
The role of nominal licensing in Austronesian voice systems

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Tag
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A distinctive and well-studied feature of many Austronesian languages is their **voice system**, whereby each clause has one argument (the “**pivot**”) which commands a privileged status. In this talk, we highlight the role of nominal licensing (abstract Case) in explaining three observed (a)symmetries:

- (i) Only the pivot argument can be \bar{A} -extracted.
- (ii) The pivot is in a particular case form, regardless of the marking on corresponding non-pivot DPs.
- (iii) Non-pivot core arguments **{are / are not}** treated equally in their **{case marking / word order}**.

Voice system clauses have a “joint” head **CT** (Martinović 2015) with a composite A/\bar{A} -probe (Van Urk 2015). Because CT is uniquely involved in attracting DPs to the clause edge, \bar{A} -movements are limited to the pivot, explaining (i), following Richards 2000, Pearson 2005. We assume all DPs require nominal licensing (abstract Case) and the pivot will be case-licensed (nominative) by CT. This explains the case-marking asymmetry (ii).

We propose two parameters which explain the (a)symmetries in (iii):

- (a) $\pm\text{ACC}$: v {can/cannot} assign accusative case.
- (b) **LAST RESORT**: If a DP lacks a source for structural Case-licensing, it can be licensed (a) *by insertion of a case-marker* (genitive) (Stowell 1981, Halpert 2012, Imanishi 2014, Van Urk 2015) or (b) *under linear adjacency* with the verb (Baker 1988, 2014, Levin 2015).

We discuss four languages—Atayal, Tagalog, Balinese, and Toba Batak—as exemplars for the four types of languages predicted by these parameters.

	+ACC	−ACC
Insertion:	Atayal	Tagalog
Adjacency:	Balinese	T.B.

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