Split-Ergativity in Enggano

Charlotte Hemmings, University of Oxford

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Introduction

- This talk presents a case-study of alignment in **Enggano**, an Austronesian language spoken in Sumatra, Indonesia.

- Enggano has **three major constructions** in which verbs can occur: *bu-* form, bare form and *ki-* form (see Kähler 1940, Hemmings forthcoming).

- There are also two sets of person markers that combine with *bu-* verbs and bare verbs respectively.

- Since these markers agree with the person/number features of S/A we can argue that main clauses are generally **accusatively aligned**.

Introduction

- However, there is one clause-type in which an **ergative alignment** pattern is found: subordinate clauses headed by the *be* 'because' and *a=* 'if, when'.

- Here, transitive verbs occur in bare form with agreement for A, but intransitive verbs occur in *bu-* form with no agreement for S.

- Consequently, we can talk about **split-ergativty** according to clause-type.

- The obvious question, then, is **how such a system arises**.

Introduction

- In this talk, I will argue on the basis of joint work with Erik Zobel that ergative alignment is the **more conservative** pattern (Zobel & Hemmings 2024).

- This follows from the fact that other Austronesian languages with person marking systems, like **Nias** (Brown 2001), have ergative alignment in both main and subordinate clauses.

- Moreover, **subordinate clauses tend to be more conservative** than main clauses cross-linguistically (see Bybee 2002).

- I will then discuss some **possible developments** that led to the Enggano system.

Roadmap

- Split-ergativity cross-linguistically

- Background on Enggano

- Split-ergativity in Old Enggano

- Historical Developments before Old Enggano

- Newer Developments in Contemporary Enggano

- Conclusions

Split-ergativity

Ergative Alignment - Dyirbal

- A language can be considered to have **ergative alignment** when the single argument of an intransitive verb (S) is coded in the same way as the patient argument (P) of a transitive verb and differently from the agent argument (A).

(1a) **Intransitive**

ŋuma-∅   banaga-nyu
father-ABS   return-NON.FUT
'Father returned'

(1b) **Transitive**

ŋuma-∅   yabu-ŋgu   bura-n
father-ABS   mother-ERG   see-NON.FUT
'Mother saw father' (Dixon 1994: 10)

Ergative Alignment

- However, ergative languages are never fully ergative and usually display some characteristics of accusative alignment in some contexts – a property known as **split-ergativity** (Dixon 1994).

- Dixon (1994) identified the following common splits:
    - NP-type based split (pronouns more likely to be accusative)
    - Tense/aspect based split (past tense/perfective aspect more likely to be ergative)
    - Main/subordinate clause split (purposive clauses likely to be accusative, relative clause perhaps ergative)
    - But… "*In the great majority of languages, of course, the same marking conventions apply to all clauses, whatever their grammatical status*" (1994: 102)

Split-ergativity in Georgian

- Georgian has nominative accusative-alignment in present, future and imperfective past tense, but ergative alignment in aorist and subjunctive tense:

(2a)   Vano-∅   xaT-av-s   mankana-s

             Vano-NOM   draw-TS-3SG   car-ACC

             'Vano is drawing a car.'

(2b)   Vano-m   xaT-a   mankana-∅

             Vano-ERG   draw-AOR.3SG   car-ABS

             'Vano drew a car.' (Nash 2017)

"Split-ergativity" in Gitksan

- Gitksan has an **alignment split** (with two different patterns of ergative alignment) in independent and dependent clauses:

(3a) Ba<u>x</u>   'nii'y

run   1SG.III

'I ran.'

(4a) Neə=dii   bax-'y

NEG=FOC   run-1SG.II

'I didn't run.'

(3b) Yats-ə-'y   'nit.

hit-TR-1SG.II   3.III

'I hit him.'

(4b) Nee=dii=n   yats-t

NEG=FOC=1.I   hit-3.II

'I didn't hit him.'

Summary

- Languages that display some form of **ergative alignment** usually display an interesting split that may be conditioned by a number of different factors, including the **NP-type**, **TAM** and **clause-type**, or a mixture of these different properties.

- These kinds of splits are very interesting from the perspective of understanding "universal properties of language"

- With this background in mind, let us consider **Enggano split-ergativity** in more detail and try to understand how the particular pattern arose and what changes we might expect in the future.

Background on Enggano

Background on Enggano

- Enggano is spoken by approx. 1,500 speakers on Enggano Island, Sumatra, Indonesia

- There is some debate around classification but most people now agree that Enggano is Austronesian (Dyen 1965, Nothofer 1986, Edwards 2015, Smith 2017, 2020, Billings & McDonnell 2022)

Background on Enggano

1850-1900	Early Wordlists	von Rosenberg 1855, van der Straaten & Severijn 1855, Walland 1864, Oudemans 1879 Helfrich & Pieters 1891, Helfrich 1893, 1916
1930s	Hans Kähler	Grammar Sketch (Kähler 1940) Text Collection (Kähler 1955, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1975) Dictionary (Kähler 1987, published posthumously)
1980s-2020s	Recent Work	Nothofer (1986, 1992), Nikelas et al (1994), Yoder (2011) Wijaya (2018), Butters (2021) Riswari et al (2021)
2018-present	AHRC-funded documentation project	Corpus of audio and video recordings with glossing in FLEX Lexical data from across the villages Grammar

Old Enggano Morphosyntax

Nominal Marker	Function
e-	subjects/objects
u-	obliques/possessors
i-	locatives

Verbal Marker	Function
ki-	relative clauses (SVO main clauses)
bu-	realis main clauses (verb-initial)
bare	irrealis clauses (negation, imperative)

Derivational Affix	Function
pa-	causative/reciprocal
-i, -a'a	applicatives
di-	passive
aba-	consecutive action
aH-	antipassive

	Set 1 (bu-)	Set 2 (bare)
1SG	'u-	'u-
2SG	'o-	u-
3SG	ka-	i-
1PL.INCL	ka-	ka-
1PL.EXCL	'u- -'ai	'u- -'ai
2PL	'o- -a'a	u- -a'a
3PL	da-/di-/ki-	da-

Contemporary Enggano Morphosyntax

Nominal Marker	Function
e-	optional
u-	fossilised forms
i	preposition

Verbal Marker	Function
ki-	main clauses and relative clauses
bu-	realis main clauses
bare	irrealis clauses (negation, imperative)

Derivational Affix	Function
pa-	causative/reciprocal
-(C), -a'	applicatives
di-	passive
aba-	consecutive action
aH-	antipassive

	Set 1 (bu-)	Set 2 (bare)
1SG	u-	u-
2SG	ė-	u-
3SG	ka-	i-
1PL.INCL	ka-	ka-
1PL.EXCL	u- -a	u- -a
2PL	ė- -a	u- -a
3PL	da-	da-

Verbal Constructions in Old Enggano

- In Old Enggano, verbs occur in one of three forms:

(5a)   ka e'anaha   ka-**bu**-pu̇a=ha   e-kaka   kaha:i'i e-huda   **bu-form**

then   3-**bu**-see-EMPH DIR-person   one   DIR-woman

'then he saw a woman' (Kähler 1957, 5.9)

(5b)   e-kaka   e'ana   kea-ba'a   i-pu̇a   'ua   **bare form**

DIR-person   DEM   NEG-INTENSIVE   3-see   1SG

'As for that person, he didn't see me' (Kähler 1940, 17.6)

(5c)   kia   **ki**-pu̇a   'ano=nia   **ki- form**

3SG   **KI**-see   friend=3SG.POSS

'He sees his friend.' (Kähler 1940, 53.6)

Verbal Constructions in Old Enggano

- This applies equally for **intransitive verbs**:

(6a)   pahumãnã   ka-**b**-Edo,   *bu*- form

   morning   3-BU-cry

   'In the morning, it cries' (Kähler 1958, 21.2)

(6b)   kEo-ba'a   y-Edo   bare form

   NEG-EMPH   3-cry

   'He is not crying' (Kähler 1940 Grammar, 15.48)

(6c)   'o'o   **k**-Edo   ki- form

   2SG   KI-cry

   You cry' (Kähler 1940 Grammar, 36.6)

Verbal Constructions in Contemporary Enggano

- The same three constructions are strill found in Contemporary Enggano:

(7a) ka-**bu**-pủ   y-a'u   dop   ean
      3-BU-see   nmlz-good   land   dem
      'We can see how beautiful the land is' (Bakblau, 22.1)

(7b) Selus   ke'   i-pủ   Maria
      Selus   NEG   3-see   Maria
      'Selus didn't see Maria' (Basic Structures, 745.1)

(7c) Selus   **ki**-pủ   Maria
      3SG   KI-see   Maria
      'Selus saw Maria' (Basic Structures, 746.1)

Major Changes:
- Loss of final vowels
- Loss of case marking

Split-ergativity in Old Enggano

Alignment in Old Enggano

- As we saw in (6) and (7), in main clauses both *bu-* and bare verbs have **obligatory person markers** that agrees with S/A

- Similarly, in ki- verb constructions, S/A appear in the pre-verbal position, whilst P appears post-verbally.

- Consequently, in main clauses Old Enggano has **accusative alignment** (see Zobel & Hemmings 2024)

Alignment in Old Enggano

- However, in background subordinate clauses headed by a= 'when, if' and *be* 'because', transitive verbs are expressed as bare verbs with a person marker for A, whilst intransitive verbs take the prefix *bu-* without person-marking.

- Since S/P are treated alike and A differently, this represents a pattern of **ergative alignment** (see Zobel & Hemmings forthcoming)

Split-Ergative Alignment According to Clause-Type

Subordinate Clauses (a=)

(8a)   **Transitive**

a=da-dohoi   e=di-'ua-dia

CONJ=3PL-hear   DIR=PASS=say-3sg.GEN

'when they heard what he had said' (Kähler 1975:80)

(8b)   **Intransitive**

a=**b**-ai   ki   na'ani

CONJ=BU-come   3PL   later

'when they will come later' (Kähler 1975:32)

Ergative Alignment

Subordinate Clauses (be)

(9a) **Transitive**

mẽ   na-noo-a   e-ũ'ã   i-ka'udara   e'ana

because   3PL-eat-FUT   DIR-food   LOC-village   DEM

'because they would eat the food in that village' (Kähler 1962: 141)

(9b) **Intransitive**

be   **bu**-pua   kia   i'ioo'ou

because   BU-run   3SG   from.1SG

'because it has fled from me' (Kähler 1955: 90)

Ergative Alignment

Alignment in the Barrier Islands

- The ergative pattern in **Old Enggano subordinate clauses** is the same pattern that is found in many other languages of the region (see e.g. Wolff 1996, 2002, Himmelmann 1996, Ross 2002, Zobel 2002, 2024, Zobel & Hemmings forthcoming)

- For example, Nias has ergative alignment in both main and subordinate clauses (see Sundermann 1892, Brown 2001).

Southern Nias

(10a) **Transitive**

ma=i-dici-ni   mbatö   asu.

PFV-3-defecate-TR   MUT:floor   DOG

'The dog has defecated on the floor' (Brown 2001:250)

Ergative Alignment

(10b) **Intransitive**

m-oloi   nasu   na   mo-huguhugu mbanua

MU-run.away   MUT:dog   if   INTR-thunder   MUT:sky

'The dog runs away when it thunders' (Brown 2001:206)

Southern Nias

(11a) **Transitive**

Na   ö-hußu-ni   ya

if   2SG-associate.with-TR   MUT:3SG

'If you associate with him' (Brown 2001:287)

Ergative Alignment

(11b) **Intransitive**

Na   moi   ya   lawa

If   go   MUT:3SG   high

'if he goes up high (Brown 2001:150)

Alignment in Old Enggano

- We can therefore think of the ergative pattern found in **Enggano subordinate clauses** as the more conservative pattern

- This is in keeping with the cross-linguistic trend for **subordinate clauses to be more conservative than main clauses** (see e.g. Bybee et al 1994, Bybee 2002, Givón 1977, 1979, Hock 2021, Hyman 1975, Crowley & Bowern 2010).

- It implies that Enggano is undergoing a pattern of alignment shift that targets different clause types at different rates.

Ki- constructions in *a=* and *be* clauses

- Note that it is possible to find *ki-* verb constructions in both a= and be clause-types as well as the ergative pattern outlined in (4) and (5).

- We believe that *ki-* is cognate with si=/si- which marks **relative clauses** in other languages of the region (see Brown 2001, Hemmings & Dalrymple forthcoming) and may have been extended to other clauses via **reanalysis of cleft constructions**.

- Use of *ki-* verbs is relatively rare for *a=* 'if/when' clauses but about as common as the ergative pattern for *be* 'because' clauses

Subordinate Clauses (a=)

(12a) **Transitive**

a=ˈadiu=ha   **ki**-ˈüdüha-ˈa   ˈua   Accusative Alignment

CONJ=2PL=EMPH   KI-startle-APPL   1SG

'But if you startle me…' (Kahler 1961, 3.17)

(12b) **Intransitive**

kia   k-Edo   a=pE-apE   a=kia   **k**-aphuo

3SG   KI-cry   CONJ=PT-REDUP   CONJ=3SG   KI-ill

'He cries as if he was sick' (Kähler 1940 Grammar, 31.12)

Differences between *a=* and *be*

(13a) **Transitive**

bE	kia	**k**-a'Ekoi	e-ici	u-paE	i'iõõ=nĩã
because	3SG	KI-follow	DIR-word	OBL-child	OBL=3SG.POSS

'Because he followed the child's words to him...' (Kähler 1955, 10.2)

(13b) **Intransitive**

Accusative Alignment

bE	ki	**k**-ahaːE-a	m-ã'ãõã
because	3PL	KI-go-FUT	BA-catch.with.net

'because they wanted to go hunting (with nets)' (Kähler 1958, 4.5)

Summary

- Old Enggano has accusative alignment in **main clauses.**

- However, it preserves a more conservative pattern of ergative alignment in **background subordinate clauses**

- This is the **more commonly attested** alignment pattern in the Barrier Island languages which have developed systems of person marking. Hence, we can think of Enggano as undergoing ergative-to-accusative alignment shift

- Background subordinate clauses may also contain accusatively-aligned ki- verbs – a strategy that is already more common with *be* 'because' clauses than with *a=* 'if/when' clauses.

Historical Developments

Ergative Alignment

- Since the pattern of **ergatively-aligned** person marking is relatively common in languages of Sumatra and Sulawesi (see e.g. Wolff 1996, 2002, Himmelmann 1996, Ross 2002, Zobel 2002, 2024, Zobel & Hemmings 2024), we assume that the **ergative pattern** found in backgrounding subordinate clauses is a retention of an earlier pattern.

- This is in keeping with the cross-linguistic trend for **subordinate clauses to be more conservative than main clauses** (see e.g. Bybee et al 1994, Bybee 2002, Givón 1977, 1979, Hock 2021, Hyman 1975, Crowley & Bowern 2010).

Accusative Alignment

- We believe the first major development is the development of the **accusative pattern** with bare verbs + SET 2 person markers.

- This is not as widespread as the ergative pattern of agreement, but is shared with some other languages of Sumatra/Sulawesi – particularly in **purposive clauses** (i.e. Mamasa as described in Matti 1994)

Mamasa (South Sulawesi) - ERG

- In basic clauses, Mamasa indexes A with person-marking proclitics, and S and O with enclitics:

(14a) **Transitive**
ku-ta=ko
1SG-see=2SG
'I see you' (Matti 1994:73)

Ergative Alignment

(14b) **Intransitive**
torro=na'   yao   Tanete
dwell=1SG   LOC   Tanete
'I live in Tanete' (Matti 1994:69)

Mamasa (South Sulawesi) – ACC

- In consecutive clauses, S/A are indexed by proclitics. The enclitic set only marks O

(15c) **Transitive**
umba=mo=ko   ampo   an-**ku**-kande**=i**   ate-mu
where=PRF=2sg   grandchild   CNS-1sg-eat=3sg   liver-2sg
'Where are you grandchild? So that I can eat your liver' (Matti 1994:78)

(15d) **Intransitive**
mai=mo=ko   an-**ta**-lao
come=PRF=2sg   CNS-1pl.in-go
'Come here and we'll go' (Matti 1994:78)

Accusative Alignment

Enggano – NOM2

- Enggano also uses accusatively-aligned bare verbs in **purposive constructions:**

(16a) **Transitive**
ka-b-ai-xa   ama   ka-pae   e'ana [y-aba-pėa   ki]
3-BU-come-EMPH   father PL-child   DEM 3-CNS-see   3PL
'The father of the children came, in order to see them' (Kähler 1957: 154)

(16b) **Intransitive**
ka-b-ahae-ha   [y-aba-kiu-ha   i-tita]
3-BU-go-EMPH   3-CNS-hide-emph   LOC-there
'It̯ went there and sought shelter there' (Kähler 1955: 90)

Accusative Alignment

Accusative Alignment

- We assume that this involves the the **extension** of proclitic marking from transitive to intransitive clauses.

- It makes sense that **purposive clauses** would be the locus of innovation since control often involves an S/A pivot, providing some motivation for extending the marking of A to intransitive clauses in this context (see Dixon 1994, Falk 2006).

Accusative Alignment

- The development of the **accusative pattern** with *bu-/mu-* verbs + SET 1 person markers is quite rare in the languages of the region (see e.g. Zobel 2024)

- In fact, generally the reflex of the PMP *-um- actor voice infix is typically associated with **intransitive/lower transitivity predicates** in languages of the region.

- A similar pattern of accusative alignment to Enggano is only attested in the Bunku-Tolaki branch of Celebic and in Southern Nias.

Southern Nias – NOM1

- Earlier we saw that main and subordinate clauses in Southern Nias have ergative alignment. However, *mu-* verb constructions can be used in **irrealis clauses** with future/volitional meaning and accusatively-aligned person markers:

(17a) **Transitive**

ya-**m**-balö   gefe   Ama Dali

3SG-MU-borrow   MUT:money   Ama Dali

'Ama Dali wants to borrow money' (Brown 2001:502)

Accusative Alignment

Ergative Alignment

(17b) **Intransitive**

ya-**m**-a-nana   nono-nia   ba   va-a-lio

3SG-MU-ANTIP-hand   MUT:child-3SG.POSS   LOC   MUT:NMLZ-ST-quick

'Her child will be crawling soon' (Brown 2001:562)

Accusative Alignment

- Enggano appears to be unique in also using accusatively-aligned *bu-* verb constructions in **realis main clauses**.

- It is possible that the *bu-* verb construction may have started as a marked construction (like in Southern Nias) but was later **reanalysed** as the basic realis transitive clause.

- If so, this may be linked to the **development of the *ki-* verb**, the general predominance of accusative alignment, or the fact that Enggano has other means of expressing future/volitionality.

Accusative Alignment

- Finally, we argue that *ki-* was **reanalysed as a verbal marker** from a relative clause marker (like the cognate si= in Nias), and extended to main clauses.

- This would explain why only *ki-* verbs are found in Enggano relative clauses.

- It is possible that this reanalysis follows from the **reinterpretation of clefts** with headless relative clauses and zero copulas as mono-clausal main clauses (see e.g. Harris & Campbell 1995)

- It may be facilitated by the fact that Enggano has a **dedicated relativizer** *mõ'õ* (unlike Nias).

Summary

- In summary, the existence of an **unusual pattern** of split-ergative alignment in Enggano (at least from the perspective of Austronesian languages with person marking in the region) seems to arise through the following sets of developments:

  ❖ The retention of a more conservative ergative pattern (subordinate clauses)
  ❖ The extension of person-marking to bare intransitive clauses (bare + SET 2);
  ❖ The reanalysis of *bu-* verbs as the basic realis clause type (bu- + SET 1); and
  ❖ The reanalysis of *ki-* as a verbal marker and extension to main clauses (ki-)

Subordinate Clauses in Contemporary Enggano

Alignment in Contemporary Enggano

- Contemporary Enggano preserves the Old Enggano **system of person marking** with *bu-* and bare verbs. This targets S/A and hence alignment in main clauses remains accusative.

- Contemporary Enggano also preserves *a=* and *be* as forms that introduce **background subordinate clauses**.

- With *a=* clauses it is still possible to find the pattern of ergative alignment that we saw in Old Enggano. However, *be* clauses (which are rather rare in the current corpus) tend to use *ki-* verbs AND where *bu-* verbs are used these may take the same **accusatively aligned SET 1** person markers for S/A that are also found in main clauses.

Subordinate Clauses (a=)

- In subordinate clauses with *a=* we still see clauses with the **ergative pattern**:

(18a) **Transitive**
a=u-bù   bak   bė   ean
when=1-see   eye   water   DEM
'If I look at the spring...' (Bakblau, 14)

Ergative Alignment

(18b) **Intransitive**
na'an   a=**b**-ahar   ki
later   when=BU -wake   3SG
'later when he wakes...' (Kähler 1955 retelling, 19)

Subordinate Clauses (a=)

- Much like in Old Enggano, it is possible to find *ki-* verbs following *a=*:

(19a) **Transitive (bare verb)**

[a=u-'ui   ie   ẽ'],   ė'   ki-pu'da-h

if=2SG-step.on   stone   DEM   2SG   KI-fall-FUT

'If you step on this stone you will fall.'

(19b) **Transitive (ki- verb)**

[a   ė'   **ki**-'i   ie   ẽ'],   ė'   ki-pu'da-h

if   2SG   KI-step.on   stone   DEM   2SG   KI-fall-FUT

'If you step on this stone you will fall'. (Erik Elicitation 02)

Subordinate Clauses (a=)

- But this is **rare** and in 158 examples in the naturalistic text corpus, there is only one example that uses a *ki-* verb:

(19c) a hã **k**-ah b-a'-da' e'yai

if someone KI-go BA-ANTIP-catch fish

'If someone catches fish' (Ekonomi, 16)

Subordinate Clauses (be)

- Clauses headed by *be* 'because' are not so frequent in our corpus - in approx. 28,000 words there are only 47 examples:

Clause Type	Number
ki- verb	19
bu- verb with agreement	3
nominal predicate	13
other	12

- There are **no ergatively-aligned** examples in the corpus

Subordinate Clauses (be)

(20a) **Transitive**

be	ik	ka-b-a'bu̇a'	yaka'ai'	e-paic
because	1PL.INCL	1PL.INCL-BU-use	war	DIR-machete

'because we will use machetes' (Yaka'ai', 34.1)

(20b) **Intransitive**

be	dako'aih	ka-b-kėkė
because	night	3-bu-walk

'because it wanders at night' (Burung Hantu, 28.1)

Accusative Alignment

Subordinate Clauses (be)

- In fact, the ergative pattern is judged to be **ungrammatical**:

(21a)   **Transitive ki- verb**
U   ki-pu'ur   [be   u   ki-'i   ie   ẽ']
1SG   KI-fall   because   1SG   KI-step.on   stone   DEM
'I fell because I stepped on this stone.'

(21b)   **Transitive bare verb**
*U   ki-pu'ur   [be   u-'i   ie   ẽ']
1SG   KI-fall   because   1SG-step.on   stone   DEM
FOR: 'I fell because I stepped on this stone' (Erik Elicitation 02, 33.1)

Summary

- In Contemporary Enggano the **process of alignment shift** has been extended to *be* 'because' background clauses.

- This means that Contemporary Enggano is starting to look very similar to **Palauan**, another Austronesian outlier, which has similar verbal constructions to Enggano *bu-* and bare verbs with different sets of person markers but preserves no trace of the more **conservative ergative alignment** type and is generally analysed as having accusative alignment (see Zobel forthcoming).

- It suggests that the process of alignment **shift is ongoing** and that Enggano could eventually lose all trace of the more conservative ergative alignment pattern.

Conclusions

Conclusion

- In this paper, I presented the unusual pattern of **split-ergativity** in Old Enggano and argued that this was most likely the result of a series of inter-related developments that differentiate Enggano from other Barrier Island languages.

- I also presented evidence of **ongoing alignment shift** in Contemporary Enggano, where *be* clauses start to behave like main clauses and hence the last vestiges of ergativity are being lost.

- This suggests that **different types of clause** can be affected by syntactic changes like alignment shift at different rates.

Conclusion

- It furthermore suggests that **split-alignment** systems according to clause type may be **diachronically unstable**, and that Austronesian languages may be prone to changes that remove any structural differences between main and subordinate clauses (see Kaufman 2018).

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