Subjecthood and Case in Lun Bawang

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Introduction

- This paper presents an unusual pattern of (differential) **case marking** in **Lun Bawang** pronouns on the basis of preliminary fieldwork in Ba' Kelalan (Buduk Nur) in 2017.

- The main aims of the paper are:

  ➢ To illustrate how the **case system** in Ba' Kelalan differs from other Lun Bawang dialects and related languages.

  ➢ Consider the possible **implications** of differential marking for the relationship between morphological encoding, grammatical function and information structure.

Outline

1. Background on voice and grammatical functions in Lun Bawang
2. Case-marking in Lundayeh, Kelabit and Lun Bawang
3. Differential marking cross-linguistically
4. Differential marking in Lun Bawang
5. Conclusions

Voice and Grammatical Functions in Lun Bawang

Lun Bawang

- **Lun Bawang** is a Western Austronesian language spoken in Northern Sarawak, Malaysia, in the Lawas, Limbang and Baram districts.

- It is part of the **Apad Uat** subgroup, which also includes Kelabit and Sa'ban.

- Related dialects are spoken in Sabah, Brunei and Kalimantan where the language is known as **Lundayeh**.

Lun Bawang

- There is relatively little documentation of Lun Bawang/Lundayeh (especially of the Ba' Kelalan dialect)

- Most existing descriptions are based on **Kemaloh Lundayeh** of Kalimantan or **Sipitang** dialect in Sabah. There are also some descriptions of **Long Semado** Lun Bawang.

- These appear to be more conservative than the Ba' Kelalan dialect (in terms of phonology, and also in the pronominal system)

Lun Bawang Voice

- Like other Western Austronesian (WAn) languages, Lun Bawang has a system of **symmetrical voice** alternations

- These are alternations in the **mapping of arguments to functions** without changes in morphosyntactic **transitivity** (Himmelmann 2005, Riesberg 2014)
  - ➢ arguments: actor vs undergoer
  - ➢ functions: **subject** vs *non-subject core*

- The function of an argument is typically indicated via **word order** (rather than case marking) but the position of the subject is **flexible**

Lun Bawang Voice

(1a) **Actor Voice**

ne'	nukat	*kelatih*	**uih**	nalem
PFV.go	AV.dig	worms	1SG.NOM	yesterday

'I went to dig up worms yesterday'

(1b) **Undergoer Voice**

Tinukat	*uih*	**kelatih**	**dih**	feh
UV.PFV.dig	1SG.NOM	worms	DEM	PT

'I already dug up the worms'

Root = *tukat*
AV = *N-*
UV = *-in-*

Lun Bawang Voice

Actor Voice   **Undergoer Voice**

Semantic Roles   **A**   **P**   **A**   **P**

Syntactic Functions   **SUBJ**   **CORE**   **SUBJ**   **CORE**

Transitive   **Transitive**

The **symmetrical voice** analysis is supported by morphosyntactic properties in Lun Bawang

Coding Properties

- AV actor/undergoer and UV actor/undergoer are expressed as NPs; obliques are PPs:

(2a)   **Actor Voice**

Delai   **dih**   nemerey   *bera*   [kuan   anak   ieh]PP

man   DEM   AV.PFV.give   rice   for   child   3SG.NOM

'The man gave rice to his child'

(2b)   **Undergoer Voice**

Uko'   **dih**   bibal   *delai*   *dih*   [makai   kayuh]PP

dog   DEM   UV.PFV.hit   man   DEM   use   stick

'The man hit the dog with a stick'

Subject Properties

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1 - AV actors/UV undergoers can be relativized on, other arguments cannot

(3a) **Actor Voice** **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'

Uko'   [luk   **nemabal**   **delai**   **dih**   makai   kayuh]

(3b) **Undergoer Voice**   **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'

Delai   *dih*   [luk   **pipag**   **uko'**   **dih**]

Subject Properties

2 - AV actor/UV undergoer can be questioned initially, other arguments *in-situ*

(4a)   **Actor Voice**

   Irey   nemelih   *bera*   *neh*?

   who   AV.PFV.buy   rice   DEM

   'Who bought that rice?

(4c)   **Undergoer Voice**

   Anun   bilih   *delai*   *dih*?

   what   UV.PFV.buy   man   DEM

   'What did the man buy?'

(4b)   *Anun   nemelih   **delai**   **dih**?

   what   AV.PFV.buy   man   DEM

   For: 'What did the man buy?'

(4d)   *Irey   bilih   **bera**   **dih**?

   who   UV.PFV.buy   rice   DEM

   For: 'who bought the rice?'

Subject Properties

3 - In control constructions the controlled argument is an AV actor/UV undergoer

(5a) **Actor Voice**   Merey   uih   **keneh**   [**kuman**   *nuba'*]
                       AV.give   1SG.NOM   3SG.OBL   AV.eat   rice
                       For: 'I let her eat rice'

                       *Merey   uih   *nuba'*   [**kuman**   **ieh**]

(5b) **Undergoer Voice** Merey   uih   **nuba'**   [**kenen**   *ieh*]
                          AV.give   1SG.NOM   rice   [UV.IRR.eat   3SG.NOM]
                          'I give her rice to eat'

                          *Merey   uih   *keneh*   [kenen   **nuba'**]

Core Argument Properties

1 - The non-subject argument appears before obliques

(6a) **Actor Voice**

i=Bulan nemerey *bera* ki=Yudan

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

'Bulan gave rice to Yudan'

(6b) #**i=Bulan** nemerey ki=Yudan *bera*

(6c) **Undergoer Voice**

Bera dih birey *i=Bulan* ki=Yudan

Rice DEM UV.give NOM=Bulan OBL=Yudan

'Bulan gave rice to Yudan.'

Summary

- Consequently, I will assume the following mappings from arguments to functions:

	actor	undergoer
AV	**subject**	*non-subject core*
UV	*non-subject core*	**subject**

This is important because it means the UV undergoer is the subject!

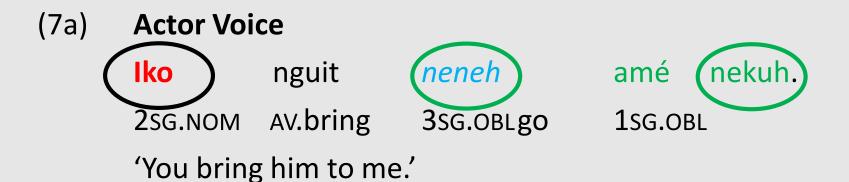# Case-Marking in Lun Bawang

Austronesian Case Marking

- In the more conservative WAn languages, case-marking is used to indicate the **function** of an argument within the voice system.

- Typically, three case distinctions are assumed for **pronouns** (cf. Kroeger 1993)

> ➤ **NOM** – subjects
> ➤ GEN – non-subject actors
> ➤ OBL – obliques and non-subject undergoers

Lundayeh (Kemaloh)

(7a) **Actor Voice**

Iko nguit *neneh* amé nekuh.

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

'You bring him to me.'

	actor	undergoer
AV	**NOM**	OBL
UV	GEN	**NOM**

(7b) **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 (Bario)

(9a) **Actor Voice**

Uih — ni'er — ieh
1SG.NOM — AV.see — 3SG.NOM
'I see him.'

	actor	undergoer
AV	**NOM**	**NOM**
UV	GEN/**NOM**	**NOM**

(9b) **Undergoer Voice**

Seni'er — kuh — t=ieh
UV.see — 1SG.GEN — 3SG.NOM
'I saw him'

differential actor marking

(9c) Seni'er — uih — t=ieh
UV.see — 1SG.NOM — PT=3SG.NOM
'I saw him'

Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan)

(10a) **Actor Voice**

Uih   nemepag   *keneh*

1SG.NOM   AV.hit   3SG.OBL

'I hit him'

(10b) Ieh   nemerey   *bera*   keneh

3SG.NOM   AV.PFV.give rice   3SG.OBL

'He gave rice to him'

(10c) **Undergoer Voice**

Pipag   *neh*   **ieh**

UV.PFV.slap 3SG.GEN   3SG.NOM

'He hit him'

	actor	undergoer
AV	**NOM**	OBL
UV	GEN	**NOM**

but…

Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan)

(11)   **Undergoer Voice**

Kinan   *uih*   bua'   nih

UV.PFV.eat   1SG.NOM   fruit   DEM

'I've eaten the fruit'

	actor	undergoer
AV	**NOM**	OBL
UV	GEN/**NOM**	**NOM**

Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan)

(12a) **Actor Voice**

Uih nemepag *keneh*

1SG.NOM AV.hit 3SG.OBL

'I hit him'

	actor	undergoer
AV	**NOM**	OBL/**NOM**
UV	GEN/**NOM**	**NOM**

(12b) **Uih** nemepag *ieh*

1SG.NOM AV.hit 3SG.NOM

'I hit him (it?)'

differential object marking

Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan)

(12c) **Undergoer Voice**

Pipag *neh* ieh

UV.PFV.slap 3SG.GEN 3SG.NOM

'He hit him'

	actor	undergoer
AV	**NOM**	OBL/**NOM**
UV	**NOM**	OBL/**NOM**

(12d) Pipag *neh* keneh

UV.PFV.hit 3SG.GEN 3SG.OBL

'He hit him'

(12e) Pipag *ieh* keneh

UV.PFV.hit 3SG.NOM 3SG.OBL

'He hit him

Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan)

(14a) **Actor Voice**

*__Keneh__   nemepag   *anak*   *ineh*

OBL.3SG   AV.PFV.slap   child   DEM

For: 'He [the man] slapped the child.'

> case choice is not just random…
> OBL can never be used for actors

(14b) **Undergoer Voice**

*Pipag   *keneh*   **anak**   **dih**

UV.PFV.slap   OBL.3SG   child   DEM

For: 'He [the man] slapped the child.'

(14c) ***anak**   **dih**   pipag   *keneh*

child   DEM   UV.PFV.slap   3SG.OBL

For: 'He [the man] slapped the child'

Summary

- Case-marking in Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan) differs from Lundayeh since case does not seem to reflect **grammatical function,** and Kelabit since we find **DOM** too:

	AV actor (Subject)	AV undergoer (non-subject core)	UV undergoer (subject)	UV actor (non-subject core)
Lundayeh	**NOM**	OBL	**NOM**	GEN
Lun Bawang	**NOM**	OBL/**NOM**	OBL/**NOM**	GEN/**NOM**
Kelabit	**NOM**	**NOM**	**NOM**	GEN/**NOM**

- We can therefore ask what motivates the choice of pronoun form?

Differential Marking

Differential Marking

- **Differential marking** = non-uniform marking of arguments
- It is known to be affected by both **semantic factors** and **information structure**:
  - ➤ Animacy, Referentiality and Definiteness
  - ➤ Properties of event semantics, e.g. volitionality, control, affectedness
  - ➤ <u>Topicality/Focus</u>

(Aissen 2003, Bossong 1985, de Swart 2007, Naess 2004, Iemmolo 2010, Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011, Witzlack-Makarevich and Seržant 2018)

DOM and Topicality

- Often objects receive overt marking when they are **topical:**

Tundra Nenets (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011: 103)

(12a) xasawa   ti-m   xadaº

man   **reindeer-ACC**   kill.3SG.SUBJ

'A/the man killed a/the reindeer'

Non-topical Object
What happened?
What did the man do?
What did the man kill?

(12b) xasawa   ti-m   xadaºda

man   **reindeer-ACC**   kill.OBJ.3SG.SUBJ

'A/the man killed a/the reindeer'

Topical Object
What did the man do to the reindeer?

Summary

- Differential object marking (DOM) is often linked to topicality

- DAT (or OBL) is a common source of ACC (topic?) marking in languages with DOM

Does information structure play a role in the choice of **OBL** vs **NOM**?

What pattern since **UV undergoer** is an **undergoer** *but also* a **subject**?

Differential Marking in Lun Bawang

Differential Marking in Lun Bawang

- I currently have access to c. five hours of elicitation and six recorded stories/ personal histories of between 1-10 minutes long.

- Hence, a very small corpus with only a few instances of case-marked pronouns (and next to no instances of naturally occurring/spontaneous UV constructions).

- Nonetheless, there are some indications that the use of OBL may be linked to **topicality**

OBL as topical undergoer marker

- The use of OBL vs NOM in AV in the recorded texts appears to correlate with animacy (which is often linked to topic-worthiness)

(18b)　idih　　**Bungkaak**　　nenaat　　　　　　*ki=Tuwau*　　　　　　feh

　　　　and　　crow　　　　　AV.PFV.decorate　　OBL=argus.pheasant　　PT

　　　　naru'　　　　*keneh*　　　　roo'-roo'　　taga

　　　　AV.make　　　3SG.OBL　　good-REDUP　　pretty

　　　　'and so Crow decorated Argus Pheasant to make him beautiful'

The OBL undergoer is animate and topical

NOM as non-topical marker

(18b)   Mo,   naru'   **kiteh**   *ieh*   keneh
        Yes,   AV.do   1DU.INCL   3SG.NOM   he.said
        'Yes, let's do it, he said'

The NOM undergoer is inanimate and non-specific

OBL as topical undergoer marker

- Similarly, the following was offered as an example sentence using *bifet* (UV.PFV.hit)

(19b)   **Undergoer Voice (OBL undergoer)**

Bifet   *uih*   **keneh**   ngaceku   ieh   pelaba lalid

UV.PFV.hit   1SG   OBL.3SG   because   3SG   very   naughty

'I hit him because he was very naughty'

The OBL undergoer has topic continuity

OBL as topical undergoer marker

- Moreover, OBL pronouns cannot appear in initial position:

(20a) **Undergoer Voice**

Anak	**dih**	pipag	*ieh*
child	DEM	UV.PFV.slap	3SG.NOM

'He slapped the child.'

NP = ✓

(20b) | ***Keneh** | | pipag | *ieh* |
|------|------|------|------|
| 3SG.OBL | | UV.PFV.slap | 3SG.NOM |

For: 'He was slapped by him'

OBL = ✗

The OBL undergoer is not compatible with a focus reading

OBL as topical undergoer marker

- Similarly, it is possible to cleft the NOM pronoun, but not the OBL pronoun:

(21a) **Ieh**   luk   pipag   *i=Yudan*

       3SG.NOM   REL   UV.PFV.slap   NOM=Yudan

       'He was the one Yudan slapped'

NOM = ✓

The OBL undergoer is not compatible with a focus reading

(21b) ***keneh**   luk   pipag   *i=Yudan*

       3SG.OBL   REL   UV.PFV.slap   NOM=Yudan

       For: 'He was the one Yudan slapped'

OBL = ✗

OBL as topical undergoer marker

- Hence, OBL undergoers are restricted to clause final position, which is associated with givenness

(22a) *nemelih   *bera*   **irey**?

Av.pfv.buy   rice   who

For: 'who bought rice?'

(22b) *Bilih   *delai*   *dih*   **anun**?

UV.PFV.buy   man   DEM   what

For: 'what did the man buy?'

It is ungrammatical for a *wh*-word to appear clause-finally which suggests that **given** information occurs there...

Hence, the OBL undergoer is given!

Summary

- There is some evidence from the corpus to suggest that OBL forms are used for **topics**, whilst **NOM** forms are used for **non-topics** (at least in AV)

- This analysis is further supported by the fact that NOM undergoers can be **clefted**, whilst OBL forms cannot and are restricted to **post-object position** (which is associated with givenness)

- Consequently, it seems worth exploring the hypothesis that differential marking in Lun Bawang (Ba' Kelalan) is triggered by **information structure**, and that this applies to undergoers irrespective of their grammatical function.

Possible development?

OBL forms strictly mark AV undergoer pronouns (OBL case is linked to definiteness)

Case-marking not necessary to mark grammatical function

No definiteness requirement for UV undergoers

OBL/NOM is used differentially to mark topicality in AV undergoer objects

OBL/NOM is used differentially to mark topical undergoers in UV as well

Conclusion

Conclusion

- In this paper, I presented the **case marking** system in the dialect of Lun Bawang spoken in Ba' Kelalan.

- Unlike other dialects, undergoers can be expressed using either ɴᴏᴍ or ᴏʙʟ case regardless of whether they function as *objects* (in ᴀᴠ) or **subjects** (in ᴜᴠ)

- Although there is **limited data**, it seems likely/possible given some of the tendencies observed (and cross-linguistic comparison) that topicality may play a role in the use of ᴏʙʟ undergoers.

Conclusion

- This suggests that **case-marking** in Lun Bawang (and perhaps WAn more generally) does not relate to grammatical function, but rather to semantic or discourse properties.

- In other words, **oblique coding** does not necessarily correlate with oblique function (contrary to ergative analyses of AV)

- This supports the idea that grammatical functions should be identified on the basis of syntactic rather than encoding properties (Dalrymple 2001, Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2011).

Conclusion

- Moreover, it suggests that patterns of **differential marking** may correlate with semantic role rather than grammatical function.

- Hence, a deeper understanding of **case-marking choices** in Lun Bawang could have important implications for Western Austronesian, the typology of differential marking and the study of grammatical functions.

- It is hoped this paper will provide the **foundation** for future, more systematic study of the motivations for case choices and provide further insight into the relationship between morphological encoding, grammatical function and information structure.

Many Thanks!