Person marking in Barrier Islands Languages
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The Barrier Islands languages (Sumatran, Austronesian) are a group of languages spoken off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. These languages differ significantly from most languages in mainland Sumatra and western Indonesia as they tend to lack symmetrical voice systems (Himmelmann, 2005, p. 113). This study explores person marking in five Barrier Islands languages (Devayan, Sigulai, Nias Selatan, Sipora Mentawai and Enggano), drawing on recent field data collected for Devayan, Sigulai and Sipora Mentawai.

Person marking is a widespread feature of Austronesian languages that tends to shift with the type of voice (or lack of voice) that a language displays[1]. Two types of person marking are generally found across languages with symmetrical voice systems. The first is person marking that indexes the pivot, whatever its semantic role may be, and the second is person marking that specifically marks the actor in undergoer voice constructions. (1) shows these two types of person marking in Tondano. In comparison, languages that entirely lack voice systems tend to display obligatory prefixes/proclitics that index the subject (S/A) and may also display a second optional series of suffixes/enclitics that index the object (P). (2) shows this system in Tukang Besi.

Languages do not always fall so neatly into these two categories though, particularly as they undergo shifts away from symmetrical voice. Himmelmann (1996) explores this phenomenon in Sulawesi languages, a well-known transitional zone where languages are moving away from symmetrical voice systems. He describes that in Uma, what appears at first glance to be ergatively aligned person marking is the result of person marking still adhering to the constraints of a voice system that has been lost. Barrier Islands languages are similarly undergoing a shift away from symmetrical voice, resulting in the emergence of diverse person marking systems across the group.

All Barrier Islands languages display person marking, and with the exception of Devayan, each language displays two series (see Table 1). These systems can be sorted into four types. Type 1 includes Devayan Series 1 and Sigulai Series 1. These series index the actor in undergoer (or undergoer-like) constructions, as shown in Devayan (3).

Type 2 includes Sigulai Series 2 which can index any argument (S, A or P) depending on the voice of the construction. Unlike other Barrier Islands languages, Sigulai retains a symmetrical voice alternation, and so the type of person marking it displays aligns closely with person marking found in other Austronesian symmetrical voice languages (e.g., Tondano, as described above).

Type 3 includes Nias Series 1 and Series 2 which index the A argument in transitive constructions (4). The person markers in Nias are sensitive to mood, with the two series representing an irrealis (Series 1)/realis (Series 2) distinction. These person marking prefixes are obligatory in Nias transitive clauses.

Type 4 includes Sipora Mentawai Series 1 and Series 2 and Enggano Series 1 and Series 2. These systems index the S/A argument and are optional (it is not yet well understood what factors condition when person marking appears in the languages). In both languages, the use of Series 1 or Series 2 prefixes is determined by other morphosyntactic features of the clause. In Mentawai main clauses (5), Series 1 person markers are used unless the verb is marked with the perfective suffix -*an*, which requires the use of Series 2 person markers (if the verb is also marked with realis *a-* then this requirement is overridden and Series 1 is used). Series 2 is also used in Mentawai relative clauses. In Enggano, Series 1 is used with BU- form verbs and Series 2 is used with bare verbs (6). BU- forms generally appear in verb initial main clauses where the subject is a continuing discourse topic while the bare form primarily appears following negation (Hemmings, 2024).

This study discusses the development of these different person marking systems from a possible Type 1 system in Proto-Sumatran, focusing on the attrition of voice systems leading to the realignment of person marking. I also discuss evidence of possible shared innovations across languages based on the forms of these systems (e.g., the use of two-part markers for 1PL.EXCL and 2PL in Sipora Mentawai Series 1 and Enggano Series 1 and Series 2).

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[1] In this study I take a broad definition of person marking, considering any bound form (clitic or affix) appearing on some part of the predicate that either references or agrees with one of the predicate's core arguments.

Table 1 – Person marking in Barrier Islands languages

	Type 1		Type 2	Type 3		Type 4			
	Devayan	Sigulai		Nias Selatan		Sipora Mentawai		Enggano	
	Series 1	Series 1	Series 2	Series 1	Series 2	Series 1	Series 2	Series 1	Series 2
1SG	u-	u-	=du	gu-	u-	ku-	-ku	'u-	'u-
2SG	mu-	mu-	=gə	gö-	ö-	nu-	-nu/m	'o-	u-
3SG	ni-	i-	=di/=ya	ya-	i-	i-	-na	ka-	i-
1PL.INCL	ta-	ta-	=ita	da-	ta-	ta-	-ta	ka-	ka-
1PL.EXCL	mai-	məi-	=ga	ga-	ma-	ku- kai	-mai	'u- -'ai	'u- -'ai
2PL	mi-	mi-	=ami	gi-	mi-	nu- kam	-mui	'o- -a'a	u- -a'a
3PL	da- ~ ra-	la-	=ila	ndra-	la-	ra-	-ra	da-/di-/ki-	da-

(1)   a.   **si**=ma-ki'is   po'opo   *Actor voice*
               3SG.NOM=AV.DYN-grate   coconut
               'He grates some coconut.' (Brickell, 2022, p. 141)

    b.   ka'a   **si**=i-ka-upi'=itè   nè=tu'a=ku   *Conveyance voice*
               because **3SG.NOM**=CV-STAT-angry=LIM   AN.PL.GEN=old=1SG.GEN
               'Because my parents are just angry at him.' (Brickell, 2022, p. 143)

    c.   pa-rintek-en**=na**=mow   si=pèrèt   *Patient voice*
               DYN-small-PV**=3SG.GEN**=CMP   AN.SG=bat
               'She dices the bat (meat).' (Brickell, 2022, p. 130)

(2)   **Ko**-hu'u-**aku**   (te   ika)   (te   iko'o)
               2SG.IRR-give-**1SG.OBJ**   CORE   fish   NOM   2SG
               'You will give me (some fish).' (Donohue, 2011, p. 120)

(3)   Eng   sia   panen   teng   **da**-abek
               currently   3PL   harvest   currently   **3PL**-take
               'They are harvesting, they are taking.' [SMR1-familyproblems01]

(4)   **I**-rino   vakhe   ina-gu
               3SG.R-cook   rice:MUT   mother-1SG.GEN
               'My mother cooked rice.' (Brown, 2001, p. 537)

(5)   Apa   **ra**-kua   nera?
               what   **3PL.NOM**-say   DEM.DIST
               'What did they say?' [ECK01-20241215_earthquakestory]

(6)   a.   **ka**-bu-pù   y-a'u   dop   ean
               3-BU-see   NMLZ-good   land   DEM
               'We can see how beautiful the land is.' (Hemmings, 2024, slide 10)

    b.   Selus   ke'   **i**-pù   Maria
               PN   NEG   **3**-see   PN
               'Selus didn't see Maria.' (Hemmings, 2024, slide 10)

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