

Jussive and Purpose Clause in Sumbawa, an Indonesian Language

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This study aims to describe the function and distribution of the two modal markers in Sumbawa—a language spoken in the western part of Sumbawa Island, Indonesia—namely *ma* and its negative form, *na*. It also presents a plausible course of historical development for their distribution.

The two modal markers occur both in jussive main clauses, as in (1) and (2), and in purpose clauses, as in (3).

- (1) *ma=ku=tama kó' balé=sia.*
ma=1sg=enter to house=2sg+hon
“Let me enter your house.”

- (2) *na sia=datang kóta.*
na 2sg+hon=come to-here
“Please don’t come here.”

- (3) *ada' rasa iri ina=ta ké' adi=ta.*
exist feel jealous mother=this with younger-sibling=this
saté ya=racén si=Ijo=ta, bau ma=dapat
selaki'.
want irr=poison title=Ijo=this can ma=get husband

“The mother and the younger sister (of Ijo) felt jealous, and they wanted to poison Ijo, so that the sister could get her (Ijo’s) husband”

Their distribution, synchronically, can be explained by the fact that both the jussive and the purposive constructions express a desire for a particular situation to be realized. Diachronically, there are two possible paths of historical development that could have lead to this distribution. That is, purposive clauses may have developed into jussives, or vice versa. Of the two evolutionary paths, the former, in which jussive clauses have developed from purposive clauses through the ellipsis of their main clause, i.e. insubordination (Evans 2007), seems more plausible, as similar instances have often been observed cross-linguistically (e.g., Japanese). However, as with most indigenous languages in Indonesia, there is a dearth of written records on Sumbawa. Hence, we cannot conclusively determine the history of *ma* and

na. Future studies on the dialectal variation of these markers will possibly confirm one of the above hypotheses.

Reference

Evans, Nicholas. 2007. “Insubordination and Its Uses.” In Irina Nikolaeva *Finiteness: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations*. Oxford University Press. pp.366–431.