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This paper discusses the attrition and the ultimate demise of the so-called 'voice symmetricality', a hallmark of voice alternation in the Philippine/Indonesian-type Austronesian (AN) languages (Foley 1998, Arka 2003, Himmelmann 2005, Riesberg 2014, Chen and McDonnell 2019). Drawing upon earlier works on Barrier Islands languages (Kähler 1940, n.d., Edwards 2015, Brown 2001, Gil 2008) and recent research with fresh and intriguing evidence from languages of Sumatra in western Indonesia (e.g., McDonnell and Truong 2024, and the references therein), as well as works on other AN languages from central/eastern Indonesia (e.g., Himmelmann 1996, Klamer 1998, 2002), this paper illuminates the trajectory of AN voice systems in the context of the following key research questions: Which voice types are pivotal and susceptible to either maintenance or loss? What forms of voice attrition manifest in Indonesian AN languages? What insights do these findings offer into mechanisms of language change, particularly in grammatical typology and voice theory? Are these changes purely natural or also possibly influenced by contact?

There hasn't been a systematic comparative study specifically addressing these key questions about the attrition of AN symmetricality: its nature, underlying factors, significance/implications in language typology.

Data analysis reveals a drift from symmetrical to asymmetrical voice systems and ultimately the complete demise of the grammatical voice system. The intermediate asymmetrical systems are typically marked by the attrition and merging of the Undergoer Voice with the Actor Voice, forming a generalized Active Voice, possibly with an optional ergative pronominal prefix (e.g., *i-* in Enggano (1b)). Besides, the Actor may be backgrounded with optional voice/oblique marking resulting in ambiguous UV/PASS at the verbal morphological level (e.g., *di-* and the PP agent in Basemah (examples (2))). Three primary change types are identified: Type 1, involving the development of distinct pronominal core arguments and possibly verbal morphology innovation. Type 2, characterized by increased analyticity, rigid SVO order, demise of UV, and possibly PASS without PASS verbal morphology as in Manggarai (example (3b)). Type 3, featuring complete demise of grammatical voice giving rise to a non-alternating grammatical system with/without pronominal agreement.

The full paper discusses how these developments stem from a nuanced interplay of grammar and discourse pragmatics, with the emergence of differential pronominal core-argument marking and the innovation, redundancy, attrition or loss of the (homorganic nasal) AV prefix. These are typically accompanied by the concomitant increased tendency in stricter SVO order (particularly in those languages drifting to the extreme isolating type as in Flores languages), or else, a tendency in more flexible order in indexing-type languages (cf., Riesberg, Malcher, and Himmelmann 2019).

Enggano, Nias and Mentawai (three Barrier Islands language) showcase Type 1; all have developed two sets of person-marking prefixes on verbs, showing different alignment types: ERG(ative) (Table 1) and Nom(inative) (similar to subject prefixes in such as Kambera (Sumba) and Woi (West Papua), not shown here for space). Consequently, the languages with type-1 change typically have more than one active voice construction, e.g. Enggano, examples (1). Also, crucially, voice (agreement) prefix may be elided as in (1b)-(2), or innovated, e.g. *ki-* (Enggano) with its cognate (*ma*)*si-* in other Barrier Islands languages such as Mentawai (Gil 2008), Nias (Brown 2001) and Haloban (Syarifuddin 2024). Western Flores languages (e.g., Manggarai, example (3)) exemplify Type 2 featuring AV/PASS without AV/PASS morphology. Extreme analyticity with type 3 change is exemplified by Keo (Baird 2002), exhibiting the demise of AN voice system. Type 3 with concomitant pronominal indexing sets is exemplified by languages in Sumba such as Kambera. Type 2/3 changes, particularly when accompanied with extreme analyticity, are intriguing, underscoring potentially the influence of past language contact with disruptive non-native acquisition; cf., the debates in Gil and Schapper (2020, and references therein).

This paper contributes to our understanding of language evolution, highlighting the intricate dynamics shaping AN voice system in diverse linguistic contexts. It underscores the importance of considering both internal grammatical factors and external contact influences in analysing grammatical change.

Examples:

1 Three AV (active voice) constructions in Enggano (Hemmings forthcoming)

- a. *ka-b-kor pa ean*      b. *è' ke' (i-)pu u ne'en*      c. *u k-it bè*  
 3-BU-lift child DEM      2SG NEG (3-)see 1SG earlier      1SG KI-drink water  
 'He picked up the child'      'you didn't see me earlier'      'I drink water'

	Mentawai	Enggano	Nias
1s	<i>ku-v</i>	<i>?u-v</i>	<i>u-</i>
1pe	<i>ku-v kai</i>	<i>?u-v 'ai</i>	<i>ma-</i>
1pi	<i>ta-v</i>	<i>ka-v</i>	<i>ta-</i>
2s	<i>nu-v</i>	<i>u-v</i>	<i>ö-</i>
2p	<i>nu-v kai</i>	<i>u-v adiu</i>	<i>mi-</i>
3s	<i>i-v</i>	<i>i-v</i>	<i>i-</i>
3p	<i>ra-v</i>	<i>da-v</i>	<i>la-</i>

Table 1: ERG pronominal prefixes in three Barrier Island languages (Zobel forthcoming, p.c.)

2 Basemah (McDonnell and Truong 2024): ambiguity of *(di-)tetak-i* as UV/PASS verb

- a. *Puntung la=udim (di-)tetak-i=(ny)e (li/nga Rafles)*.  
 firewood PFV=finish UV-chop-LOC.APPL=3 by/with Rafles  
 'He/(Rafles) already chopped the firewood.'
- b. *Puntung la=udim (di-)tetak-i (li/nga Rafles)*.  
 firewood PFV=finish PASS-chop-LOC.APPL by/with Rafles  
 'The firewood was already chopped (by Rafles).'

3 Manggarai (Arka and Kosmas 2005): the verb *cero* is associated with active and passive constructions

- a. *Aku cero latung=k.*      b. *Latung hitu cero l=aku=i.*  
 1s fry corn=1s      corn that fry by=1s=3s  
 'I fry/am frying corn.'      'The corn is (being) fried by me.'

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