

The Ubiquitous, Anomalous *-om-* Infix in Kankanaey

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Many Philippine languages have the infix *-om-* (or *-um-*, depending on the orthography) in their repertoire of predicate affixes. Kankanaey, a language spoken in communities in northern Luzon, mostly in Benguet Province, is among those languages. This study looks at the range of predicates that are formed with this infix in Kankanaey, and attempts to define the conditioning factors that govern its use.

Kankanaey has lexical roots that may describe nominal entities, attributes, actions, or states. Verbal predicates are formed by combining a lexical root with one of several affixes that cross-reference one argument of the verb, that is, one participant in the state of affairs indicated by the verb. These arguments may be grouped by the macroroles Actor and Undergoer, as defined by their place in the logical structure of the verb. In most cases, the verbal affix is restricted to cross-referencing specific semantic roles that group together as either Actors or Undergoers, giving rise to such traditional labels as "actor-focus verb" or "object-focus verb." This study finds that *-om-* defies this restriction by cross-referencing a special group of Actors AND a special group of Undergoers.

The most common, unmarked Actor-referencing affix in Kankanaey is *man-*, but the affix *-om-* also cross-references Actors of verbs in certain contexts. With action roots, *-om-* forms verbs with Activity predicates and the cross-referenced argument is an EFFECTOR with no inherent agency implied. The way a verb is used determines the interpretation of agency unless the root itself has lexicalized agency. In Kankanaey, verbal affixes contribute to the agency implicature. In particular, *-om-* is used to license the Actor status of arguments with low or reduced agency.

The most common, unmarked intransitive Undergoer-referencing affix in Kankanaey is *ma-*, but *-om-* is used to cross-reference Undergoers that have a change of state. With stative roots, *-om-* forms Achievements and Accomplishments. Achievements and Accomplishments are not static; they are dynamic, somewhere between Activities and States. The affix *-om-* cross-references these Undergoer arguments that participate in dynamic change-of-state events.

This study concludes that with *-om-* affixed verbs in Kankanaey, the status of their cross-referenced argument is compromised or modified in some way, occupying a middle ground between typical Actors and typical Undergoers.