

A diachronic view of Enggano voice alternations

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We present a case study of the development of voice alternations in Enggano (ENO, spoken on Enggano Island, off the west coast of Sumatra, ~1,500 speakers), concentrating on the antipassive. It is well-known that antipassive constructions can be re-interpreted as active clauses (Creissels 2018, Zúñiga 2018) and this development is also attested in other Western Austronesian languages (Aldridge 2012, Hemmings 2021). What makes Enggano particularly interesting is that we can plot this change across a few generations since, unusually for an endangered and minority language, we have access to a substantial documentary corpus from the 1930s (Kähler 1940, 1955, 1987 etc.). In the older texts the prefix *aH*¹ functions as a typical antipassive, since it triggers the demotion of the object to an oblique, reflected in nominal OBL case-marking and occasionally the presence of a preposition.

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|--------|-----------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|--------------------|
| (1) a. | 'o'o | ki-pudu | e-koyo | e'ana | Transitive |
| | 2SG | FOC-kill | DIR-pig | DEM | |
| | 'You killed the pig' | | | | |
| b. | 'o'o | k-a-budu | (i'ioo) u-koyo | e'ana | Antipassive |
| | 2SG | FOC-ANTIP-kill | (to) OBL -pig | DEM | |
| | 'You killed the pig' (Kähler 1940: 205) | | | | |

Accordingly, it occurs relatively infrequently in naturalistic text – occurring only twice in 274 verbal clauses in the folk story in Kähler (1955). In fact, it mainly occurs in nominalised verbal roots (formed with the *e*- direct nominal marker) in which case it marks action nominalisation (e.g. *eabudu* DIR-ANTIP-kill 'killing' from *pudu* 'kill').

In the contemporary Enggano corpus (2018-present), the same *aH*- form occurs widely but without the function of object demotion. This may reflect the loss of case-marking (oblique *u*- does not occur and direct *e*- is optional), as we cannot easily tell from casemarking what the function of a nominal argument is. However, oblique nouns in contemporary Enggano are marked with the preposition *o*, whereas *aH*- verb objects are not:

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|--------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| (2) a. | mè' | k-a-nama | (e-)kupar |
| | REL | FOC-ANTIP-sharpen | (DIR-)fence |
| | 'who was sharpening fence posts' (Kähler 1955 retelling) | | |

Structures like (2a) are marginally more common than (1b) in modern texts, occurring 16 times in the 298 verbal clauses in a contemporary retelling of the Kähler 1955 story. They are also commonly elicited as translations of active clauses, e.g. in Wijaya (2018) where the *aH*- prefix occurs in at least 164 of the 227 examples. This suggests that *aH*- has undergone a similar change in Enggano to other languages: it has lost its antipassive function of demoting the object, but may retain a tendency to be used in contexts where the object is less referential. What is interesting about Enggano is that *aH*- is not directly tied into the symmetrical voice system typical of Austronesian languages, since the verbal prefix *bu*- (from the PMP actor voice prefix *-um-) and bare verb stems take on the pivot marking function of Austronesian voice. This may explain why *aH*- loses its antipassive function without becoming the main transitive construction. More generally, these patterns provide further support to the idea that antipassives are particularly amenable to historical reanalysis (e.g. Aldridge 2012).

¹ This form is cognate with the homorganic *N*- that marks AV in other Austronesian languages on the basis that *ŋ* changed to *h* (see Edwards 2015). Conservative AV constructions are often treated as antipassives (Aldridge 2012).

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