

Clause Structure and Types in Mëranaw

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Abstract

This paper describes the clause structure and types of Mëranaw (ISO 639-3: mrw). Mëranaw, or more commonly known as Maranao, is a Philippine language prevalently spoken in almost all of Lanao del Sur province and in some areas in Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, and North Cotabato (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2022). The internal structure of clauses in Mëranaw is typologically similar to that of most Philippine languages. It is left-branching and predicate-initial—that is, it begins from the left and with a predicate that is followed by (pro)nominal arguments. In terms of clause types, they are divided according to predicate heads and pragmatic function. Furthermore, the predicate slot in Mëranaw is not only limited to verb phrases; it can also be filled by nonverbal ones such as noun phrases, adjective phrases, and even prepositional phrases. On the other hand, clauses in Mëranaw categorized through pragmatic function include existential, possessive, and locative clauses, negation, and interrogative clauses.

Keywords: Maranao, Mëranaw, Philippine languages, clause structure, clause types

1. Introduction

The grammatical description of Mëranaw is far from complete: syntax is one of the research areas in Mëranaw where not much has been written. During the last century, linguistic studies in Mëranaw mostly focus on phonology and historical linguistics apart from the dictionary and some morphosyntactic works¹ done by Howard P. McKaughan and Batua A. Macaraya. In these papers, Mëranaw is found to subgroup with Maguindanao and Iranun on the basis of phonological and lexical innovations, while its phonology is reanalyzed to revisit the overlooked consonants /p', t', k', s'/, which are called “heavy” in contrast to their voiceless counterparts /p, t, k, s/ (Allison, 1979; Lobel & Riwarung, 2009; Lobel 2013). To contribute to the growing body of literature of Mëranaw, this paper aims to describe the clause structure and types in Mëranaw.

This paper is organized into the following sections. In section 1, facts about Mëranaw including its location and speakers are discussed in 1.1., while the vitality status of this language is briefly explained in 1.2. In section 2, the data collection and presentation are explained thoroughly, while the theoretical framework used in data analysis is laid out. In section 3, the internal structure and various types of clauses in Mëranaw are presented and discussed.

1.1. Mëranaw and Its Speakers

Mëranaw² is a Philippine language prevalently spoken by an ethnic population of 1,325,000 (2010 NSO) in four provinces in Mindanao, namely—Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, and North Cotabato (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2022). As previously mentioned, in terms of subgrouping, it is more genetically related to Maguindanao (ISO 639-3: mdh) and Iranun (ISO 639-3: ilp), and together, they form a legitimate subgroup called Danaw, one of the microgroups that constitute a higher-order proto-language³ called Greater Central Philippine (GCP) (Blust, 1991). Mëranaw and its two other sister languages, Maguindanao and Iranun, all share the same root—i.e., *danaw* or lake—which reflects these ethnolinguistic groups' being generally referred to as people of the lake.

¹These studies include (overt) relation markers and verbal affixes in Maranao (McKaughan, 1957, 1958, & 1962).

²This study prefers to use Mëranaw over Maranao, which is the more commonly used in the literature. The shift of preference here is to accurately represent speech sounds in Mëranaw.

³A protolanguage is a hypothesized parent language from which languages are believed to have descended based on phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, and semantic evidence (Crowley & Bowern, 2010).

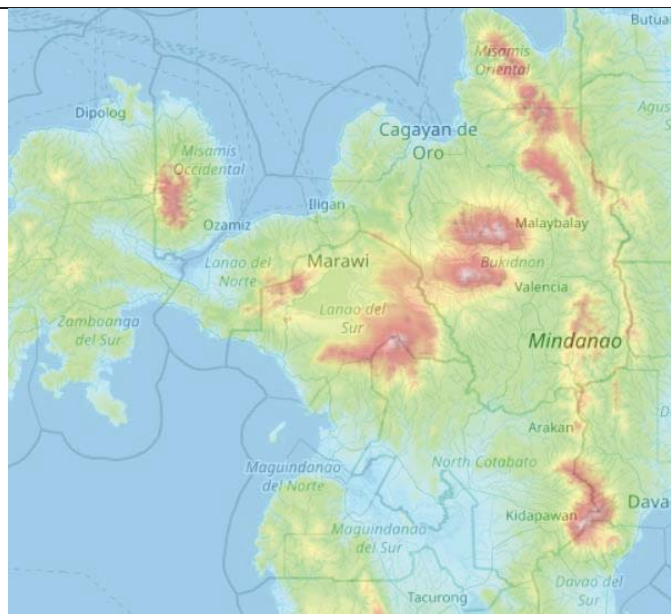


Figure 1. The topographic map of Lanao del Norte and Sur, Maguindanao, and North Cotabato, where Mëranaw is spoken. Taken from <https://en-us.topographic-map.com/map-5v93q/Lanao-del-Sur/?center=7.60429%2C124.44983&zoom=8>

1.2. Vitality Status

The language status of Mëranaw is evident in the number of its speakers. According to the 25th edition of Ethnologue, the status of Mëranaw on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS⁴) is 4 or educational—that is, it is standardized through the codification of grammatical and lexicographic materials as well as the literature flourishing (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2022). The current situation of Mëranaw seems to have been further improved, as it has been initially chosen as one of the 12 language areas for the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). Furthermore, Mëranaw is the de facto provincial language⁵ in the entire province of Lanao del Sur.

2. Materials and Methods

This section is divided into three, namely: data collection and processing, data presentation, and data analysis. In 2.1., how the data used in this study has been collected and processed is explained. In 2.2., how the data is presented is discussed. In 2.3., the framework used in analyzing the processed data is argued about.

2.1. Data Collection and Processing

The data collected for this study are elicited. As opposed to text data, elicited data refer to language samples “that accomplish hypothetical communicative tasks” (Payne, 1997, p. 366). What the term “hypothetical” entails in this context is that the tasks carried out are “controlled, limited, and static” (p. Payne, 1997, p. 367). For instance, these data are typically gathered through the translation of materials from a lingua franca to the language under study (e.g., from Tagalog or Binisaya to an indigenous language). The elicited data were collected using the elicitation materials of Department of Linguistics at University of the Philippines-Diliman. These materials consist of a 700-sentence list and a 600-word list, both of which are in Tagalog.

The data collection process was done virtually—i.e., through Facebook messenger, where the materials were sent over to the participants in this study, who hail from Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, and where the translated materials were sent back. The recorded files of both sentence and word lists were sent over email. Furthermore, the translated materials were cross-checked with the recorded files to ensure the accuracy of the translation and orthography.

2.2. Data Presentation

⁴It is a tool that is used to measure the status of a language in terms of endangerment or development (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2022).

⁵It is the language, in which the local government of Lanao del Sur conducts their business, but it is not mandated by the law (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2022).

In presenting the elicited data, especially sample sentences, they are glossed or represented in five tiers or layers, as shown in the sentence below. The (1) tier is for orthographic representation. The (2) tier is for morphophonological representation. The (3) tier is for morphemic analysis. The (4) and (5) tiers are for Tagalog and English translation, respectively.

- Mamot so sampaguita. (1)
 mamut su=sampagi:ta (2)
 ADJ.fragrant ABS=sampaguita (3)
 “Mahalimuyak ang sampaguita.” (4)
 “Sampaguita is fragrant.” (5)

Additionally, the conventions adapted in this study for the interlinear morphemic analysis are Leipzig glossing rules⁶.

2.3. Analysis of the Data

Since this study strives to be descriptive, the framework used here is basic linguistic theory (BLT) recognized by R.M. Dixon to be the dominant theory among descriptive grammars in the past century (Dryer, 2006). As a typologically-informed framework, BLT allows one to describe a language in own terms and “furnishes an array of grammatical categories and construction types—together with varieties of interrelations between them—from which appropriate choices are made” (Dixon, 2009, p. 182). Hence, the description of clause structure and types in Mëranaw is based on the typological characterization of the internal structure of a clause and the various clause types. Moreover, when it comes to the organization of the clause structure and types in Mëranaw, *The Art of Grammar* was used (Aikhenvald, 2016).

3. Results

This section discusses the clause structure of Mëranaw and the various types of clauses. In 3.1, the internal structure of clauses, which is shown to consist of different kinds of phrases, in Mëranaw is described. In 3.2, the typical word order in Mëranaw is presented and explained.

3.1. Clause Structure

The basic clause structure in Mëranaw consists of a predicate followed by arguments. Hence, like most Philippine languages, Mëranaw can also be said to be a predicate-initial language, as exemplified in (1). In (1), the predicate is the affixed verb *miyamasa*, while the arguments are either core—i.e., the 1st-person singular personal pronoun (absolute) *ako*—or peripheral—i.e., the genitive or extended argument *sa isa ka gantang a margas*.

- (1) Miyamasa ako sa isa ka gantang a margas.
 m<ij>-(p)amasa=ako sa=?isa=ka=gantaŋ=?a=margas
 AV<RLS>buy=1SG.ABS GEN=one=LKR=3 kilograms=LKR=rice
 “Bumili ako ng isang salop ng bigas.”
 “I bought three kilograms of rice.”

3.1.1. Phrases

This subsection includes noun phrases in 3.1.1.1, adjective phrases in 3.1.1.2, prepositional phrases in 3.1.1.3, and verb phrases in 3.1.1.4. As seen in (1), the typical phrases found in a Mëranaw clause are verb (VP) and noun phrases (NP) functioning the predicate and arguments, respectively. In addition to VPs and NPs, there are also adjective (AP) and prepositional phrases (PP), both of which can be part of a complex noun phrase, although PPs can be on their own.

3.1.1.1. Noun Phrases

In Mëranaw, noun phrases typically function as arguments that are either core (or required by the verb) or peripheral (not required by the verb or fulfilling adverbial functions). In terms of the internal structure of a noun phrase, the only obligatory element in it is the head noun or only a noun, as shown in (2).

- (2) NP → (Nominal Marker) (Adjective) + (Linker) + (Head) Noun + (Linker) + (Adjective)

The rewrite rule about a Mëranaw noun phrase captures the optionality of a nominal marker occurring preminally, while the adjective can occur attributively (i.e., before a noun) or postnominally. Moreover, Table 1 is a list of possible noun phrase combinations in Mëranaw.

⁶The glossing abbreviations and symbols used in this study are as follows: (), nasal substitution or epenthesis; ~, reduplication; -, an affix boundary; =, a clitic boundary; ., a boundary for metalanguage elements; 1, first person; 2, second person; 3, third person; ABS, absolute; ADJ, adjectivalizer; AV, actor voice; CAUS, causative; CORE, demonstrative; ERG, ergative; GEN, genitive; INCL, inclusive; INTERROG, interrogative marker; INTR, intransitive; IPFV, imperfective; IRR, irrealis; IV, instrument voice; LV, locative voice; MED, medial; NEG, negation; NCORE, non-core; NOM, nominalizer; OBL, oblique; PL, plural; PFV, perfective; PROX, proximal; PRT, particle; PV, patient voice; RLS, realis; SG, singular; and TR, transitive.

Table 1. Possible combinations of noun phrases in Mēranaw

	Absolutive Case	Genitive Case	Ergative Case	Oblique Case
Noun	wata wata N.child “bata” “child”			
Non-Personal Nominal Marker + Noun	so wata su=wata ABS=child “ang bata” “the child”	sa wata sa=wata GEN=child “by bata” “the child”	o wata ʔu=wata ERG=child “ng bata” “by a child”	ko wata ku=wata OBL=child “sa bata” “to the child”
Non-Personal Nominal Marker + Plural Marker + Noun	so mga wata su=maŋa=wata ABS=PL=child “ang mga bata” “the children”	sa mga wata sa=maŋa=wata GEN=child “ng mga bata” “of/by a child”	o mga wata ʔu=maŋa=wata ERG=child “ng bata” “by a child”	
Personal Singular Nominal Marker + Noun	si Pedro si=Pedro ABS=Pedro “Si Pedro” “Si Pedro”	e Pedro ʔi=Pedro GEN/ERG=Pedro “ni Pedro” “of/by Pedro”	ki Pedro ki=Pedro OBL=Pedro “kay Pedro” “to Pedro”	
Personal Plural Nominal Marker + Noun	siki Pedro siki=Pedro ABS=Pedro “Sina Pedro” “Pedro (and company)”	saki Pedro saki=Pedro GEN/ERG/OBL=Pedro “Nina/kina Pedro” “of/by/to Pedro (and company)”		
Non-Personal Nominal Marker) + Noun + Linker + Adjective	so walay a ator su=walaj=ʔa=ʔatur ABS=house=LKR=stone “ang bahay na bato” “a house that is made of stone”			
Non-Personal Personal Nominal Marker + Adjective + Linker + Noun	so ator a walay su=ʔatur=ʔa=walaj ABS=stone=LKR=house “ang bato na bahay” “a stone house”			
Cardinal Number + Noun	isa ka kilometro ʔisa=ka=kilumetru one=LKR=kilometer “isang kilometro” “one kilometer”			

3.1.1.2. Adjective Phrases

As mentioned, adjectives are part of noun phrases because the former modifies the latter. In terms of adjectives’ internal structure in Mēranaw, it consists of an adjectivalizing affix *ma-* and the root as shown in (3) or only a root.

- (3) **Adjective**
 mapiya
 ma-pija
 ADJ-good
 “mabuti”
 “good”

In Mëranaw, adjectives can also be accompanied by a comparative marker in (4), a superlative marker in (5), and an intensifier in (6). All these modifiers all occur before the head of the adjective phrase. In (4), the comparative form of an adjective is expressed analytically through *mas*.

- (4) **Comparative Marker + Adjective**
mas mapasang
mas=ma-pasaŋ
COM=ADJ-intelligence
“mas matalino”
“more intelligent”

In (5), the superlative form of a Mëranaw adjective is expressed morphologically, while the intensified adjective in Mëranaw is expressed analytically through *benar a*⁷

- (5) **Superlative Affix + Adjective**
miyakapasam-pasang
mijaka-pasa(ŋ)-m~pasaŋ
SUPER-RED~intelligence
“pinakamatalino”
“most intelligent”

- (6) **Intensifier + Adjective**

benar a mapasang
bənar=a=ma-pasaŋ
INT=LKR=ADJ-intelligence
“napakatalino”
“very intelligent”

3.1.1.3. Prepositional Phrases

Prepositions in Mëranaw, like in Tagalog and Cebuano, co-occur with the oblique non-personal nominal markers, as in (7) where the preposition *para* is right next to *ko*. Other examples of prepositions in Mëranaw include *taman* “until” and *poon* “because”. In terms of function, prepositional phrases in Mëranaw can also occupy the predicate slot.

- (7) **Preposition + Non-Personal Nominal Marker + Noun**
para ko raga
para=ku=raga
PREP=OBL=young woman
“para sa dalaga”
“for the young woman”

3.1.1.4. Verb Phrases

As previously mentioned, verb phrases in Mëranaw function as the predicate; the only obligatory elements in a verb phrase are the verbal affix and the head verb, as in (8).

- (8) **Affix + Verb**
miyalalagoy
m-(p)<ij>alalaguj
AV<RLS>run
“tumakbo”
“ran”

Together with modifiers such as adverbs, modal particles, and even negative particles, the possible combinations of verbs are shown from (9) to (11). As can be seen in (9) and (10), the form of the adverb is analogous to that of the adjective. Also, the placement of the adverb also affects whether a linker or a non-personal nominal marker is used.

- (9) **Adverb + Linker + Affix + Verb**

magaan a miyalalagoy
magaʔan=?a=m-(p)<ij>alalaguj

⁷Due to the constraint of space, other ways to express adjectival intensification, such as *tanto a* and *bes*, have not been included here.

- fast=LKR=AV<RLS>run
 “mabilis na tumakbo”
 “ran fast”
- (10) **Affix + Verb + Non-Personal Nominal Marker + Adverb**
 miyalalagoy sa magaan
 m-(p)<ij>alalaguj sa=magaʔan
 AV<RLS>run OBL=fast
 “tumakbo nang mabilis”
 “ran fast”

Moreover, if a modal particle is used, it can precede or follow an affixed verb in Mëranaw. In (11), the reportative particle *kon* immediately follows the verb, provided that there are no pronominal arguments within the clause.

- (11) **Affix + Verb + Modal Particle**
 miyalalagoy kon
 m-(p)<ij>alalaguj=kun
 AV<RLS>run=MOD
 “tumakbo raw”
 “reportedly ran”

3.1.2. Word Order

In predicate-initial languages like Mëranaw, the basic word order consists of a predicate, regardless of its head, and one to two arguments or even more. In (12), the predicate is an affixed verb *karosen*, which is followed by the volitional agent *o bedong* and the patient *su wata*.

- (12) Karosen o bedong so wata.
 karus-ən ʔu=bəduŋ su=wata
 scratch-IRR.PV ERG=cat ABS=child
 “Kakalmutin ng pusa ang bata.”
 “The cat will scratch a child.”

Moreover, there is a change in the word order when a noun phrase becomes pronominalized; it tends to cliticize to the clause-initial element, which is typically the predicate. In (13), because the 3rd-person singular absolutive personal pronoun *sekaniyan* is an enclitic⁸, it occurs right after the verb.

- (13) Karosen sekaniyan o bedong.
 karus-ən=səkanijan ʔu=bəduŋ
 scratch-IRR.PV=3SG.ABS ERG=cat
 “Kakalmutin siya ng pusa.”
 “The cat will scratch him/her.”

3.2. Clause Types

Clause types in Mëranaw can be classified according to the head (i.e., verbal or nonverbal) of a predicate or the pragmatic function.

3.2.1. According to Predicate Heads

In Mëranaw, clause types classified in terms of predicate heads are either verbal or nonverbal. In 3.2.1.1, verbal clauses can be further classified as intransitive or transitive. In 3.2.1.2, clause types can also be nonverbal—i.e., nominal, adjectival, and prepositional.

3.2.1.1. Verbal Clauses

Verbal clauses in Mëranaw are either intransitive or transitive. The concept of transitivity followed in this study refers to the property of the clause, which specifies the number of core or required arguments per clause. Moreover, it should not be confused with valency, a closely related concept that is a property of the verb.

3.2.1.1.1. Intransitive Clauses

Intransitive clauses have just one core argument (S), as in (14) where *so mama* is the required argument. In Mëranaw, the actor-voice affix *m-* signals intransitivity. Moreover, if an intransitive clause has two arguments, one of which is an extended argument (E), then it is called an extended intransitive clause.

⁸An enclitic is one of the two kinds of clitics (i.e., phonologically dependent words/morphemes) that appear after its host.

- (14) Somombali so mama sa mga manok.
 <um>sumbali? su=mama? sa=maña=manuk
 (S) (E)
 <IRR.AV>kill ABS=man GEN=PL=chicken
 “Papatay ang lalaki ng mga manok.”
 “The man will kill chickens.” (McKaughan, 1957, p. 1)

3.2.1.1.2. Transitive Clauses

As opposed to intransitive clauses, transitive ones have two core arguments: the agent (A) and the patient (O). In Mëranaw, there are three basic transitive affixes, namely: the patient-voice (PV) affix *-en*, the locative-voice (LV) affix *-an*, and the instrument-voice (IV) affix *i-*.

As can be noticed, O is marked with *so* from (15) to (17), while A, with *o*. What can be gleaned from (14) to (17) is that S and O are marked the same, while A differently. This kind of marking in the morphosyntactic alignment of a given language is called ergative-absolutive, which can also be found in other Philippine languages like Tagalog, Cebuano, and Tausug (Dixon, 2009; Payne, 1997).

- (15) Sombalien o mama so mga manok.
 sumbali?-ən ?u=mama? su=maña=manuk
 (A) (O)
 kill-IRR.PV ERG=man ABS=PL=chicken
 “Papatayin ng lalaki ang mga manok.”
 “A man will kill the chickens.” (McKaughan, 1957, p. 1)
- (16) Sombalian o mama sa mga manok so kapekaoma o maior.
 sumbali?-an ?u=mama? sa=maña=manuk su=kapekaoma=?u=major
 (A) (E) (O)
 kill-IRR.LV ERG=man GEN=PL=chicken ABS=arrival=GEN=mayor
 “Ipagkakatay ng lalaki ng mga manok ang pagdating ng alcalde.”
 “A man will kill chickens for the mayor’s arrival.” (McKaughan, 1957, p. 2)
- (17) Isombali o mama so gelat ko mga manok.
 ?i-sumbali? ?u=mama? su=gəlat ku=maña=manuk
 (A) (O) (E)
 IRR.IV-kill ERG=man ABS=knife OBL=PL=chicken
 “Ipampapatay ng lalaki ang kutsilyo sa mga manok.”
 “A man will use the knife to kill the chickens.” (McKaughan, 1957, p. 2)

3.2.1.2. Nonverbal Clauses

On the other hand, clauses classified as nonverbal have nouns, adjectives, or prepositional phrases as the predicate. In Mëranaw, there are three types of nonverbal clauses, namely: nominal, adjective, and prepositional.

3.2.1.2.1. Nominal Clauses

According to Reid & Liao (2004), there are two types of nominal clauses: classificational and identificational. In a classificational nominal clause, the nominal predicate classifies the absolutive noun phrase or S as a member of a certain class, as in (18) where someone’s sibling is a member of a class of lawyers.

- (18) Wakil so pagari niyan.
 wakil su=pagari=nijan
 (S)
 lawyer ABS=sibling=3SG.GEN
 “Abugado ang kapatid niya.”
 “His/her sibling is a lawyer.”

On the other hand, in a specificational nominal clause, the absolutive noun phrase or S is identified through the nominal predicate, as in (19) where the one who escaped is the soldier.

- (19) So sondaro i miyalagoy.
 su=sundaru ?i=m-(p)<ij>alaguj
 (S)
 ABS.FOC=soldier ABS=AV<RLS>escape’
 “Ang sundalo ang tumakas.”
 “It is the soldier, who escaped.”

3.2.1.2.2. Adjective Clauses

Adjective clauses are fairly straightforward in that they are used to qualify the absolutive argument. In (20), *so raga* is described as pretty or *mataid*, while in (21), *si Juan*, strong or *mabagr*.

- (20) Mataid so raga.
 ma-taiʔd su=raga
 (S)
 ADJ-beauty ABS=young woman
 “Maganda ang dalaga.”
 “The lady is beautiful.”
- (21) Mabagr si Juan.
 ma-bagr si=Juan
 (S)
 ADJ-strength ABS=Juan
 “Malakas si Juan.”
 “Juan is strong.”

3.2.1.2.3. Prepositional Clauses

Prepositional clauses are typically used in expressing the absolutive NP’s location and source or origin, as well as the time of occurrence. In (22), the prepositional predicate is about the item given to a recipient.

- (22) Para ko raga so mga bulaklak.
 para=ku=raga su=maja=bulaklak (S)
 PREP=OBL=young woman ABS=PL=flower
 “Para sa dalaga ang mga bulaklak.”
 “The flowers are for the young woman.”

3.2.2. According to Pragmatic Function

Mëranaw clauses classified in terms of pragmatic function are as follows: existential, possessive, and locative; negation, and interrogatives.

3.2.2.1. Existential, Possessive, and Locative Clauses

In Mëranaw, the existential verb *aden* is used to form both existential (i.e., to express existence in a location) and possessive (i.e., possession) clauses (Payne, 1997). The difference between these clauses is noticeable: in (23), *taw* is unmarked, while in (24), there is an absolutive noun phrase or S. Moreover, as a possessive verb, *aden* takes a complement—e.g., *bolakbolak* in (24).

- (23) Aden a taw sa walay.
 ʔakən=ʔa=taw sa=walaj
 EXIST=LKR=person OBL=house
 “May tao sa bahay.”
 “There is no one at home.”
- (24) Aden bulaklak so raga.
 ʔakən=bulaklak su=raga
 POSS=flower ABS=young woman
 “May bulaklak ang dalaga.”

Finally, a locative clause has an oblique noun phrase in (25) or a reduplicated oblique demonstrative pronoun in (26) as its predicate.

- (25) Sa walay so raga.
 sa=walajsu=raga
 OBL=house ABS=young woman
 “Nasa bahay ang dalaga.”
 “The young woman is in the house.”
- (26) Sisii siran.
 si~siʔi=siran
 RED~DEM.PROX.OBL=3PL.ABS
 “Nandito sila.”
 “They’re here.”

3.2.2.2. Negation

In a negative clause, it is asserted “that some event, situation, or state of affairs does not hold” (Payne, 1997, p. 282). According to him, clausal negation and constituent negation are among the most common strategies in expressing negation,

and Mëranaw utilizes both and has three negative particles, namely: *da*, *di*, and *kenaba*. The first two are both clausal negative particles, while the latter for constituent negation.

The clauses from (27) to (29) are negative counterparts of the existential, possessive, and locative clauses from (23) to (25). The clausal negative particle *da* negates the assertions of existence, possession, and location in such clauses.

- (27) Da a taw sa walay.
 da=?a=taw sa=walaj
 NEG.EXIST=LKR=person OBL=house
 “Walang tao sa bahay.”
 “There is no one at home.”
- (28) Da a bolaklak so raga.
 da=?a=bulaklak su=raga
 NEG.POSS=LKR=flower ABS=young woman
 “Walang bulaklak ang dalaga.”
 “The young woman does not have flower(s).”
- (29) Da sa walay so raga.
 da=sa=walaj su=raga
 NEG=OBL=house ABS=young woman
 “Wala sa bahay ang dalaga.”
 “The young woman is not in the house.”

In (30), it can be seen that *kenaba* is only used for constituent negation; it negates only *so mangoda*.

- (30) So wata i tominindeg, kenaba so mangoda.
 su=wata ?i=t<um><in>indəg kənaba su=maɲuda
 ABS.FOC=child ABS=<AV><RLS>stand up NEG ABS=lad
 “Ang bata ang tumayo, hindi ang binata.”
 “It is the child, not the lad, who stood up.”

Clausal negation in Mëranaw is also sensitive to the aspect of the verb. As shown in (31) and (32), *da* is used if the aspect of the verb is perfective; whereas, *di*, if contemplative.

- (31) Da sekaniyan miyalalagoy.
 da=səkanijan m-(p)<ij>alalaguy
 NEG=3SG.ABS AV<RLS>run
 “Hindi siya tumakbo.”
 “S/he didn’t run.”
- (32) Di sekaniyan p’lalagoy.
 da=səkanijan p(a)-ɻlalaguj
 NEG=3SG.ABS (IRR.AV).run
 “Hindi siya tatakbo.”
 “S/he will not run.”

3.2.2.3. Interrogatives

Traditionally referred to as interrogative sentences or clauses, interrogatives are expressed to request information that requires “a simple affirmation or disaffirmation” or “a more elaborate locution—a phrase, a proposition, or an entire discourse” (Payne, 1997, p. 295).

3.2.2.3.1. Polar Questions

In this study, questions that are answerable by a yes or a no are called polar, since there are languages without words for yes and no. Hence, a system of polarity—i.e., a contrast between positive and negative—is adhered to (Dixon, 2009). In Mëranaw, polar questions are expressed through rising intonation.

- (33) Kiyān ka so saging aken?
 <ij>kan=ka su=sagiɲ=?akən
 <RLS.PV>eat=2SG.ERG ABS=banana=1SG.GEN
 “Kinain mo ba ang saging ko?”
 “Did you eat my banana?”

3.2.2.4.3. Content Questions

In Mëranaw, content questions are formed through interrogative pronouns such as *anta* “who or whose”, *anda* “where or when”, *antona* “what or how”, *ino* “why”, and *pira* “how much”. Typically, these pronouns are clause-initial, as can be seen from (34) to (37).

- (34) Anta’y komiyan ko mangga aka?
 ?anta=?i=k<om><ij>an=ku=mangga=?aka
 INTERROG=ABS=<AV><RLS>eat=OBL=mango=2SG.GEN
 “Sino ang kumain sa mangga mo?”
 “Who ate your mango?”
- (35) Anda domiyapo so papanok?
 ?anda d<um><ij>apu su=papanuk
 INTERROG <AV><RLS>alight ABS=bird
 “Saan dumapo ang ibon?”
 “Where did the bird alight?”
- (36) Anda so kawing i Celia?
 ?anda su=kawing=?i=Celia
 INTERROG ABS=wedding=GEN=Celia
 “Kailan ang kasal ni Celia?”
 “When is Celia’s wedding?”
- (37) Antona i soloten aken a bangkala?
 ?antona ?i=sulut-an=?akən=?a=baŋkala
 INTERROG ABS=wear=1SG.ERG=LKR=clothes
 “Anong damit ang susuotin ko?”
 “What clothes do I wear?” (Alonto, Adam, Zorc, & Lobel, 2009, p. 66)

4. Conclusion

The clause structure of Mëranaw and its clause types are quite analogous to those of most Philippine languages. The basic clause structure consists of a predicate and several arguments that are either core or peripheral; in terms of word order, a Mëranaw clause begins with a predicate followed by arguments. Regarding the clause types, they can be classified in terms of their predicate heads or pragmatic function. Clause types classified in terms of their predicate heads are verbal or nonverbal, while those classified by virtue of pragmatic function include existential, possessive, locative, negative, and interrogative clauses on account of their context-based functions. Perhaps, one salient feature of Mëranaw syntax is that clausal negation is sensitive to the verb’s aspect, which can also be found in some Bisayan languages.

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