

## NON-CANONICAL PASSIVE AND CASE-LICENSING IN BALINESE VS. MALAGASY

• **Synopsis:** We present a non-canonical passive analysis of promotion to pivot in Balinese (BAL) and Malagasy (MAL), attributing the morphosyntactic similarities of their pivots to an intermediate status between topics and subjects. We further discuss syntactic micro-variation between the two languages wrt. Condition C connectivity, suggesting that BAL OV can still ACC-license its theme, whilst MAL PV has lost this option.

• **Pivots and subjecthood:** A debate concerns whether Austronesian pivots are obligatory V2-like topics or derived surface subjects. We focus on BAL (Indonesian-type) and MAL (Philippine-type), contrasting A(gent)V(oice) to O(bject)/P(atient)V(oice), claiming that BAL/MAL align in the middle of the two poles: while their pivots move to a high position with strong discourse effects (e.g. a definiteness requirement), they also acquire subject properties, such as the ability to serve as controllee under obligatory control. We propose that Malayo-Polynesian languages are undergoing a topic-to-subject grammaticalization (cf. Patrianto & Chen 2023), with intermediate stages in-between, represented by BAL and MAL: their pivots are neither pure topics (anymore), as in Philippine-type languages (Tagalog), nor pure surface subjects (yet), as in Indonesian-type languages (Acehnese). This is mostly evident in OV/PV clauses, where an internal argument (IA) becomes the subject-like pivot (1); despite resembling a passive, the clause remains syntactically active and transitive.

(1) a. *Bawi-ne punika tumbas tiang*  
**pig-DEF** that **OV.buy** 1SG  
 'The pig was bought by me.' BAL (Arka 2003: 5)

b. *Notapahin'i Sahondra tamin'ny antsy ity hazo ity*  
 PST.**PV.cut**.GEN.Sahondra PST.P.GEN.DET knife **this tree this**  
 'This tree was cut with a knife by Sahondra.' MAL (Paul 2000: 9)

• **Non-canonical passive:** We suggest that OV/PV in BAL and MAL (1) instantiates a non-canonical passive (Legate 2021): it renders the theme the surface subject, but does not demote the agent to an oblique and is not morphologically more marked than AV; in fact, OV in BAL is morphologically null and co-exists with a canonical marked passive, as in other Indonesian-type languages (Arka 2003). Although non-canonical, the passive-like nature of OV/PV stems from three facts: i) only the pivot can be controlled; ii) the non-pivot agent can be dropped, otherwise it must be strictly adjacent to the verb; iii) the pivot undergoes A-movement.

**1) Control:** Only pivots can be the target of obligatory control, a major subject diagnostic (Dixon 1994).

(2) a. *Ia majanji [ PRO periksa dokter ]*  
 3SG AV.promised [ **PRO**<sub>piv</sub> **OV.examine** doctor<sub>agent</sub> ]  
 'She promised to be examined by a doctor.' BAL (elicited)

b. *nanery ny zaza [ PRO h-ozahan' ny dokotera ] aho*  
 force.AV the child [ **PRO**<sub>piv</sub> IRR-PV.examine the doctor<sub>agent</sub> ] 1SG.DFLT  
 'I forced the child to be examined by the doctor.' MAL (Potsdam 2009: 761)

**2) Agent status:** The non-pivot agent can be dropped in OV/PV, yielding an implicit passive reading.

(3) *Jemak nasi-ne* (4) *Notapahina tamin'ny antsy ity hazo ity*  
 take.OV **rice-DEF** PST.PV.cut PST.P.GEN.DET knife **this tree this**  
 'The rice was taken.' 'This tree was cut with the knife.'  
 BAL (elicited) MAL (Paul & Travis 2006: 323)

If overtly expressed, the non-pivot agent must be strictly adjacent to the verb, a form of last-resort licensing in the absence of structural case for the external argument (Levin 2015; Erlewine et al 2019), (5)-(6).

(5) a. *siap-e [ uber cicing ] ke jalan-e*  
 chicken-DEF [ **OV.chase** dog ] into street-DEF  
 'The chicken was chased into the street by a dog.'  
 b. \**siap-e [ uber ke jalan-e cicing ]* BAL (Wechsler & Arka 1998: 405)

(6) a. *[ Nohanin' ny gidro ] haingana ny voankazo omaly*  
 [ PST.PV.eat DET lemur ] quickly DET fruit yesterday  
 'The fruit was eaten quickly by the lemur yesterday.'  
 b. \**[ Nohanin(a) haingana ny gidro ] ny voankazo omaly* MAL (Pearson 2005: 392)

**3) WCO:** Promotion to pivot is A-movement: it feeds variable binding, thereby obviates WCO effects.

(7) a. *Sabilang; anak cenik alih bapa-ne<sub>i/j</sub>*  
 Every person small search.OV father-POSS  
 'Every<sub>i</sub> child is searched by his<sub>i</sub> father' BAL (elicited)

- b. *Norahan'ny vadiny<sub>i/j</sub> ny vehivavy rehetra<sub>i</sub>*  
 PST.PV.kiss'DET spouse.her DET woman all  
 'Every woman<sub>i</sub> is kissed by her<sub>i</sub> spouse.' MAL (Travis 1998: 442)

• **Condition C:** Despite an otherwise striking similarity, BAL and MAL differ wrt. Condition C: promotion to pivot obligatorily reconstructs in BAL OV (8a), but can fix an underlying violation in MAL PV (8b).

- (8) a. \**Bapan i Wayan-e<sub>i</sub> alih ia<sub>i</sub>*  
 father Wayan-POSS OV.search 3SG  
 Int.: 'Wayan<sub>i</sub>'s father is searched for by him<sub>i</sub>.' BAL (elicited)
- b. *Notambazany<sub>i</sub> ariary folo ny zana-dRakoto<sub>i</sub>*  
 PST.PV.hire.GEN.3SG ariary ten DET child-GEN.Rakoto  
 'Rakoto<sub>i</sub>'s child was hired by him<sub>i</sub> for 10 ariary.' MAL (Paul 2002: 112)

We propose that this micro-variation results from the language's case-assignment system: the high pivot position invariably assigns unmarked NOM(inative); but while Voice° in BAL OV still retains structural ACC(usative) for the theme, MAL PV Voice° has lost it. Thus, while the MAL PV theme pivot is only licensed at its (high) landing site, the BAL OV theme pivot is already licensed downstairs and then trivially absorbs the high NOM.

• **Late Merge:** We assume that, while WCO tracks the A/A'-distinction, Condition C tracks the locus and timing of case (Bhatt & Keine 2019). As per Takahashi & Hulsey (2009), a determiner can be base-generated and move without its NP restrictor, which can be late-merged with D° at the landing site, as long as case can still be assigned there. Since BAL OV assigns ACC to the theme pivot within VoiceP already, the offending R-expression is present within the lowest copy, thereby feeding Condition C even after pivot movement. MAL pivots only receive (NOM) case at the final high pivot site, and thus allow late merge of the NP, bleeding Condition C. Further, we address why BAL OV can never delay case-assignment and late-merge the NP restrictor directly at the NOM-assigning pivot site to bleed Condition C (which should, in principle, be possible even in the presence of ACC). We link the strict impossibility of late merge to an independently motivated DP-internal movement in BAL, of NP to SpecDP, to derive the suffixal nature of the D° head *-e*: such movement must happen at the first-merge position of the DP, and so the NP restrictor must be present there from the beginning of DP-building; at any later stage, it would be countercyclic, violating any formulable version of the Extension Condition (cf. Safir 2019). The effect of the determiner's position (post-NP in BAL, pre-NP in MAL) also manifests in the licensing of non-pivot agents, restricting them to indefinite NPs in BAL, but not in MAL.

• **Balinese OV ACC:** That BAL OV Voice° can still assign ACC to the theme in-situ is supported by **i) multiple extraction:** when BAL *wh*-extracts the pivot under OV, it allows simultaneous fronting of the non-*wh*/non-pivot agent, (9), which must otherwise occur verb-adjacently. We follow Erlewine et al (2017) in that the high pivot site hosts a composite [A/A'] probe: the A-part assigns case, the A'-part yields the discourse (topic) effects and restricts A'-extraction to the pivot. We assume that in (9) the composite probe splits to attract two different DPs (Scott 2021). The A-part operates before the A'-part, whereby case is reserved for the first moving DP (the agent); the second (the theme) undergoes pure A'-movement. Hence, in (9), the agent employs high NOM to be licensed, while the *wh*-extracted theme (pivot) has already received case downstairs. Generally, fronting an agent to the left of an OV theme pivot is impossible, (10), but fronting a theme to the left of an agent pivot under AV is possible. We will show that these (il)licit orders of multiple fronting are explained if i) only the lower (A-)landing site is reserved for NOM; ii) the theme is always ACC-licensed at the base position, iii) the non-pivot agent must either be verb-adjacent or piggyback on theme OV extraction to make use of high NOM.

- (9) *Apa ci aih ditu ibi?* (10) \**Tiang niki kopi-ne tunas*  
 what you OV.seek there yesterday? I this coffee-DEF take  
 'What did you look for there yesterday?' Int.: 'This coffee, I take it quickly.'  
 BAL (Erlewine et al 2017: 390) BAL (Arka 2003: 78)

Further support for ACC in BAL comes from **ii) focus fronting** of the pivot, where BAL allows stranding a resumptive at the launching site, (11). If resumptive pronouns must be independently licensed themselves, BAL OV must be able to assign ACC. No such resumption of a focus-fronted pivot is allowed in MAL (Paul 2000).

- (11) *Anak luh ento alih-ang yang i Nyoman ia*  
 person female that OV.search-APPL I PN Nyoman 3SG  
 'That girl, I sought her for Nyoman.' BAL (Arka 2003: 52)

All in all, we suggest that the availability of ACC in BAL but not in MAL represents slightly different stages of the topic-to-subject grammaticalization and the concomitant passivization-like process.