

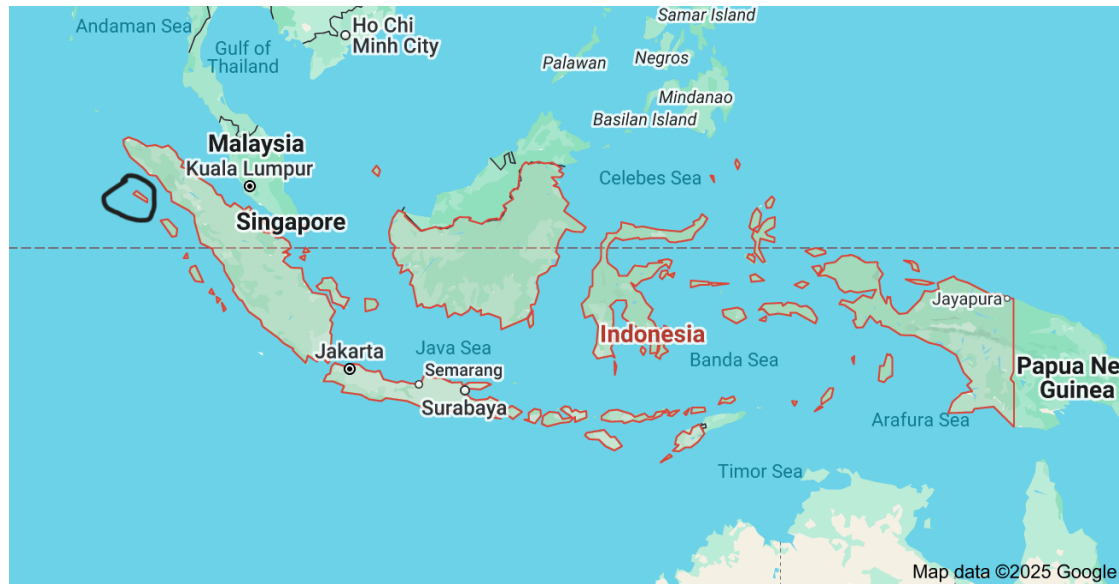
PRONOMINAL & ALIGNMENT SYSTEMS IN SIGULAI

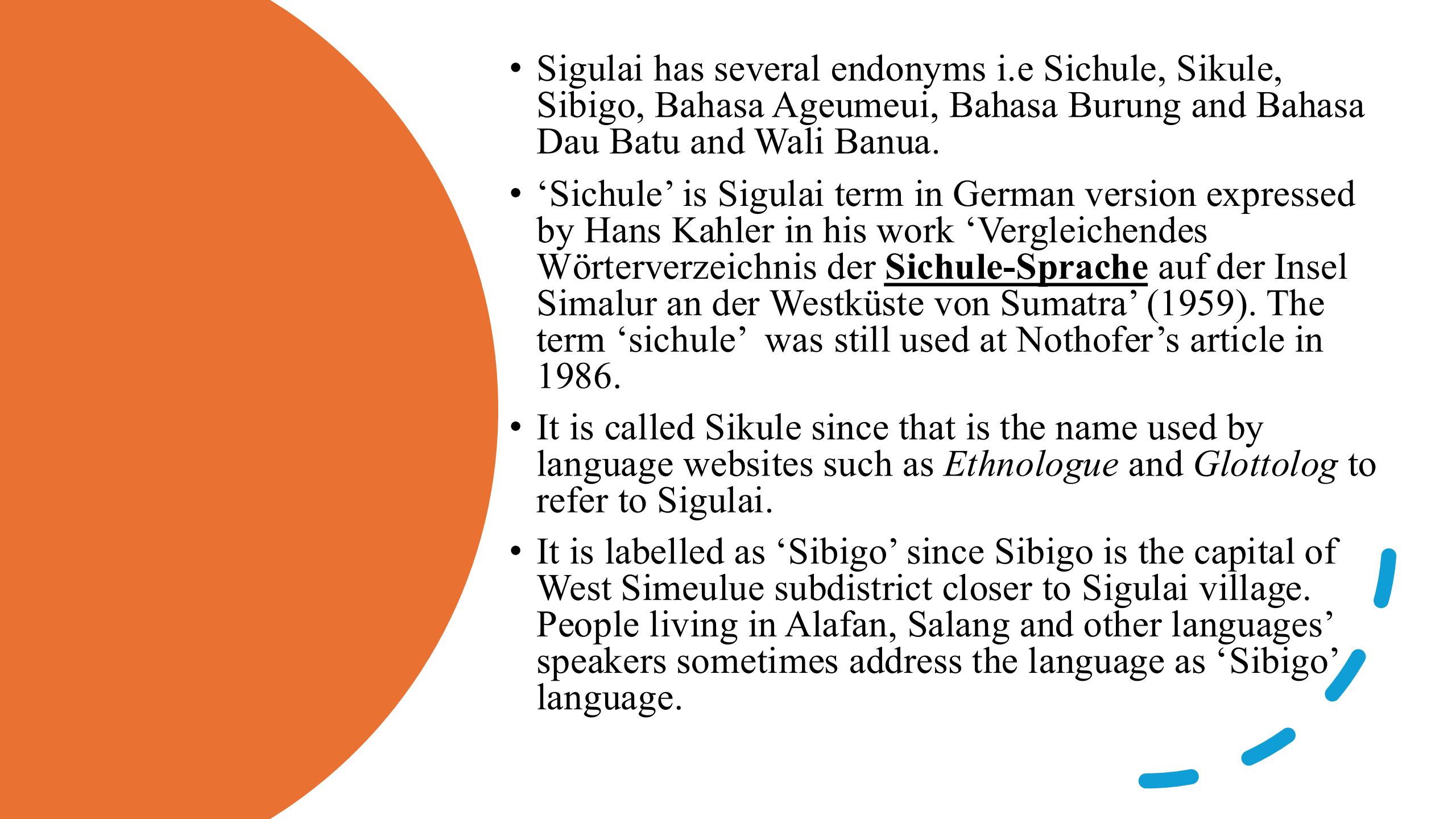
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1. Background

Sigulai or Sikule (ISO 639-3 :skh) is an Austronesian language spoken in the northern parts of Simeulue island, Aceh province together with two other languages, that is, Devayan and Leukon (see Map.01).



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- Sigulai has several endonyms i.e Sichule, Sikule, Sibigo, Bahasa Ageumeui, Bahasa Burung and Bahasa Dau Batu and Wali Banua.
 - ‘Sichule’ is Sigulai term in German version expressed by Hans Kahler in his work ‘Vergleichendes Wörterverzeichnis der **Sichule-Sprache** auf der Insel Simalur an der Westküste von Sumatra’ (1959). The term ‘sichule’ was still used at Nothofer’s article in 1986.
 - It is called Sikule since that is the name used by language websites such as *Ethnologue* and *Glottolog* to refer to Sigulai.
 - It is labelled as ‘Sibigo’ since Sibigo is the capital of West Simeulue subdistrict closer to Sigulai village. People living in Alafan, Salang and other languages’ speakers sometimes address the language as ‘Sibigo’ language.

- Bahasa ‘agəmәi’. In Sigulai, ‘agəmәi’ means ‘where do you go ?’ It is normal for people on Simeulue Island to ask other people where a person goes. In Simeulue, there are two similar expressions reflecting linguistically similar meanings: ‘u mәi o’ (Devayan) & ‘agəmәi’ (Sigulai).
- Bahasa Burung : It is one of the pejorative terms addressed to the Sigulai language. Speakers of other languages find Sigulai too difficult to acquire, while Sigulai speakers consider Devayan easy to speak. In fact, most Sigulai speakers can speak Devayan, but Devayan speakers cannot speak Sigulai. That is why Devayan and Simolol speakers label this language as ‘Bahasa Burung’.

- Bahasa Dau Batu : ‘Dau Batu’ in Sigulai language literally means ‘take stone’. According to my informants, Sigulai people suffered from slavery long time ago where these people were forced to work hard. Therefore, this ‘Dau Batu’ can be considered as an insult from other speaking communities to Sigulai speakers. However, today Sigulai generation does not take it as an insult.
- Guali Banua : In Sigulai, it literally means ‘language of the place’. This term refers to how Sigulai language has been spread not only among West Simeulue people but also used by people in Salang and Alafan. Therefore, anytime these speakers mention ‘Guali Banua’, they refer to Sigulai as the original speaking place of the language.
- The original name of Sigulai according to Sigulai language itself is ‘efulae’. Local people say ‘Baserekga guali efulae’ meaning ‘we speak Sigulai language’.

- Along with Nias, Sigulai typologically belongs to Central Barrier Islands subgroup of Sumatran languages under Malayo-Polynesian group (Hammarström et al, 2024).
- The speaking areas of Sigulai administratively cover three subdistricts, that is, Alafan, Salang and West Simeulue.
- Its native speakers are around 20,000.
- These speakers are dominantly Moslems and the language use among them are strictly found in informal settings such as domestic affairs and neighborhood (Candrasari et al, 2022).
- Sigulai speakers also speak Standard Indonesian.
- In term of its language vitality, Sigulai is endangered (Hammarström et al, 2024).



2. Research Methodology

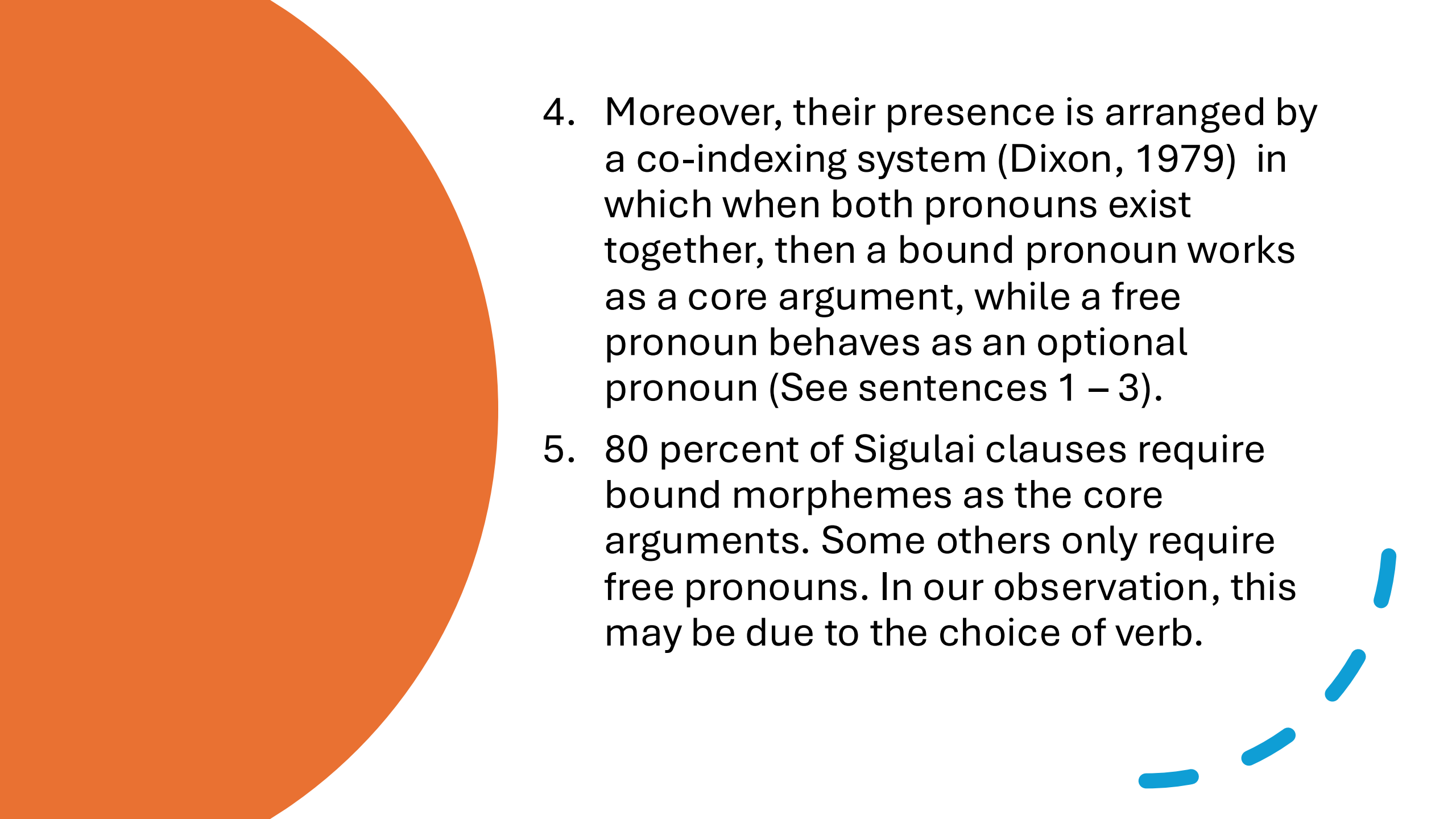
- Data in this presentation are gained from a two-month scoping trip to Sigulai communities in Simeulue island.
- The list of elicited sentences is adapted from Comrie and Smith (1977).
- The written data become primary source of data analysis.
- The data are then analysed by using grammatical concepts provided by Timberlake (2007), Kroeger (2005), Givon (2001) and Bhat (2004).

PRONOMINAL SYSTEM IN SIGULAI

	Free		Bound		
	NOM.	ACC.	ERG	ABS	POSS
1sg.	(i-)etu	etu	u-	=du	-gu
2sg.	(i-)egə	egə	mu-	=gə	-mo
3sg.	(i-)fəi	fəi	i-	=di/=ya	-ni
1PL.Incl.	(i-)fəita	fəita	ta-	=ita	-da
1PL.Excl.	(i-)fəaga	fəaga	məi-	=ga	-ma
2PL.	(i-)fəami	fəami	mi-	=ami	-mi
3PL.	(i-)fəila	fəila	la-	=ila	-la

To understand the Sigulai pronominal system :

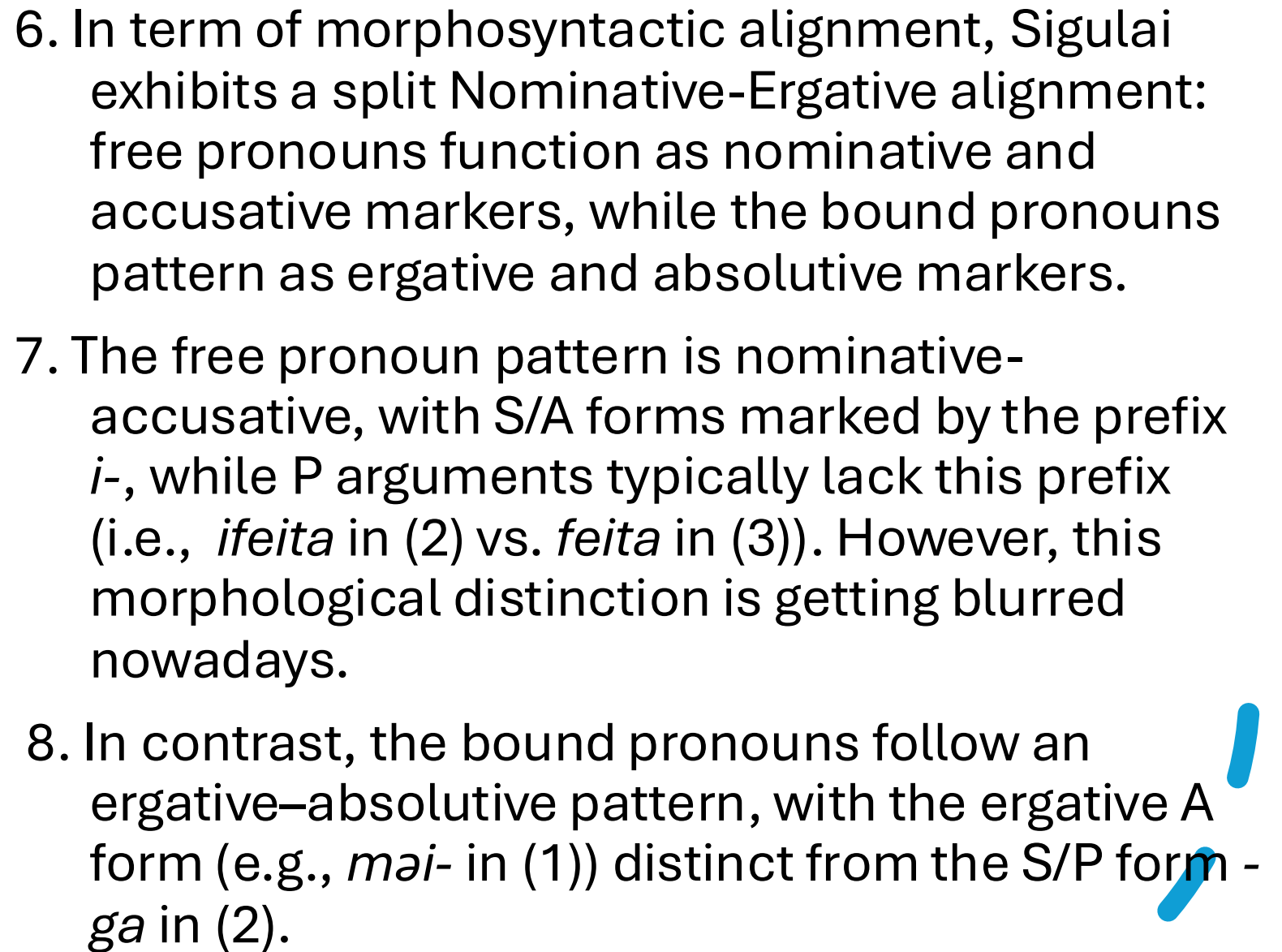
1. Sigulai pronouns are distinguished based on whether they are morphologically free or bound forms. Free pronouns denote nominative and accusative alignment, while bound pronouns form ergative and absolutive pattern.
2. These pronouns behave anaphorically. 'Anaphoric' here means that they get their meanings from other (pro)nouns in the sentence or the previous sentence (Bhat, 2004).
3. In the Sigulai context, the bound pronouns show themselves as core arguments since their presence in a sentence is obligatory, while free pronouns are optional.

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4. Moreover, their presence is arranged by a co-indexing system (Dixon, 1979) in which when both pronouns exist together, then a bound pronoun works as a core argument, while a free pronoun behaves as an optional pronoun (See sentences 1 – 3).
 5. 80 percent of Sigulai clauses require bound morphemes as the core arguments. Some others only require free pronouns. In our observation, this may be due to the choice of verb.

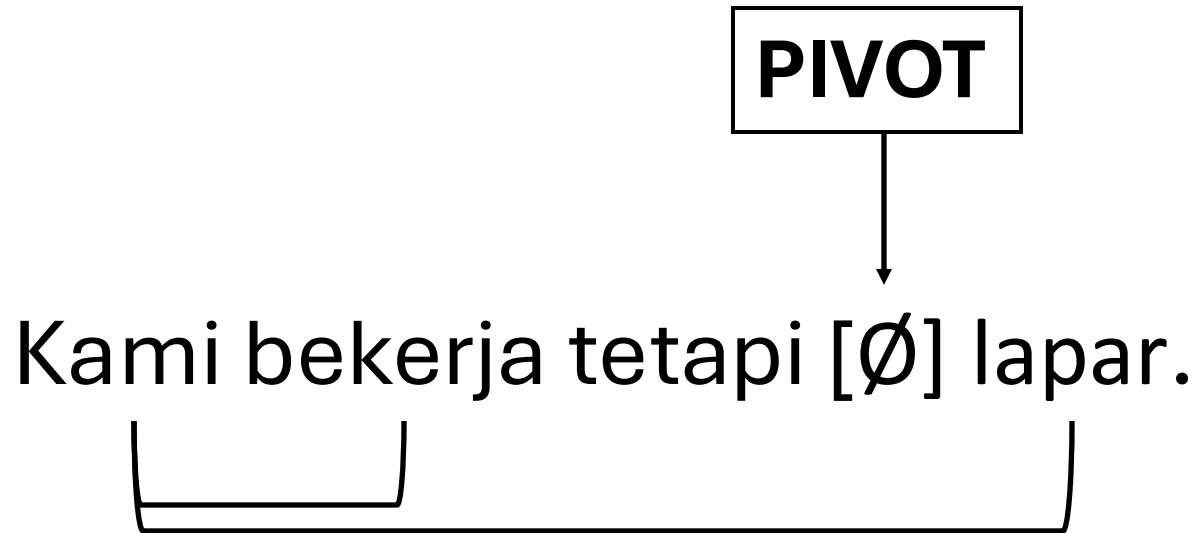
1. [ifəaga nen] mo-ami mæi-ila mənefi
1PL.EXC.NOM Dem.Dist PST- 2PL.ABS 1PL.EXC.ERG-see yesterday
‘We saw you (PL) yesterday’

2. [ifəita mənefi] mo=ga khumundung
1PL.INC.NOM yesterday PST-1PL.EXC.ABS run
‘We run yesterday’

3. iegə u=ge butəng ma-nolong feita lale’e
2SG.NOM PRS-2SG.ABS currently AV-help 1PL.INC.ABS now
‘You are currently helping us now’

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6. In term of morphosyntactic alignment, Sigulai exhibits a split Nominative-Ergative alignment: free pronouns function as nominative and accusative markers, while the bound pronouns pattern as ergative and absolutive markers.
 7. The free pronoun pattern is nominative-accusative, with S/A forms marked by the prefix *i-*, while P arguments typically lack this prefix (i.e., *ifeita* in (2) vs. *feita* in (3)). However, this morphological distinction is getting blurred nowadays.
 8. In contrast, the bound pronouns follow an ergative-absolutive pattern, with the ergative A form (e.g., *məi-* in (1)) distinct from the S/P form -*ga* in (2).

7. Due to the presence of pronominal co-indexing in Sigulai, the notion of a syntactic subject or pivot—as found in Indonesian-type languages—is either weakened or absent, particularly in coordination, which does not require shared-argument gapping.



SUBJECT



u=ga

PRS=1PL.EXC.ABS

karajo neʔa

work but

‘We work but are hungry’

SUBJECT



u=ga

PRS=1PL.EXC.ABS

ulufu

hungry

However, pivot is observed in structurally tight structures such as syntactic control and relativization.

1. Control can be conceived as a construction in which the understood subject of a given predicate is determined by some expression in context.
2. Relativization is a syntactic process of creating relative clauses, which modify nouns or pronouns by adding extra information.

4. ietu meifakha-du ____ i-parekso dokter imea nen
 1SG.NOM want-1SG.ABS PIV 3SG.ERG-check doctor person that
 ‘I want to be checked up by the doctor’

5. ifəi yuw mang-əntuk etu

 3SG.NOM REL. PIV AV-hit 1SG.ACC
 ‘He who hit me’ or ‘the one who hits me is him’.

Conclusion

- Morphologically, there is an undeniably intertwined relationship between Sigulai's pronominal and alignment systems.
- The pronominal system is divided into two, that is, free pronouns and bound pronouns. Free pronouns are grouped into NOMINATIVE-ACCUSATIVE PATTERN, while bound pronouns are classified into ERGATIVE-ABSOLUTIVE ALIGNMENT.
- Their appearances in Sigulai expressions are anaphorically-referred and arranged by co-indexing system.
- Morphosyntactically, the alignment system in Sigulai shows a split Nominative-Ergative one with respect to free and bound pronouns.

- As a consequence of pronominal co-referencing in Sigulai, pivot is reduced or absent as there is no argument gapping in its expressions, particularly in coordination.
- However, pivot obviously appears in certain structures like syntactic control and relativization.

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MUCHAS GRACIAS

THANK YOU

TERIMAKASIH

TARIMOKASI

OBRIGADO



Q&A