

**SPLIT ERGATIVITY IN SIANE: A STUDY IN MARKEDNESS**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

The use of various kinds of case-marking systems in language, and the correlation of those systems with different syntactic processes in the languages in which they occur, has received increasing attention in the literature over the past decade. Of particular interest has been the discussion centered around the differing classifications of the core arguments of predicates, i.e. ergative/absolutive vs. nominative/accusative, which may be observed in languages which utilize morphological case-marking systems.

In a classic article, Dixon (1979) has pointed out a number of ways in which different languages utilize basically ergative/absolutive vs. basically nominative/accusative systems, and those which mix or split the case-marking devices between ergative and accusative patterns. His basic thesis is "that A (roughly: underlying transitive subject), O (underlying transitive object), and S (underlying intransitive subject) are universal syntactic-semantic primitives" (p.60) rather than the category 'subject', and he holds that "'Subject' as a universal category, which can be valid only at the level of deep structure, involves a grouping of A and S" (p.60). Morphological case-marking systems, verbal agreement systems, and/or various syntactic processes in a given language may treat S and O alike and mark A as a separate category (ergative/absolutive), or may treat S and A alike and mark O uniquely (nominative/accusative).

The different marking systems in any given language may utilize different groupings, and specific marking, in particular the ergative case-marker, may be used to mark a transitive agent

only under certain specifiable circumstances, or may be used to mark not only A, but in specific statable instances may also mark other NP arguments, resulting in what has been called 'split ergativity'. Dixon (1979) states that "An exhaustive examination of the literature suggests that all languages which have been described as ergative, at the morphological level, are in fact 'split ergative'" (p.64).

DeLancey (1981:627) defines a split ergative (SE) language as "one in which some transitive clauses, but not all, are ergative constructions." He defines an ergative construction as "a transitive clause in which a special case-form or adposition marks the semantic agent, or verb-agreement is with patient in preference to agent." According to these criteria, Siane<sup>1</sup> is a split ergative language. While, like many languages of Papua New Guinea, Siane has a subject-object verb-agreement system which follows a nominative/accusative pattern rather than ergative/absolutive, it also has an intricate case-marking system which bears certain resemblances to an ergative/absolutive pattern. In this paper we will examine the relevant case-marking clitics in Siane, and will show how these clitics play a vital role not only in the marking of clause and sentence constituents, but also in the overall focal structure of Siane discourse.

DeLancey points out that in an SE language "ergative case-marking contrasts not only with case-markers indicating other semantic roles, but also with the zero-marking which occurs with some agents." He goes on to underline the traditional claim "that these represent two distinct contrasts, and thus that ergative case in an SE language... carries two levels of information: the fact that it is present (i.e. its contrast with zero) carries one message, and its identity (i.e. ergative as opposed to accusative or some other marking) carries another" (p.630, parentheses his).

Careful study of the use of the ergative and other relevant clitics in Siane provides clear confirmation of these claims. In

section 2 of this paper we will examine the contrasts between the use of the ergative clitic, the focal given clitic, and the instrumental clitic in marking similar clause and sentence constituents in Siane. In section 3, the contrast between the presence vs. absence of the ergative clitic will be discussed, with special attention given to the role which the ergative clitic plays in marking viewpoint in Siane discourse structure.

## 2. CLAUSE AND SENTENCE FUNCTIONS OF THE ERGATIVE vs. OTHER CLITICS

The animate agentive constituent of a transitive clause in Siane may be marked either by the ergative clitic -kafo 'singular' / -te 'plural', or by the focal given clitic -mo<sup>2</sup>, depending upon specific choices in focus which the speaker/writer makes. Either of these two clitics may also, under certain circumstances, be used to mark the NP referring to an inanimate entity or body part as instrument/effector, or to an inanimate entity or topic about which the speaker/writer wishes to comment and/or give his evaluation. The instrument-marking clitic -dunu<sup>3</sup> is the normally expected case-marker for inanimate instrument/effector NP's. Reasons for the choice of one of these three clitics over the others in any given situation will be given throughout the rest of this section of the paper.

In its agentive role, the ergative clitic consistently marks the NP which is the referent of the subject agreement suffix in the verb, and the obligatorily un-case-marked absolutive NP is the referent of the object agreement prefix on those verbs which are prefixed for object agreement.

In its topicalizing role, the ergative clitic is used to mark the NP about which the speaker plans to make a comment, and the subject agreement suffix in the comment predicate is usually third person singular, corresponding to the normally inanimate and generic nature of the referent of the NP marked with the ergative clitic.

When the ergative clitic is used to mark the NP referring to an inanimate instrument/effector, however, the subject suffix agreement in the verb often corresponds to the agent(s) using the instrument rather than to the ergative case-marked instrument/effector. In the cases where the ergative case-marked instrument is also marked in the verb as syntactic subject, there is evidence that either a deliberate or a subconscious attempt is being made on the part of the speaker/writer to move blame or responsibility away from the agent(s) using the instrument. When the instrumental clitic -dunu is used, subject agreement in the verb is consistently with the agent(s) using the instrument, never with the instrumental case-marked constituent.

### 2.1 Use of Ergative vs. Focal Given Clitic to Mark Agent

Animate agentive noun phrases in transitive clauses in Siane may be inflected either with the ergative clitic or with the focal given clitic when that participant has already been introduced into the discourse or is presupposed in the script. When an animate agentive participant is first introduced into a Siane discourse, it is normally unmarked by any case-marking, deictic or definitive clitic(s).<sup>4</sup> Thereafter, if the speaker wishes to focus the hearer's attention primarily on an agent qua agent, the ergative clitic -kafo 'singular' / -te 'plural' is used to mark the agentive NP. If the speaker wishes to focus attention not only on the agent but also, and primarily, on the effect of the action perpetrated by that agent, the focal given clitic -mo is encliticized to the agentive NP.

#### 2.1.1 The Ergative Clitic Used to Mark Agent

When an agentive NP is marked with the ergative clitic -kafo 'singular' / -te 'plural', the referent participant must be animate, responsible and the initiator and controller of a controlled action. In its agentive-marking function, the ergative clitic is

used to draw attention to the marked participant(s) as agent(s) per se, i.e. to raise them in saliency or hearer/reader awareness. The agentive use of the ergative clitic is illustrated in the examples in (1)-(3), in each of which the ergative-marked agentive NP is underlined.<sup>50</sup>

Example (1) is taken from a legend telling why the honey-eater has a red head and the cassowary a red throat. In the span of text immediately preceding the example, the focus is on the anger and actions of the honey-eater, whose sweet potato the cassowary had deceitfully stolen. The ergative clitic is used to raise the other participant in saliency at this point.

- (1) ...óloná -káfó yo -lûfá kéfá ólu -∅ -tó  
 cassowary erg fire brand stick hold ss co  
∅ -ófó-∅ -tó...  
 him hit ss co

'...the cassowary took a fire-brand and hit him and...'

Examples (2a) and (2b) are both taken from a narrative report of an argument over the ownership of some tobacco plants, which develops into a fight between the narrator and the husband of the other protagonist. In the span of text immediately preceding example (2a), the narrator has been describing his own thoughts about why he feels he owns the plants, and the ergative clitic is used to bring the irate husband, who makes a contrastive assertion, into sharper focus.

- (2a) ...ido Sógání-káfó ya Náwa néta -lá nê -e,  
 and Sogani erg there Nawa thing her exist ind  
ló -∅ -tó...  
 say ss co

'...and Sogani said, "It belongs to Nawa," and...'

During the course of the ensuing fight, the narrator describes in some detail the attempted intervention of his elderly mother, and then returns to details of the fight, using the ergative clitic with the first person pronoun, shown in example (2b), to draw the hearers' attention to his own participation, now in the spotlight.

(2b) ...ido námó-kafo Sógání ∅ -ófó ít -óne-to...  
 and I erg Sogani him hit aug 1s co

'...and I really hit Sogani, and...'

Example (3) is taken from a legend in which a spirit boy deceives an old couple. In the span of text immediately prior to this example, the boy is described as camouflaging himself with mud and concealing himself near where the old couple plan to hunt frogs. The ergative clitic -te on the NP identifying the old couple indicates a change in focus to a different set of participants.

(3) Wé kílófó-té wéná kílófó-té -má -té<sup>6</sup> féiyá  
 man old and woman old and det erg:p torch  
ki -∅ -tí...  
 light ss co:pf

'The old man and the old woman lit torches and...'

### 2.1.2 The Focal Given Clitic Used to Mark Agent

The use of the focal given clitic -mo to inflect the NP referring to an animate agentive participant of a transitive clause, whilst giving some prominence to the agent, places the primary focus on the effect of the action perpetrated by that agent rather than on the agent per se. In contrast to the ergative clitic, the focal given clitic in its agentive-marking function is used only with noun phrases referring to common nouns, never with a proper noun, nor with a pronoun unless that pronoun is qualified by use in an appositional NP. (Compare example (6) below with example (2b).)

Examples (4)-(6) contrast with the examples given in (1)-(3) in that in all of the examples in (1)-(3), the primary focus is on the marked participant as agent, whereas in all the examples in (4)-(6), the primary focus is on the effect of the action perpetrated by the marked participant.

Example (4) is taken from a written legend about a beautiful girl who had many suitors, and in the extract shown in the example, the girl's response, (or rather lack of response,) is described. The NP referring to the girl is set off and given a slightly

sharper focus by following it with the demonstrative ya 'there', and the focal given clitic is likewise raised in focus by being encliticized to the demonstrative rather than directly to the NP, turning the reader's attention more sharply to the result of her actions, namely the discouragement of the suitors, so that they continually kept going and coming.

- (4) ...nomlí-wá ya -mo ka -ka ló -g -imí -Ø -tó  
 girl this there fg talk redup speak them give ss co  
kíya -aya ó g -im -ám -ai-to ú -Ø -tí -utí  
 smile redup do them give neg 3s co go ss co:pf redup  
 (o) -a -tó...  
 come 3p co

'...this (aforementioned) girl neither talked to them nor smiled at them, and they continually went and came and...'

Example (5), from the same legend as example (1), describes part of the argument which ensued following the honey-eater's discovery of the cassowary's deceitful actions. The author's use of the focal given clitic to mark the NP referring to the cassowary secondarily marks a change of speech act participant, but primarily directs the readers' attention to the effect of the sarcastic self-defence of the cassowary, namely the honey-eater's fierce anger (and subsequent seizing of a fire-brand and burning the cassowary's throat).

- (5) ...ólóná -má -mó kámo nomílípá kéfola mín -o -mo  
 cassowary def fg you child small remain 1s fg  
kô -ne wi -n -ágóló l -ábe(-an-fe), l -í -to  
 nose my wear fut intnt say 2s int do/say 3s co  
 ya...  
 there  
wáfódole -ma sí(y) -a -u -ka kálá-kala  
 honey:eater def intestines his in place hot redup  
 l -í -to...  
 do 3s co

'...the cassowary said, "Are you speaking intending to deceive me, (like) my being a little child?" and the honey-eater became very angry and...'

Example (6), from a sermon in a church service, illustrates the agentive-marking use of the focal given clitic as a teaching

device. The pastor, predicting dire consequences in the entire community if people continued in their present ways, linked church leaders and government leaders together as trying to improve community attitudes and actions, and tactfully links himself with those who respond in talk but not in deed. In the extract given in the example, the focal given clitic, encliticized to the demonstrative, is used to mark the appositional NP describing the leaders who call for action, directing the hearers' attention from those leaders to the expected response, which is then found to be negated.

- (6) ...onémá lámo kíyaba we ya -mo<sup>7</sup> l -óge-tó  
 today we care for men there fg say 1p co  
 (o) -én -un-ê, ló -Ø -tó l -óní-má né -fá  
 do/be fut 1p ind say ss co say 1p def exist cx  
 (o) -ám -a -na -ko...  
 do/be neg 2/3p intns only(since)

'...today, we leaders speak and it's (a fact) that we (different subject referent) respond, saying, "We'll do (it)", but because/since you/they don't do (it)...'

## 2.2 Use of Ergative vs. Focal Given vs. Instrumental Clitic to Mark Effector

### 2.2.1 The Ergative Clitic Used to Mark Effector

The ergative clitic -kafo is used to inflect an NP referring to a non-animate instrument or body part when the speaker/writer chooses to focus on the instrument as effector, thus backgrounding the animate agents using the instrument.

Example (7) is taken from a modern folktale in which one of the turning points in the story is the fact that it was the wallaby and opossum's car that hit the lubiya bird's son; thus the car as effector/instrument is marked with the ergative clitic. At this point in the story the lubiya's son as patient or undergoer is also given high prominence by being left dislocated and thus marked as the theme of the ensuing span of discourse.

- (7) Nêmá lúbiyá ná -la -fo kóbóni -te kêfá  
 bird type son his kin wallaby and opossum  
duwáná-té kálf-ni -kafo ∅ -óf -ái-tó...  
 type and car their erg him hit 3s co

'The lubiya bird's son, it was the wallaby and duwana opossum's car that hit him and...'

Example (8) is taken from an expository text describing how people in other countries build their houses. The focus is on the materials used in the building rather than on the action of building or on the agents using the materials; thus the ergative clitic is suffixed directly to the NP indicating the materials in each predication. In this example the patient or undergoer NP 'their house walls' is not only left dislocated but also marked with the demonstrative ya, giving it additional force as the topic of the ensuing discourse span.

- (8) Númú -ní láwe ya yá fóik -a -mó-káfó  
 house their walls there tree split 3p fg erg  
∅ -óf -â -e. Ido kápá -káfó ku -∅ -tí  
 3s hit 3p ind and corrugated:iron erg build ss co:pf  
ido kámená má ya páláni-kafo l -â -e.  
 and time indef there plank erg do 3p ind

'Their house walls, it's with logs they have split that they nail them. And it's with corrugated iron that they build, and sometimes it's with milled timber that they do it.'

In example (7) above, there could be some ambiguity as to whether the third person singular subject co-referenced in the verb has as referent a) the ergative-marked car itself, b) the unspecified driver of the car, or c) one of the two specified owners of the car. The wider context of the story seems to indicate that in this case it is the car itself as inanimate instrument-effector which is also the syntactic subject of the verb, thus backgrounding the animate agent driver and owners of the car even more, with the effect of lessening their responsibility and culpability in the accident. In example (8), the generic third person plural users of the materials, although not specified in an overt NP in either sentence, are clearly referenced in the verbs as subject, not the ergative-marked materials. (In Siane, all

inanimate entities are referenced in the verb as singular, as shown in the object verbal prefix co-reference to 'house walls' in the final verb of the first sentence of example (8).) In example (9) below, which shows the ergative clitic used to inflect a body part as effector, it is again clear that the syntactic subject of the sentence, co-referenced in the verb by the first person plural suffix although not specified in an overt NP, is different from the ergative-marked instrument-effector NP.

- (9) Láfá ló-Ø -tó kíyá-de -kafo éif -on-ê.  
 line:up do ss co legs our erg extinguish 1p ind

'We lined up and it was (by stamping) with our feet that we extinguished (it) (the fire).'

### 2.2.2 The Focal Given Clitic Used to Mark Effector

When the focal given clitic -mo is used to inflect an NP referring to an inanimate instrument-effector, the primary focus is again on the effect of the action rather than on the instrument itself.

When an instrumental NP is marked with the focal given clitic, it is understood that that instrument is either given information or that it is presupposed in the script. In many cases where it is used, there is no animate actor manipulating the instrument, nor is any deliberate intention of the effect of the action implied. The overall semantic flavour of a clause in Siane in which an NP is marked with the focal given clitic -mo may more often be indicated in an English gloss by a passive rather than by an active construction. Examples (10a) and (10b) show the focal given clitic used to inflect the NP referring to natural elements as inanimate effectors of an action.

- (10a) ...kô -lá -wé -lá yo -mó ló -Ø -tó...  
 nose his mouth his fire fg burn ss co

'...his face was burned by fire and...'

- (10b) ...yo -kílá -má -mó ya kófó mínó -t -ai-to...  
 fire fence def fg there hit remain prf 3s co

'...(he) kept being smitten by the smoke and...'

Example (11) is taken from the same legend as example (3), in which a boy disguises himself with mud in order to attack an old couple. The span of text immediately prior to example (11) relates how the old couple set out to go hunting for frogs. In example (11), the boy as actor is the subject of every verb in the sentence, co-referenced as such by the zero person-number suffix which indicates same subject referent on every verb up to the last, which is overtly marked for third person singular, co-referencing the boy. The focal given clitic -mo, however, is used to inflect the NP referring to the mud, indicating that it is the effect of the mud, namely the camouflaging of the boy, that the author wishes to focus on, rather than on the boy as agent, the mud itself, or the action of his spreading it over his body. This example is exceptional in that there is an animate agent specified and the effect created by the NP marked with -mo is deliberate on the part of that agent; nevertheless, it is neither the agent nor the material used by him that is in primary focus, but rather the effect of his action, as indicated both by the use of the focal given clitic marking the NP 'mud' rather than the ergative clitic marking either the boy or the mud, and by the presence of the emphasis-adding lexical devices módá 'enough' and the augmentative verb used in serial structure with the verb falúkú 'hide (camouflage)' in the final clause(s).

- (11) ...kípa-wá -má áyá -ida -na ó -Ø -tó ya  
 boy this def exactly same intns do ss co there

kábá-ma -mo lúfúwá-afuwa wi -Ø -tó witó  
 mud def fg mark redup wear ss co redup

úká -na -lo-ma wi -Ø -tó... ú -Ø -tó módá  
 body his at def wear ss co... go ss co enough

falúkú  
 hide

ító mín -ai(y)-e.  
 aug stay 3s ind

'...this boy in just the same way went, having (first) made designs with the mud all over his body, and (its effect was that) he was completely camouflaged.'

### 2.2.3 The Instrumental Clitic Used to Mark Effector

The use of the instrumental clitic -dunu indicates the bodily manipulation of an instrument, tool, weapon or body part by an animate being in purposeful, controlled action to do something to someone or something else. In other words, marking an inanimate effector NP with the instrumental clitic -dunu indicates that the referent of that NP is controlled by a higher-ranking animate agent to accomplish a specific purpose directed toward some animate or inanimate patient or goal/location which also out-ranks the instrument.

Example (12) is taken from a written expository text explaining the habits and description of bats, and in this extract the writer describes how the female bat carries her young. In this example, the marked instrument of the matrix sentence is outranked not only by the animate subject-agent and the patient, but also by the location-goal, as shown not only by the case-marking, but also by the word order and the fact that the location-goal NP is set off by the demonstrative ya and the instrument-effector NP is not.

- (12) Ido mómola kéde-Ø -tó otó móin -ami(-ai-mo)  
 and young bear ss co take travel 3s fg  
ámí -ná -ló ya we -la -dunu ógofú kíkí  
 breast her at there mouth its inst cover tight  
ló ít -ai-to ya bú ló-Ø -tó móin -ami(-ai-mo)  
 do aug 3s co there fly do ss co travel 3s fg  
ya má olú -mó wí(y)-ám -ai(y)-e.  
 there indef hold fg wear neg 3s ind

And she who bears young and takes (them) travelling, it (each one) really holds on tightly at her breast with its mouth, and as she goes flying around, not one falls down.

In example (13), the marked instrumental NP is outranked both by the location-marked agent NP and by the unspecified patient which is presupposed in the script, indicated by the fact that both agent and patient are co-referenced in the verb as subject and object by suffixation and prefixation respectively, while the instrument is not.

- (13) Wénená má -lé-ká ya ile -kimf-dúnú  
 people indef at place there arrow bow inst  
∅ -óf -â -e.  
 3s hit 3p ind

'Some people (i.e. people located in some places) hunt with bows and arrows.'

Example (14) shows an instrumental NP as a tail, tag or 'afterthought'. In this example the object, which in any case out-ranks the instrument, is given additional emphasis by the use of an appositional NP to highlight what it is that she sees. In order to show that the strongly out-ranked instrument also warranted some focus, the speaker moved the instrumental constituent to post-verbal position, which in Siane is highly marked and significant.

- (14) Ébá láló netá ∅ -éy -o(w)-ê. Ómú -ne-dunu.  
 place good thing it see 1s ind eyes my inst

'I see a place, a good thing. With my eyes.'

A more usual and therefore less highly marked way of setting off one clause constituent from another and giving it additional focus in Siane is to follow that constituent with the demonstrative ya 'there', as was noted in examples(4), (8) and (12), and which may be observed in most of the examples in the paper. The demonstrative may follow the entire construction, including any and all clitics, or, if a speaker desires to indicate extra focus on the function(s) denoted by a specific clitic or combination of clitics, they may be encliticized to the demonstrative.

Because the wielder of an instrument usually manipulates it with a body part if the instrument is not itself a body part, and there is thus a close physiological as well as psychological relationship between the instrument and its operator, the instrumental clitic is usually encliticized directly to the instrumental NP. Since the instrumental constituent is normally comparatively low in focus, it is rarely marked with the demonstrative ya. However, on the rare occasions when the instrumental constituent comprises an embedded relative clause,

raising it both in focus and in specificity, it is often followed by the demonstrative, to which the instrumental clitic is suffixed rather than suffixing it directly to the nominalized verb, as shown in example (15).

- (15) Wé -má Táfiyó lúna-la ól -ami(-ai-mo) ya -dunu  
 man def name axe his hold 3s fg there inst  
yá fúk-ai(y)-e.  
 tree cut 3s ind

`The man cut down the tree with Tafiyo's  
 axe that he had.'

Wierzbicka (1980:77) notes "the tendency of the instrumental objects to be indefinite." This is usually the case in Siane, except when the instrument is a body part which is inalienably possessed, as in examples (12) and (14), or when a given instrument is re-introduced later in a discourse and conforms to the tendency for given items to be encliticized with the definitive -ma, as shown in example (16), taken from a procedural text describing the making of a carved wooden cooking drum.

- (16) ...máne-na -lo lúná-dunu kéteyá méle-Ø -tí -tí  
 head its at axe inst depression put ss co:pf redup  
ya úwa -Ø -tí -tí ena lúná-ma -dunu  
 there strip:bark ss co:pf redup and:then axe def inst  
fâlá ó -Ø -tí...  
 chisel do ss co:pf

`...having hollowed out its top with an (adze-type) axe, and having stripped off the bark, they then chisel out (the inside of the drum) with the axe, and...

Wierzbicka further notes (1980:78) that this indefiniteness tendency is due to the fact that the speaker is mentioning the instrumental case-marked object "in order to explain fully what happened to the object referred to by the direct object..., not in order to enable the addressee to think of that substance as of a separate entity involved in the action." In other words, the use of the instrumental case "amounts to... 'object demotion'" (p.78). We have already noted several ways in which this is shown to be true in Siane. We reiterate them here:

1. NP's marked with the instrumental clitic normally occur in immediate pre-verbal position; i.e. last in order, following all other NP constituents of a clause.
2. Instrumental NP's are rarely marked with the saliency-raising demonstrative ya 'there'.
3. Apart from the exceptions noted in the preceding paragraph, and the rare occurrence of an embedded relative clause as an instrumental constituent, instrumental NP's tend to be indefinite.
4. Only A and S (in Dixon's terms) NP's in Siane are consistently cross-referenced in the verb by suffixation. Certain verbs have an obligatory prefix which cross-references the O (patient or recipient, depending on the verb) NP. NP's marked with the instrumental clitic are never cross-referenced in the verb.

### 2.3 Use of Ergative vs. Focal Given Clitic to Mark Speaker's Evaluation

In every case in which either the ergative clitic or the focal given clitic is used to mark an NP about which a Siane speaker wishes to make a comment and/or give his evaluation, the NP is followed by the demonstrative ya, thus raising it in focus or saliency. The clitic is then suffixed to the demonstrative, as shown in examples (17)-(20).

If the marked NP comprises an embedded relative clause, the verb of that clause may be either transitive or intransitive, active or stative. The verb of the matrix sentence is usually stative; however, we have found a few examples of active intransitive verbs (see example 17b) and even, in rare instances, transitive verbs (see example 20).

#### 2.3.1 The Ergative Clitic Used to Mark Speaker's Evaluation

The ergative clitic -kafo is used to mark an inanimate NP to which a speaker/writer wishes to direct specific attention in order to

give a comment and/or an evaluation. In such usage only the singular form of the ergative clitic is used.

This function of the ergative clitic is often found in behavioural discourse. The examples in (17) are all taken from behavioural discourse texts: (17a) from a written hortatory message and (17b) and (17c) from an oral sermon in a church service.

- (17a) Fíná lówa ya- kafo nós-ám -ai(y)-e.  
fight warfare there erg bad neg 3s ind

`Fighting is bad!'

- (17b) Kólf kíki -te ya -kafo (o) -í -do ú -Ø -tó  
perceive tight our there erg be/do 3s at go ss co

ú kôpá ám -ú -n -ai(y)-e.  
go ruin neg go fut 3s ind

`At our faith's existing, it will go on and not go to ruination/nought.'

- (17c) ...lóno-te ya ólu -n -ú -mó ya -kafo  
work our there hold fut 1p fg there erg

fe -fe l -en -ámí(-ai-mo) nê -e.  
straight redup do fut 3s fg exist ind

`...it's (a fact) that our doing our work/the work we will do will be straight/all right (the right thing to do).'

### 2.3.2 The Focal Given Clitic Used to Mark Speaker's Evaluation

When the focal given clitic -mo is used to inflect an inanimate NP about which the speaker/writer wishes to express a comment or evaluation, attention is directed from the marked NP and toward the author's comment or evaluation.

Example (18) is taken from the same text as the examples in (2), a report of a fight between two men, during which the elderly mother of one of the men was accidentally knocked down. In the subsequent village court discussion, one of the adjudicators is reported as giving his evaluation of the situation, using the focal given clitic rather than the ergative to mark a nominalized clause, indicating that the action of pushing her over, while bad in its effect, is not the primary focus since it was uncontrolled and non-intentional.

(18) ...Ø -itúf-ámí(-ai-mo) ya -mo nós-ám -ai(y)-e.  
 her push 2d fg there fg bad neg 3s ind

'...given that you two pushed her over, it's not good.'

The use of the focal given clitic to mark speaker's evaluation may in certain contexts imply at the same time a cause-effect or reason-result relationship between the marked NP and the stated comment or evaluation, with the primary focus on the effect or result, rather than on the cause or reason. Example (19) is taken from a letter in which the writer expressed his complaint that he wasn't properly paid for a job he claimed he undertook. The marked NP, again a nominalized clause, reflects a cause-effect relationship implied between that clause and the following one, with the reader's attention specifically directed from the cause to the result by the use of the focal given clitic, with the implication that the recipient of the letter, while possibly not entirely to blame for the cause, will certainly want to do something to allay the effect.

(19) ...meina ól -ám -o -mo ya -mo ká -né kéiná  
 payment hold neg 1s fg there fg ear my heavy

(o) -í(y)-e.  
 be/do 3s ind

'...given that I didn't receive payment, my thoughts are heavy.'

Example (20), taken from an expository text explaining the use of outriggers in canoe building, demonstrates that the focal given clitic may be used in combination with the verbal causative suffix complex to give added focus to the cause-effect relationship between two clauses, reflecting the speaker's viewpoint or evaluation of the importance of that relationship. The use of the verbal causative suffix complex -na 'intns' -ko 'only' is used in Siane only to express a strong cause-effect relationship between two clauses, with considerable focus on the cause. A weak cause-effect relationship between two clauses may be implied in some contexts by the use of a simple coordinate suffix on the verb of the first clause, in which case neither cause nor effect is

given specific emphasis. In example (20), the use of the causative suffix complex gives sharp focus to the first clause, the cause, while the use of the focal given clitic suffixed to the demonstrative immediately following that clause then directs the reader's attention strongly to the effect of that cause, a useful didactic tool in expository discourse.

- (20) Néta -wa ya yá kéiná (o)-í -mo-ma  
 thing this there tree heavy be 3s fg def  
né -ná -ko ya -mo oíyó ya  
 exist intns only(since) there fg stick there  
ólu -ò -tí olú kíkí l -â -e.  
 hold ss co:pf hold tightly do 3p ind

'Since it's (a) given (fact) that this (aforementioned) thing is a heavy tree, they take sticks and make it secure.'

#### 2.4 Summary

In section 2. of this paper we have discussed the three main uses to which Siane speakers put the ergative clitic -kafo, to mark the NP referring to 1) an animate agentive participant in a clause, 2) a non-animate instrument or body part effector, or 3) a topic about which a speaker or writer wishes to make a comment or give his evaluation. In each case, the use of the ergative clitic indicates that the speaker/writer wishes to focus attention directly on the referent of the NP it inflects, raising it in hearer/reader saliency, as contrasted with the use of the focal given clitic -mo in each of those situations, indicating a direction of focus going from the referent of that NP as a given, to the result of 1) the action of the agent, 2) the use of the instrument effector, or 3) the comment or evaluation of the topic so marked, respectively.

With the animate agentive use or the topicalizing use of either clitic, the referent of the NP is consistently cross-referenced in the verb as grammatical subject; with the instrument-effector use, it may be so cross-referenced, but if there is an animate agent overtly stated or contextually understood

or implied as using the instrument, that agent is normally cross-referenced in the predicate as grammatical subject instead.

Any constituent of any clause or sentence in Siane may be given a slightly sharper focus or saliency by following it with the demonstrative ya 'there'. When the ergative or focal given clitics are used with an NP, the clitic may occur on the final word of the NP, preceding the demonstrative, or may be encliticized to the demonstrative itself, thus raising the focus of the clitic in its use still more.

A Siane speaker/writer may choose yet a third clitic to mark a non-animate instrument-effector NP, the instrumental clitic -dunu. The use of this clitic indicates a very low focus on the NP so marked: it is never cross-referenced in the verb as grammatical subject, rarely marked with the demonstrative ya 'there', and usually occurs last in order of NP arguments, in immediate pre-verbal position.

### 3. DISCOURSE FUNCTION OF ERGATIVE MARKING

Thus far in the paper we have been examining the use of the ergative clitic in contrast with other clitics within Siane clauses/sentences, with only minor reference to the wider context in which those predications occur. In this section we will discuss the function of ergative marking over the scope of the entire discourse.

A study of numerous Siane texts in both written and oral style shows that not all specified agentive NP's in transitive clauses are case marked. In fact, in many Siane texts over half of the agentive subject NP's are non-case marked. It is also significant that considerably more use is made of the ergative than of the focal given clitic, in those NP's which are marked.

Chart 1 presents a summary of the agentive subject marking and non-marking in ten different texts from the four main discourse types in Siane. (For comparative purposes, the effector and

topicality uses of the clitics discussed in section 2 are also included on the chart.) The narrative and behavioural discourse types, which are agent-oriented texts, show significantly more use of the ergative marking than do expository and procedural texts, which are non-agent-oriented. There is comparatively little agentive marking with the focal given clitic, but the number of unmarked agentive occurrences is significant.

Note, by comparing columns 1 and 5 of chart 1, that in texts of all discourse types, comparatively few of the total number of clauses in the text have a specified agentive subject NP at all. The verbal suffix subject co-reference and switch reference systems of Siane suffice in most clauses for clear participant identification, so that overt NP specification of subjects, whether of transitive, intransitive or stative verbs, is for the most part redundant after the initial introduction of participants, and is used mainly for highlighting certain participants or for re-introducing them after they have been 'off-stage' for a time.

The fact that over half of the specified agentive subject NP's in Siane discourse are unmarked for case, and that there is significantly more agent marking with the ergative clitic than with the focal given clitic, leads us to explore the possibility that the ergative clitic may have another discourse related function which would help to account for these facts.

As was stated in the introduction to this paper, DeLancey (1981:630) claims that "ergative case in an SE language... carries two levels of information: the fact that it is present (i.e. its contrast with zero) carries one message, and its identity (i.e. ergative as opposed to accusative or some other marking) carries another." In section 2 of this paper we showed how the 'identity' (in DeLancey's terms) of the ergative clitic in Siane is significant, in that it is used to focus attention specifically on the constituent NP which it marks, in contrast with other clitics which shift the primary focus elsewhere, and in contrast with the

CHART 1

	No. of clause in Text	Agentive subcetet use			Total no. of specified	Effector Use			Topicality Use	
		erg. marked	f.g. marked	unmarked		erg.	f.g.	inst.	erg.	f.g.
NARRATIVE REPORT										
Fight [oral]	414	18	2	23	43					1
Hunt [oral]	133	1	0	2	3					
NARRATIVE LEGEND										
Bird boy [written]	375	2	5	6	13		2		2	
Cave [written]	104	4	0	7	11					
EXPOSITORY										
Lolaba's habits [written]	23	0	0	2	2					
Old ways [oral]	132	2	0	13	15					
PROCEDURAL										
Trapmaking [oral]	32	0	0	0	0	1				
Garden work [oral]	82	0	0	8	8					
BEHAVIOURAL										
Sermon (incomplete) [oral]	255	21	1	21	43	1			2	
People's bad ways [written]	23	0	0	1	1				2	

obligatorily unmarked absolutive.

In this section we will investigate the contrast of the ergative marking with zero markedness on agentive NP's.

Delancey (1981), after examining contrastive pairs of sentences from numerous languages, comparing ergative marking vs. zero markedness based on such varied criteria as placement on the empathy hierarchy (speech act participants > third person human > non-human animate > inanimate), completed vs. incomplete tense/aspect, active- vs. passive-like constructions, volitional vs. inadvertent action, inference vs. eyewitness accounts, etc., concludes that "ergative case marking labels the starting-point (of attention flow) when it is not also the viewpoint (i.e. the perspective from which the speaker describes the event): when viewpoint and starting-point coincide, the NP is not marked for case. Leftmost position marks starting point, while verb agreement... indicates viewpoint" (p.653, parentheses ours).

Detailed investigation of each of the above possibilities as motivating factors for ergative markedness vs. non-markedness of agentive subjects in Siane has proved singularly unfruitful. Furthermore, as indicated in the earlier sections of this paper, verb agreement is invariably with an ergative-marked agentive NP, whether that NP is in leftmost position or elsewhere in the clause. Its position in the clause has no bearing on whether it is marked or unmarked, as may be seen in the examples in (21), taken from the same report as the examples in (2) and (18). In each of the examples in (21), the complete clause is given, though it may have been preceded and/or followed in the same sentence in the text by another clause in coordinate relationship with it.

(21a) ...módá námó-kafo ya módá kíyaba  
 enough I erg there enough ten

(o)-ó(w)-e.  
 do 1s ind

'...I tended it!!'

(21b) ...kíyaba (o)-ó(w)-e, námó-kafo.  
 tend do 1s ind I erg

'...I tended it, I!'

(21c) ...námo kíyaba (o)-óne-tó...  
 I tend do 1s do

'...I tended it, and...'

Nevertheless, the hypothesis that ergative markedness vs. non-markedness may be motivated by the non-coinciding vs. coinciding respectively of viewpoint and attention flow seemed intuitively to have relevance for Siane, even though none of the language-specific applications of the hypothesis covered by DeLancey could be related to Siane. As we investigated the concept of viewpoint vs. attention flow from a slightly different angle, in the context of entire discourses rather than comparing pairs or even groups of sentences, we obtained the following results, which proved more insightful in accounting for split ergative marking in Siane.

Examination of numerous texts, both written and oral, reveals that in Siane the agentive NP's referring to that participant from whose point of view the discourse is being related are normally not marked with the ergative clitic. The NP's referring to any other participant(s) are normally marked with the ergative clitic, in order to raise them in saliency and distinguish them from the primary participant, when they are agentive constituents of the clause in which they occur. However, at pivotal points in narrative text, i.e. at points at which the story peaks or changes direction, the marking vs. non marking is reversed, for that clause or group of clauses only. That is, at pivotal points in a narrative, and only at those points, an agentive NP referring to the participant(s) from whose viewpoint the story is being related will be marked with the ergative clitic, and an agentive NP referring to any other participant(s) will be unmarked for case.

To show how this operates in an actual text, we have charted the case marking (including zero markedness) on the specific NPs

referring to four participants when they appear in an agentive role in a narrative report discourse. The results are shown in chart 2. This particular narrative has four major participants: Wali, the narrator; Nawa, a female antagonist of the narrator; Sogani, her husband; and the village court committee. The committee comprises three men: Yalufuwa, Kilali and Maine, but after their initial identification as individuals they are referred to collectively, sometimes as a group, with plural verb agreement, and sometimes as a single participating entity, implying that the leader of the group performed the action in question on behalf of the group as a whole. In the report, Wali describes in detail how, although Nawa cut some tobacco plants and planted the seed, it was he alone who tended the growing plants, and thereby had the ownership rights to the tobacco. Nawa disputes his right and an argument develops, into which her husband Sogani enters, and Wali becomes so angry that he punches Sogani and a fight ensues. During the fight, Wali's elderly mother, who tries to intervene and stop the fight, is accidentally knocked down by the men. At this point Sogani raises several other unrevolved disputes that exist between them and demands immediate settlement. The village court committee arrive to sort out the problem, and they eventually decide to fine Wali and Sogani 2 Pounds each and to give the money to the old lady. This is done and the matter is closed, with no further mention of the disputed tobacco plants or the other issues raised.

It can be seen from chart 2 that when Wali is specifically identified in an NP used in agentive function in the text, that NP is usually not marked with the ergative clitic, whereas the NP's referring to other participants in an agentive role **are** marked with the ergative clitic. The exceptions to this are underlined on the chart, and when these are viewed in the context of the entire narrative, it is apparent that the clauses where these 'exceptions' occur contain peak or pivotal information.

Of the specified 'agentive' NP's included in chart 2, it may be noted that a few, including some which are marked with the ergative clitic, are immediately followed by an intransitive or stative verb, rather than transitive. Note in particular the first example listed in Sogani's column, and the final one in Nawa's column. It is not unusual in Siane to have an ergative-marked NP followed by an intransitive or stative verb, if that verb is in either an embedding or a co-ordinate relationship with a transitive verb to which the speaker/writer wishes to draw specific attention. On this basis we have also considered NP's such as the seventh example listed in Wali's column as unmarked 'agentive' NP's, though it could be argued that they are unmarked because they are the subject of an intransitive verb and therefore in absolutive case. Either way, it would not change the statistical count by much of a percentage, nor would it change the overall conclusions reached in this paper.

Of the 43 specified agentive NP's in the narrative represented in chart 2, 28 are accounted for on the chart. Of the remaining 15, two are ergative-marked NP's referring to minor participants, two are marked with the focal given clitic, and the other 11 are first and second person pronominal referents within quoted speech, which we did not include on the chart, but which follow the same pattern as the charted NP's.

The fact that the narrator in this story is obviously relating the events from his own point of view, and that he consistently (except at pivotal or peak points in the narrative) refers to himself when in an agentive role by non-ergative marked NP's and to other participants in agentive roles by ergative marked NP's, demonstrates that, even though Siane speakers do not use either the empathy hierarchy or tense-aspect differences as consistent motivating factors for split ergative case-marking, Delancey's claim that in split ergative languages, ergative case-marking labels the starting point of attention flow when it is not the

CHART 2

(Wali)/I		Nawa/she		Sogani/he		Komiti/they/	
		-kafo	cut tobacco, came & scattered the seed				
-kafo	<u>tended it</u>	-0	<u>merely scattered the seed</u>				
-kafo	<u>tended it</u>	-kafo	said, 'Since it's mine, I'll take you to court.'				
-0	thought 'It's nothing' and cut some.	-0	<u>called me</u>				
-0	answered	-0	<u>said, 'Since it's my tobacco, why did you cut it?'</u>				
-0	said, 'Since it's nothing, what are you saying?'	-kafo	became angry and took a stick and came & slashed this tobacco	-kafo	came and said, 'Since it's Nawa's...'		
-0	intending to go to work, as I went, turned & saw her, scolded & kicked her, & said, ...since it's my tobacco...why are you pounding it?'			-kafo	who said, 'It's Nawa's!'		
-0	just stayed there and looked at him (Re. that I got angry & we two began fighting... & my old mother came to stop us &)			-0	said strongly, 'Everything I've helped you with ...pay it back now!'		
-kafo	hit Sogani and we two pushed the old lady & she fell into the flowers.						

contd.

(Wali)/I	Nawa/she	Sogani/he	Komiti/they/
-0	didn't answer him, just stared at him.	(deft talking on & on in the same vein)	
-0	said to him, 'Since you're a leader,... your speaking like that is no good.'	-kafo	
-0	didn't answer him. just kept hearing him speak.	-kafo	
-0	didn't answer him. Just kept thinking & listening		<u>-0</u> came & settled the problem & said 'bring money'
-0	brought 2 Pounds (& we two gave it to Komiti)	<u>-0</u> brought 2 Pounds	-te settled it & said '...give it to your old grand- mother.'
	(we agreed & gave the 4 Pounds to Komiti and ...)		-kafo settled it & said '...from now on, ...stay quiet...'
13	Total agentive subject NP identifications	6	3
3	-kafo (ergative)	3	-kafo (ergative)
10	-0	3	-0
		4	-kafo (ergative)
		2	-0
		1	-kafo (ergative)
		1	-te
		1	-0

viewpoint, is true for Siane. For Siane, however, rather than determining the 'viewpoint' sentence by sentence as indicated by verb agreement, one must look at the overall context of the narrative and determine the participant from whose point of view the entire story is being told, regardless of the verb agreement pattern of any given clause or sentence, if one is to understand and utilize the split ergative marking system accurately. The shift in use of the ergative case marker to mark only the main participant at pivotal points in the narrative also illustrates DeLancey's claim, but with a different application: even though the story is still being told from the viewpoint of that same participant, there is a shift of focus in his viewpoint, a change of direction or new starting point in the attention flow, and the narrator draws attention to this fact by marking only that main participant ergatively at such places in the story.

We are not claiming that Siane speakers in general, or any Siane speakers in particular, are consciously aware of this use of the split ergative marking system in Siane. What we **are** saying is that there appears to be a consistent pattern within Siane discourse, and narrative discourse in particular, which is used intuitively and consistently by differing speakers, and which we have observed to be operating over a wide range of text material, including both first person and non-first person narratives.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Siane is a split ergative language in which the ergative clitic -kafo is used for the sole purpose of raising an NP in saliency, but such saliency-raising may be actualized in a number of different specific ways. By far the most frequent use of the ergative clitic is to mark the NP referring to the agentive subject in a transitive sentence; however, it may also be used to mark the NP referring to the non-animate instrument-effector of an action, or to the topic about which the speaker/writer wishes to comment or

express an evaluation. In each of these functions, the ergative clitic contrasts with the focal given clitic -mo, which is used to mark each of the three kinds of NP constituent listed above when the speaker/writer wishes to direct attention from the referent of that constituent to the effect of the action or the comment or evaluation given. A third clitic, the instrumental clitic -dunu, may be chosen instead of the ergative or focal given clitic to mark the NP referring to a non-animate instrument-effector of an action, in which case the object referred to in the NP is demoted in focus or saliency.

In Dixon's terms, Siane bound verbal suffixes reflect the universal (deep) subject category {S, A}, while bound object prefixes are oriented to the semantic content of verbs. The verbal affix system thus reflects a nominative/accusative orientation, while the nominal clitic system more nearly resembles an ergative-absolutive orientation. NP's referring to syntactic object or semantic undergoer are obligatorily unmarked, as are those referring to the subject of an intransitive verb (unless that verb is in an embedded or coordinate relationship with a transitive verb to which the author wishes to draw attention). NP's referring to the subject of a transitive verb, i.e. agentive NP's, may be marked with the ergative clitic; however, only half or fewer than half of the specified agentive NP's in most Siane texts are so marked. The split ergative case inflection usage indicates none of the specific motivating factors for conditioning split ergativity listed by Dixon or DeLancey. Rather, the ergative clitic is used to highlight a specified participant who is not the participant from whose point of view the story is being told, or to indicate a peak or pivotal point in a narrative when used to mark the NP referring to the participant from whose point of view the story is being told, in which case the marking is normally dropped from NP's referring to any other participants.

## NOTES

1. There are approximately 27,000 speakers of Siane, a Papuan language of the East Central Family of the East New Guinea Highlands Stock of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum, according to Wurm, Voorhoeve and McElhanon (1975). There are several dialects and numerous sub-dialects of Siane; examples in this paper are from the Komongu dialect spoken in the Watabung area of the Eastern Highlands Province.  
 Data for this paper have been collected during extensive periods of residence, from 1960 to the present time, in Nonambalo, one of the villages of the area, under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.  
 We would like to acknowledge the helpful stimulation, encouragement and suggestions of other colleagues of the Summer Institute Linguistics during the preparation of this paper, in particular Ger Reesink, and the friendly help, care and patience of the Siane people themselves, particularly Tafiyo Kendai Kafa and Jim Tela Noimbano. All responsibility for error belongs to the authors alone.
2. The focal given clitic -mo has a multitude of grammatical functions in Siane. a) It is used as a relativizing suffix on verbs, replacing the modal suffix of what would otherwise be a finite verb, and as such, nominalizing the entire clause and/or sentence in which that verb occurs. b) It may be suffixed to the imperative modal suffix to give additional focus or emphasis to a given command. c) It is suffixed to the interrogative modal suffix to indicate disjunction, thus: énafâ-mô 'shall I come, or.....?' d) It is suffixed directly to the first verb stem in serial verb structures indicating temporal, spatial or psychological distance (For further discussion on this function of the focal given clitic see James, 1982, pp.28-38). e) It is an obligatory suffix on most free pronouns, underlining their focal purpose when they are

used. f) It is used in combination with the suffix -ta as an intensive pluralizer for kinship terms, thus: kunánéfó `my younger sibling(s)', kunánéfó-mota `all my younger siblings'. g) As a nominal clitic it may be used to inflect a noun phrase which is given or assumed information, for the purposes discussed in this paper. In this paper we will limit our discussion to the uses of the focal given clitic where it occurs in contrast to the ergative clitic.

3. Suffixes or clitics of more than one syllable are rare in Siane, and those that do occur can often be shown to have been derived from a combination of single-syllable morphemes. The ergative clitic -kafo, for instance, has probably been derived from the suffixes -ka `place, location' and -fo `kinship marker'. The instrumental clitic -dunu has an alternative pronunciation -duna which could have been derived from an earlier -tu or -du `instrument' and -na `intensive', with the preferred pronunciation -dunu having come about through vowel harmony.
4. On the rare occasions when an ergative or focal given clitic has been used in the title or introduction of a Siane discourse, it is in the context of a narrative assumed to be well known to the hearers, such as a folk tale, and thus the use of any one name or key expression from the story is assumed by the speaker/writer to bring at least some of the more salient participants into the presuppositional awareness of the hearer(s)/reader(s).
5. There are thirteen non-syllabic segments in Siane: b, d, f, g, k, l, m, n, p, s, t, w, y; five syllabic segments: a, e, i, o, u; and four tonal units: high (´), low (unmarked), rising (v) and falling (^). For a detailed account of Siane phonological and morphophonemic rules, see James (1981).
6. Note, in example (3), that the comitative morpheme -te is used by Siane speakers to indicate not only comitative but also the plural of the ergative. We may perhaps deduce from this that

Siane speakers view the ergative marking on an agentive group of participants as indicating that the group is functioning together, as a combined unit, as agent. Thus, the English gloss on example (1c) could possibly be more accurately stated as: 'The old man and the old woman (together as agents) lit torches and...'

7. The same form of the focal given clitic is used for both singular and plural. Example (6) illustrates the use of the focal given clitic -mo marking a group of participants.

## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

aug	augmentative	1	first person
co	coordinate	2	second person
cx	contra-expectational	3	third person
def	definitive	s	singular
erg	ergative	d	dual
fg	focal given	p	plural
fut	future	'	high tone
(surface)			
ind	indicative	^	falling tone
(surface)			
indef	indefinite	v	rising tone
(surface)			
inst	instrumental	unmarked	low tone (surface)
int	interrogative		
intns	intensive		
intnt	intensive		
kin	kinship		
neg	negative		
pf	polyfocal		
prf	perfective		
redup	reduplicated		
ss	same subject referent in next following clause		

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