when prefixed with *paG-* (AG), another agent is introduced producing a reciprocal verb form in an intransitive clause.

- (18) *Magandu*’ [(-u)m-*paG-andu*]’ *ilo*.  
 AV-AG-wife 3PNOM  
 ‘They marry each other.’

- (19) *Mangkubayau* [(-u)m-paG-kubayau] ilo.  
 AV-AG-sweetheart 3PNOM  
 'They are in love with each other.'

So, we can summarise *paG-* (AG) as having the following constraints.

First, *paG-* (AG) requires a single core argument as Actor (i.e. the overall structure of the clause MUST BE intransitive).

Second, *paG-* (AG) promotes any Undergoer present to Actor (provided that in reciprocals we understand this statement in the sense explained).

The functions of the affixes (-u)m- (AV) and *paG-* (AG) in intransitive clauses can be represented as in Table 5.

**Table 5:** (-u)m- (AV) and *paG-* (AG) contrasted

Root type	(-u)m- (AV)	<i>paG-</i> (AG)
unaccusative root	non-agentive	agentive
unergative root	agentive	plural agent
transitive root	reflexive	reciprocal

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