

Subordinate Clauses in Enggano

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Introduction

- This paper presents a diachronic study of **subordinate clauses** in **Enggano**, an Austronesian language spoken off the south coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.
- We compare the expression of **background clauses** headed by *a* = 'if/when' and *be* 'because' in a corpus of Old Enggano texts collected in the 1930s (Kähler 1940, 1955, 1975) with Contemporary Enggano materials collected as part of an ongoing documentation project (Arka et al in prep).
- We show that **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.

Introduction

- However, this **alignment type** is not attested in Old Enggano main clauses and, interestingly, is also **no longer attested** in the Contemporary Enggano corpus for *be* ‘because’ clauses.
- This suggests that the Old 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 understanding **alignment shift** and the discussion surrounding the apparently **different behaviour** of different clause types in terms of **syntactic change** (see e.g. Bybee 2002, Dixon 1994).

Roadmap

- Background on Enggano
- Subordinate Clauses in Old Enggano
- Subordinate Clauses in Contemporary Enggano
- Conclusions

Background on Enggano

Background on Enggano



- Enggano is spoken by approx. **1,500 speakers** on Enggano Island, Sumatra, Indonesia
- There is some debate around its classification but most people now agree that Enggano is **Austronesian** (Dyen 1965, Nothofer 1986, Edwards 2015, Smith 2017, 2020, McDonnell & Billings 2024)

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	è-	u-
3SG	ka-	i-
1PL.INCL	ka-	ka-
1PL.EXCL	u- -a	u- -a
2PL	è- -a	u- -a
3PL	da-	da-

Major Sound Changes

- Old Enggano had CV(V) syllable structure – in Contemporary Enggano final vowels (and non-stressed medial vowels) are regularly deleted:

	Old Enggano	Contemporary Enggano
sit	hěkũ	hěk
garden	pia	pi
want (tr.)	kãhãpĩĩ	kãhpĩh

- The sound written as <o> in Kähler sometimes corresponds to to <è> /ə/ in contemporary Enggano (see Smith 2020)

	Old Enggano	Contemporary Enggano
hear	dohoi	dèhè
water	boo	bè

Verbal Constructions in Old Enggano

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

(1a) ka e'anaha **ka** bu-pua=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)

(1b) e-kaka e'ana kea-ba'a **i**-pua 'ua **bare form**
 DIR-person DEM NEG-INTENSIVE 3-see 1SG
 'As for that person, he didn't see me' (Kähler 1940, 17.6)

(1c) kia **ki**-pua '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**:

- (2a) pahumānã **ka-b-Edo**, *bu- form*
morning 3SG-BU-cry
'In the morning, it cries' (Kähler 1958, 21.2)
- (2b) kEo-ba'a **y-Edo** *bare form*
NEG-EMPH 3-cry
'He is not crying' (Kähler 1940 Grammar, 15.48)
- (2c) '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 still found in **Contemporary Enggano**:

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

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

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

Major Changes:

- Loss of final vowels
- Loss of case marking

Subordinate Clauses in Old Enggano

Alignment in Old Enggano

- As we saw in (1) and (2), 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 forthcoming)

Alignment in Old Enggano

- However, in 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=)

(4a) **Transitive**

a=**da-dohoi**

CONJ=3PL-hear

e=di-'ua-dia

DIR=PASS=say-3sg.GEN

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

(4b) **Intransitive**

a=**b-ai**

CONJ=BU-come

ki na'ani

3PL later

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

Ergative Alignment

Subordinate Clauses (be)

(5a) **Transitive**

mě	na-noo-a	e-ũ'ã	i-ka'udara	e'ana
because	SPL-eat-FUT	DIR-food	LOC-village	DEM

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

(5b) **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

(6a) Transitive

ma=i-~~o~~ici-ni mbatö asu.
 PFV-3-defecate-TR MUT:floor DOG

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

Ergative Alignment

(6b) 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

(7a) Transitive

Na **ö**-huβu-ni **ya**
if 2SG-associate.with-TR MUT:3SG
'If you associate with him' (Brown 2001:287)

Ergative Alignment

(7b) 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 & Bowerman 2010).
- It implies that Enggano is undergoing a pattern of **alignment shift** that targets different clause types at different rates.

Differences between *a=* and *be*

- Before we move to looking at Contemporary Enggano, it is worth noting that there are **some differences** between *a=* and *be* clauses even in the Old Enggano corpus
- In both clause-types it is possible to find *ki- verb* constructions as well as the ergative pattern outlined in (4) and (5). We believe that *ki-* is cognate with *si-* which marks **relative clauses** in other languages of the region (see Brown 2001) 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=)

(9a) Transitive

a=**'adiu=ha** **ki-'üdüha-'a** 'ua
 CONJ=2PL=EMPH KI-startle-APPL 1SG

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

Accusative Alignment

(9b) 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*

(10a) 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)

(10b) Intransitive

bE	ki	k-aha:E-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)

Accusative Alignment

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**.

Subordinate Clauses in Contemporary Enggano

Alignment in Contemporary Enggano

- Contemporary Enggano preserves the Old Enggano **system of person marking** with *bu-* and bare verbs (as we saw in (3)). 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**:

(12a) Transitive

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

Ergative Alignment

(12b) 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=*:

(13a) Transitive (bare verb)

[a=u-~~ui~~ ie ẽ'], è' ki-pu'da-h
 if=2SG-step.on stone DEM 2SG KI-fall-FUT
 'If you step on this stone you will fall.'

(13b) Transitive (ki- verb)

[a è' ki-'i ie ẽ'], è' 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:

(13c) 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
<i>ki-</i> verb	19
<i>bu-</i> verb with agreement	3
nominal predicate	13
other	12

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

Subordinate Clauses (be)

(14a) Transitive

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

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

(14b) Intransitive

be	dako'aih	ka-b-keke
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**:

(15a) Transitive ki- verb

U	ki-pu'ur	[be	u	ki-'i	ie	ě']
1SG	KI-fall	because	1SG	KI-step.on	stone	DEM

'I fell because I stepped on this stone.'

(15b) Transitive bare verb

*U	ki-pu'ur	[be	u-i	ie	ě']
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 (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, we presented a **diachronic study** of subordinate clauses in Enggano, an Austronesian language of Sumatra, Indonesia.
- We demonstrated that **background subordinate clauses** headed by **a= 'if/when'** and **be 'because'** preserve an **ergative alignment** type in Old Enggano that is typical of the region but not found elsewhere in the Enggano grammar.
- Comparison with Contemporary Enggano materials collected since 2018 reveals that the language has **undergone further changes** in the intervening years, such that **be 'because'** background clauses are **predominantly accusatively aligned**.

Conclusion

- This suggests 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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