Does Passive exist in Melayu Papua?
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Many languages of New Guinea (i.e. Austronesian and Papuan) may consider to have no passives in their grammar. Such languages show active structure strongly (Shopen, 1992). However, they may also demonstrate various strategies for passivization. Passives are normally constructed from transitive and/or ditransitive verbs of which agent-patient interaction are clearly stated. Kroeger (2004) argues that passivization occurs when two changes are assigned in grammatical relations: the patient from direct object to subject; and the agent from subject to oblique argument.

One of Austronesian languages of New Guinea is Melayu Papua, a variety of Melayu spoken by people in the western part of the New Guinea Island as a lingua franca (Foley, 1986). It is a Melayu variety, which has a long-standing history of language contact with Papuan languages and other Austronesians in the area. One of the results of such a contact is how to make a passive sentence that, more or less, resembles among languages in the New Guinea region.

As mostly isolating language with SVO order, Melayu Papua constructs simple sentences as in (1), (2) and (3).

(1) sa tidur
    1s sleep
    'I sleep'

(2) dong makan mangga
    3p eat   manggo
    'They eat (a/some) manggo'

(3) de pukul sa kemarin
    3s pukul 1s yesterday
    'He hit me yesterday'

The transitive sentence, as in (3), may basically be passed with a movement of the patient *sa* '1s' into the subject position and the agent subject *de* '3s' can be stated as an oblique argument. However, the lexical passive marker *dapa* 'PASS' has a grammaticalization process in term of serial verb construction within a verb phrase as in (4) and (5).

(4) sa dapa pukul (dari dia)
    1s:OBJ PASS hit (from 3s)
    'I was hit (by him)'

(5) tong   dapa ajar (dari pa guru itu)
     1p:OBJ   PASS teach (from sir teacher that)
     'We are tought (by that teacher)'

In Melayu Papua, the passive construction may be restricted grammatically or semantically to some transitive verbs. It is impossible to Melayu Papua to construct passive sentences with verbs such as *makan* 'eat', *dengar* 'hear', *punya* 'own', *tulis* 'write', *baca* 'read', etc.

Melayu Papua applies a degree of passivization in which human patient is higher than non-human patient as structured as follows: HUMAN > NON-HUMAN ANIMATE > INANIMATE.

To conclude my talk, passivization in Melayu Papua takes a grammaticalization process in which a syntactical strategy supports the semantic/discourse analysis of the passive constructions. Moreover, in common, human patient may be considered higher than non-human in the hierarchy of passive constructions.

References:

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