

Symmetrical Voice in Northern Sarawak

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1. Introduction

- ❖ Western Austronesian languages are known for their typologically unusual systems of verbal morphology.
- ❖ Like active/passive alternations, they appear to encode an alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions.
- ❖ However, unlike other voice systems, the alternations do not result in syntactic detransitivisation – though they may be associated with different semantic and discourse properties.
- ❖ This has led to many different analyses of verbal morphology – including alternations in focus (Clayre 1991); pivot assignment (Foley and Van Valin 1984); topic (McKaughan 1958); case (Rackowski and Richards 2005); transitivity (Aldridge 2004); nominalisation (Kaufman 2009) and, finally, *symmetrical voice* (Foley 2008, Himmelmann 2005, Riesberg 2014)
- ❖ In this paper, I present the verbal alternations in three related languages of Northern Sarawak (Lun Bawang, Kelabit and Sa'ban) and put forward the case for treating the alternations as symmetrical voice.
- ❖ The main aims are as follows:
 - a. To consolidate the definition of symmetrical voice, provide a clear methodology for identifying symmetrical voice systems and demonstrate that symmetrical voice is the best analysis of the data.
 - b. To show that languages can have more than one transitive clause regardless of other morphosyntactic properties.

2. Western Austronesian Voice Systems

- ❖ To illustrate how Western Austronesian (henceforth WAn) voice systems differ from other voice systems (especially active/passive and ergative/antipassive) this paper adopts a broad definition of voice:

The morphological encoding of the mapping from semantic arguments to syntactic functions (Kulikov 2011)

- ❖ Thus, voice alternations can be understood to allow different ways of expressing a notionally transitive event with different mappings from argument structure to functional structure.
- ❖ In some cases (e.g. active/passive and ergative/antipassive), voice alternations also result in detransitivisation or the demotion of an argument.

❖ This can be seen in the English active/passive alternation in (1):¹

- (1) *English*
- a. **Active**
The man bought *fish* at the store <morphologically unmarked>
 <syntactically intransitive>
- b. **Passive**
The fish was bought at the store (by the man) <morphologically marked>
 <syntactically intransitive>

❖ This alternation is morphologically and syntactically *asymmetrical*

❖ In contrast, though verbal morphology in a language like Tagalog in (2) can reflect an alternation in which semantic argument is syntactically privileged, each voice is equally morphologically marked and each voice appears syntactically transitive:²

- (2) *Tagalog*
- a. **Actor Voice (AV)**
 B<um>ili ang lalake *ng isda* sa tindahan. <marked>
 <AV>buy NOM man GEN fish OBL store <transitive>
 ‘The man bought fish at the store.’
- b. **Undergoer Voice (UV)**
 B<in>ili *ng lalake* ang isda sa tindahan. <marked>
 <PFV.UV>buy GEN man NOM fish OBL store <transitive>
 ‘The man bought the fish at the store.’
- c. **Locative Voice (LV)**
 B<in>ilih-an *ng lalake* *ng isda* ang tindahan. <marked>
 <PFV>buy-LV GEN man GEN fish NOM store <transitive>
 ‘The man bought fish at the store.’
- d. **Instrumental Voice (IV)**
 Ip<in>am-bili *ng lalake* *ng isda* ang pera. <marked>
 <PFV>IV-buy GEN man GEN fish NOM money <transitive>
 ‘The man bought fish with the money.’
- e. **Benefactive Voice (BV)**
 I-b<in>ili *ng lalake* *ng isda* ang bata. <marked>
 BV<PFV>buy GEN man GEN fish NOM child <transitive>
 ‘The man bought fish for the child.’ (Arka 2002)

❖ Thus, the WAN alternation appears morphologically and syntactically *symmetrical*

¹ Subject underlined, object in italics

² Glosses have been adapted to allow comparison between WAN languages. AV and UV are used in a pre-theoretical way. NOM can be understood to reflect subjects and GEN non-subject core arguments.

- ❖ Nonetheless, the analysis of WAn verbal morphology remains controversial (Adelaar 2013) since a) grammatical functions are themselves controversial and b) semantic differences between AV and UV have led some to claim that AV is an antipassive and that the voices therefore differ in their transitivity (Aldridge 2004, 2012).
- ❖ So what does it really mean for a language to have symmetrical voice?

Riesberg (2014: 10): A language is symmetrical, if:

- a. **It has more than one basic transitive construction**
- b. The corresponding arguments behave equally in all different voices, and
- c. The verb is morphologically equally marked in all different voices

- ❖ In other words, if we want to show that Lun Bawang, Kelabit and Sa'ban have symmetrical voice we need to show, firstly, that the morphology encodes an alternation in the mapping of arguments to grammatical functions and, secondly, that each of the clause-types is transitive – i.e. has two core arguments.

3. Northern Sarawak

- ❖ This paper focuses on three languages of Northern Sarawak belonging to the Apad Uat subgroup: Lun Bawang; Kelabit and Sa'ban (Kroeger 1998)
- ❖ The data is based on fieldwork in Ba' Kelalan (2017); Bario (2013-2017) and Long Banga (2017), as well as Beatrice Clayre's unpublished fieldnotes.
- ❖ The Apad Uat languages are said to be transitional between the more conservative Philippine-type languages, and the more innovative Indonesian-type languages (Hemmings 2015, Clayre 2005).
- ❖ This can be seen in the number of voice alternations and the patterns of case-marking.
- ❖ However, despite morphosyntactic differences, each of the languages appears to have a symmetrical voice system:

(3) *Lun Bawang*

a. **Actor Voice**

Ngekeb	<i>lacing nih</i>	<u>uih</u>	atun
AV.cover	pot	DEM 1SG.NOM	first

'I'm covering this pot first.' (Clayre 2005: 20)

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Beli-en	<i>ku</i>	<u>lal</u>	<u>neh</u>	ku	usin	nih.
buy-UV.IRR	1SG.GEN	hen	DEM	with	money	DEM

'I'll buy the hen with this money.'

c. **Instrumental Voice**

Pimeli	<i>ku</i>	<i>lal</i>	<u>usin</u>	<u>nih.</u>
IV.buy	1SG.GEN	hen	money	DEM

'I'll use this money to buy the hen.' (Clayre 2014: 132-133)

- (4) *Kelabit*
- a. **Actor Voice**
La'ih sineh ne-nekul *nuba' nedih* ngen seduk.
man DEM PFV-AV.spoon.up rice 3SG.POSS with spoon
'That man spooned up his rice with a spoon.'
- b. **Undergoer Voice**
Sikul *lai'h sineh* nuba' nedih ngen seduk.
UV.PFV.spoon.up man DEM rice 3SG.POSS with spoon
'That man ate his rice with a spoon.'
- c. **Instrumental Voice**
Seduk pe-nekul *la'ih sineh nuba' nedih*.
Spoon IV-spoon up man DEM rice 3SG.POSS
'That man used a spoon to spoon up his rice.' (Hemmings 2015)
- (5) *Sa'ban*
- a. **Actor Voice (AV)**
Yuet noknai n-toe *éek*.
monkey this AV-drop 1SG
'This monkey drops me.'
- b. **Undergoer Voice (UV)**
Yuet noknai i-toe *éek*.
monkey this UV-drop 1SG
'I dropped the monkey.' (Clayre 2014: 138)
- (6) *Lun Bawang case marking (Ba' Kelalan)*
- a. **Actor Voice**
Uih nemepag keneh
1SG.NOM AV.hit 3SG.OBL
'I hit him'
- b. **Undergoer Voice**
Pipag neh i=Yudan
UV.PFV.hit 3SG.GEN NOM=Yudan
'He hit yudan'
- c. Pipag uih keneh
UV.PFV.hit 1SG.NOM 3SG.OBL
'I hit him'

❖ To show that the alternations are truly symmetrical voice we need to show:

- a. That there is an alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions
- b. That each clause in is transitive

4. An alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions

- ❖ Grammatical functions – particularly subject – are controversial in WAN on account of the fact that typical subject properties (see e.g. Keenan 1976, Falk 2006) are split between the argument privileged in the verbal morphology and the actor semantic role.
- ❖ This is true for a wide range of WAN languages (that are otherwise structurally quite different from one another) as well as syntactically ergative languages.
- ❖ It can be seen in Kelabit in the patterns of relativisation (4) and reflexive binding (5):

(7) *Kelabit Relative Clauses*

a. **Actor Voice**

Seni'er kuh la'ih [suk ne-nekul *nuba'* ngen seduk]
 UV.PFV.see 1SG man REL PFV-AV.spoon rice with spoon
 'I saw the man who spooned up rice with a spoon'

b. *Seni'er kuh *nuba'* [suk nekul la'ih sineh]
 UV.PFV.see 1SG rice REL AV.spoon man DEM
 For: 'I saw the rice that the man spooned up'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Seni'er kuh nuba' [suk sikul *la'ih sineh* ngen seduk]
 UV.PFV.see 1SG rice REL UV.PFV.spoon man DEM with spoon
 'I saw the rice that the man spooned up with a spoon'

e. *Seni'er kuh *la'ih* [suk sikul nuba']
 UV.PFV.see 1SG man REL UV.PFV.spoon rice
 For: 'I saw the man who spooned up rice' (Hemmings 2015: 394-395)

(8) *Kelabit Reflexive Binding*

a. **Actor Voice**

Uih ne-mada' *burur kudih* ngedeh
 1SG PFV-AV.show body 1SG.POSS to.3PL
 'I surrendered myself to them'

b. *Burur kudih ne-mada' *uih* ngedeh
 body 1SG.POSS PFV-AV.show 1SG to.3PL
 For: 'I surrendered myself to them'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Binada' *kuh* burur kudih ngedeh
 UV.PFV.show 1SG body 1SG.POSS to.3PL
 'I surrendered myself to them'

d. *Binada' *burur kudih* uih ngedeh
 UV.PFV.show body 1SG.POSS 1SG to.3PL
 For: 'I surrendered myself to them' (elicitation, fieldnotes)

- ❖ Since the split is quite systematic across a range of languages, Falk (2006: 16) concludes that typical subject properties are actually of two types:

Table 1. Type 1 and Type 2 Subject properties

Type 1 Subject Properties	Type 2 Subject Properties
Agent argument in active voice	Shared argument in co-ordinated clauses
Most likely covert argument	Raising
The addressee of an imperative	Extraction
Anaphoric prominence	Obligatory element
Switch reference systems	“External” structural position
Controlled argument (PRO) for some languages	Controlled argument (PRO) for some languages
Discourse topic	Definiteness/wide scope

- ❖ In languages where the properties are split, role-related (type 1) properties are associated with the highest semantic role, whilst reference-related (type 2) properties are associated with the syntactic pivot.
- ❖ The split has led to three main approaches to grammatical functions in WAN:
 - Austronesian languages do not have subjects (cf. Schachter 1976)**
 - Subjects must have all of the properties in Table 1
 - The privileged argument is a topic
 - The subject in Austronesian is the privileged argument (cf. Manning 1996, Manning and Sag 1998)**
 - Only Type 2 properties are important in identifying subjects
 - Type 1 properties are handled at argument structure
 - The subject in Austronesian is the actor (cf. Aldridge 2004)**
 - Only Type 1 properties are important in identifying subjects
 - The privileged argument is a topic or an absolutive
- ❖ I will argue that the Manning and Sag (1998) approach is best for the languages in this paper because:
 - The privileged arguments have reference-related subject properties
 - There are good arguments against treating the privileged arguments as topics
 - The AV undergoer and UV actor behave like core non-subject arguments

4.1 Privileged Argument as Subject

- ❖ A number of tests support the identification of the privileged argument as subject in Lun Bawang, Kelabit and Sa’ban:

Table 2. Subject Tests in Northern Sarawak Languages³

	Lun Bawang	Kelabit	Sa'ban
Particles		✓	✓
Relativisation	✓	✓	✓
External position	✓	✓	✓
Fronted questions	✓	✓	✓
Raising		✓	?
Control	✓	✓	? (just actor?)
Shared argument in co-ordination	?	? not limited to subjects	

(9) *Lun Bawang Relativisation*

a. **Relativising the Actor**

Delai dih [luk nemabal uko' makai kayuh]
 Man DEM REL AV.PFV.hit dog with stick
 'This is the man who hit the dog with the stick'

b. **Delai dih* [luk pipag uko' dih]
 man DEM REL UV.PFV.hit dog DEM
 For: this is the man who hit the dog'

c. **Relativizing the Undergoer**

Uko' [luk binabal delai dih makai kayuh]
 Dog REL UV.PFV.hit man DEM use stick
 'It was the dog that the man hit with a stick'

d. **Uko'* [luk nemabal delai dih makai kayuh]
 dog REL AV.PFV.hit man DEM use stick
 For: 'It was the dog that the man hit with a stick'

e. **Relativising the Instrument**

Kayuh [luk pemabal delai dih uko' dih]
 Stick REL IV.hit man DEM dog DEM
 'It was the stick that the man used to hit the dog'

(10) *Lun Bawang Questions*

a. **Actor Voice**

Irey nemelih bera neh?
 who AV.PFV.buy rice DEM
 'Who bought that rice?'

b. **Anun* nemelih delai dih?
 what AV.PFV.buy man DEM
 For: 'What did the man buy?'

³ The blank space reflects phenomena that I have not yet tested. ? reflects instances where tests were not possible to carry out or the results were unclear/did not distinguish between subject and object.

- c. **Undergoer Voice**
Anun bilih *delai* *dih?*
 What UV.PFV.buy man DEM
 ‘What did the man buy?’
- d. *Irey* bilih bera dih?
 Who UV.PFV.buy rice DEM
 For: ‘who bought the rice?’

(11) *Lun Bawang Control/Permissive Constructions*

- a. **Actor Voice**
 Merey uih keneh [kuman *nuba*']
 AV.give 1SG.NOM 3SG.OBL AV.eat rice
 For: ‘I let her eat rice’
- b. *Merey uih *keneh* [kenen nuba']
 AV.give 1SG.NOM 3SG.OBL UV.IRR.eat rice
 For: ‘I let her eat rice’
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
 Merey uih nuba' [kenen ieh]
 AV.give 1SG.NOM rice [UV.IRR.eat 3SG.NOM]
 ‘I give her rice to eat’
- d. *Merey uih nuba' [kuman ieh]
 AV.give 1SG.NOM rice [AV.eat 3SG.NOM]
 For: ‘I give her rice to eat’

(12) *Kelabit Control*

- a. **Embedded Clause in Actor Voice for Controlled Actor**
 Mesurung ieh tu'uh-tu'uh neh kamih [ngabi nuba' nedih]
 Persuade 3SG real-REDUP PT 1PL.EXCL AV.finish rice 3sg.pos
 ‘we really persuaded her to finish her rice’
- b. **Embedded Clause in Undergoer Voice for Controlled Undergoer**
 Mesurung ieh tu'uh-tu'uh neh kamih [siren dutur]
 persuade 3SG real-REDUP PT 1PL.EXCL UV.see doctor
 ‘we really persuaded her to be seen by the doctor’

- (13) *Kelabit Raising*
- a. **Actor Voice**
 Uih ngelinuh **ieh** tu'uh-tu'uh [nekuman nuba' ngimalem]
 1SG AV.think 3SG real-REDUP AV.PFV.eat rice yesterday
 'I thought him truly to have eaten his rice yesterday'
- b. *Uih ngelinuh nuba' tu'uh-tu'uh [nekuman **ieh** ngimalem]
 1SG AV.PFV.think rice real-REDUP AV.PFV.eat 3SG yesterday
 FOR: 'I thought the rice truly to have been eaten by him yesterday'
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
 Uih ngelinuh **nuba'** tu'uh-tu'uh [kinan neh ngimalem]
 1SG AV.PFV.think rice real-REDUP UV.PFV.eat 3SG yesterday
 'I thought the rice truly to have been eaten by him yesterday'
- d. *Uih ngelinuh ieh tu'uh-tu'uh [kinan **nuba'** ngimalem]
 1SG AV.think 3SG real-REDUP UV.PFV.eat rice yesterday
 FOR: 'I thought him truly to have eaten his rice yesterday'

- (14) *Sa'ban particles*
- a. **Actor Voice**
 Pi maan *wei'* *nah* [**nah** aka ai]
 already AV.eat fruit DEM PT wild.boar PT
 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'
- b. *pi maan [**nah** *wei'* *ai*] aka nah
 already AV.eat PT fruit DEM wild.boar PT
 For: 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
 Pi inaan *aka* *nah* [**nah** wei' ai]⁴
 Already UV.eat wild.boar DEM PT fruit PT
 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'
- d. *pi inaan [**nah** *aka* *ai*] wei' nah
 already UV.eat PT wild.boar DEM PT fruit
 For: 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

- (15) *Sa'ban pre-verbal position*
- a. **Actor Voice**
Súel nah maan *bi'*
 girl DEM AV.eat rice
 'That girl eats rice'

⁴ Possibly a little strange – perhaps due to the combination of *pi* and *inaan*.

- b. **bi'* maan súel nah
 rice AV.eat girl DEM
 For: 'that girl eats rice'
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
bi' ceh ai inaan *súel nah*
 rice 2SG DEM UV.eat girl DEM
 'your rice was eaten by that girl'
- e. **súel nah* inaan bi' nah
 girl DEM UV.eat rice DEM
 For: that girl ate that rice'

- ❖ Hence, across the three languages several syntactic tests support the identification of the privileged argument as the topic.

4.2 Privileged Argument as Topic

- ❖ The main alternative to treating the privileged argument as subject is to treat it as a topic.⁵ However, the privileged argument is not really a topic in either the discourse or information structure senses.
- ❖ Cooreman, Fox, and Givón (1984) and Givón (1983) suggest that a discourse topic has high topic continuity in the sense that it has a low referential distance (and is easy to identify in context) and a high topical persistence (remains important).
- ❖ Though this may be true of the AV actor, it does not appear to be true of the UV undergoer:

- (16) *Kelabit Discourse Topic*
- | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Nalap | <i>neh</i> | <u>pupu'</u> | |
| UV.PFV.fetch | 3SG.GEN | hitting.implement | |
| 'She fetched something to hit with' | | | |
| | | | |
| Nukab | <i>neh</i> | <u>bubpu'</u> | <u>daan</u> |
| UV.PFV.open | 3SG.GEN | door | hut |
| 'Opened the door to the hut' | | | |
| | | | |
| Nalap | <i>neh</i> | <u>dteh</u> | <u>kayuh</u> |
| UV.PFV.fetch | 3SG.GEN | one | stick |
| 'Picked up a piece of wood' | | | |
| | | | |
| Nulin | <i>neh</i> | <u>kuyad</u> | <u>sineh.</u> |
| UV.PFV.throw | 3SG.GEN | monkey | DEM |
| 'And threw it at the monkey.' (text, PDA10112013CH_01) | | | |

⁵ Another alternative is to treat the privileged argument as an absolutive in an ergative system but this presupposes that the AV construction is an antipassive. However, as shown in section 3.2, AV is a transitive construction.

- ❖ In fact, it is the actor that has high topic continuity in this stretch of narrative discourse and is expressed with a pronominal form. In contrast, the undergoers are variously non-specific, indefinite and not important in the discourse.
- ❖ Furthermore, you can set up the actor of a UV clause as an overt hanging topic:

(17) *Kelabit Hanging Topics*

a. **Actor Topics in UV**

Paul	kedieh,	kinan	neh	<u>bua'</u>	<u>ebpuk</u>
Paul	3SG.EMPH	UV.PFV.eat	3SG.GEN	fruit	passion

‘As for Paul, he ate the passion fruit’

- ❖ Hence, there is no direct link between privileged argument status and discourse topic.
- ❖ Similar arguments can be made for Lun Bawang and Sa’ban:

(18) *Lun Bawang*

Actor Topic in UV

Kerab	ieh	amé	munu
Time	1SG.NOM	go	AV.head.hunt

‘when he [Apu Padan] went head-hunting’

Kudeng	inan	peh	<u>lemulun</u>	iput	neh
if	EXIST	PT	people	UV.PFV.shoot	3SG.GEN

‘If he shot anyone with a blowpipe’

Ru’en	neh	nguk	nache	bau	dalé
UV.IRR.do	3SG.GEN	AV.string	OBL.one	bead	maize

‘He would string a maize bead’ (Beatrice Clayre, fieldnotes)

(19) *Sa’ban*

Actor Topic in UV

Pi	aroo’	Pwaal Payaau	ntan-ntan	pat	yeh
after	UV.do	Tree Shrew	AV.steer-REDUP	bottom	3SG

Mai	seu	taloon	Beladiin	ai	ngaai
Go	towards	cloth	tortoise	DEM	there

‘Then the Tree Shrew turned his bottom around to face Tortoise’s cloth’

Yaden	yeh	<u>ta'é'</u>	<u>yeh</u>	wan	yeh.
UV.push	3SG	excretion	3SG	on	3SG

‘And emptied his bowels onto it.’ (from *Sii’ Beladiin, Sii’ Tenhlét*, published by the Saban Association Sarawak, 2003)

- ❖ As for information-structure topics, AV actor and UV undergoer can fulfill the role of focus – which is often assumed to be mutually exclusive with topic in the information structure sense (Butt and King 1996):

(20) *Kelabit Information Structure*

a. **Undergoer Voice**

Q. Enun seni'er *muh?*
what UV.PFV.see 2SG
'What did you see?'

A. [Edteh wayang]_{focus} seni'er *kuh* na'ah...
one video UV.PFV.see 1SG before
'I just saw a video...' (pear story, BAR31072014CH_06)

b. **Actor Voice**

Q. Iih suk kuman *bua'* *kaber* *sineh?*
who REL AV.eat fruit pineapple DEM
'Who is eating that pineapple?'

A. [Peter]_{focus} suk kuman *bua'* *kaber* *sineh*
Peter REL AV.eat fruit pineapple DEM
'Peter is eating that pineapple.' (elicitation, BAR19082014CH_03)

❖ But again, focus need not necessarily be carried by the privileged argument:

(21) *Kelabit*

Q. senuru' *iih* *tieh* ngelaak ngen tauh?
UV.PFV.order who PT+3SG.NOM AV.cook for 1PL.INCL
'who ordered her to cook for us?'

a. **NOM marked actor**

senuru' *uih* tieh
UV.PFV.order 1SG.NOM PT+3SG.NOM
'I ordered her'

- ❖ Consequently, the privileged argument appears to be underspecified for its information structure role.
- ❖ Thus there are good arguments for treating the privileged argument as a subject and against treating it as a topic.
- ❖ Consequently, the verbal alternations can be said to encode an alternation in the mapping of semantic arguments to subject and can therefore be described as voice.
- ❖ The next piece in the puzzle is showing that each of the voices is transitive...

5. Multiple Transitive Clauses

- ❖ A syntactically transitive clause is one in which there are two core arguments.
- ❖ Hence, it is important to show that the AV undergoer and UV actor are also core arguments and hence that AV is not an antipassive and UV not a passive.
- ❖ There are a number of syntactic properties that suggest their core argument status and distinguish them from both subjects and obliques:

Table 3. Object Tests in Northern Sarawak

	Lun Bawang	Kelabit	Sa'ban
NP rather than PP	? (OBL case for pronominal AV undergoer)	✓	✓
Post-verbal position	✓?	✓	✓
No subject properties	✓	✓	✓
No adjunct-fronting		✓	✓

(22) *Lun Bawang – Post-verbal Position (core arguments vs obliques/subjects)*

a. **Actor Voice**

i=Bulan nemerey bera ki=Yudan
 NOM=Bulan AV.PFV.give rice OBL=Yudan
 ‘Bulan gave rice to Yudan’

b. #i=Bulan nemerey ki=Yudan bera
 NOM=Bulan AV.PFV.give OBL=Yudan rice
 For: ‘Bulan gave rice to Yudan’

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Bera dih birey i=Bulan ki=Yudan
 Rice DEM UV.give NOM=Bulan OBL=Yudan
 ‘Bulan gave rice to Yudan.’

d. *Pipag anak dih ieh
 UV.PFV.hit child DEM 3SG.NOM
 For: ‘he hit the child’ (would mean ‘the child hit him’)

(23) *Kelabit - Post-verbal Position (adjuncts of time)*

a. **Actor Voice**

La'ih sineh ne-kuman (*ngimalem) bua' kaber
 man DEM PFV-AV.eat (*yesterday) fruit pineapple
 For: ‘I ate pineapple yesterday’

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Kinan (*ngimalem) la'ih sineh bua' kaber sineh
 UV.PFV.eat (yesterday) man DEM fruit pineapple DEM
 For: ‘The man ate that pineapple yesterday.’

c. La'ih sineh nenekul nuba' (ngimalem) ngen tekul
 man DEM AV.PFV.spoon rice yesterday with spoon
 ‘The man spooned up rice yesterday with a spoon’

d. Nuba' sikul la'ih sineh (ngimalem) ngen tekul
 rice UV.PFV.spoon man DEM yesterday with spoon
 ‘The man spooned up the rice yesterday with a spoon’

(24) *Sa'ban – No fronting*

a. **Actor Voice**

*bi' súel nah maan⁶
rice girl DEM AV.eat
For: 'rice, the girl ate'

b. Ngan anak yeh ai súel nah mraai brée
To child 3SG DEM girl dem av.give rice
'To her child, the girl gave rice'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

súel nah, bi' nah inaan
girl DEM rice DEM UV.eat
For: 'the girl, rice was eaten by her'

d. Ngaan anak yeh ai brée iraaí súel nah
To child 3SG DEM rice uv.give girl dem
'To her child, the girl gave rice'

- ❖ Consequently, the AV undergoer and UV actor both behave like non-subject core arguments rather than obliques.
- ❖ This suggests that both AV and UV are transitive and hence that the voice alternations are symmetrical.
- ❖ In fact, although there is a restriction against definite undergoers in AV in languages like Tagalog, this restriction is (at most) a tendency in Northern Sarawak. Hence, there is also less of a semantic motivation for a lower transitivity analysis (cf. Aldridge 2004, Rackowski and Richards 2005)
- ❖ Hence, we can conclude that the alternations in Lun Bawang, Kelabit and Sa'ban (despite differences in morphosyntax) all constitute symmetrical voice.
- ❖ This is interesting from the perspective of Western Austronesian typology as it suggests that symmetrical voice systems are independent of other morphosyntactic properties (including word order/case marking).

6. Conclusion

- ❖ I have proposed that identifying symmetrical voice systems involves the following steps:
 - a. Demonstrate an alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions
 - b. Demonstrate that each alternation is equally transitive
- ❖ In line with this approach, I presented a number of syntactic properties that support the identification of the privileged argument as subject and non-privileged actors and undergoers as core arguments in Lun Bawang, Kelabit and Sa'ban.

⁶ It is possible that one might front the AV undergoer in a separate intonation phrase if listing contrastively the various things someone ate. This remains to be further explored.

- ❖ These support the idea that verbal morphology encodes an alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions and results in multiple transitive clauses
- ❖ Hence, it suggests that the best analysis of the data is **symmetrical voice** despite the fact that the Apad Uat languages otherwise differ in their morphosyntactic properties from more Philippine-type to more Indonesian-type.
- ❖ Consequently, it seems that symmetrical voice systems are a common feature across typologically distinct Western Austronesian languages and languages can have more than one transitive clause independently of their morphosyntactic typology.

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10. Appendix

- ❖ The patterns of binding in Kelabit may be more complicated than they seemed above when we consider quantificational objects e.g. 'every child' and 'every mother' (cf. Legate 2012):

(25) *Kelabit Binding*

a. **Actor Voice**

Kenep-kenep	tesineh	nu'uh	anak	nedih
Every	mother	AV.look.after	child	3SG.POSS

'Every mother_i looks after her_i child'

b.

Tesineh	nedih	nu'uh	kenep-kenep	anak
Mother	3SG.POSS	AV.look.after	every	child

'Her*_{i/k} mother looks after every child_i'

➤ i.e. binding asymmetry!

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Kenep-kenep anak terenuwen tesineh nedih
Every child UV.look.after mother 3SG.POSS
'Every child_i is looked after by her_i mother'

d. Anak nedih terenuwen kenep-kenep tesineh
child 3SG.POSS UV.look.after every mother
'Her_i child is looked after by every mother_i'

➤ No binding asymmetry!

- ❖ Looks as though the undergoer can bind into the actor - as in (c) – in UV, but there is an asymmetry between actor and undergoer in terms of binding that exists only in AV (and only when the actor is pre-verbal).