

# Cofán Comes in All Shapes and Sizes\*

Maksymilian Dąbkowski

May 2017

## Abstract

The paper consists of two parts. The first part focuses on A'ingae (Cofán) shape morphology, an unusual amalgam of classifier-like semantics and nominalizing syntax. An exegesis of previous literature is presented (specifically, Fisher and Hengeveld (forthcoming) and Borman (1976)), disagreements between the two accounts exposed, and a reconciliation attempted. The addition of a new shape morpheme *-fo'cho* is proposed. The second part presents data suggesting that those very same morphemes can be used in a more clitic-like way, akin to the agent nominalizer *=su*. The similarities and differences between shape clitics and *=su* are discussed. It is concluded that the clitic must match the shape of the subordinate clause's head and that the head must be an argument with a sufficient number of agent-like properties.

## 1 On suffixes

One of A'ingae's most unique features is an abundance of classifier-esque shape morphemes. Those morphemes serve a number of different functions, including nominalization (also denominal nominalization),<sup>1</sup> diminution, augmentation, and—as I will argue in this paper—relativization. Even though the shape morphemes divide the semantic space in a way akin to classifiers or determiners known from languages such as Japanese, Chinese or Kaqchikel, shape morphemes do not function as classifiers at all. Numerals, in other languages frequently accompanied by classifiers, in A'ingae do not require any shape morphemes at all.

Nominalization potential of shape clitics is well demonstrated by the derivatives of *tevaen* “(to) write.” An addition of the flat-shape suffix *-je* results in *tevaen'je* “paper, book.” The angular-shape suffix *-'cco* gives us *tevaen'cco* “writing implement” (“pen” or “pencil”); and the round/small-shape suffix *-'cho* – *tevaen'cho* “letter.” In the listed derivations, shape suffixes appear to derive nouns of the appropriate shape, and semantics most closely associated with the base verb.

Diminution and augmentation are the second most prominent usage of shape morphemes. *-'Cho* connotes diminution and *-'cco* – augmentation. Fisher and Hengeveld (forthcoming, henceforth F&H) recount the following two examples:<sup>2</sup>

---

\*The quality of the title is not intended to reflect the quality of the paper.

<sup>1</sup>What is a noun and what is not might not be easy to determine. As Fisher and Hengeveld (forthcoming) observe, there seems to be a division between at least nouns and verbs, and certain morphemes seem to derive adverbs and adnominal adjectives, but the lines can be blurry.

<sup>2</sup>Abbreviations for glosses: 1: first person subject discontinuity clitic; 2: second person subject discontinuity clitic; 3: third person subject discontinuity clitic; A.REL: agent relativizer clitic; ABS: absentive case clitic. ACC: accusative case clitic; ADD: additive focus clitic; ANA: anaphoric pronoun; ASS: assertive mood clitic; ASSOC: associative clitic; AUG: augmentative clitic; BEN: benefactive case clitic; CAUS: causative voice suffix; CIS: cislocative clitic; COLL: collective clitic; CONT: continuation marker; CONTR: contrastive topic clitic; DAT: dative case clitic; DIST: distal deictic pronoun; DS: different subject clitic; ELAT: elative case clitic; EXCL: exclusive focus clitic; IMP: imperative clitic; IMPV: imperfective aspect suffix; INF: infinitive clitic; INST: instrumental case clitic; IRR: irrealis mood clitic; ITER: iterative reduplication; LOC: locative case clitic; MANN: manner/path case clitic; NEG: negative clitic; NEW: new topic clitic; P.NML: patient nominalizer clitic; PASS: passive voice suffix; PL.H: personal plural clitic; PL.S: plural subject clitic; PROX: proximal deictic pronoun; Q: polar question clitic; REFL: reflexive pronoun; SG: singular; SH: shape clitic; SRC: source case clitic; SS: same subject clitic; SUB: clausal subordinator clitic; TRANS: translocative clitic.

	SEMANTICS BY F&H	SEMANTICS BY BORMAN	PROPOSED REFINEMENTS	GLOSSES
'su	attributive	gerund	agent relativizer	A.REL
'cho	round or small	round or diminutive	_____	SH.ROUND
'cco	angular	angular or augmentative	_____	SH.ANG
je	flat	flat	_____	SH.FLAT
fa	lateral	large or tall	lateral	SH.LAT
qui	linear	_____	_____	SH.LINE
jin	large	_____	_____	SH.LARGE
jion	_____	tall (like a tree)	_____	SH.TALL
fi'ndi	splinter-like	_____	split, ragged, uneven (?)	SH.SPLIT
si	with protrusions	hairy	_____	SH.SPIKE
fo'cho	_____	_____	scattered or diffused	SH.DIFF
ccu	delimited space	hollow space	_____	SH.DELIM

Table 1: Shape morphemes

- (1) Da moñeco-'cho='o.  
CONT doll-SH.ROUND=AUG  
“And the little doll?” (V002-01-FASC-Panzaye-014)
- (2) Ta'e-'cco='o jova=ja toya.  
hard-SH.ANG=AUG DIST=CONTR already  
“That one is freaking hard.” (V107-19Ene06-01-AC-Consiana-02-0068.651)

In both examples, the diminutive or augmentative semantics is reinforced by *-'o*, glossed as AUG(MENTATIVE). (The augmentative suffix augments whatever semantics the word already possesses. In case of the doll, it augments the littleness.) The diminutive usage of *-'cho* is widely attested in the dictionary (Borman, 1976). The augmentative usage of *-'cco* less so, perhaps because A'ingae has as many as four different suffixes which convey the idea of large size (*-'cco*, *-fa*, *-jin*, and *-jion*). For example, the base *ccota'cco* “hill” gives rise to *ccotacco'cho* “little hill” and *ccotacco'fa* “large hill,” the latter formed with *-fa*, rather than *-'cco*. Nonetheless, the status of *'cco* as the true augmentative remains unchallenged, as it is the only shape morpheme with an overtly pejorative connotation. This claim is well supported by its occurrence in abstract concepts such as *re'ri'cco* “few” or *qqe'cco* “ugly,” and the aforementioned *ta'e'cco* “hard.”

Table 1 lists twelve morphemes in total: one agent relativizer and eleven shape morphemes. The placing of the agent relativizer on top of all the other morphemes will be later elaborated. F&H list nine shape morphemes, while Borman (1976, henceforth Borman or the dictionary) only seven. The semantics proposed by the two sources differ, at times drastically. The morpheme *-fa* indicates, according to Borman, a large or tall shape. One must wonder why F&H decided to recast it as “lateral,” or what could “lateral shape” possibly mean. Yet that decision, even if unargued for, might turn out to be quite well-motivated.

Recall that *re'ri'cco* means “(a) few,” or “(a) little.” Furthermore, in Quintero et al. (1980, henceforth A'ingae V), one encounters *re'richo'cco* translated as “corto” (*Sp.* “short”) and *re'rifacco* translated as “delgado” (*Sp.* “thin, slim”). A possible conjecture is then that *re'ri-* *-'cco* is a circumfixal deprivative shape matrix. The matrix combines with a shape morpheme (here, a sort of infix), to denote “being short of” some dimension. In combination with *-fa-*, then, *re'ri-* *-'cco* produces *re'rifacco* “lacking in the lateral dimension,” hence “thin.” That would predict *re'richo'cco* should mean “small” (lacking in the “general size” dimension) rather than “short,” but in the text the word is used to describe tapir tails, for which purpose “short” and “small” are, I believe, fairly interchangeable. This hypothesis makes falsifiable predictions. If the *re'ri-* *-'cco* derivation is productive, I would expect *re'risicco* to mean “with short spikes,” or perhaps most ideally, “stubbed.” In a similar fashion, *re'rije'cco* should mean “flat.” More data is needed to further or abolish this hypothesis.

The classification of *-fi'ndi* as a splinter-like shape morpheme, on the other hand, seems less justifiable. Even though the suffix appears in *atui'ndi* “wood chips,” it also appears in *corifi'ndi* “money,” whose shape is nothing like a splinter. Neologisms created with that morpheme were generally interpreted as small rocks (*fi'ttifi'ndi*, for example, a word derived from *fi'tti* “kill”, was understood as a homicidal pebble). “Splinter-like,” thus, does not reflect the compositional semantics of the *-fi'ndi* morpheme. “Jagged,” “split,” or “uneven” might serve as better approximation of its meaning.

The one shape morpheme listed in Table 1, but absent from both H&F and Borman, is *-fo'cho*. Its productivity is an open question, but a semantically-consistent *-fo'cho* is attested in at least four words: *catifo'cho* “trash” derived from *cati* “throw away,” *jufofo'cho* “coal, soot” derived from *ju'ru* “burn,” and *atuifo'cho* “splinters” derived from *atui* “cut, slice, chop,” *sundafo'cho* “flour” derived from *su'nda* “grind, mill.” Since *-fo'cho* contains the *-'cho*, indicative of patient nominalization, and all four words match the semantics of patient nominalization quite neatly, it is tempting to try deriving them from *catifo*, *jufofo*, *atuifo*, and *sundafo*, respectively. Nonetheless, none of those stems were encountered anywhere in the texts. Apparently, *-fo-* is not a morpheme, at least not synchronically. The semantics I propose for *-fo'cho* have to do with diffusion or scatteredness, but that does not tell the whole story; there seems to be more to *-fo'cho*'s meaning than just that. The *-fo'cho* words are all results of destruction. Given their patient properties, the presence of *-'cho* is perhaps non-accidental and might have been diachronically motivated. At the end of the day, whether the result-of-destruction semantics play a significant role in *-fo'cho*'s meaning is not clear. Either that, or extra-linguistic knowledge might be applied to shed light on this issue—scattered objects, like violent ends, are very frequently an aftermath of violent delights.

Other words ending in *-fo'cho* are either zoological terms (e.g. *ofendyo'ndyo cuvejefo'cho* “oruga que no pica,” *Sp.* “a caterpillar which does not sting”), or words whose decomposition is difficult to decipher. The dictionary gives *sentufo'cho* as “vertebral column,” but *sentu* does not seem to appear independently. In addition, AnderBois (2017) points out the existence of *patuvo'cho*, translated by Borman as “piedra grande” (*Sp.* “large rock”), and seemingly derived from *patu* “rock.” It is tempting to consider *-vo'cho* an alternation of *-fo'cho*, but doing so leaves us with a semantic kerfuffle. Given the above discussion, one would expect *patuvo'cho* to mean “gravel,” (ideally created in the process of smashing rocks), rather than “one large rock.” Even if that hypothesis were dropped, the *-'cho* ending suggest a diminutive, not an augmentative. For now, *patuvo'cho* remains a mystery.

The shape morpheme list in Table 1 should best be treated as tentative. More morphemes might be added if warranted sufficient evidence. For example, both *a'ma* “stomach” and *injama'cho* “heart” seem to be derived from verbs (*an* “eat” and *in'jan* “want”,<sup>3</sup> respectively) by adding a *-(')ma* suffix. The suffix's semantics jibes well with neither the accusative *=ma*, nor the frustrative *='ma*. I am tempted to believe it is a third kind of *-(')ma*, but the provenance and nature of that *-(')ma* still awaits unearthing. The opposite can also be true: some suffixes might end up removed from the list of basic shape morphemes. *-Jion*, for instance, strikes me as a combination of *-jin* and the augmentative *-'o*. Nonetheless, I would predict the productive combination of those two suffixes to be *-jin'o(n)*, so perhaps *-jion*'s place in the shape morpheme canon is well-deserved.

As a side note, one might suggest that to speak of “shape” with reference to A'ingae morphemes is a misnomer. With semantics of size, laterality and diffusion, “shape” could perhaps be replaced with a more fitting term. To my dismay, I was unable to come up with one—“topological,” “geometrical” or “dimensional morphology” seem no better.

---

<sup>3</sup>Borman lists *in'jan* as profoundly vague, with meanings ranging from “want,” to “think,” to “remember,” to “understand,” to “learn,” to “believe,” to “know,” to “feel.” There are reasons to believe, however, that “want” is the most basic meaning of *in'jan* and the others are arrived at through specialized syntactic constructions. The “remembering” sense of the word, for example, is expressed by putting it in the imperfective aspect. The “thinking” sense of *in'jan*, on the other hand, becomes salient in quoted speech constructions with *qquen* “thus.”

## 2 On enclitics

Shape morphology as heretofore discussed—in nominalizations, diminutions, and augmentations—was limited to its suffixal uses only. But it is possible to use shape morphemes in ways similar to other clitics, which A’ingae has no shortage of.

First, let us review a few morphological items. The most common clausal subordinator is =’cho, glossed as SUB. We already encountered -’cho, the round/small shape morpheme. Those two are considered homophonous, but otherwise unrelated. The third =’cho is a patient nominalizer, glossed as P.NML. There is some affinity between the subordinator =’cho and the patient nominalizer. Nonetheless, the patient nominalizer appears to scope over one word only, so there is almost always a way to tell the difference (not to mention rather distinct semantics). Perhaps in the future a unified account can be attempted.

- (3) Atesu=mbi [que ña=nga tevaen]=’cho=ma.  
 know=NEG you.SG I=DAT write=SUB=ACC  
 “I didn’t know that you had written to me.” (Fisher and Hengeveld, forthcoming, 150)
- (4) a. fundo=’cho  
 shout=P.NML  
 “a shout” (Fisher and Hengeveld, forthcoming, 53)
- b. fi’tti=’cho  
 kill=P.NML  
 “a prey” (041121-001-group1-nominalization-4d-hl)

’Cho-clauses can function as internally-headed relative clauses (5), headless relative clauses (6), or externally-headed relative clauses, either preceding the head (7) or following it (8).

- (5) ... tise mama=ni ja~ja=’fa=’ya [cachapa=ma tise’=pa aiña]=’cho=ve.  
 ... (s)he mom=LOC go.ITER=PL.S=ASS parrot=ACC (s)he=ASSOC domesticate=SUB=ABS  
 “... they went to their mother for the parrot they had domesticated.”  
 (001-04-03-LC-Onfendyo’ndyo-053)
- (6) ... ji=’fa=’ya [tisu’=pa canchana=me ñoña]=’cho=ye.  
 ... come=PL.S=ASS REFL=ACCOC ladder=ABS make=SUB=ELAT  
 “... they came via that which they themselves had made into a ladder.”  
 (001-04-03-LC-Onfendyo’ndyo-052)
- (7) [ingi canse]=’cho ande  
 we live=SUB land  
 “the land we lived in”
- (8) Atesu gi du’shu [quini-ji=nga mandia=ñe]=’cho=ma.  
 know 1 child tree-SH.LARGE=DAT chase=PASS=SUB=ACC  
 “I know a child who was chased by a large tree.” (170424-000-group1-nominalization-2-hl)

The other major morpheme indispensable in the discussion of relativization is the agent relativizer =’su. Just like =’cho, it attaches to the clause-final verb. ’Su-clauses can function as headless relative clauses (9), or externally-headed clauses, either preceding the head (10), or following it (11). It is noteworthy that ’su-clauses can follow the head, since that directly contradicts claims made by Fisher (2007), Fisher and van Lier (2011, henceforth F&vL), and Fisher and Hengeveld (forthcoming).

- (9) [Du’shu=ma mandian]=’su amppi.  
 child=ACC chase=A.REL fall  
 “The chaser of a child fell.” (170321-001-group1-nominalization-4-hl)

- (10) [ingi=ma atesian]=’su pushe’su  
 we=ACC teach=A.REL woman  
 “the woman who teaches us” (Fisher and Hengeveld, forthcoming, 25b)
- (11) Atesu gi du’shu [quini-jin=ma ttuttu]=’su=ma.  
 know 1 child tree-SH.LARGE=ACC fell=A.REL=ACC  
 “I know the child who fell a large tree.” (170424-001-group1-nominalization-2-hl)

Example (11) could perhaps be analyzed as an internally-headed relative clause:

- (11’) Atesu gi [du’shu quini-jin=ma ttuttu]=’su=ma.

To clarify which analysis is correct, more data is needed. Either way, the very grammaticality of (11) already contradicts claims made by Fisher, for he does not consider the internal-headedness of *’su*-clauses a possibility either.

From here on out, things are getting only curiouser and curiouser. It appears that, unbeknownst to previous researchers,<sup>4</sup> shape morphemes can also take on the role of agent relativizers.

- (12) [Du’shu=ma mandian]=’cho amppi.  
 child=ACC chase=SH.ROUND fall  
 “The chaser<sub>small/round</sub> of a child fell.” (170321-001-group1-nominalization-4b-hl)

The semantics of (12) is essentially the same as that of (9), but the unexpressed head of the relative clause encliticized by *’cho* must fulfill the additional requirements imposed by the semantics of the shape clitic (in this case, roundness or smallness). In example (12), the most naturally understood agent is a pet or a lizard, i.e. a small (per our expectations) animal.

Shape clitics, thus understood, can encliticize onto internally-headed clauses.<sup>5</sup> In example (13), the word order disambiguates the syntactic structure. Even though the nominative case is unmarked, we know that *quinijin* has to be an internal head, since it is sandwiched between *du’shuma* and *mandian*. Barring a bizarre analysis involving discontinuous constituency (which has, to the best of my knowledge, never been proposed in A’ingae, nor are there good reasons for it), this word order guarantees an internally-headed clause; *du’shuma mandian* simply cannot be said to modify *quinijin* as a relative clause following head. Compare with example (14), whose syntactic structure is—at least in principle—ambiguous.<sup>6</sup> In either case, the meaning remains the same.

<sup>4</sup>Unless previous researchers knew about it, unbeknownst to me.

<sup>5</sup>As shape clitics resemble “task-specific” stripes of agent relativizers, that suggests example (11) might truly be an internally-headed clause.

<sup>6</sup>There is a reason to believe that such ambiguous structures are necessarily disambiguated to externally-headed clauses. Currently, this is my best shot at explaining why the object-headed reading is unavailable for example (A), unlike for example (B).

- (A) Atesu gi [quini-ji=nga du’shu mandia-ñe]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 tree-SH.LARGE=DAT child chase-PASS=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 (i) I know that a child was chased by a tree.  
 (ii) I know the child that was chased by a tree.  
 (iii) I know that tree that a child was chased by. (170424-000-group1-nominalization-3-hl)
- (B) Atesu gi du’shu [quini-ji=nga mandia-ñe]=jin=ma.  
 ✗ Atesu gi [du’shu quini-ji=nga mandia-ñe]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 child tree-SH.LARGE=DAT chase-PASS=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 (i) ? I know that a child was chased by a tree.  
 (ii) I know the child that was chased by a tree.  
 (iii) \* I know that tree that a child was chased by. (170424-000-group1-nominalization-2-hl)

Whether the propositional reading of (B) is available is not clear to me. Further elicitation is necessary.

- (13) Atesu gi [du'shu=ma quini-jin mandian]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 child=ACC tree-SH.LARGE chase=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 "I know the tree who chases children." (170424-000-group1-nominalization-8-hl)
- (14) Atesu gi quini-jin [du'shu=ma mandian]=jin=ma.  
 Atesu gi [quini-jin du'shu=ma mandian]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 tree-SH.LARGE child=ACC chase=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 "I know the tree who chases children." (170424-000-group1-nominalization-7-hl)

The shape clitic has to "agree" with the subject of the clause it cliticizes onto. Even if a word of appropriate shape appears as a non-subject argument, the sentence is still ungrammatical.

- (15) \* Atesu gi [du'shu quini-jin=ma ttuttu]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 child tree-SH.LARGE=ACC fell=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 intended: "I know the tree a child felled." (170424-001-group1-nominalization-6-hl)

In the above examples, the agreement between the subject and the shape clitic appears morphological. Notwithstanding, that is not a requirement. The shape "agreement" should be regarded as purely semantic, which is demonstrated by example (16), where the presence of =*je* is licensed by *mesa* "board," even though the word *mesa*, a Spanish loanword, does not carry any shape morphology.<sup>7</sup>

- (16) [Mesa=ma tise amppi-an]=je ucca.  
 board=ACC (s)he fall-CAUS=SH.FLAT break  
 "The board he dropped broke." (170418-001-group1-nominalization-1d-hl)

Those syntactic restrictions have their parallels in restricted semantics. Generally, a non-shape internally-headed clause like (17) can have up to three readings: (i) a propositional one, (ii) a subject-headed one, (iii) and an object-headed one. The first reading corresponds to the simple subordinate clause syntax; the other two result from the inherent ambiguity of internally-headed relative clauses. Example (13), on the other hand, has only the subject-headed reading. Shape clitics thus provide a way of disambiguating internally-headed clauses.

- (17) Atesu gi [du'shu=ma quini-jin mandian]='cho=ma.  
 know 1 child=ACC tree-SH.LARGE chase=SUB=ACC  
 (i) "I know that a large tree chased a child."  
 (ii) "I know the child that a large tree chased."  
 (iii) "I know the tree who chased a child." (170424-000-group1-nominalization-1-hl)
- (13) Atesu gi [du'shu=ma quini-jin mandian]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 child=ACC tree-SH.LARGE chase=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 (i) \* "I know that a large tree chased children."  
 (ii) "I know the tree who chases children."  
 (iii) \* "I know the child who a large tree chased." (170424-000-group1-nominalization-8-hl)

Most surprisingly, a shape clitic can attach to passivized clause, without deviating in meaning much from example (13).

- (18) Atesu gi [du'shu mandia=ñe]=jin=ma.  
 know 1 child chase=PASS=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 "I know the chaser<sub>large</sub> of children." (170424-000-group1-nominalization-9-hl)

<sup>7</sup>On the other hand, it can. *Mesaje* is understood as "flat and not-too-big a board or table." It is not clear to me how to interpret this additional specificity of size.

In example (18), the chaser is understood to be an ent only from the context. In another sort of discourse, the large chaser of children could be an anthropomorphic meteorite or some other large entity. But it is the pure syntax, rather than semantic details, that make this example so unusual. Here, *=jin* attaches to *du'shu mandiañe* “children were chased.” Evidently, in the passivized clause, children are the subject, not a tree. Nonetheless, not only is the encliticization of *=jin* grammatical, but its referent is a sylvan anthropomorph. We might therefore conclude that the property relevant for understanding of workings of shape clitics is not subjecthood, but rather agency.<sup>8</sup>

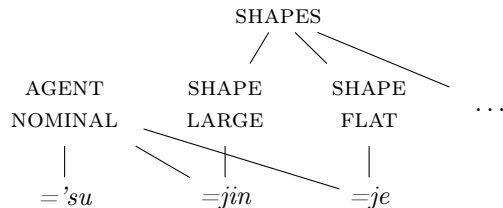


Figure 1: Semantic geometry of shape clitics

Agency is here understood as a bundling of some critical number of proto-agent properties (Dowty, 1991). For this reason, I generally expect subjects of intransitive verbs to fall into this loosely defined category of agents, especially subjects of unergative verbs. Similarly, objects of causative verbs might retain enough agentive properties to licence shape clitics, hence the grammaticality of (16).<sup>9</sup> To properly investigate this hypothesis, much more data is needed. The minutia of the conclusion might be swayed into any of a million direction based on future research. Nonetheless, certain predictions can already be stated. Loosening the requirements on subjecthood and emphasizing the semantic notion of agency will have to result in broadening of the chasm between *=su* and shape clitics.

Due to their semantic specificity, shape clitic can pick out the relevant argument of the subordinate clause, even if that argument is not the subject. We can see that happen in example (16). In comparison, the agent relativizer *=su* is agnostic with respect to shape, so, quite plausibly, it clings to the syntactic subject more readily. Thus, the following tweaking of example (16) is predicted to be grammatical, but mean something very different.

- (19) [Mesa=*ma* tise amppi-an]=*su* ucca.  
 board=ACC (s)he fall-CAUS=A.NOM break  
 “The one who dropped the board broke.” (expected grammaticality)

Importantly, the semantic foundations of the shape clitic phenomenon do not prevent an existence of syntactic restrictions. The ungrammaticality of example (20) suggests that the head cannot appear in a oblique case, such as the dative. On the other hand, it seems that the nominative is not the only option either. In (16), the case on the head is accusative, but the sentences is judged as grammatical anyway. There might be a prohibition on oblique cases such as the dative, but since all this is based on one datum only, the conclusion is obviously tentative.

- (20) \* Atesu gi [du'shu quini-ji=*nga* mandia=*ñe*]=jin=*ma*.  
 know 1 child tree-SH.LARGE=DAT chase=PASS=SH.LARGE=ACC  
 intended: “I know the chaser<sub>large</sub> of children.” (170424-000-group1-nominalization-9-hl)

Our current hypothesis postulates that shape clitics are geometrically-specialized agent nominalizers. Some potential complications to this view have already been noted. Nonetheless, other facts should hold for *=su*. Thus, for instance, example (21) is expected to be grammatical.

<sup>8</sup>Trying to decompose the meaning of *du'shu mandiañejin* and construct an intuitive paraphrase in English might be a daunting task. I like to think of it as “a child-being-chaser.” The English neologism is obviously ungrammatical, but convincing oneself it makes sense is a first step on the way to understanding the A'ingae perspective.

<sup>9</sup>This view presupposes that falling is more agent-like than being felled, which does not seem unreasonable. Anyway, it is most definitely less patient-like, in that the object of felling is an incremental theme, unlike the subject of fall. Perhaps then, the hypothesis should be formulated in terms of minimization of proto-patient properties, not maximization of proto-agent properties.

- (21) Atesu gi [du'shu mandia=ñe]='su=ma.  
know 1 child tree-CHASE=PASS=A.NML=ACC  
intended: "I know the chaser of children." (expected grammaticality)

More data will clarify which of the positions proposed above is correct, or whether entirely different hypotheses should be pursued. Either way, directions for further research have been sketched, so the prospect of future elicitations is promising.

The above discussion can be summarized as follows. Shape clitics are specialized agent relativizers. Just as is the case with the non-shape-specific =*'su*, they can create headless relative clauses, and internally-headed and/or externally headed relative clauses (pending more data). Unlike =*'su*, shape clitics are quite versatile in their choice of the internal agentive head, since "agency" is for their purpose defined as a bundling of some critical number of proto-agent properties. Finally, the shape they represent must match the shape of the agentive head.



## References

- Raphael Fisher and Kees Hengeveld. Cofán (A'ingae). In Patience Epps and Lev Michael, editors, *Amazonian Languages, An International Handbook*. De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin, Germany, forthcoming.
- Marlytte Bub Borman. *Vocabulario cofán: Cofán-castellano, castellano-cofán*. Institute Lingüístico de Verano (Summer Institute of Linguistics), 1976.
- Elsira Quintero, Silvio Chapar, Toribio Aguinda, Emeregildo Criollo, Deji Criollo, Gloriano Quenamá, and Becky de Rhon. *Ainga'e V. Texto de Lectura V. Cofán – Castellano*. Imprenta Lingüística Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador, 1980.
- Scott AnderBois. Personal communication, 2017.
- Raphael Fisher. Clausal Linkage in Cofán, a Language of the Ecuadorian-Colombian Border Region. In Leo Wetzels, editor, *Language Endangerment and Endangered Languages: Linguistic and Anthropological Studies with Special Emphasis on the Languages and Cultures of the Andean-Amazonian Border Area*, page 381–399. CNWS Publications, Leiden, The Netherlands, 2007.
- Raphael Fisher and Eva van Lier. Cofán subordinate clauses in a typology of subordination. In Rik van Gijn, Katharina Haude, and Pieter Muysken, editors, *[Typological Studies in Language 97] Subordination in Native South-American Languages*, page 221–250. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2011.
- David Dowty. Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection. *Language*, 67(3):547–619, 1991. ISSN 00978507, 15350665. URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/415037>.
- Maria Enma Chica Umenda and Becky de Rhon. *Ainga'e III. Texto de Lectura III. Cofán – Castellano*. Imprenta Lingüística Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador, 1980.
- Becky de Rhon and Homero Ayala García. *Ainga'e IV. Texto de Lectura IV. Cofán – Castellano*. Imprenta Lingüística Ecuador, Quito, Ecuador, 1979.
- Comunidad Cofán de Zábalo and Centro Cofán Pakuya. *Na'ensu A'i. Tayopi'su cuenzandeccu sararo chonine condase'cho*. Imprenta Rimana, Quito, Ecuador, 2011.