

**Influence of verb classes on the realis/irrealis distinction in Bonggi**

Morphology

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### Abstract

The indigenous languages of the Philippines and of Sabah, Malaysia, are known for their complex voice systems. Voice marking morphology together with tense/aspect/modality (TAM) morphology results in rich systems of verb morphology. The TAM system is inflectional, whereas the voice system is derivational.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the languages of Sabah and the Philippines have an inflectional morpheme whose semantic function has been analyzed as indicating past tense, perfective/completive aspect, or realis modality. In Bonggi, this morpheme indicates realis modality. Sometimes realis modality is realized as an infix (*-in-* or *-i-*), other times as a prefix (*in-*, *i-*, or *n-*), and still other times it results in ablaut (a change in the stem vowel in which /a/ → [e] or /o/ → [e]). The form and the position of the realis modality allomorphs (i.e., whether they are realized as an infix or a prefix) is conditioned by both morphosyntactic and phonological properties of the verb.

This paper analyzes the morphosyntactic properties of Bonggi verbs from the perspective of Role & Reference Grammar (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). These morphosyntactic properties include: verb class, voice, mood, and modality. These properties license a set of realization rules which determine the word's inflectional form (cf. Stump 2001). It will be shown that the morphosyntactic properties of verb class, voice, and mood condition both the position and the form of realis modality.

One implication of this paper is that any analysis which does not account for the verb classes described will be unable to account for the position and the form of the realis morpheme.

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<sup>1</sup> The voice system of Philippine languages is viewed by some as derivational (Starosta 1986, 1988) and others as inflectional (De Guzman 1978, 1991). According to Sells (1997), the voice markers have both inflectional and derivational properties.

## References

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