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 $\overline{A}$-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/$\overline{A}$-probe (Van Urk 2015). Because CT is uniquely involved in attracting DPs to the clause edge, $\overline{A}$-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) $\pm$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.

**References:**