

The argument status of clitic pronouns in Sou Amana Teru

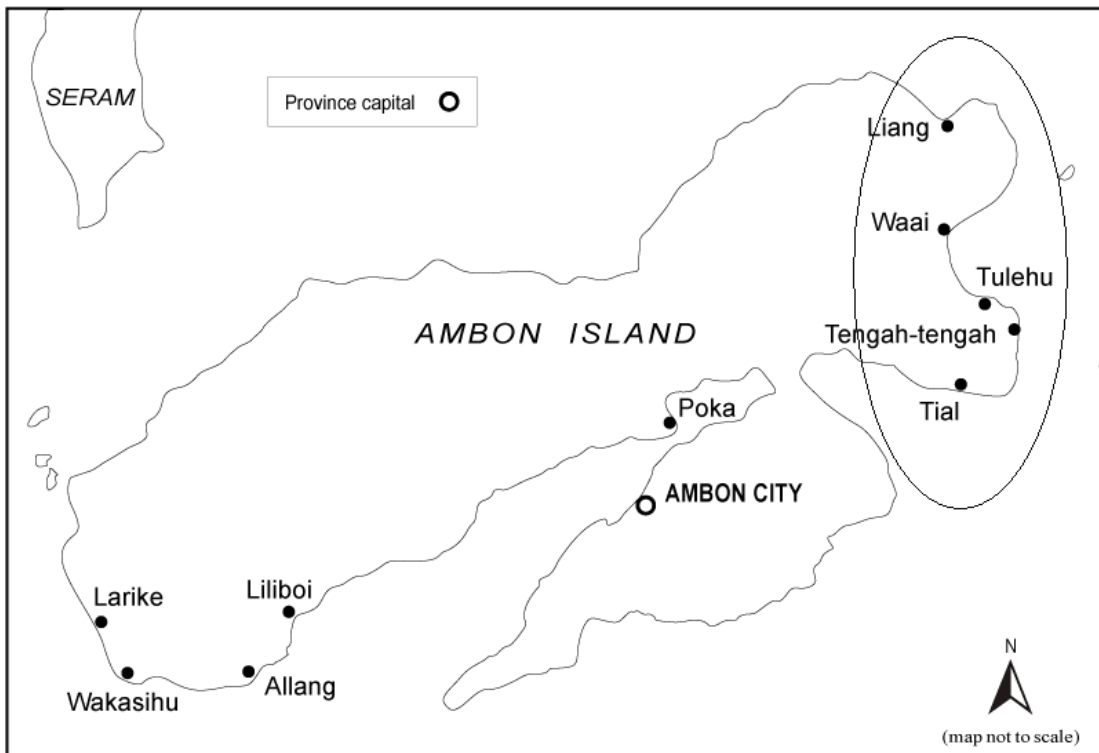
Simon Musgrave
Monash University
Simon.Musgrave@arts.monash.edu.au

1. Background

- Sou Amana Teru = ‘language of the three villages’
- Spoken at eastern end of Ambon Island
- Part of Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian subgroup
- Approximately 10k active speakers, most over 30 years of age
- Ambonese Malay and Indonesian both also used



Map 1 – location of Ambon in Indonesia



Map 2 – Ambon Island

2. Basic facts

Pronoun forms:

	Free pronouns	Reduced pronouns	
		Proclitics	Enclitics
1SG	<i>yau</i>	<i>au=</i>	<i>=u</i>
2SG	<i>yare</i>	<i>ar=</i>	<i>=(a)r, =m(u)</i>
3SG HUM	<i>ire (eng)</i>	<i>e=</i>	<i>=i</i>
	NHUM		<i>=re</i>
1PL INCL	<i>ike</i>	<i>ka=</i>	<i>=ka</i>
	EXCL	<i>yami</i>	<i>=m(i)</i>
2PL	<i>yimi</i>	<i>mu=</i>	<i>=m(u)</i>
3PL	<i>sire/isi</i>	<i>si=</i>	<i>=si</i>

Clauses:

Basic pattern: **(NP) (Aux) (Clitic) V**

where at least one of NP and clitic must occur, and both may occur

Examples:

- Free pronoun only
 1. *Yami lai wa'a ruma-ma atatoru ea*
1PL.Ex come LOC house-DIST evening already
'When we got home, it was evening already.'
- Clitic only:
 2. *Ar=oi tula ar-ang nina*
2SG=go with 2SG-LNK mother
'You go with your mother.'
- Free NP + clitic
 3. *Sire taha=si supu ian-e*
3PL NEG=3PL catch fish-LM
'They didn't catch any fish.'

What can go in Aux position?

- Three possibilities found so far:
 - *taha* – negator
 - *hare* – continuous aspect
 - *na* – the mystery auxiliary
- Examples for *hare* and *na*:
 4. *Hare=si turi'e*
CONT=3PL write
'They are writing.'
 5. *Na=isi lai mena ea*
AUX=3PL come first already
'They came first.'

3. Morphology?

- Sou Amana Teru similar to e.g. Italian
- Subject agreement
- Marked on auxiliary if there is one
- Marked on verb otherwise
- Argument is free NP or zero pronoun licensed by agreement

a) Problem 1

- Pronoun-Agreement sequence is not possible:

6. **Yau u=pahai'e*
1SG 1SG=play

- But free pronoun can co-occur with agreement marker on Aux

7. *Sire taha=si supu ian-e*
3PL NEG=3PL catch fish-LM
'They didn't catch any fish.'

b) Problem 2

- There are no subject markers for 3rd person non-human arguments
- So 3rd person non-human subjects are always free NPs only:

8. *Manu ane kula-e*
bird eat banana-LM
'The bird is eating bananas'

- This is true even where the AUX spot is filled, where for human referents a marker is obligatory

9. *Lampu taha kina*
lamp NEG bright
'The lamp has gone out.'

- Pronouns with non-human reference do exist in the language
- 3rd person possessive (*eng*) can have non-human reference

10. Tapi *eng nalar=ma, eng nalar ha'er?*
But 3SG.POSS name=that 3SG.POSS name what
'But what was its name?' (refers to village)

- There is a clitic form for non-humans used in A function and as complement of prepositions:

11. *Jadi rua=isi pa-tanane'e=re*
then two=3PL CAUS-plant=3NH
'Then the two of them planted them.'

- Possible analysis would be that there is a zero marker
- So this account would predict that zero marker could license pro-drop
- This does occur for human subjects – see previous examples

- In fact, this possibility seems almost non-existent
- Only example I have is not a main clause, could be analysed as nominalised:

12. *Masehu usie ike pareta waer-e*
 drop.down all 1PL.INCL make.dry water-LM
 ‘After (it) drops down, we dry the water out.’

- Zero pronoun possibility doesn’t seem well supported

c) Position of markers

- Subject markers occur in two positions:
 - Attached to left of V
 - Attached to right of I
- Cf:

13. i) *Tahina-n laha matua-na=re si=jaga*
 old.woman-PL with old.man-PL=this 3PL=guard
duren=re
 durian=this
 ‘These old people were guarding the durian.’

ii) *Sire taha=si supu ian-e*
 3PL NEG=3PL catch fish-LM
 ‘They didn’t catch any fish.’

- Morphological analysis says these are distinct
 - I is marked by suffix, V by prefix
- Intuition suggests that there is only one structural position for the marker
- It appears immediately to the left of V
- Attachment is a surface phenomenon
- This intuition plus problems in morphological analysis suggest a syntactic analysis

4. Syntax?

- Clitic pronoun has its own structural position to the left of V
- Can attach either to left or to right
- There is a constraint which bars adjacent co-referent pronouns
 - stipulative, but makes more sense than morphology
- But new problems:
 - Argument positions
 - Structure above V

a) Argument positions

- Clitic can be sole exponent of subject in clause whether I is filled or not:

14. i) *Tah=i pa-manahu tapi e=ane*
 NEG=3SG CAUS-fall but 3SG=eat
 ‘He didn’t send [them] down but he ate.’

ii) *E=hose: “Mai palamana.”*
 3SG=say let’s tour
 ‘He said: “Let’s take a trip.”’

- This suggests that the clitic is the argument
- Consistent account then would make clitic the argument in all cases where it occurs
- Except non-humans which are going to have to be treated differently
- Co-referent free NP is then an adjunct of some sort, Jelinek style

Problem 1

- This sort of analysis predicts that the adjunct NP should be free to appear in different positions
- This is not the case – free NP subjects overwhelmingly appear at left edge
- This contrasts with case where an argument is definitely realised by a pronoun

Object fronting:

- Objects of transitive verbs can be represented by a clitic
- A co-referent NP can occur
- But not in canonical post-V position
- Typically the NP appears at the start of the clause

15. *Isi pakaian isi=taru=r wa'a pe'e*
 3PL clothes 3PL=place=3NH LOC where
 'Their clothes, where had they put them?'

Problem 2

- There are clauses which have a free pronoun before the verb
- Possible solution:
 - The position where the clitics appear can hold any pronoun
 - Phonological considerations determine what form is pronounced
- (Could be related to the constraint against adjacent pronouns?)

b) Structure above V

- Subject should be consistently associated with a single structural position
- Position to left of V is plausibly Spec of VP
- Examples with free NP + Aux suggest that this is the subject position:
 - There is a head for the projection above V (call it IP)
 - So the clitic can't be considered to have moved up

Non-human subjects again:

- Clauses can occur with a non-human subject AND Aux

9. Lampu *taha kina*
 lamp NEG bright
 'The lamp has gone out.'

- In these cases, the subject seems to be in Spec of IP
- Even given that non-human subjects need separate account, this is worrying

Two Spec positions?

- An escape at this point might be to say that both Spec positions are relevant
- But then if both are filled, they are obligatorily co-referent
- And they are both linked to a single argument position
- Neither of these stipulations is desirable

5. Diachrony

- Collins reports previous morphological marking on verb
 - Current clitics are closely related to one conjugation he reports
- Is what we see a move from that to a more analytic system?
- Or is it incipient grammaticalisation in a new cycle?
- Younger speakers are simplifying morphology in general
 - whatever is going on is unlikely to be observable to completion – language is declining

6. (Non-) Conclusion

- Diachrony is not really relevant
- We should be able to give a coherent account of the system as it is used by speakers now
- I hope I have shown that there is no immediately obvious way to do this
- Current best idea: defeasible constraints, OT analysis.....

7. References

- Bresnan, Joan & Sam Mchombo 1987. Topic, pronoun and agreement in Chichewa. *Language* 63.4. 741-82
- Collins, James T. 1983. *The Historical Relationships of the Languages of Central Maluku, Indonesia*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics (D-47).
- Jelinek, Eloise. 1984. Empty Categories, Case, and Configurationality. *Natural Language And Linguistic Theory*, 2: 39-76.
- Jelinek, Eloise and Richard Demers. 1994. Predicates and Pronominal Arguments in Straits Salish. *Language* 70: 697-736.
- Musgrave, Simon. To appear. Reduced pronouns and arguments in Sou Amana Teru, Ambon. In Michael C. Ewing & Marian Klamer (eds.) *Typological and Areal Analyses: Contributions from East Nusantara*.
- Ross, Malcolm. 2004. The morphosyntactic typology of Oceanic languages. *Language and Linguistics* 5:491-541.