

Enggano Middle Voice and Valence Over Time

Oral/Workshop: "Valency and valency alternations within and across language boundaries"

In this paper, we explore the development of Enggano middle voice and valency alternations over time by comparing the use of the *pa-* prefix in a corpus of Old Enggano (henceforth OE) texts collected by Hans Kähler in the 1930s (Kähler 1955; Kähler 1957; Kähler 1958; Kähler 1960a; Kähler 1960b; Kähler 1961; Kähler 1962; Kähler 1964; Kähler 1975) with contemporary materials (Contemporary Enggano [henceforth CE]) collected as part of ongoing documentation since 2018. We demonstrate that the *pa-* prefix occurs not only with *oppositional* verbs, which also occur in active transitive and passive constructions without *pa-*, but also with *non-oppositional* verbs that always take *pa-*. With *oppositional* verbs, *pa-* is typically interpreted as reciprocal or antipassive, a common middle function (cf. Inglese 2022: 494) as shown in (1). With *non-oppositional* verbs, *pa-* is associated with typical middle semantics, like inherently reciprocal events, e.g. *pakob* ‘meet’ as in (2), manner of speaking verbs, e.g. *pana* ‘speak’, non-translational motion, e.g. *pakokoeh* ‘squat’, bodily functions/spontaneous events, e.g. *pawap* ‘yawn’, and verbs of cognition/emotion and perception, e.g. *pakō’ōā* ‘know’ (cf. Kemmer 1993):

(1) Contemporary Enggano

a. **Active transitive**

Selus ki-pù kèh ean
 PN KI-see mountain DEM
 ‘Selus sees the mountain’

b. **Oppositional Middle (reciprocal)**

Ki ki-pa-pù-pù iěn
 3PL KI-PA-REDUP-see 3PL.OBL
 ‘They see each other’ (elicitation)

(2) a. **Non-oppositional Middle**

U ki-pa-kob he ki ne’en
 1SG KI-PA-meet with 3SG earlier
 ‘I met with him earlier’ (elicitation)

By investigating quantitatively the usage of *pa-* in the two corpora we seek to investigate whether *oppositional* or *non-oppositional* uses are more common and what this means for the development of Enggano middle. In particular, we are keen to explore whether Enggano follows the common development from *oppositional* to *non-oppositional* or provides further counter examples to this trend as per the languages discussed in Inglese & Verstraete (2023). We consequently coded all the attested examples of *pa-* in middle function in our naturalistic text corpora¹. The results show that *pa-* has higher type frequency for *non-oppositional* verbs than with the *oppositional* verbs in both OE (66.5% [n=153] *non-oppositional* vs. 33.5% [n=77] *oppositional*) and CE (63.5% [n=33] *non-oppositional* vs. 36.5% [n=19] *oppositional*). There is no statistical difference between the two corpora ($X^2=0.176$, $df=1$, $p=0.67$), suggesting that the function of *pa-* has remained relatively stable, namely predominantly used for *non-oppositional* function.

Cognates of Enggano *pa-* in other Austronesian languages are typically reconstructed as PMP **paR-/*maR-* (Pawley 1973: 152–153; Pawley & Reid 1979: 11; Brill 2005: 29–30; Brill 2019; Karaj & Sansò 2023: 227), an actor-oriented prefix with durativity and pluractionality semantics (Karaj & Sansò 2023) that can express reciprocal and middle functions (Adelaar 1984). Given this etymology, the Enggano data suggests that the original reciprocal/*oppositional* function has been expanded and reinterpreted as marker for middle semantics, and has been used consistently more frequently for the *non-oppositional* uses over several generations (from at least OE to CE). This suggests that the Enggano middle voice system follows the normal development of middle markers in many other languages, namely from *oppositional* to *non-oppositional* functions (Inglese & Verstraete 2023). Consequently, Enggano provides further non-Indo-European evidence for the cross-linguistic frequency of this particular diachronic development in valency alternations.

¹ Note that *pa-* also functions as a causative marker with intransitive root verbs. This is a common pattern of polysemy in Austronesian languages (see Kaufman 2018).

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