Symmetrical Voice in Northern Sarawak

Charlotte Hemmings, University of Oxford
SEALS 17th-20th May 2018

Introduction

- Introducing **Western Austronesian** Voice systems

- Voice in **Lun Bawang**, **Kelabit** and **Sa'ban**

- Arguments for treating the voice systems as **symmetrical voice**
  a) Arguments for an alternation in grammatical functions ("voice")
  b) Arguments for each voice being transitive ("symmetrical")

- Implications for our understanding of **Western Austronesian**

Aims

(1) Consolidate the **definition of symmetrical voice** and refine the methodology for identifying symmetrical systems

(2) Show that symmetrical voice is the best analysis of the data in all three languages

(3) Demonstrate that languages can have more than one transitive clause regardless of other morphosyntactic properties.

Western Austronesian Voice

Voice

- This paper adopts a broad definition of **voice**:

The morphological encoding of the mapping from

semantic arguments to syntactic functions (Kulikov 2011)

- I.e. voice alternations give us different means of expressing transitive events that allows for different mappings between **arguments** and **functions.**

Active/Passive

- In addition, active/passive alternations typically involve **additional morphological marking** and **detransitivisation**
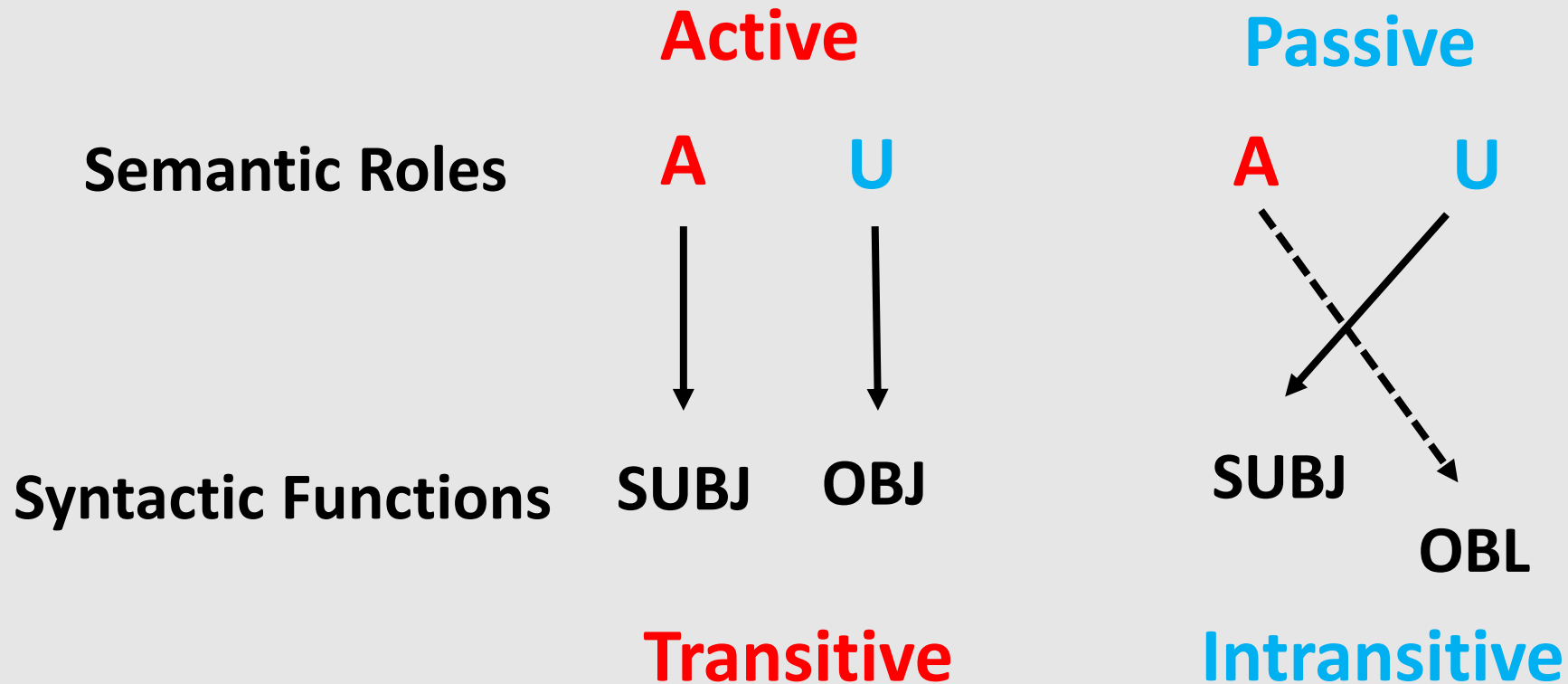
(2a)   **Active**

The man   bought   *fish*   at the store

(2b)   **Passive**

The fish   was bought   at the store   (by the man)

Active/Passive

- Hence active/passive (and ergative/antipassive) alternations are **asymmetrical**

Tagalog Verbal Alternations

(1a) **Actor Voice**   B<um>ili   *ang* lalaki   *ng isda*   sa tindahan.
<AV>buy   NOM man   GEN fish   OBL store
'The man bought <u>fish</u> at the store.'

(1b) **Undergoer Voice**   B<in>ili   *ng lalaki*   *ang* isda   sa tindahan.
<PFV.UV>buy   GEN man   NOM fish   OBL store
'The man bought <u>the fish</u> at the store.'

(1c) **Locative Voice**   B<in>ilih-an   *ng lalaki*   *ng isda*   *ang* tindahan.
<PFV>buy-LV   GEN man   GEN fish   NOM store
'The man bought fish at the store.'

(1d) **Benefactive Voice**   I-b<in>ili   *ng lalaki*   *ng isda*   *ang* bata.
BV<PFV>buy   GEN man   GEN fish   NOM child
'The man bought fish for the child.' (Arka 2002)

Western Austronesian

- Western Austronesian (WAn) voice alternations are **symmetrical**

Possible Analyses

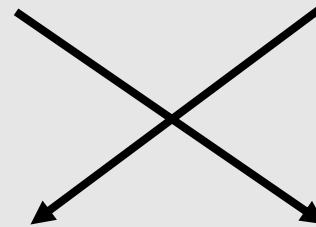- The analysis of WAn verbal morphology is **controversial** (Adelaar 2013):
  - ➢ The number of alternations
  - ➢ The subject debate (see e.g. Schachter 1976, Kroeger 1993)
  - ➢ Semantic/discourse differences

- This has led to a variety of alternative accounts:
  - ➢ E.g. alternations in focus (Clayre 1991); pivot (Foley and Van Valin 1984); topic (McKaughan 1958)
  - ➢ Alternations in case (Rackowski and Richards 2005) or transitivity (Aldridge 2004)
  - ➢ Or nominalisation (Kaufman 2009)

Symmetrical Voice

- Riesberg (2014: 10): a language is **symmetrical** if:

   (1) It has more than one basic transitive construction
   (2) The corresponding arguments behave equally in all different voices, and
   (3) The verb is morphologically equally marked in all different voices

- Hence **to identify symmetrical voice** it is necessary to show:

   (1) that there is an alternation in grammatical functions, and
   (2) that all clauses are transitive

Northern Sarawak Voice Systems

Northern Sarawak Languages

- This paper presents three languages of the Apad Uat subgroup spoken in Northern Sarawak, Malaysia: **Lun Bawang**; **Kelabit** and **Sa'ban**.

- Data is taken from my own fieldwork in Ba' Kelalan; Bario and Long Banga and Beatrice Clayre's published/unpublished fieldnotes.

- They all appear to have **symmetrical voice** systems but differ in their **morphosyntactic properties** (Clayre 2005, 2014)
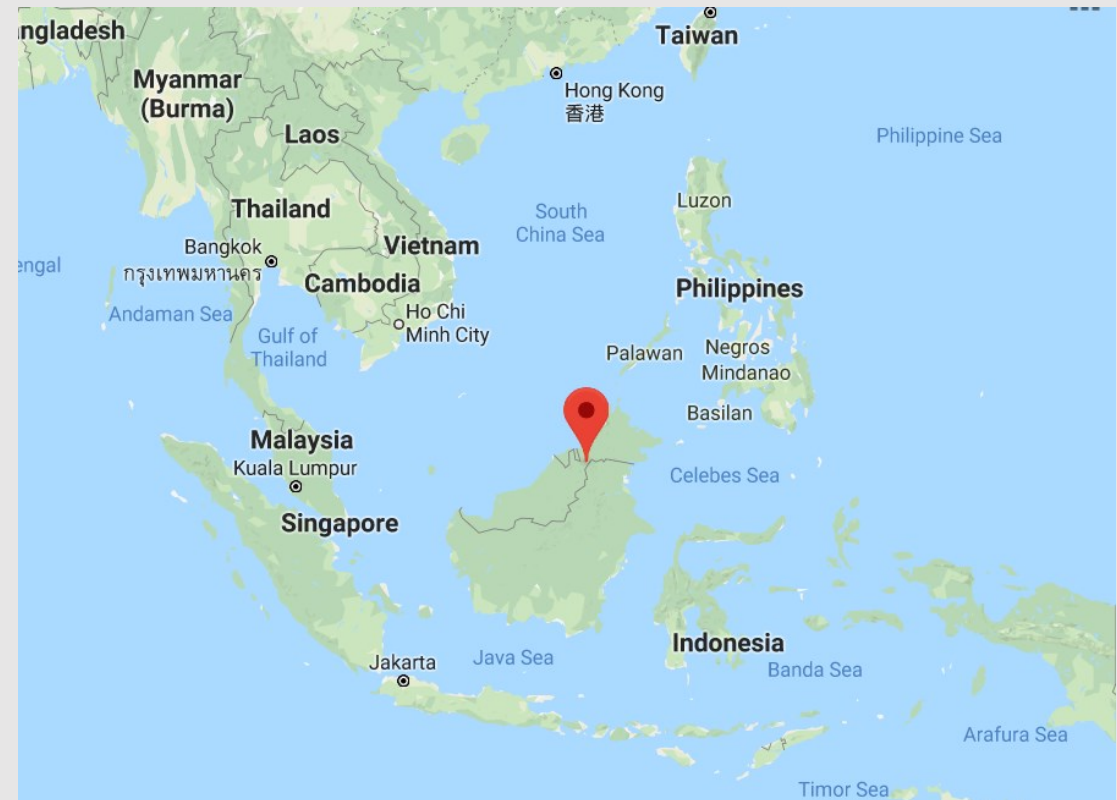
Lun Bawang

(3a)   **Actor Voice**

Ngekeb   *lacing   nih*   **uih**   atun
AV.cover   pot   DEM   1SG.NOM   first
'I'm covering this pot first.' (Clayre 2005: 20)

3-way system
of alternations

(3b)   **Undergoer Voice**

Beli-en   *ku*   lal   neh   ku   usin   nih.
buy-UV.IRR   1SG.GEN   hen   DEM   with   money   DEM
'I'll buy the hen with this money.'

(3c)   **Instrumental Voice**

Pimeli *ku*   *lal*   usin   nih.
IV.buy 1SG.GEN   hen   money   DEM
'I'll use this money to buy the hen.' (Clayre 2014: 132-133)

Lun Bawang

(3d)　**Actor Voice**

Iko　　　　　nguit　　　　　*neneh*　　　　amé　nekuh.

2SG.NOM　　　AV.bring　　　3SG.OBL　　　go　　1SG.OBL

'You bring him to me.'

> Preserves 'Philippine-type' case-marking

(3e)　**Undergoer Voice**

Inapung　　　*kuh*　　　　**ieh**　　　　　rat　neneh.

UV.PFV.hide　1SG.GEN　　　3SG.NOM　　　from　3SG.OBL

'I hid it from him.' (Clayre 2005: 25)

Kelabit

(3a) **Actor Voice**

La'ih	sineh	ne-nekul	nuba'	nedih	ngen	seduk
man	DEM	PFV-AV.spoon	rice	3SG.POSS	with	spoon

'That man spooned up his rice with a spoon'

3-way system of alternations

(3b) **Undergoer Voice**

sikul	lai'h	sineh	nuba'	nedih	ngen	seduk
<UV.PFV>spoon	man	DEM	rice	3SG.POSS	with	spoon

'That man ate his rice with a spoon'

(3c) **Instrumental Voice**

seduk	penekul	la'ih	sineh	nuba'	nedih
spoon	IV-spoon	man	DEM	rice	3SG.POSS

'That man used a spoon to spoon up his rice'

Kelabit

(a)   **Actor Voice**

Uih   ni'er   *ieh*

1SG.NOM   AV.see   3SG.NOM

'I see him.'

> Case-system does not mark AV undergoer as oblique

(b)   **Undergoer Voice**

Seni'er   *kuh/uih*   **t=ieh**

UV.see   1SG.GEN/1SG.NOM   PT=3SG.NOM

'I saw him'

Sa'ban

(4a)   **Actor Voice (AV)**

Yuet   **noknai**   n-toe   *éek*.

monkey   this   AV-drop   1SG

'This monkey drops me.'

(4b)   **Undergoer Voice (UV)**

Yuet   **noknai**   i-toe   *éek*.

monkey   this   UV-drop   1SG

'I dropped the monkey.' (Clayre 2014: 138)

2-way system of alternations

No case distinctions in pronominal system

Summary

- The three languages differ in terms of the **morphosyntactic properties** of the voice systems (from Philippine-type to Indonesian-type)

- However, they all appear to have **symmetrical voice** systems

- Therefore, we can ask:

  a) Is evidence of an alternation in the **mapping of arguments to functions?**

  b) Is there evidence for more than one type of **transitive clause?**

  c) Do the languages differ in this regard?

An alternation in Grammatical Functions

Alternation in Grammatical Functions

- Grammatical functions in Western Austronesian are controversial – especially **subject**

- This is because the **typical subject properties are split** between the actor and the privileged argument (see Schachter 1976, Kroeger 1993ab)

- This is true of Western Austronesian as well as syntactically ergative languages and can be seen in the patterns of relativisation and reflexive binding in **Kelabit**.

Relativisation

- Only the privileged argument can be relativised on:

(4a) **Actor Voice**
Seni'er   kuh   **la'ih**   [suk   ne-nekul   *nuba'*]
UV.PFV.see   1SG   man   REL   PFV-AV.spoon   rice
'I saw the man who spooned up rice'

> Privileged argument = subject?

(4b)   *Seni'er   kuh   *nuba'*   [suk   nekul   **la'ih sineh**]

(4c)   **Undergoer Voice**
Seni'er   kuh   **nuba'**   [suk   sikul   *la'ih sineh*]
UV.PFV.see   1SG   rice   REL   UV.PFV.spoon   man DEM
'I saw the rice that the man spooned up with a spoon'

(4d)   *Seni'er   kuh   *la'ih*   [suk   sikul   **nuba'**]

Reflexive binding

- Only the actor role can bind reflexives

(5a)   **Actor Voice** (actor = privileged)

Uih	ne-mada'	burur	kudih	ngedeh
1SG	PFV-AV.show	body	1SG.POSS	to.3PL

'I surrendered myself to them'

Actor = Subject?

(5b)   **Undergoer Voice** (actor = non-privileged)

Binada'	kuh	burur	kudih	ngedeh
UV.PFV.show	1SG	body	1SG.POSS	to.3PL

'I surrendered myself to them'

Systematic Split (Falk 2006)

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

Actor Semantic Role

Syntactic Pivot

What does this mean for subjects?

- There have been three main approaches to the **split:**

  (1) Western Austronesian languages do not have subjects (Schachter 1976) [X]
  - There is no subject - the privileged argument is a **topic**

  (2) Only Type 1 properties identify subjects (Aldridge 2004) [X]
  - The **actor is subject** – the privileged argument is a **topic/absolute**

  (3) Only Type 2 properties identify subjects (Manning 1996, Manning & Sag 1998) [✓]
  - The privileged argument is **subject -** binding controlled by **actor**

Privileged Argument as Subject?

- In addition to extraction (relativisation, cleft constructions) there are a number of **subject properties** unique to privileged arguments

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

Control in Lun Bawang

(11a) **Actor Voice**

Merey	uih	**keneh**	[kuman	*nuba'*]
AV.give	1SG.NOM	3SG.OBL	AV.eat	rice

For: 'I let her eat rice'

(11b) *Merey uih *keneh* [kenen **nuba'**]

(11c) **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**]

Raising in Kelabit

(13a) **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'

(13b) *Uih ngelinuh nuba' tu'uh-tu'uh [nekuman **ieh** ngimalem]

(13c) **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'

(13d) *Uih ngelinuh ieh tu'uh-tu'uh [kinan **nuba'** ngimalem]

Particles in Sa'ban

(14a) **Actor Voice**

Pi   maan   *wei'*   *nah*   [**nah**   <u>aka</u>   <u>ai</u>]

already AV.eat   fruit   DEM   PT   wild.boar   PT

'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

(14b) *pi   maan   [**nah**   *wei'*   *ai*]   <u>aka</u>   <u>nah</u>

(14c) **Undergoer Voice**

Pi   inaan   *aka*   *nah*   [**nah**   <u>wei'</u>   <u>ai</u>]

Already UV.eat   wild.boar   DEM   PT   fruit   PT

'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

(14d) *pi   inaan   [**nah**   *aka*   *ai*]   <u>wei'</u>   <u>nah</u>

Privileged Argument as Subject?

The privileged argument has the Type 2 properties expected of subjects in all three languages

Privileged Argument as Topic?

- Although the AV actor is often a topic, the UV undergoer is not a **discourse topic** with high topic continuity…

(8)   Nalap   neh   pupu'
               UV.PFV.fetch   3SG   hitting.implement
               'She fetched something to hit with'

               Nukab   neh   bubpu'   daan
               UV.PFV.open   3SG   door   hut
               'Opened the door to the hut'

               Nalap   neh   edteh   kayuh
               UV.PFV.fetch   3SG   one   stick
               'Picked up a piece of wood' (Narrative)

> It is the actor that has high discourse continuity and is expressed as a pronoun!

Kelabit Hanging Topics

(17a) **Paul   kedieh**,   kinan   *neh*   <u>bua' ebpuk</u> | The actor is topic! |

Paul   3SG.EMPH   UV.PFV.eat   3SG.GEN   passionfruit

'As for Paul, he ate the passion fruit'

Sa'ban Discourse

(8)   Pi   aroo'   *Pwaal Payaau*   ntan-ntan   **pat   yeh**
      after   UV.do   Tree Shrew   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*   **ta'é'**   **yeh**   wan   yeh.
      UV.push   3SG   excretion   3SG   on   3SG

'And emptied his bowels onto it.'

> This is about the actor… not the undergoer!

Lun Bawang Focus

- Both AV actors and UV undergoers can express **focus information**:

(10a)   **Actor Voice**

Irey   nemelih   *bera*   *neh*?

who   AV.PFV.buy   rice   DEM

'Who bought that rice?

(10c)   Undergoer Voice

Enun   bilih   *delai*   *dih*?

What   UV.PFV.buy   man   DEM

'What did the man buy?'

> The privileged argument is focus – the non-privileged argument is presupposed!

Privileged Argument as Topic?

The privileged argument does not correspond

to a topic in any sense!

Summary

- There are many subject tests that support the idea that the privileged argument is **subject...**

- And arguments against treating it as **topic.**

- Hence, we can conclude that the privileged argument is subject and consequently that the verbal morphology represents an alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions....

- This is the definition of **voice**!

All Voices are Transitive

Transitive

- The next piece of the puzzle is showing not only that WAn morphology encodes voice but that the alternations are **symmetrical**.

- In other words, we not only need to show that the AV actor and the UV undergoer are **subjects**, but also that the AV undergoer and UV actor are both core arguments (unlike passive actors and antipassive undergoers)

- There are a number of **syntactic phenomena** that support this position – these also serve to show that the UV actor is more like an object than a subject.

AV Undergoer and UV Actor Core Properties

- The AV Undergoer and UV Actor share the following properties which distinguish them both from **subjects** and **obliques**

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

Lun Bawang - post-verbal position

(22a) **Actor Voice**

i=Bulan   nemerey   *bera*   ki=Yudan

NOM=Bulan   AV.PFV.give   rice   OBL=Yudan

'Bulan gave rice to Yudan'

> The AV undergoer and UV actor occur after the verb and before the recipient

(22c) **Undergoer Voice**

Bera   dih   birey   *i=Bulan*   ki=Yudan

Rice   DEM   UV.give   NOM=Bulan OBL=Yudan

'Bulan gave rice to Yudan.'

Kelabit - post-verbal position (core args)

(23a) **Actor Voice**

La'ih   sineh   ne-kuman   (***ngimalem**)   *bua'   kaber*

man   DEM   PFV-AV.eat   (yesterday)   fruit   pineapple

For: 'I ate pineapple yesterday'

(23b) **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.'

> Both the AV undergoer and UV actor cannot be separated from the verb by adjuncts of time

Kelabit - post-verbal position (obliques)

(23c) **Actor Voice**

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'

(23d) **Undergoer Voice**

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'

> Hence, neither the AV undergoer nor UV actor patterns like an oblique

Sa'ban – Fronting (core args)

(24a) Actor Voice

*bi'   **súel   nah**   maan

rice   girl   DEM   AV.eat

For: 'rice, the girl ate'

> The AV undergoer and UV actor cannot be fronted before a pre-verbal subject

(24c) Undergoer Voice

*súel   nah,   **bi'   nah**   inaan

girl   DEM   rice   DEM   UV.eat

For: 'the girl, rice was eaten by her'

Sa'ban – Fronting (adjuncts/obliques)

(24b) **Actor Voice**

Ngaan	anak	yeh	ai	**súel**	**nah**	mraai	*brée*
To	child	3SG	DEM	girl	dem	av.give	rice

'To her child, the girl gave rice'

Neither the AV undergoer nor UV actor patterns like an oblique

(24d) **Undergoer Voice**

Ngaan	anak	yeh	ai	**brée**	iraai	*súel*	*nah*
To	child	3SG	DEM	rice	uv.give	girl	dem

'To her child, the girl gave rice'

Non-privileged arguments?

The ᴜᴠ actor looks more like an object (non-subject core argument) than a subject!

Summary

- Consequently, the AV undergoer and the UV actor both have **core argument properties** and differ in their coding and behaviour from both **subjects** and obliques

- This suggests that both AV and UV are indeed transitive clauses with two core arguments and consequently that the alternations are **symmetrical**

- This applies regardless of other **morphosyntactic properties** of the voice system (and cross-cuts the Philippine-type/Indonesian-type distinction)

Summary

- Hence, we have motivated the following analysis of **argument to function mappings** in the different voice constructions:
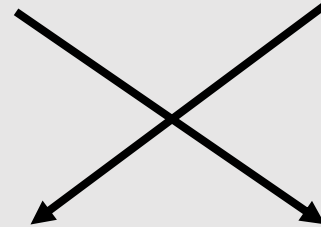
Conclusion

Conclusion

- I 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 keeping with this, 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.

- These suggest that the best analysis of the data is **symmetrical voice**

Conclusion

- This despite morphosyntactic differences between the three languages…

- Consequently, it seems that **symmetrical voice systems** are a common feature across Western Austronesian languages

- And languages can have more than one transitive clause independently of their morphosyntactic typology.

Many Thanks!