

**OPTIONAL CASE MARKING IN DANI AND YALI?
– THE MANY USES OF *-en*–**

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Optional case marking, especially optional ergative marking, is a well-known phenomenon found in many Trans New Guinea languages. For those languages where there are descriptions available, the occurrence has been shown to be determined by different factors, such as word order – and thus probably information structure – (e.g. Korafe [Farr 1999], Kâte [Suter 2010]), animacy (e.g. Fore [Scott 1986, Donohue/Donohue 1997]), or a combination of animacy and agentivity (e.g. Fologa [Anderson/Wade 1988]). Maybe less known is the fact that in many of these languages, the same clitic that marks case on the noun phrase can also occur attached to the verbal predicate (Suter, manuscript).

This is also the case in Lower Grand Valley Dani and Yali, two closely related Trans New Guinea languages of the Dani subgroup, which display the same case marker *-en* (in Dani realized as *-nen* before vowels). In both languages, this marker shows the same, quite wide ranging set of functions, including the “traditional” ergative function, i.e., marking the actor of a transitive predicate, but also functions such as marking the source, the cause, or the instrument of an action, or the time when the action took place. Furthermore, the *-en* can be attached to the predicate, marking either purpose, or causation, as respectively illustrated in examples (1) and (2).

(1) [DAN] a. *wolo' loak-en wok-eisan*
 carrying let.go:3SUB-PURP take-transfer:3s.3p
 ‘Give them to them so that they can carry them off’ (Bromley 1981: 51)

[YAL] b. *wak lul ari sani esebulen*
 wak la-ul ari sani eset-ul-en
 take go-1p.IM.FUT DET stone.oven cook-1s.IM.FUT-PURP
 ‘We will bring them (over here) so we can cook’ [making_fire 046]

(2) [DAN] a. *o botok-at-en-be men-akeikehe*
 village close-PRED-CAUS-TOP stand-do:3s.REM.PST
 ‘Because the village was close by, he stopped’ (Bromley 1981: 86)

[YAL] b. *tilip suruken yobore asug sum yiko suruk lamuk*
 tilip su-tuk-en yoho-te asug sum yiko su-tuk la-muk
 torn do-INF-CAUS today-FOC FOC net.bag plait do-PROG go-1p.REQ
 ‘Because it is broken, today we have to make net bags.’ [making_fire 025]

This paper will investigate the different uses of the suffix *-en*, showing that its multiple functions differ from the doubling of case functions found in many other Trans New Guinea Languages, where the ergative marker is identical with the instrumental case marker, and the verbal (purposive) marker matches with the genitive case marker (Suter, manuscript).

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