ERGATIVE CONTROL OF SYNTACTIC PROCESSES IN SAMA SOUTHERN

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1. and 2. Introduction, and Explanation of Ergativity

- when is 3 a crowd? (siblings Sara & Alan, plus Owen / Mr & Mrs. Sara & Owen, plus Alan)
- many Philippine languages are morphologically ergative (S & O, plus A)
- for many of the world’s languages which are morphologically ergative, control of syntactic processes is either (a) nominative, or (b) split between nominative and ergative (many Philippine languages)
- in (Southern) Sinama, at least 5 major syntactic processes show an exclusive ergative pattern of syntactic control

3. Ergativity in Sinama Morphology

- Sinama has three pronoun sets: absolutive, ergative, and oblique. As illustrated in examples (1) through (7), S and O are absolutive, and A is ergative.

(1) Tulí akú gana-gana.
    tuli akú gana-gana
    sleep 1SG.ABS later

I (S) will sleep later.

(2) Tabangan-na akú.
    tabang -an -na akú
    help -PAT -3SG.ERG 1SG.ABS

She (A) will help me (O).

(3) Tabangan-ku iyá.
    tabang -an -ku iyá
    help -PAT -1SG.ERG 3SG.ABS

I (A) will help him/her (O).

- When S or O is encoded by a full NP (whether common noun or a proper noun), it has no case marking:

(4) Tulí si Ben gana-gana.
    tuli si Ben gana-gana
    sleep PM name.person later

Ben (S) will sleep later.
(5) Tuli anak-anak gana-gana.
      tuli  DUP- anak gana-gana
     sleep  DIM- child later
      S
The child (S) will sleep later.

(6) Tabangan-ku si Ben.
    tabang -an -ku si Ben
   help  -PAT -1SG.ERG PM name.person
      A       O
I (A) will help Ben (O).

(7) Tabangan-ku anak-anak.
    tabang -an -ku DUP- anak
   help  -PAT -1SG.ERG DIM- child
      A       O
I (A) will help the child (O).

   • When A is encoded by a full NP (whether common or proper noun), it is preceded by leh, and the verb is obligatorily affixed with ni-:

(8) Nitabangan anak-anak leh mastal.
    ni- tabang -an DUP- anak leh mastal
   AGR- help  -PAT DIM- child ERG teacher
          O     A
The teacher (A) will help the child (O).

(9) Nitabangan akú leh si Ben.
    ni- tabang -an akú leh si Ben
   AGR- help  -PAT 1SG.ABS ERG PM name.person
          O     A
Ben (A) will help me (O).

   • The marker leh marks A only; it never marks S or O, as in Tuli *leh si Ben ‘Ben (S) will sleep’ or Tabangan-ku *leh si Ben ‘I (A) will help Ben (O)’.

4. Syntactic Processes and Patterns of Control in Sinama

4.1. Relativization

   • NP is modified by a subordinate clause; subordinate clause is relative clause, and modified NP is its head noun (e.g., I saw the rope which Alan cut.)
   • In Sinama, relativization follows an ergative pattern of syntactic control in that only S and O may be the head of a relative clause.

(12) Bey tandah-ku lubid.¹
    bey ta- ndah -ku lubid
   PPFV NCTRL- see -1SG.ERG rope
      A       O
I saw the rope.

¹ (The numbers assigned to examples in this handout are not continuous; they correspond to the example numbers in the full paper, some of which are not included here.)
(13) **Bey nikottob lubid itu leh anak-anak.**
> bey ni- kottob lubid itu leh DUP- anak
> PPFV AGR- cut rope D1.ABS ERG DIM- child
> O A

*A/The child cut this rope.

(14) **Bey tandah-ku lubid ya bey nikottob**
> bey ta- ndah -ku lubid ya bey ni- kottob
> PPFV NCTRL- see -1SG.ERG rope NMZ PPFV AGR- cut

Ø **leh anak-anak.**

(leh DUP- anak
> ERG DIM- child

O=Ø A

*I saw the rope which a/the child cut.

- Ex. (15) demonstrates that the A argument cannot be the head of a relative clause.

(15) **Bey tandah-ku anak-anak ya bey nikottob(-na)² lubid Ø.**

*I saw the child who cut the rope.

- In (16), the relativized clause is an antipassive construction (that is, it has been detransitivized – note the -ngan intransitive prefix on the verb). Thus, the deleted referent is S (as is clearly the case in (18)).

(16) **Bey tandah-ku anak-anak ya bey ngottob Ø lubid.**
> bey ta- ndah -ku DUP- anak ya bey ngaN- kottob lubid
> PPFV NCTRL- see -1SG.ERG DIM- child NMZ PPFV INTR- cut rope

S=Ø

*I saw the child who cut a/the rope.

(17) **Bey nengge anak-anak.**
> bey ngaN- tengge DUP- anak
> PPFV INTR- stand DIM- child

S

The child stood.

(18) **Bey tandah-ku anak-anak ya bey nengge Ø.**
> bey ta- ndah -ku DUP- anak ya bey ngaN- tengge
> PPFV NCTRL- see -1SG.ERG DIM- child NMZ PPFV INTR- stand

S=Ø

*I saw the child who stood.

4.2. Clefting

- NP extracted from main clause, appears as fronted head noun (e.g., *It’s Alan who cut the rope.*); in Sinama, head noun is cross-referenced on nominalized verb.
- Clefting in Sinama follows ergative pattern of syntactic control – only S and O³ may be the head noun. The head noun precedes the nominalized clause. The argument in the nominalized clause that is co-referential with the head noun is obligatorily absent. If the head noun is a pronoun, the pronoun is from the oblique class⁴.

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² The parentheses here indicate that this example is ungrammatical with or without the ergative pronoun.
³ In addition to a patient, this may include a location, an instrument, or a beneficiary that has been promoted to O. See full paper for details.
⁴ For example, item (20) would be: *Iya ya na bey nengge. ‘He/She is who stood.’
(19) **Bey nengge si Ben.**
    bey ngAN- tengge si Ben
    PPFV INTR- stand PM name.person
    S

    Ben stood.

(20) **Si Ben ya na bey nengge ə.**
    si Ben ya na bey ngAN- tengge
    PM name.person NMZ LK PPFV INTR- stand
    S=Ø

    Ben is who stood.

(21) **Bey nikottob lubid itu leh anak-anak.**
    bey ni- kottob lubid itu leh DUP- anak
    PPFV AGR- cut rope D1.ABS ERG DIM- child
    O A

    A/the child cut this rope.

(22) **Lubid itu ya bey nikottob ə leh anak-anak.**
    lubid itu ya bey ni- kottob leh DUP- anak
    rope D1.ABS NMZ PPFV AGR- cut ERG DIM- child
    O=Ø

    This rope is what a/the child cut.
    - Ex. (23) illustrates that A cannot be head of a cleft construction.

(23) ***Anak-anak ya bey nikottob(-na) lubid itu.**
    A/The child is who cut this rope.
    - Transitive clause may be changed to antipassive (A becomes S); S can be the head of a cleft (24):

(24) **Anak-anak ya bey ngottob lubid ə.**
    DUP- anak ya bey ngAN- kottob lubid
    DIM- child NMZ PPFV INTR- cut rope
    S=Ø

    A child is who cut (or cut at) a rope.
    - In (25), patient is O and so is eligible to be head of cleft construction (26). When an oblique
      referent is promoted to O, it is also eligible to be the head of a cleft construction (see full paper
      for example of promoted recipient and beneficiary which are heads of cleft constructions).

(25) **Nipamuwan búk leh mastal ni anak-anak.**
    ni- pangaN- buwan búk leh mastal ni DUP- anak
    AGR- PAT- give book ERG teacher to DIM- child
    O A OBL

    A/The teacher will give the book to a/the child.

(26) **Búk itu ya na nipamuwan ə leh mastal ni anak-anak.**
    búk itu ya na ni- pangaN- buwan leh mastal ni DUP- anak
    book D1.ABS NMZ LK AGR- PAT- give ERG teacher to DIM- child
    O=Ø A OBL

    This book is what a/the teacher will give to a/the child.

4.3. **WH-question formation**
    - question with a pro-form (e.g., English “who”, “what”, “where”, “why”, “when”), often in clause-
      initial position, with “gap” where questioned argument occurs in the non-question form. (E.g.,
      He will give the book to you. cf. What will he give ə to you?)
    - in Sinama, WH-question formation follows ergative pattern: S (34) and (41) and O (36) may be
questioned, not A (39):

(33) **Bey nengge anak-anak.**
    be y ngan- tengge DUP- anak
PPFV INTR- stand DIM- child
*The child stood.*

(34) **Siyan bey nengge ø?**
    siyan bey ngan- tengge ø
who PPFV INTR- stand ø
S=Ø

*Who stood?*

(35) **Bey pamuwan bük leh danda ni anak-anak.**
    be y pangän- buwan bük leh danda ni DUP- anak
PPFV PAT- give book ERG female to DIM- child
O A OBL

*A/the woman gave the book to a/the child.*

(36) **Iyan bey pamuwan ø leh danda ni anak-anak?**
    eyyan bey pangän- buwan leh danda ni DUP- anak
what PPFV PAT- give ERG female to DIM- child
O=Ø A OBL

*What did a/the woman give to a/the child?*

(39) **Siyan bey pamuwan bük ø ni anak-anak?**
    *A=Ø

*Who gave the book to a/the child?*

(40) **Bey akú muwan bük ni anak-anak.**
    bey akú ngan- buwan bük ni DUP- anak
PPFV 1SG.ABS INTR- give book to DIM- child
S

*I gave a book to a/the child.*

(41) **Siyan bey ø muwan bük ni anak-anak?**
    siyan bey ngan- buwan bük ni DUP- anak
who PPFV INTR- give book to DIM- child
S=Ø

*Who gave a book to a/the child?*

4.4. Equi-NP deletion

- main clause and complement clause; argument in main clause co-referential with one in complement clause, and a co-referential argument is deleted (e.g., *I want to sleep. I want to give the book to her.*)
- in most languages, equi-NP deletion operates on nominative pattern of control; in Sinama, ergative – only S (49) or O (51) can be deleted, not A (52):

(47) **Kabilahan-ku bük.**
    ka- bilahi -an -ku bük
INV- want -PAT -1SG.ERG book
*I want the book.*
(48) Tuli akú.
    tuli akú
    sleep 1SG.ABS
    S
    I will sleep.

(49) Kabilahian-ku tuli ø.
    ka- bilahi -an -ku tuli
    INV- want -PAT -1SG.ERG sleep
    S=Ø
    I want to sleep.

(50) Nilinganan akú leh si Ben.
    ni- lengan -an akú leh si Ben
    AGR- call -PAT 1SG.ABS ERG PM name.person
    O    A
    Ben will call me.

(51) Kabilahian-ku nilinganan ø leh si Ben.
    ka- bilahi -an -ku ni- lengan -an leh si Ben
    INV- want -PAT -1SG.ERG AGR- call -PAT ERG PM name.person
    O=Ø A
    I want Ben to call [me].

(52) *Kabilahian si Ben nilinganan akú ø.
    Ben wants to call me.
        O  *A=Ø

4.5. Second-position cliticization

- clitic: form which has some features of an independent word but which is bound to another word
- in many Philippine languages, S, A, and O pronouns all behave like second-position clitics
- in Sinama, only S and O function as second-position clitics, not A (thus, ergative pattern)
- specifically, when host element such as ley PPFT, bey PPFV, or maha NEG occurs clause-initially, and S (54) or O (56) is pronoun, it moves to left of verb (second position of clause); this is not the case with A (57), (58).

(53) Nenge iýá.
    ngaN- tengge iýá
    INTR- stand 3SG.ABS
    S
    S/he will stand.

(54) Bey iýá nenge.
    bey iyá ngaN- tengge
    PPFV 3SG.ABS INTR- stand
    S
    S/he stood.

(55) Tabangan-na akú.
    tabang -an -na akú
    help -PAT -3S.ERG 1S.ABS
    A    O
    She will help me.
5. Conclusion

The data presented here demonstrate that in addition to morphological ergativity, Sinama exhibits a high degree of syntactic ergativity. Specifically S and O, and only S and O, control not only relativization, clefting, and WH-question formation, as in many Philippine languages, but also equi-NP deletion and second-position cliticization.5 (That is, in each of these syntactic operations, S and O pattern alike, and A patterns differently.) To our knowledge, Sinama6 is unique among Philippine languages in that syntactic control for equi-NP and second-position cliticization follows an exclusive ergative pattern. Although other Philippine languages demonstrate syntactic ergativity with respect to some of these processes, published results to date have not documented syntactic ergativity to this degree.

Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>more agent-like argument in transitive clause</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>agreement affix</td>
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<td>ASC</td>
<td>Associative</td>
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<td>beneficiary</td>
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<td>CAUS</td>
<td>causative</td>
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<td>D1.ABS</td>
<td>demonstrative, near, absolutive</td>
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<td>PPFV</td>
<td>past perfective</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>single argument of intransitive clause</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>valence increaser</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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5 Preliminary research indicates that imperatives, reflexivization, and reciprocalization operate on a nominative-accusative pattern of syntactic control, but these processes are beyond the scope of this paper.

6 This claim may also be true of other Sama languages, and has in fact been demonstrated for Yakan (Brainard and Behrens 2002).