Subordinate Clauses in Enggano

This paper presents a diachronic study of subordinate clauses in Enggano, an Austronesian language spoken off the south coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Specifically, we compare the expression of adjunct clauses headed by the clitics *a=* 'if/when' and *be* 'because' in a corpus of Enggano texts collected in the 1930s (Kähler 1940, 1955, 1975) with contemporary materials collected as part of an ongoing documentation project. We show that *a=* and *be* clauses (henceforth *background* clauses) in the older corpus preserve a more conservative ergative alignment pattern in person-marking that is widely attested in both main and background clauses in other languages of the region. However, this alignment type is not attested anywhere else in older Enggano and, interestingly, is also no longer attested in the contemporary materials, at least for *be* clauses. This suggests that the older Enggano corpus may preserve evidence of a process of alignment shift that affects main and subordinate clauses in different stages. This has important implications for the discussion surrounding the apparently different behaviour of different clause types in terms of syntactic change (see e.g. Bybee 2002, Dixon 1994).

Unlike other Western Austronesian languages, Enggano does not have a symmetrical voice system. However, it preserves some of the PMP voice morphology (e.g. *-um-* as *bu-*) and uses this to mark different verbal constructions: *bu-* form, bare form and *ki-* form, as in (1). These constructions mark arguments in different ways: *bu-* verbs and bare verbs take different sets of person markers, and *ki-* verbs express arguments as pronouns or NPs. In general, alignment can be said to be accusative since the person markers agree with S/A. In the older corpus, however, background clauses preserve an ergative alignment pattern since (in this context only) transitive and intransitive verbs behave differently. As shown in (2), transitive verbs occur in bare form with a person marker for A, but intransitive verbs occur in *bu-* form without any person-marking. Hence, S/O are unmarked and A is marked and Enggano can be said to have split-ergative alignment according to clause type. The ergative pattern in background clauses is exactly the same pattern found in realis main clauses and background subordinate clauses in Northern and Southern Nias (Sundermann 1892, Brown 2001), and hence can be assumed to be more conservative. Interestingly in contemporary Enggano, *a=* clauses preserve this pattern but *be* clauses are attested that use *bu-* verbs with person marking for both S/A, (3)-(4). Consequently, the alignment shift has been extended to some background clauses. This makes contemporary Enggano very similar to Palauan, which has similar verbal constructions to Enggano with different sets of person markers but preserves no trace of the more conservative ergative alignment type (Zobel forthcoming).

Overall, this study is interesting as it shows that different types of clause can be affected by syntactic changes like alignment shift at different rates. 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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(1) a.   ka-**bu**-pudu-ha   epaE   e'ana   *bu*-form
           3.SET.1-**bu**-kill-EMPH   child   DEM.MED
           'and he killed the child' (Kähler 1955, 17.6)

           pahumãnã   ka-**b**-Edo,
           morning   3.SET.1-BU-cry
           'In the morning, it cries' (Kähler 1958, 21.2)

    b.   kea-ba'a   **i**-pudu   e-koyo e'ana   bare form
           NEG-EMPH   3.SET.2-kill   DIR-pig DEM.MED
           'He didn't kill the pig' (Kähler 1940, 35.15)

           kEo-ba'a   **y**-Edo
           NEG-EMPH   3.SET.2-cry
           'He is not crying' (Kähler 1940, 15.48)

    c.   'o'o   **ki**-pudu   e-koyo e'ana   *ki*-form
           2SG   KI-kill   DIR-pig DEM
           'You killed the pig' (Kähler 1940, 42.5)

           'o'o   **k**-Edo
           2SG   KI-cry
           'You cry' (Kähler 1940, 36.6)

(2) a.   be   **i**-pa-ka'aːua'aːė-a   **kia**   na'ani
           because 3.SET.2-MID-know-FUT/VOL   3SG   later
                 A   O
           'because one would otherwise recognize him' (Kahler 1975 Rechtsprechung, 17.7)

    b.   be   bu-pua   **kia**   i'ioo'oːu
           because   BU-run   3SG   from.1SG
                                      S
           'because it has fled from me' (Kähler 1955, 10.6)

(3) a.   a=**i**-kė'   **it**
           if=3.SET.2-plant   banana
           A   O
           'If they plant bananas' (Enggano Tahun 60, 16.1)

    b.   na'an   a=**b**-ahar   **ki**
           later   if=BU-wake   3SG
                              S
           'later when he wakes' (Kähler 1955 retelling, 19.1)

(4) a.   be   dako'aih   **ka**-b-kėkė
           because   night   3-bu-walk
                                S
           'because it wanders at night' (Burung Hantu, 28.1)

    b.   be   ik   **ka**-b-a'bùa'   yaka'ai'   e-paic
           because 1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL-BU-use   war   DIR-machete
                           A
           'because we will use machetes' (Yaka'ai', 34.1)