

Variation in person indexing in Abui

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1 Background

This paper deals with variation in the person indexing in Abui, a Papuan language of the Alor-Pantar Archipelago of Eastern Indonesia, shown in Figure 1.² Abui belongs to the Alor branch of the Alor-Pantar family (Holton et al. 2012).³

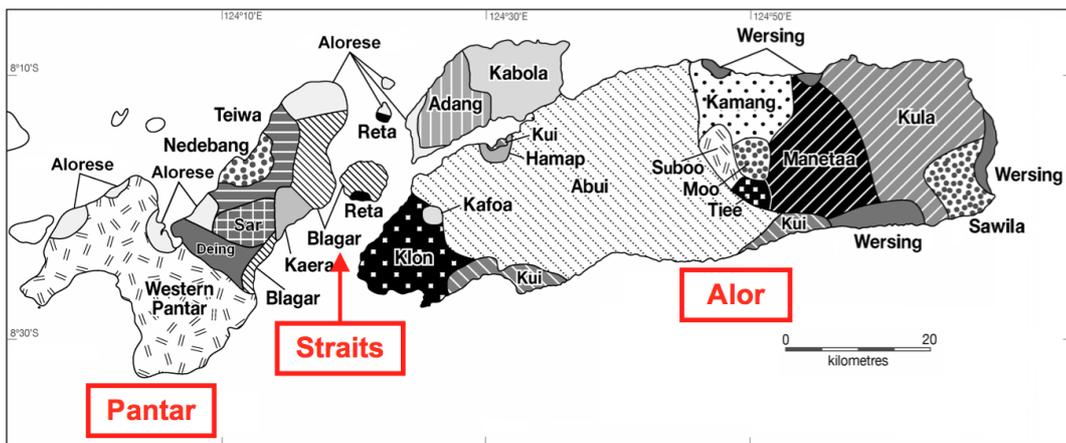


Figure 1. Linguistic situation in the Alor-Pantar Archipelago

This paper discusses the relationship of the Abui person indexing on the verb and encoding of affectedness.

1.1 Typological profile

Abui has a relatively simple phonemic inventory, with phonemic vowel length, lexical and grammatical tone. The language is head-marking, verb-final, and moderately agglutinative. Negation particles occur post-verbally and verb serialization and clause chaining are extensive.

Abui is a language with semantic alignment detected in both free pronouns and person prefixes (Kratochvil 2007, 2011, 2014a; Fedden et al. 2013, 2014). Abui verbs are highly fluid in argument selection and indexing. The system is complex, and we do not presently understand the feature predicting the distribution of person marking prefixes. The system

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³ Abui (iso 639-3:abz) is spoken in the central part of the main island Alor by about 16,000 speakers.

likely interacts with the Abui aspectual system, expressed through a variety of morphosyntactic operations such as stem modification, suffixation and verb serialization.⁴

1.2 Abui free pronouns and person prefixes

Abui has three paradigms of free pronouns. There are no distributive pronouns, although these are commonly found in other Alor-Pantar languages.⁵

Table 1: Abui free pronouns

PERSON	AGENTIVE	FOCUS	TOPIC
1SG	<i>na</i>	<i>nedo</i>	<i>nel</i>
2SG	<i>a</i>	<i>edo</i>	<i>el</i>
3	<i>di</i>	<i>hedo</i>	<i>hel</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>ni</i>	<i>nido</i>	<i>nil</i>
1PL.INCL	<i>pi</i>	<i>pido</i>	<i>pil</i>
2PL	<i>ri</i>	<i>rido</i>	<i>ril</i>
3PL			<i>hel loku</i>

Abui person prefixes are listed in Table 2. Number is distinguished in the first and second person only. Distributive forms have both distributive and reciprocal reading.⁶

Table 2: Abui person prefixes

Person	I	II	III	IV	V
1SG	<i>na-</i>	<i>no-</i>	<i>ne-</i>	<i>noo-</i>	<i>nee-</i>
2SG	<i>a-</i>	<i>o-</i>	<i>e-</i>	<i>oo-</i>	<i>ee-</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>ni-</i>	<i>nu-</i>	<i>ni-</i>	<i>nuu-</i>	<i>nii-</i>
1PL.INCL	<i>pi-</i>	<i>pu-/po-</i>	<i>pi-</i>	<i>puu-/poo-</i>	<i>pii-</i>
2PL	<i>ri-</i>	<i>ru-/ro-</i>	<i>ri-</i>	<i>ruu-/roo-</i>	<i>rii-</i>
3	<i>ha-</i>	<i>ho-</i>	<i>de-</i>	<i>doo-</i>	<i>dee-</i>
3.I	<i>da-</i>	<i>do-</i>	<i>he-</i>	<i>hoo-</i>	<i>hee-</i>
DISTR	<i>ta-</i>	<i>to-</i>	<i>te-</i>	<i>too-</i>	<i>tee-</i>
gloss	PAT	REC	LOC	GOAL	BEN

1.3 Database

Most data discussed in this is part of the *Abui inflectional paradigms (v. 2014)* database. The database contains attested combinations of 300 verbal roots and person prefixes. The

⁴ The data presented in this paper comes from the Abui corpus (collected since 2003; current size roughly 130,000 words) and from Benediktus Delpada, who is a native speaker of Abui. Glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing Conventions with the following additions: AD addressee-perspective, AGT agentive pronoun, ASSOC associative, CONT continuative, EVID evidential, FIN final form, I/II paradigm numbers, INC inchoative, LNK linker, MOD modal, NFIN non-final form, ORD ordinal, POT potentive pronoun, PRIOR priorative, SEQ sequential, SIM simultaneous, SPC specific determiner.

⁵ The third person agentive form *di* is an innovation, with no cognates in other Alor-Pantar languages. The topic and focus forms are historically derived from the CV shaped pronominal root by fusion with a light verb root (Kratochvíl 2014a).

⁶ The third person is split between the *d-* series prefixes (indexing the A argument), and the *h-* series (non-A argument). For more details about their use, see Kratochvíl (2011, 2014a).

first 100 verbs have also been sense-tagged, using the Semantic Domains ontology (<http://semdom.org/>).

2 Verbal indexing - basics

Although a number of predicates are rigid in their argument selection, Abui semantic alignment has been characterized as relatively fluid (Kratochvíl 2007, 2011; Fedden et al. 2013, 2014). To illustrate the fluidity, the paradigm of the verb *wik~wit* ‘carry in hands/arms’ is given in (1). Each person prefix series indicates a different degree of affectedness (Kratochvíl 2011: 601-606).

- (1) a. *Bui kaai ha-wik*
 [name]_N [dog]_{PAT} 3.PAT-carry.in.arms.IPFV
 ‘Bui is carrying her dog in her arms’ [N-PAT]
- b. *Bui bataa tuku mi de-wiil hee-r ba ha-wik*
 name wood piece take 3I.AL-child 3.BEN-reach SIM 3.PAT-carry.in.arms.IPFV
 ‘Bui made a doll from a piece of wood and carries it around’ [N-PAT]
- c. *akun nuku, dikang di de-naamang do-witi, pun*
 morning one again 3AGT [3I.AL-cloth]_N 3I.REC-carry.in.arms.PFV field
namei he-yaari
 prepare.field 3.LOC-go.PFV
 ‘one morning, he again took his clothing and went to work in the field’ [A-N-REC₁]
- d. *a-táng do mi Ø he-wik, hee-wik-e!*
 2S.INAL-hand PROX take [Ø]_{LOC} 3.LOC-carry.in.arms.IPFV 3.BEN-carry.in.arms.IPFV
 ‘carry it in your hands, carry it for him!’ [(A)-LOC, (A)-BEN]
- e. *na ara mi hoo-wik*
 1SG.AGT firewood take 3.GOAL-carry.in.arms
 ‘I give him firewood to carry’ [A-GOAL]
- f. *sura foka do baai wik-e?*
 book big PROX also carry.IPFV-PROG
 ‘should (I) be carrying this big book too?’ [(A)-N]

The basic meaning of the root does not seem to be a good predictor of the inflectional behavior. Also, in many cases, some of the combinations give are used in an idiomatic way, where the basic meaning is extended based on a metaphor (here *strong*, *firm* > *rely on*, *put faith in*):

- (2) a. *di rumai natet hare el baai rumai*
 3AGT strong stand.up.PFV so 2SG.TOP also strong
 ‘He is firm, so you too be strong!’ [E14BD.A63]
- b. *ni-maama wee lik ha-rumai*
 1PL.EXCL.AL-father ASSOC platform 3.PAT-strong
 ‘my father and his friends are strengthening the bench/house floor’ [E14BD.A64]

- c. *no-rumai*
1SG.REC-strong
'I feel strong (and I took the decision to feel so)' [E14BD.A65]
- d. *he-tanga nu a he-rumai naha!*
3.AL-word SPC 2SG.AGT 3.LOC-strong not
'Do not put your trust in his words!' [E14BD.A66]
- e. *moku kaik loku di needo noo-rumai*
kid orphan PL 3AGT 1SG.FOC 1SG.GOAL-strong
'The orphaned children rely on me, have support in me' [E14BD.A67]
- f. *na ama wala hee-rumai naha*
1SG.AGT person just 3.BEN-strong not
'I don't expect any support from anyone' [E14BD.A68]

In addition, some verbs index both their arguments and fit well in Tsunoda's 1985 affectedness hierarchy. These verbs often describe perception, emotion, and cognition events. In rare cases, such as (3c), we find up to three prefixes attached to a single root.

- (3) a. *a o-ne-bai?*
2SG.AGT 2SG.REC-1SG.LOC-angry.IPFV
'are you angry with me?' [REC-LOC]
- b. (*na*) *sieng ma he-noo-marani*
1SG.AGT [rice cooked]_{LOC} 3.LOC-1SG.GOAL-come.up.PFV
'I am stuffed with the rice, I am satiated by the rice' [LOC-GOAL]
- c. *no-hee-na-yongfi*
1SG.REC-3.BEN-1SG.PAT-forget.PFV
'I just completely forgot about it' [REC-BEN-PAT]

3 Verbal indexing – affectedness and indexing alternations

As mentioned in the introduction paper, Beavers (2011) adopts a two-dimensional space for the encoding of affectedness. One dimension represents the types of change, and the other the degree of change. With respect to the types of change, he identifies the following 6 types:

- (a) x changes in some observable property (*clean/paint/delouse/fix/break x*)
 (b) x transforms into something else (*turn/carve/change/transform x into y*)
 (c) x moves and stays at some location (*move/push/angle/roll x into y*)
 (d) x is physically impinged (*hit/kick/punch/rub/slap/wipe/scrub/sweep x*)
 (e) x goes out of existence (*delete/eat/consume/reduce/devour x*)
 (f) x comes into existence (*build/design/construct/create x*)

The verbs that show no alternation form no consistent group.

OBSERVABLE CHANGE (*clean/paint/delouse/fix/break x*)
ha-basa 3.PAT-brush.off 'brush him off, dust it'

<i>h-iel</i>	3.PAT-roast	‘roast it’
<i>ha-wel</i>	3.PAT-bathe	‘wash him, bathe him’
<i>ha-tamadia</i>	3.PAT-repair.IPFV	‘repair it’

TRANSFORM INTO SOMETHING ELSE (*turn/carve/change/transform x into y*)
n.a.

MOVE AND STAY AT SOME LOCATION (*move/push/angle/roll x into y*)

<i>ha-fik</i>	3.PAT-pull	‘pull it, pull him’
<i>ha-kuoila</i>	3.PAT-topple.IPFV	‘topple it, make it fall’
<i>ha-yei</i>	3.PAT-fall.IPFV	‘it falls’
<i>ha-kai</i>	3.PAT-drop.IPFV	‘drop it’
<i>ha-pakda</i>	3.PAT-throw.IPFV	‘throw it’
<i>da-pakda</i>	3I.PAT-throw.IPFV	‘he jumps (lit. throws himself)’
<i>ha-ai</i>	3.PAT-add.IPFV	‘add it’
<i>ha-reng</i>	3.PAT-turn.to.IPFV	‘turn to it’
<i>ha-bi</i>	3.PAT-lean.PFV	‘lean against it’

BE PHYSICALLY IMPINGED (*hit/kick/punch/rub/slap/wipe/scrub/sweep x*)

<i>ha-balak</i>	3.PAT-punch	‘punch him’
<i>ha-langa</i>	3.PAT-harass.IPFV	‘harass him’

GO OUT OF EXISTENCE (*delete/eat/consume/reduce/devour x*)

<i>ha-al</i>	3.PAT-burn.IPFV	‘burn it’
<i>ha-fuul</i>	3.PAT-swallow.IPFV	‘swallow it’

COME INTO EXISTENCE (*build/design/construct/create x*)

<i>ha-yaal</i>	3.PAT-give.birth.IPFV	‘bear it, give birth to (a child)’
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OTHER (*not fitting Beavers’ 2011 classes*)

<i>ha-kawalia</i>	3.PAT-protect.IPFV	‘pull it, pull him’
<i>h-ieng</i>	3.PAT-see.IPFV	‘see it, see him/her’
<i>h-iengria</i>	3.PAT-show.IPFV	‘show him’
<i>ha-mintaai</i>	3.PAT-pray.IPFV	‘pray to him’
<i>ha-paatingdi</i>	3.PAT-advise.PFV	‘advise him’
<i>ha-pai</i>	3.PAT-keep	‘keep him, maintain him in life’
<i>ha-riik</i>	3.PAT-ill	‘s/he is sick, fell sick’
<i>da-minang</i>	3I.PAT-remember.IPFV	‘he remembers’
<i>da-yongfi</i>	3I.PAT-forget.PFV	‘he forgot’
<i>da-moida</i>	3I.PAT-sound.IPFV	‘it makes sounds, he makes sounds’
<i>da-lal</i>	3I.PAT-laugh	‘he is laughing’

It remains to be investigated whether the entailments pointed out in Beavers 2011 hold in these cases. On the other hand, the rigid requirement to combine with the PAT prefix indicates that the morphological properties of these verbs may display an older stage of the Abui grammar, where a different system was determining the prefix assignment. This system could perhaps be one similar to the other Alor-Pantar languages.

3.1 PAT ~ LOC alternations

This section looks whether at least some of the alternations between of the PAT and LOC prefixes can be related to the degree of affectedness.

<u>LESS AFFECTED</u>	~	<u>MORE AFFECTED</u>
OBSERVABLE CHANGE (<i>clean/paint/delouse/fix/break x</i>)		
<i>he-komangdi</i> ‘make it less sharp’	~	<i>ha-komangdi</i> ‘make it blunt’
<i>he-lilri</i> ‘warm it up’	~	<i>ha-lilri</i> ‘boil it’
<i>he-siki</i> ‘interrupt it, split it’	~	<i>ha-siki</i> ‘divorce it, separate it’
<i>he-kol</i> ‘tie it’	~	<i>ha-kol</i> ‘tie it up, into a bundle’
<i>he-kuya</i> ‘peel it’	~	<i>ha-kuya</i> ‘make it visible, open up’

TRANSFORM INTO SOMETHING ELSE (*turn/carve/change/transform x into y*)
Unclear whether any verbs should be listed here

MOVE AND STAY AT SOME LOCATION (<i>move/push/angle/roll x into y</i>)			
<i>he-taang</i> ‘pass it along’	~	<i>ha-taang</i> ‘give it away, set it free’	
<i>he-fil</i> ‘pull on it’	~	<i>ha-fil</i> ‘pull it’	
<i>he-bel</i> ‘pluck it’	~	<i>ha-bel</i> ‘pull it out’	
<i>he-kil</i> ‘pull it (nail), remove tire’	~	<i>ha-kil</i> ‘turn upside down, inside out’	

BE PHYSICALLY IMPINGED (<i>hit/kick/punch/rub/slap/wipe/scrub/sweep x</i>)			
<i>he-dik</i> ‘stab (at) it’	~	<i>ha-dik</i> ‘pierce it’	
<i>he-rel</i> ‘stab into the ground’	~	<i>ha-rel</i> ‘ram into the ground (firmly)’	
<i>he-keila</i> ‘block it’	~	<i>ha-keila</i> ‘plug it’	
<i>he-daak</i> ‘measure with hand’	~	<i>ha-dak</i> ‘clutch it, firmly grab’	
<i>he-puna</i> ‘hold it’	~	<i>ha-pung</i> ‘catch it, grab it’	
<i>he-lai</i> ‘diffuse on (smoke)’	~	<i>ha-lai</i> ‘squeeze out (a thorn)’	

GO OUT OF EXISTENCE (*delete/eat/consume/reduce/devour x*)
he-lák ‘demolish it’ ~ *ha-lák* ‘destroy it’

COME INTO EXISTENCE (*build/design/construct/create x*)
not sure

STATE/PROCESS ~ CAUSATIVE			
<i>he-rumai</i> ‘it is strong’	~	<i>ha-rumai</i> ‘strengthen it’	
<i>he-buida</i> ‘it is becoming short’	~	<i>ha-buida</i> ‘shorten it’	
<i>he-takda</i> ‘it is becoming empty’	~	<i>ha-takda</i> ‘empty it’	
<i>he-peekdi</i> ‘it became near’	~	<i>ha-peekda</i> ‘approach it, put it near’	
<i>he-fokda</i> ‘it is becoming bigger’	~	<i>ha-fokda</i> ‘make it bigger, enlarge it’	
<i>he-poku</i> ‘it hatched’	~	<i>ha-poku</i> ‘crack it, break it’	
<i>he-lika</i> ‘it is stuck’	~	<i>ha-lika</i> ‘stick it in, make it stuck’	
<i>he-fuuisi</i> ‘it exploded’	~	<i>ha-fuuisi</i> ‘explode it, blow it up’	
<i>he-fuunri</i> ‘it piles up’	~	<i>ha-fuunri</i> ‘pile it up’	

<i>he-mong</i>	‘it is dead’ (and many more)	~	<i>ha-mong</i>	‘extinguish it, switch off’
ANIMACY				
<i>he-wik</i>	‘carry it (a thing)’	~	<i>ha-wik</i>	‘carry it (a child)’
OTHER				
<i>he-fanga</i>	‘say it’	~	<i>ha-fanga</i>	‘order him’
<i>he-tuuk</i>	‘measure it’	~	<i>na-tuuk</i>	‘know me’
<i>he-tuk</i>	‘push it out (tobacco)’	~	<i>ha-tuk</i>	‘breastfeed (push breast into child’s mouth)’
<i>he-lúk</i>	‘bend to it’	~	<i>ha-lúk</i>	‘fight him (lit. bend him)’

3.2 Self-benefactives

Self-benefactives describe situations in which the actor benefits from the outcome of the event. There does not seem to be any restriction on the type of verb that can be fitted in this construction. If the verb is already indexed for another argument, the REC prefix will be the outer one. Other paradigms encode other meanings, as shown in (d).

- (4) a. *yoikoi do di ama he-baleei do-takai*
 [turtle PROX 3AGT]_A [person 3.AL-banana]_N 3I.REC-steal.IPFV
 ‘the turtle steals someone’s bananas for himself (only)’ [A-N-REC₁]
- b. *ni mayol moku nu-ha-pai*
 1PL.EXCL.AGT [woman child]_{PAT} 1PL.EXCL.REC-3.PAT-keep
 ‘we nourish our daughter (because we enjoy having her around)’ [A-REC₁-PAT]
- c. *do-da-lalia*
 3I.REC-3I.PAT-laugh.ITER
 ‘he is giggling, lit. laughing for himself’ [REC₁-PAT₁]
- d. *doo-da-lal*
 3I.GOAL-3I.PAT-laugh
 ‘he is smiling at himself (in the mirror)’ [GOAL₁-PAT₁]

The REC seems to cover meanings similar to the Czech/Slavic reflexives, measuring out the effect of the event on the performing participant, whose need, purpose, or intention is (often temporarily) satisfied. It is one of the most predictive prefixes, used even with borrowed words.

<i>do-kupildia</i>	3I.REC-become.round.IPFV	‘it is becoming round (for a moment)’
<i>no-hapusdia</i>	1SG.REC-erase.IPFV	‘I am erasing something (I want to)’
<i>do-anaria</i>	1SG.REC-tell.IPFV	‘she talks to herself’
<i>do-mahia</i>	1SG.REC-hear.IPFV	‘he is (deriving pleasure from) listening’
<i>o-takia</i>	2SG.REC-escape.IPFV	‘you have to escape (to save yourself)’
<i>no-ha-basa</i>	1SG.REC-3PAT-brush.off.IPFV	‘I am brushing him off (to my own satisfaction)’
<i>no-kariang</i>	1SG.REC-work	‘I am working (and determine how long)’

3.3 Other alternations (information structure)

As shown in (5), *mia~mii* ‘take’ can be double-indexed, for both the LOC and GOAL argument, although both arguments can be indexed separately as well.

- (5) a. *na aloba he-mia*
 1SG.AGT thorn 3.LOC-take.IPFV
 ‘I am taking out/removing the thorns’ [A-LOC]
- b. *aloba nu a noo-mii so!*
 thorn SPC 2SG.AGT 1S.GOAL-take.PFV PROX.AD
 ‘those thorns, you relieve me [from them]!’ [N || A-GOAL]
- c. *aloba nu a he-noo-mii so!*
 thorn SPC 2SG.AGT 3.LOC-1SG.GOAL-take.PFV PROX.AD
 ‘those thorns, you should remove [them] from me!’

3.4 Uses of the BEN prefix

The BEN prefix most frequently adds a benefactive argument, indirectly benefiting from the event, as in the following combinations.

<i>ee-ananra</i>	2SG.BEN-tell	‘speak, tell for you’
<i>nii-murui</i>	1PL.EXCL.BEN-plant	‘plant for us’
<i>nee-manei</i>	1SG.BEN-pay	‘pay instead of me, on my behalf’

However, there are other uses, as in (6) where the BEN prefix allows measuring out the duration of an event.

- (6) *Di menit karnuku hee-na-wel-e.*
 3AGT minute ten-one 3.BEN-1SG.PAT-wash-PROG
 ‘He will wash me for ten minutes (already washing but not finished yet).’
 [E14BD.A47]

The duration of an event is marked as an argument here.

4 Summary

Beavers’ types of change are at least partly relevant to the Abui verbs tracking affectedness. Further analysis will benefit from a careful analysis and annotation of aspectual features of the predicates – this will be added in our database.

We will also apply the sense annotation to the entire database, and track for some of the relevant features we picked up above.

5 Current cluster analysis

References

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