

# What non-canonical switch-reference systems tell us about switch-reference

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# Switch Reference (SR)

As a comparative concept (Haspelmath 2010), SR includes (at least):

**A system of clause-level grammatical markers, some indicating coreference (CR), and some indicating disjoint-reference (DR), between a ‘salient’ reference in its own clause, and a ‘salient’ reference elsewhere.**  
*(There are strict, language-specific, criteria in determining which reference in which clause is the ‘salient’ one.)*

# Switch Reference (SR)

*Canonically:*

- *SR markers are in paradigmatic opposition;*
- *SR markers are inflexional verbal affixes;*
- *a SR-marked clause is syntactically dependent on the control clause, or the two clauses are codependent with another clause; (in clause chains, the control clause is found in the direction of the independent clause of the clause chain);*
- *SR pivots are subjects, actors, or ‘topics’;*
- *SR markers are used for SR pivots of all persons, numbers, and genders.*

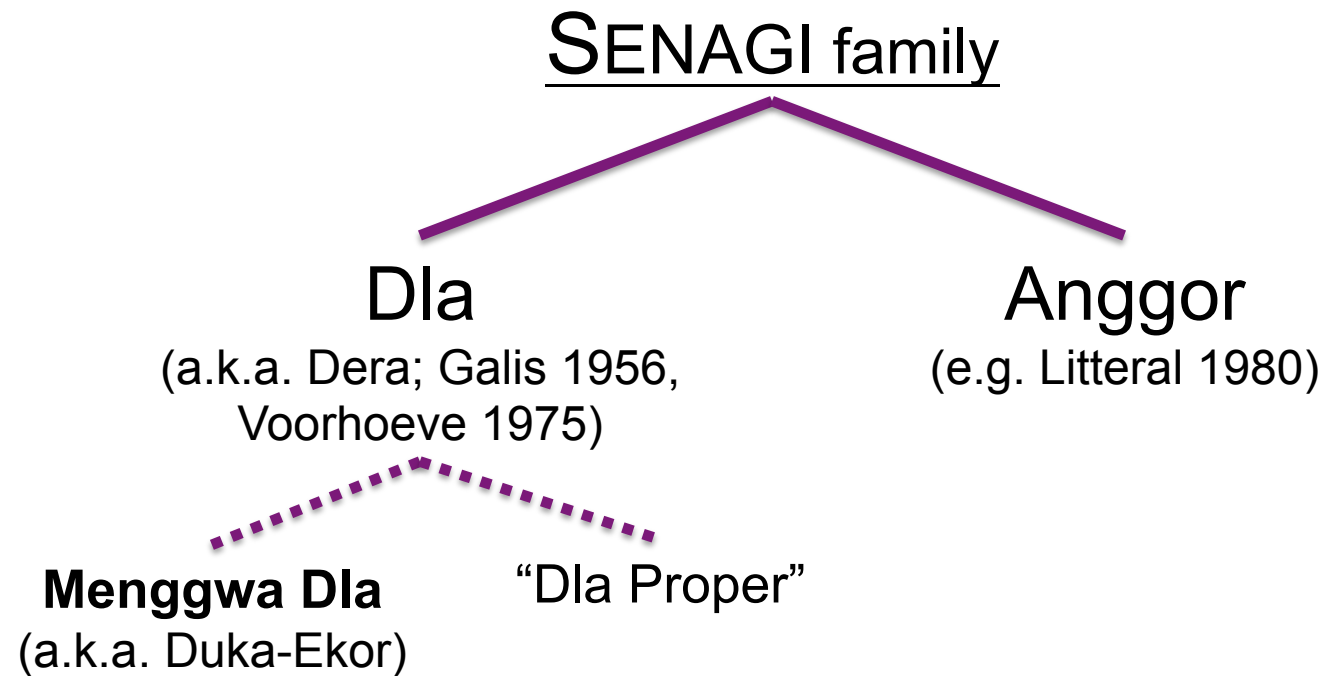
# Menggwa Dla language

*SANDAUN (West Sepik) Province, Papua New Guinea*  
*Kabupaten KEEROM, Papua, Indonesia*









# Some Menggwa Dla morphosyntax preliminaries

- Verb-final (most usually)
- =TOP, =OBJ (P/R), =GEN, and semantic cases
- Verbal agreement: -SBJ or -SBJ-OBJ  
*does not necessarily correspond with semantic valency;  
many monovalent verbs have a dummy -3FSG.OBJ [-3fs.o]*

# Menggwa Dla SR morphology

On “type 1” chain verbs:

- CR: Ø;
- DR: *ma-*, *-ma*, or *-me*  
(depends on conjugation class, C or V ending verb root)
- CR and DR verbs usually take different sets of agreement suffixes
- dependent verbs have a  
DEP suffix *-Ø ~ -mbo ~ -mbona* at the end

...

1. *rani=mbe walambani-Ø-o-mbo, homba-e-Ø-hwa.*

DEM=INS swim-CR-3fs-DEP see-3fs-3ms.O-PST

‘She<sub>j</sub> was swimming there, and she<sub>j/\*k</sub> saw him.’

2. *rani=mbe walambani-me-wa-mbo, homba-e-Ø-hwa.*

DEM=INS swim-DR-3fs-DEP see-3fs-3ms.O-PST

‘She<sub>j</sub> was swimming there, and she<sub>\*j/k</sub> saw him.’

# Traditional SR system in Menggwa Dla

(≈ people born in or before the 1960s)

Canonical SR system:

a. used for all persons

(i.e. the agreement suffixes are often already sufficient in disambiguating the subject referents.)

3. *ye Ø-ser-i fa-hya-a-mbo, ap-aha-hi.*

then CR-eat-1s SEQ-1s-3fs.O-DEP sleep-1s-PRS;CONT

‘Then I eat, and then I sleep.’ (B)

4. *ini. pusi homba-ma-ha-a-mbo, hwi=na han-wa-hwa.*

yes cat see-DS-1s-3fs.O-DEP water=ALL go.down-3fs-PST

‘Yes, I saw the cat<sub>j</sub>, it<sub>j/k</sub> went down towards the stream.’ (60III)

# Traditional SR system in Menggwa Dla

Canonical SR:

b. SR pivot: subject.

(No voice oppositions; animate undergoers of involuntary states expressed as subjects.)

5.    *gwa*                    *gihali(=mbo)*    *sufwa-Ø-a-mbo*,  
      but                    hunger(=OBJ)    feel-CR-1s-DEP  
*stroperi*    *imbu*                    *hihiri-Ø-a-mbo*,    *ser-ihā-hwa*.  
      strawberry    two                    steal-CR-1s-DEP    eat-1s-PST

‘But then I was hungry, and I stole two strawberries and I ate them.’ (50II)



# Traditional SR system in Menggwa Dla

Canonical SR:

- c. clause skipping...
- d. referential overlap: usually CR; DR used to emphasise other types of discourse discontinuity...

# Innovative SR system in Menggwa Dla

(≈ some people born in or after the 1980s)

- a. When the person-number-gender features of the subject agreement suffixes are sufficient in disambiguation, CR verbs becomes SR-neutral.

6. *hofahi(-Ø)-a-mbo, yoambo sumbu-Ø-hwa.*

fall(-‘CR’)-1s-DEP    1SG;OBJ    laugh-3ms-PST

‘I tripped over and he laughed at me.’ (90I)

7. *hofahi(-Ø)-a-mbo, sumbu-aha-hwa.*

fall(-‘CR’)-1s-DEP    laugh-1s-PST

‘I tripped over and I laughed.’

# Innovative SR system in Menggwa Dla

(DR can still be used, especially when a type of discourse discontinuity is emphasised.)

8.     *dukumi*         *po-me-Ø-mbona*,  
valley         go;DR-DR-3ms-DEP  
*yo*             *lohama*         *rongo*         *pi-aha-hwa*.  
1             ridge             along         go-1s-PST  
‘He went to the valley, and I went along the ridge.’ (N)

# Innovative SR system in Menggwa Dla

- b. When the person-number-gender features of the subject agreement suffixes are not sufficient in disambiguation,

CR = CR and DR = DR.

9. *twangi=lofo*                      *wuli=na*                      *Ø-hahof-o-mbo*,  
white.person=COM    house=ALL    CR-go.up-3fs-DEP  
*aflambli*                                      *nafi-Ø-a-hwa*.  
many                                      show-n1s-3fs.O-PST

‘She<sub>j</sub> went into the house with the white person<sub>k</sub>, and she<sub>j</sub> showed her<sub>k/l</sub> many things.’ (90III)

# Innovative SR system in Menggwa Dla

10. *twangi=lofo*                      *wuli=na*                      *ma-hahof-wa-mbo,*

white.person=COM    house=ALL    *DR-go.up-3fs-DEP*

*aflambli*                                      *nafi-Ø-a-hwa.*

many    show-n1s-3fs.O-PST

‘She<sub>j</sub> went into the house with the white person<sub>k</sub>, and she<sub>k/l</sub> showed her<sub>j/m</sub> many things.’

11. *Pita=na*                      *wamla*                      *ma-ser-u-mbo,*                      (*/\*Ø-ser-u-mbo*)

Peter=TOP                      betal.nut                      *DR-eat-3ms-DEP*                      *CR-*

*Saimonu=na*                      *fofo-Ø-mbi.*

Simon=TOP                      blow-3ms-PRS;CONT

‘Peter is chewing betal nut, and Simon is smoking.’ (80II)

[The deciding factor is the subject suffixes; NPs are ignored.]

# Menggwa Dla SR

## Traditional Menggwa Dla SR

Canonical

## Innovative Menggwa Dla SR

Functioning CR markers only available when the two subjects are both third person and with non-conflicting gender information.

Otherwise, CR verb forms have become SR-neutral.

SR in Menggwa Dla: de Sousa (2006a, 2006b, 2007)

# Functions of SR

## 1. Reference tracking:

The **Innovative SR system** has become more economical in reference tracking. (For reference tracking; functioning CR/DR markers are only needed for third person references.)

However, consider the following facts:

- Nearly all SR systems require functional CR/DR markers to be used even for first and second person references;
- 49 out of 116 languages (<40%) in Roberts' (1997) survey of PNG SR systems have subject agreement (including anticipatory marking) for both CR and DR verbs.



# Functions of SR

2. Grammatical marking of discourse dis/continuity of the 'salient' participant.

*(≠ Givón's topic continuity, i.e. topic predictability)*

Between clauses in discourse, some level of cohesion of:

- 'Discourse theme'
- Temporal/spatial settings, logical relationships (incl. foregrounding and backgrounding);
- Participants

(rephrased from Givón 1983a, 1983b)

# Functions of SR

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In a Papuan-type clause-chaining SR system:

**CR: (CR, &) the 'salient' participant will remain/re-emerge as topical (i.e. my 'participant continuity');**

**DR: DR, the 'salient' participant will no longer be topical, *and/or disruption in other types of discourse continuity.***

## (One type of) 'clause skipping'



t.kangaroo is:sleepy-CR



cassowary walks:pass-DR

(Background)



t.kangaroo sleeps.

*Foreground; Mainline of events*



[...]

*ser-u Ø-num-u-la-mbona,*  
eat-3MSG CR-sit-3MSG-LIG-DEP  
'he (the moon) ate and lived (in this place), and'

CR: the 'salient' participant will  
remain/re-emerge as topical  
(i.e. 'participant continuity')

*sungu amni=la afile ai Ø-haf-u-mbo,*  
later garden=GEN father 3SG CR-arrive-3MSG-DEP  
'one day the father (owner) of the garden he arrived, and'

[17 chain clauses...]

*homba boka-ma-wu-Ø-mbona,*  
see NEG:R-DR-N1MPL-3MSG:O-DEP  
'they did not see him (the moon), and'

Mostly  
foreground  
clauses

→ *ai=na tumali hupla ambya rungu pipa-me-Ø-mbo,*  
3=TOP pandanus container hole inside hide-DR-3MSG-DEP  
'he (the moon) was hiding in a hole inside a pandanus trunk, and'

'that being the case they broke (the hole) and'  
'pulled him (the moon) out, and'  
'they took him (the moon) (away).'

# Functions of non-canonical SR

- Reference tracking
- Grammatical marking of discourse dis/continuity of the 'salient' participant



**Grammatical marking of discourse dis/  
continuity in general**

# Functions of non-canonical SR

## Grammatical marking of discourse dis/ continuity in general

e.g. Bauzi (East Geelvink Bay)

13. ‘Then Vadu<sub>[v]</sub> thought,’ [D]

---

‘because (Aseda) struck his sister,’ [D]

---

*Sembina beo-me*

Sembina strike-C

‘(he<sub>[v]</sub>) struck Sembina<sub>[s]</sub>’ [C: consequence]

---

*ab si-h-am*

IND seize-R-IND

‘and (she<sub>[s]</sub>) sat down.’ (Briley 1997:21)

# Functions of non-canonical SR

## Grammatical marking of discourse dis/ continuity in general

e.g. Bauzi (East Geelvink Bay)

14. ‘([W]e) passed by Gienali’s house,’ [C]

---

‘and (we) arrived at the base of the matoa tree,’ [C]

---

*ai-ha*

hear-D

‘and listened’ [D: boundary between discourse paragraphs]

---

*dam      meb-dae      ab      aii-da-m-am.*

people   cry-words   IND   hear-CONT-IR-IND

‘(we<sub>I</sub>) began hearing wailing.’ (Briley 1997:118)



# Functions of non-canonical SR

**Grammatical marking of discourse dis/  
continuity in general**

e.g. Bauzi (East Geelvink Bay)

Other examples:

Central Pomo (Mithun 1993);

Koasati (Rising 1992)

# Functions of non-canonical SR

- Reference tracking
- Grammatical marking of discourse dis/continuity of the 'salient' participant



**More economical in reference-tracking:  
'third person SR systems'**

# Functions of non-canonical SR

**More economical in reference-tracking:  
'third person SR systems'**

e.g.

≈ Innovative SR system in Menggwa Dla

Esk-Aleut languages

e.g. Aleut, linking tensed clause (Bergsland 1994:346-347; 1997:244):

1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>: -DAT

3<sup>rd</sup> DR: -DAT;

3<sup>rd</sup> CR: -ABS (immediate SEQ) or -REL (others).

Some Tupí-Guaraní languages, e.g. Guajajára, Tembé

(Jensen 1997,1998).

# Vanuatu Echo-Subject systems

(de Sousa 2008, de Sousa & Hammond 2010)

V'ënen Taut *ka-*  
Nese *ko-*  
Tape *d<sup>ə</sup>-*  
Aulua *ana-*

S Efate *kai*

Tanna:  
Whitesands *m-*  
N Tanna *m-*  
Lenakel *m-*  
SW Tanna *m-*  
Kwamera *m-/Ø-*

Erromango:  
Ura *m(V)-*  
Sye *m-*

Aneityum:  
Anejoĩ (*i*)*m=*

# Switch-reference in Southern Vanuatu?

	ES marker	DR	ES antecedent
Erromango	(clausal) CR marker	only for 3 <sup>rd</sup> person	subject, referentially overlap OK, (object: one case found)
Tanna	(clausal) CR marker	yes	usually topic/subject, but otherwise whatever pragmatically fitting. <i>c.f. zero anaphors in East Asian languages.</i>
Aneityum	VP coordinator	no	<i>n.a.</i>

# Summary: Non-Canonical Switch-reference

Departure from formal canon of SR; and/or

Alterations in the underlying functions of SR:

- Reference tracking
- Grammatical marking of discourse dis/continuity of the 'salient' participant.

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**Thank you!**  
**Hvala!**  
**Fala ni!**