Attrition of Actor Voice Morphology and Fronted Content Questions in the Austronesian languages of Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

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11–ICAL, 23 June 2009

What is actually the constraint?

- Examples in (1) d–e (Balinese) appear show that verbal morphology is crucial: the AV morphology seems to block the fronted OBJ question. The same is observed with the nasal (AV) verb in Sasak (see example (4) later).

Claims
- The AV morphology does not ‘really’ block the ‘fronted’ OBJ question
- Against the analysis of ‘morphological blocking’
- Information structure associated with SUBJ/OBJ is crucial
- Contrastive FOC assignment to SUBJ.
- PIVOT selection as part of (language–specific) grammatical constraints: SUBJ (or OBJ) is assigned salient discourse function (DF):
  \[ \text{salient.DF} = \text{SUBJ} ]_{\text{PIVOT}}

A fronted OBJ question is possible in Balinese!

- Condition: SUBJ is assigned contrastive FOCUS
  (2) a. * Apa Ketut meli _ ? (1d) what K. AV.buy
    i) FOR ‘What did Ketut buy?’
    ii) OKAY for ‘what bought Ketut’
  b. * Apa ane Ketut meli _ ? what REL Ketut AV.buy FOR ‘What did Ketut buy?’
  c. Apa ane Ketut dogen meli _ ? what REL Ketut only AV.buy ‘What is it that only Ketut bought’
  d. Apa ane beli–a teken Ketut what REL buy–PASS by Ketut ‘What was bought by Ketut?’

Fronted content questions defined

- A question that can alternatively appear in sentence–initial position, left–periphery position, instead of its canonical in–situ position.
- Fronted questions are often claimed to be restricted to SUBJ in Balinese:
  => the ‘SUBJ–only’ constraint: not always!

(1) Balinese:

(a) Ketut ngalih Nyoman
   Ketut AV.search N
   OBJ
   ‘Ketut looked for Nyoman’

Questions with ane:

(b) Nyen ane [ ] ngalih Nyoman?
   who REL SUBJ AV.search N
   ‘Who is the one who looked for Nyoman?’

Without ane:

(c) Nyen Nyoman [ ] ngalih _?
   Who N SUBJ AV.search –
   i) ‘Who looked for Nyoman?’
   ii) * ‘Who did Nyoman look for?’

A fronted QW in Balinese cannot be associated with OBJ in (d); PASS must be used (e):

(d) * Apa Ketut meli _ ?
   (1d)
   FOR “What did Ketut buy?”
   ii) OKAY for “what bought Ketut”

(e) * Apa Ketut meli _ ?
   FOR “What did Ketut buy?”
   ii) OKAY for ‘what bought Ketut’
Nasal & bare verbs: Balinese vs. Sasak

- The nasal prefix is diminishing: Balinese vs. Sasak vs. other languages in Nusa Tenggara
- Nasal and non-nasal contrast in the transitive verbs may be:
  - functional Balinese: maling (<N-paling: AV-steal) vs. beli (UV-steal)
  - not functional in certain contexts: non-standard Indonesian, many dialects of Sasak

Balinese:

(3) a. Nyen ane [ _ maling / paling siap-e] nta?
   Who FOC AV-steal / steal chicken-DEF that
   'who stole the chicken?'

(4) a. sai (saq) paling maling manuk wiq?
   Who FOC steal / N-steal chicken yesterday
   'who stole a chicken yesterday?'

(5) Manggarai
   a. Hi Mundus tako manuk meseng? (S–V–O)
      ART name steal chicken yesterday
      'Mundus stole chickens yesterday?'

   b. Ceing (ata) tako manuk meseng?
      Who REL steal chicken, yesterday
      'who stole chickens yesterday?'

   c. * Apa ata hi Mundus tako ___ meseng?
      what REL ART name steal OBJ yesterday
      'What did Mundus steal yesterday?'

   d. Apa ata __ tako le Mundus meseng? (S–V–OBL)
      what REL SUBJ steal by name yesterday
      'What was stolen by Mundus yesterday?'

Jelantik Sasak

(4) a. * Apa ane _ paling / *maling ci ?
   What FOC UV-steal / AV-steal 2
   'What did you steal yesterday?'

(7) a. apa ata ghetu ne kau [ _ (ata) naka ne Ami]
   what REL think by 2 REL steal by Ami
   'what was thought (by you) to have been stolen by A'

Flores languages (1): Manggarai

- When the AV morphology is all gone, focussed OBJ is not always freely fronted: Manggarai & Rongga

(5) Manggarai
   a. Hi Mundus tako manuk meseng? (S–V–O)
      ART name steal chicken yesterday
      'Mundus stole chickens yesterday?'

   b. Ceing (ata) tako manuk meseng?
      Who REL steal chicken yesterday
      'who stole chickens yesterday?'

   c. * Apa ata hi Mundus tako ___ meseng?
      what REL ART name steal OBJ yesterday
      'What did Mundus steal yesterday?'

   d. Apa ata __ tako le Mundus meseng? (S–V–OBL)
      what REL SUBJ steal by name yesterday
      'What was stolen by Mundus yesterday?'

(8) The attrition of the AN voice coding & the related (SUBJ–only) constraint in some AN languages of Nusa Tenggara

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<th>FORM</th>
<th>Verbal morphology: N–</th>
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<td>[+ present]</td>
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<th>SUBJ-only/CONSTRAINT in fronted content questions</th>
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Rongga

(6) a. Sei naka manu nembumai? (S–V–O)
   Who steal chicken yesterday
   'who stole the chicken?'

(8) b. Apa naka apa nembumai?
   A steal what yesterday?
   'What did Amir steal yesterday?'

   c. * Apa (ata) Ami naka _ nembumai?
      What REL Ami steal yesterday
      'What did Amir steal yesterday?'

   d. Apa (ata) naka ne Ami nembumai?
      What REL steal by Ami yesterday
      'What was stolen by Amir yesterday?'

(7) a. apa ata ghetu ne kau [ _ (ata) naka ne Ami]
   what REL think by 2 REL steal by Ami
   'what was thought (by you) to have been stolen by A'

   b. * apa ata ghetu ne kau [(ata) Ami naka _]
Attrition of AN Actor Voice: multi-dimensional

- Coding
  - (a) N vs. bare verbs
  - (b) Expressions of A vs. U
  - (c) 'Structural or constructional types'

- Constraints
  - (d) Fronted content questions are restricted to: -SUBJ only, -SUBJ & OBJ
  - (e) Information structure: contrastive FOC > TOP

Proposed Analysis

- The 'SUBJ-only' constraint in certain constructions is in fact 'derived' from other independent principles: PIVOT selection.
- PIVOT = ARG targeted in complex structure formation; not overtly expressed.
- PIVOT = an overlay pragmatic-syntactic function composed of
  - Discourse Functions (DFs) of TOPIC and FOCUS
  - Grammatical Functions (GFs) of SUBJECT and OBJECT
- Voice morphology: marking of the selection ARG-role (A/U) as [DF=SUBJ]_{inv}
- Generalisation:
  - Fronted content questions must be PIVOT: [Salient.DF=GF]

Voice & ‘focus’

- Voice and voice types
  - A selection of A or U argument as SUBJ-PIV: [[IFOC|TOP]=SUBJ]_{inv}
  - Voice alternations → Grammatical function alternations
  - AV -> PASS
- FOCUS
  - The (intension of a) constituent (e.g., argument) of S which the speaker intends to direct the attention of his/her hearer to, by uttering S (cf. Erteschick-Shir 2007:38)
- Voice regulates PIV selection, but PIV selection is also determined by a larger structure/construction
  - A mismatch is expected: the verb is in AV but the U is focussed!
  - Complex interaction between FOCUS and TOPIC

Fronted Content Questions & AV morphology

- FORM of the AV prefix
  - Form: N- (Balinese, Sasak, Colloquial Indonesian)
- CONSTRAINT of the AV morphology: the selection of Actor as SUBJ-PIV

Most harmonic alignment: FOC > TOP | SUBJ > OBJ | A > U

The AV.VERB str with QUESTION-FOC:

- (11) [[DF=SUBJ]_{inv} PRED <A, U>]
  - The AV.VERB str with QUESTION-FOC:

Balinese:
- Nyoman [FOC = SUBJ]_{inv} PRED <A, U> Obj
  - i) “Who looked for Nyoman”
  - ii) * “Who did Nyoman look for?”

Most harmonic alignment: FOC > TOP | SUBJ > OBJ | A > U

Most harmonic alignment: FOC > TOP | SUBJ > OBJ | A > U

Fronted Content Questions: Balinese

- The nasal AV verb in Balinese may show the blocking of a fronted OBJ question

  b. # Apa (ane) ci ngadep _ ? [FOC=SUBJ=A] [TOP=OBJ=U] AV- sell # [FOC=SUBJ] & [FOC=OBJ]

  "What is the thing that only you sold?"

  Harmonic prominence alignment: FOC (contrastive) > TOP > OBJ

Fronted Content Questions: Sasak

- The AV /- prefix in Sasak has the same constraint as the AV prefix in Balinese: [salient.DF=SUBJ=A]PIV

- Fronted Content Questions: same as in Balinese

- The fronted QW bears FOC, and when it comes with the nasal AV verb, the constraint of [FOC=SUBJ=A]PIV is imposed.

- DIFFERENT:
  - Balinese: bare verbs are SPECIFIED: UV verbs; i.e., [DF=SUBJ=U]PIV
  - Sasak: bare verbs are UNSPECIFIED for PIVOT

  (14) a. * Ape saq mu-m maling _ wiq? what FOC=PAST-2 N.steal OBJ [FOC=SUBJ=A]PIV
  b. Ape saq mu-m paling _ wiq? what FOC=PAST-2 steal OBJ [FOC=OBJ=U] [SUBJ=A]

  "What did you steal yesterday?"

Conclusions

- Differences in the coding of PIVOT selection (i.e., alignment/linking of [FOC/TOP] = SUBJ = [A/U])
  - Morphological
  - Analytic

- The constraint of fronting OBJ questions with the AV verb is explainable in terms of independent principles:
  - Harmonic alignment between GF assignment and DF assignment (as part of PIV selection);
  - Voice morphology marks role-specific SUBJ-PIV selection, but a particular PIV selection is not necessarily marked by voice morphology

  - Expected:
    - The ‘subject-only’ constraint shows up in certain AV constructions in Balinese & Sasak when there is a clash as a result of [Salient.DF=SUBJ=U]PIV assignment
    - The ‘subject-only’ constraint shows up in a isolating language like Rongga where PIV selection is not morphologically marked

- The data suggests:
  - that AV voice morphology (/-) is related to SUBJ-PIV assignment
  - that the voice morphology and the PIV-related constraints are independent with each other
  - that total disappearance of the AN AV morphology as seen Rongga in does not mean the disappearance of certain PIV-related constraint.
Further data from Sasak

(17) Sasak Jelantik

a. Ape kamu doang saq tao maling /paling_?  
   what 2 only REL can AV.steal
   'what is the thing which only YOU could steal?'

b. Ape saq kamu doang tao maling /paling_?  
   what REL 2 only can AV.steal
   'what is the thing which only YOU could steal?'

c. Ape saq eak-m paling /*maling_?  
   What REL FUT-2 steal AV.steal
   'What would you steal?'