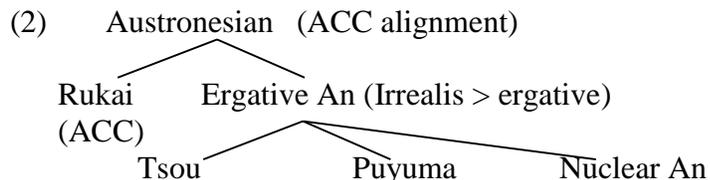# Reconstructing Proto-Austronesian Alignment
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In this presentation, I propose a reconstruction of Proto-Austronesian (PAn) alignment, claiming specifically that PAn was an accusative language. This proposal stands in contrast to the mainstream view that PAn was an ergative language on the basis of the fact that this alignment is found in nearly all of the conservative languages in Taiwan and the Philippines. For example, Ross (2009) identifies four first-order subgroups, three of which are uncontroversially reconstructed as ergative. The principle of "majority rule" then prompts him to reconstruct PAn as ergative, too.

(1)   Proto-Austronesian (ERG alignment)

Rukai	Tsou	Puyuma	Nuclear An
(ACC)	(ERG)	(ERG)	(ERG)
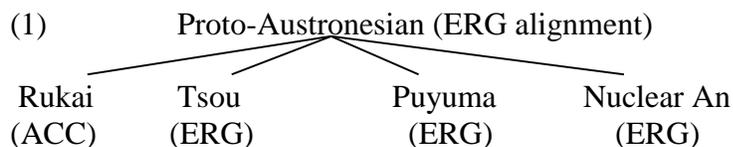
However, Rukai is highly problematic for Ross' reconstruction, because all dialects of modern Rukai have accusative alignment and also exhibit no trace of the verbal morphology reconstructed by Ross as marking ergative clause types in PAn, which forces Ross to merely stipulate the wholesale loss of all morphology associated with ergative alignment attributed to PAn. In earlier work (Aldridge 2015, 2016), I proposed instead that PAn had accusative alignment (like Rukai) and further proposed that ergative alignment was first innovated in a language I termed Proto-Ergative Austronesian. The evidence for the innovation comes from verbal morphology in Puyuma, which shows a clear diachronic connection between ergativity and irrealis mood. I proposed that irrealis mood is a natural syntactic environment for nominative objects and non-nominative subjects. Hence, this shift in alignment can be captured in terms of a natural syntactic change.

(2)   Austronesian   (ACC alignment)

   Rukai   Ergative An (Irrealis > ergative)
   (ACC)
            Tsou   Puyuma   Nuclear An

The current presentation offers new evidence for reconstructing PAn with accusative alignment. Part of this evidence comes from a restriction on A'-movement found widely distributed across the Austronesian family and attributed uncontroversially to PAn. In languages with this restriction, only nominative or absolutive DPs are able to undergo A'-movement operations. In the ergative language Tsou, for example, an object in a transitive clause can become the head of a relative clause, as in (3b), but the ergative external argument cannot, as shown in (3c).

(3)   a.   i-ta   teaph-**a**   to   kexpx   ta   pasuya   'e   cxyx
           TR-3SG   put.into-TR   OBL   backpack ERG   PN   ABS   lunch.box
           'Pasuya put the lunch box into his backpack.'   (Chang 2011: 281-2)
      b.   cuma   na   i-he   papas-**a**
           what   ABS   TR-3PL   cut-TR
           Lit. 'What are the things they are cutting?'   (Chang 2011: 301-2)
           'What are they cutting?'

    c. *sia   na   i-he   papas-**a**   'e   evi
       who ABS   TR-3PL cut-TR   ABS   tree
       Intended for 'Who all are cutting the wood?'

I show that the extraction restriction can receive a uniform account if the position for nominative/absolutive case valuation is [Spec, CP] rather than [Spec, TP]. In other words, these languages do not have C-T Inheritance in the sense of Chomsky (2008). Consequently, because the landing site for A'-movement operations like relativization and *wh*-movement is also the position for valuing nominative/absolutive case, only the DP needing to value this case can undergo extraction. I also reconstruct the lack of C-T Inheritance to PAn.

Unsurprising, all conservative Austronesian languages have the extraction restriction, including accusative Rukai. The subject can move freely in a verbal clause since it values nominative case, as shown in (4b). However, in order to extract an internal argument over a subject, the clause must be nominalized, as in (4c). This is also accounted for on my proposal of the extraction restriction. Nominalization in an accusative language with the extraction restriction allows an object to move over a subject, since in this environment, the subject has genitive case rather than nominative, leaving [Spec, CP] free for another DP to move to.

(4)   a. luða   **ay**-kɨla   ku   tina=li   (Finite root clause with tense marking)
       tomorrow FUT-come NOM   mother=1.SG.GEN
       'My mom will come tomorrow.'
    b. [kuaDa   **ay**-suwasuwaw] ka   muka-baru-barua
       DEM   FUT-clean   TOP   girl   (Finite RC with tense marking)
       'The one who will clean is the girl.'
    c. w-aga=su   sa   aga   sa   [**a-kani-ani**=ta   ki maum]
       PAST-cook=2.SG INDEF food   INDEF IMPRV-eat-NMLZ=1.PL.INC P night
       'Did you cook dinner (the food that we will eat tonight)?'

The evidence in favor of reconstructing PAn as accusative comes from Puyuma. Puyuma is an ergative language, but it also requires nominalization for object relativization. This would be surprising if ergative alignment in Puyuma were inherited from PAn, as proposed by Ross (2009), since ergative languages generally allow direct movement of absolutive objects over ergative subjects in verbal contexts, as seen in (3b) for Tsou. On the other hand, if PAn is reconstructed as accusative, as I propose, then the presence of nominalized object relative clauses in the relatively conservation language Puyuma receives a natural explanation. This strategy for object extraction was necessary in accusative PAn, as discussed above for Rukai. It can then be viewed as a retention in Puyuma. The nominalization strategy was subsequently lost in other ergative Austronesian languages like Tsou.

Selected references
Aldridge, Edith. 2015. A Minimalist Approach to the Emergence of Ergativity in Austronesian Languages. *Linguistics Vanguard* 1.1: 313–326.
Ross, Malcolm. 2009. "Proto Austronesian verbal morphology: A reappraisal." In K. Alexander Adelaar & Andrew Pauley (eds.), *Austronesian historical linguistics and culture history: A festschrift for Robert Blust* (Pacific Linguistics 601). Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 295-326.