‘Patient’ and ‘goal’ marking in Helong

John Bowden
Jakarta Field Station
Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology
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Helong – some background

• Helong is part of Central Malayo-Polynesian subgroup of Austronesian (Blust: 1993, 2009)

• Helong is spoken in western Timor, in the region of Kupang which is the capital of Nusa Tenggara Timur province of Indonesia

• Once the language of former raja of Kupang, but now being squeezed by the spread of Kupang Malay in urban areas
Helong dialects

- **Helong Funai**
  - spoken in region of Kupang city itself. Highly endangered. Kupang Malay is taking over all functions. Only old people still know

- **Helong Bolok**
  - spoken in region of port area outside Kupang city. Threatened. Other local languages also spoken in port area. (Rote, Uab Meto, etc.) Kupang Malay also widely used

- **Helong Pulau**
  - spoken on Semau island off the coast of Kupang. Language use still vibrant. Subdialects from north and south. Southern subdialect more heavily influenced by Rotinese
Semau island
Helong – basic typology

- Not much morphology
- Short vs. long vowels
- Basic AVO word order
- No subject agreement
- Complex (and not yet understood) demonstrative system
- Widespread and productive metathesis
This talk

• Unusual pattern of cross-referencing of goals / undergoers in Helong, but only on a small set of verbs.
  – Includes some intransitive verbs with undergoer subjects
  – Includes cross-referencing of goals of directional verbs
  – Does not involve undergoer / patient of transitive verbs
• ‘Split-S’ argument cross-referencing common in eastern Indonesia
• Metathesis in Helong
• Metathesis prevents any possible suffixation of transitive verbs with overt objects
Basic verbal morphology

• Agent-oriented intransitive

(1) auk mali
aku mali
‘I smiled’

(2) auk mail lahin
aku mali lahin
1s smile yesterday
‘I smiled yesterday’
Transitive verbs

(3) un osa daat in hos ngae pait
   u osa data in hos ngae pait
   3s price broken DEM cook corn again
   ‘She was too lazy to cook corn again’

(4) un kutang ngae la nol uin tua
   un kutang ngae la nol uni tua
   3s mix corn DEM and sugar palm

   le kaa
   le kaa
   IRR eat
   ‘He mixed corn and palm sugar to eat’
Undergoer-oriented intransitives

(5) oen mates sam
    one mate-s sam
    3p die-3s DEM
    ‘They died’

(6) auk leang
    aku lea-ng
    1s fall-1s
    ‘I fell over’
## Forms of undergoer / goal suffixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number / person</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s</td>
<td>-ng</td>
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<tr>
<td>2s</td>
<td>-n</td>
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<td>3s</td>
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<td>1pi</td>
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<td>1pe</td>
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<td>2p</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>3p</td>
<td>-s</td>
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‘Goal-oriented’ motion verbs

(7) mi lakom umam
mi lako-m uma-m
2s go-2s house-2s
‘You went home’

(8) oen maas umas
one maa-s uma-s
3p come-3p house-3p
‘They came home’
More goal-oriented verbs (possessed goal)

(9) auk lakom umam
    aku lako-m uma-m
1s go-2s house-2s
‘I went to your house’

(10) oen leo-leo nol auk lakong Uiasang
    one leo-leo nol aku lako-ng uiasa-ng
3p together with 1s go-1s Uiasa-NG
‘They go together with me to Uiasa’
Ditransitive constructions

• Direct object vs primary object constructions

• DIRECT:  She gave the book to him
            The book was given to him by her

• PRIMARY:  She gave him the book
            He was given the book by her
Heling ditransitives (Primary objects?)

(11) auk belen ui
    aku bele-n ui
    1s give-3s water
    ‘I gave him a drink’

BUT ALSO

(12) auk bel un ui
    aku bele un ui
    1s give 3s water
    ‘I gave him a drink’

(13) un beles ikan nuu
    un bele-s ikan nua
    3s give-3p fish DEM
    ‘She gave them the fish’
Helong ditransitives (Direct object?)

(14) auk  bel  ui  bel  ku
    aku  bele  ui  bele  ku
  1s  give  water  give  2s
‘I gave a drink to you’

(15)  un  bel  ikan  nua  bel  one
    un  bele  ikan  nua  bele  one
  3s  give  fish  DEM  give  3p
‘She gave the fish to them’
Split-S in eastern Indonesia

• Common pattern in eastern Indonesia

• Agency / affectedness
• Animacy
• Active / stative
Helong and split-S systems

- Not a split-S system
- No patient marking with real transitives
- However, some undergoer/goals marked in intransitive and some semitransitive / ditransitive constructions
Metathesis in Helong

• Very widespread in language
• Perhaps has relationship with truncation found in languages like Waima’a
• Not well understood
• Often obligatory in particular contexts
• Sometimes optional in other contexts
• Sometimes not possible
• Mostly seems to be triggered when there is a tight bond of some kind with the element that follows
Metathesis not possible

At end of utterance:

(16) Un tuun ikan
un tunu ikan
3s barbeque fish
‘He barbequed some fish’

(18) Un sail ui laok se blingan na
un sali ui lako se blingan na
3s put water go at shellfish DEM

taung manu
taung manu
for chicken
‘He put water in the shell for chickens’
Metathesis optional??

- Sometimes ‘intradirectional’ verbs may undergo metathesis

(18)  
\[ oen \quad lakos \quad umas \]
\[ \text{one} \quad \text{lako-s} \quad \text{uma-s} \]
\[ 3p \quad \text{go-3p} \quad \text{house-3p} \]
‘They went home’

(19)  
\[ oen \quad laok \quad umas \quad (le) \]
\[ \text{one} \quad \text{lako} \quad \text{uma-s} \quad (le) \]
\[ 3p \quad \text{go} \quad \text{house-3p} \quad (IRR) \]
‘They’re about to leave for home now’
Metathesis obligatory

- Initial subject pronouns

(20)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{auk} & \quad \text{mali} & \quad \text{cf.} & \quad \text{un} & \quad \text{meet aku} \\
\text{aku} & \quad \text{mali} & \quad \text{un} & \quad \text{mete aku} \\
1s & \quad \text{smile} & \quad 3s & \quad \text{see} & \quad 1s \\
\text{‘I smiled’} & \quad & \text{‘she saw me’} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(21)  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{oen} & \quad \text{mali} & \quad \text{cf.} & \quad \text{auk} & \quad \text{meet one} \\
\text{one} & \quad \text{mali} & \quad \text{aku} & \quad \text{mete one} \\
3p & \quad \text{smile} & \quad 1s & \quad \text{see} & \quad 3p \\
\text{‘They smiled’} & \quad & \text{‘I saw them’} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Metathesis obligatory

• Transitive verbs followed by overt objects

(22) un man huu teel hadut ta
un man huu tele hadut ta
3s who blow kill lamp DEM
‘He blows out the lamp’

(23) laok muid una ta un man tan
lako mudi una ta un man tan
go follow 3s because 3s who know
lalan na
lalan na
road DEM
‘Go follow her because she knows the way’
Emergence of Helong system of marking patients / goals?

MAYBE

• Once a more regular split-S system
  – All undergoers marked by suffixes

• Development of metathesis blocks suffixation in certain contexts, including of transitive verbs with following objects

• Still needs more exploration