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Western Austronesian Voice

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Abstract

Over the past four decades, the nature of western Austronesian voice—typically subcategorized as Philippine-type and Indonesian-type—has triggered considerable debate in the typological and syntactic literature. Central questions in these debates have been concerned with how voice alternations in western Austronesian languages interact with grammatical relations, transitivity, and syntactic alignment. In this review, we reassess the syntactic properties of voice alternations in western Austronesian languages, in some cases focusing on more controversial alternations, including the putative antipassive and applicative constructions in Philippine-type languages and the passive constructions in Indonesian-type languages. We discuss reasons that favor a valency-neutral approach to western Austronesian voice and evidence against a valency-changing and/or ergative approach to the analysis of these languages.



1. INTRODUCTION

The so-called voice systems found in many western Austronesian¹ languages—also known as focus, trigger, or symmetrical voice—are exceptional among the world’s languages. Unlike well-known voice systems with an active–passive alternation, voice in western Austronesian languages is rich in verbal morphology, commonly distinguishing four voices that mark arguments of various semantic roles (e.g., agent, patient, location, benefactor, instrument) as the privileged syntactic argument (i.e., the only argument available to certain syntactic operations like relativization; see Section 2 for details), which we refer to as the pivot in this review. Paiwan, an Austronesian language of southern Taiwan, exhibits such a voice system, as illustrated in examples 1*a–d* (for reasons that will become clear in Section 2.1, we use the labels NPIV1 and NPIV2 to gloss two types of phrase-marking clitics that occur with nonpivot arguments):²

- Paiwan
- (1a) Q<m>alup a caucau tua vavuy i gadu tua vuluq. [Actor voice]
 <AV>hunt PIV man NPIV2 pig LOC mountain OBL spear
 ‘The man hunts wild pigs in the mountains with a spear.’
- (1b) Qalup-en nua caucau a vavuy i gadu tua vuluq. [Patient voice]
 hunt-PV NPIV1 man PIV pig LOC mountain OBL spear
 ‘The man hunts wild pigs in the mountains with a spear.’
- (1c) Qalup-an nua caucau tua vavuy a gadu tua vuluq. [Locative voice]
 hunt-LV NPIV1 man NPIV2 pig PIV mountain OBL spear
 ‘The man hunts wild pigs in the mountains with a spear.’
- (1d) Si-qalup nua caucau tua vavuy i gadu a vuluq. [Circumstantial voice]
 CV-hunt NPIV1 man NPIV2 pig LOC mountain PIV spear
 ‘The man hunts wild pigs in the mountains with a spear.’
 (Ferrell 1979, p. 202)

These Paiwan examples demonstrate how voice alternations correlate with a change in the phrase-marking clitics—conventionally written as free morphemes—preceding each NP within the clause. When a clause is in actor voice (AV), as in example 1*a*, a particular phrase-marking clitic signals that the pivot is the agent, indicating that it is the only phrase that is eligible for syntactic operations such as relativization or clefting (e.g., A’ extraction in a generative framework). When the clause is in patient voice (PV), locative voice (LV), and circumstantial voice (CV), the same phrase-marking clitic signals that the pivot is the patient in example 1*b*, location in example 1*c*, or instrument in example 1*d*, with a corresponding constraint on the syntactic operations mentioned above. When a phrase is nonpivot marked, it carries a fixed phrase-marking clitic (i.e., *nua* for nonpivot actors, *tua* for nonpivot themes), regardless of the voice. This four-way system is attested in 9 of the 10 Austronesian primary branches and is widely accepted as being reconstructible to Proto-Austronesian (e.g., Wolff 1973; Ross 2006, 2009; Blust 2013, 2015; Chen 2017a).

In other western Austronesian languages, especially those of western Indonesia, the voice system is simpler, but still differs significantly from a canonical active–passive voice alternation. Consider the following examples from Madurese, spoken in western Indonesia:

¹The term western Austronesian describes a rough geographical designation. Details are provided in Section 2.

²The abbreviations used in the examples are as follows: 1, first person; 3, third person; AOR, aorist; AP, antipassive; APPL, applicative; AV, actor voice; CV, circumstantial voice; DEF, definite; EXCL, exclusive; LOC, locative; LV, locative voice; NPIV1, nonpivot 1; NPIV2, nonpivot 2; NP, noun phrase; PASS, passive; PFV, perfective; PIV, pivot; PL, plural; PN, proper name; PV, patient voice; SG, singular; UV, undergoer voice.



Madurese

- (2a) Ale' n-(t)oro' Ebu. [Actor voice]
 younger.sibling AV-follow mother
 'Little Brother followed Mother.'
- (2b) Ebu e-toro' Ale'. [Undergoer voice]
 mother UV-follow younger.sibling
 'Little Brother followed Mother.'
- (Davies 2010, p. 249)

The verb is still marked by voice affixes, but arguments are no longer preceded by phrase-marking clitics. The voice affixes represent a far simpler set, an AV prefix in example 2a and a single undergoer voice (UV) prefix in example 2b.³ In these examples, the pivot—commonly referred to as the subject—occupies the preverbal position. Thus, the pivot is the actor in AV and the undergoer in UV. These examples are still different from a canonical active–passive alternation because in each construction the verb has a distinct voice prefix and neither construction is the “basic” construction from which the other is derived.

The voice systems found in these western Austronesian languages, despite showing different degrees of complexity, have triggered much debate in the typological and syntactic literature concerning how voice alternations interact with grammatical relations, transitivity, and syntactic alignment (e.g., Schachter 1976; Payne 1982; Cumming & Wouk 1987; Shibatani 1988; De Guzman 1988; Gerdts 1988; Guilfoyle et al. 1992; Kroeger 1993; Mithun 1994; Richards 2000; Wouk & Ross 2002; Arka 2003a; Arka & Ross 2005; Himmelmann 2005; Pearson 2005; Rackowski & Richards 2005; Austin & Musgrave 2008; Legate 2012, 2014; Riesberg 2014; Hemmings 2016; McDonnell 2016; Asikin-Garmager 2017; Chen 2017a; Erlewine et al. 2017). As pointed out in previous research, there have been essentially two general approaches to western Austronesian voice: valency-changing approaches and valency-neutral approaches (Himmelmann 2002a). Simply put, under the valency-changing approach, one voice (PV or UV) is considered to be the basic one whereas all others are derived from it; voice alternations are thus considered to be valency-rearranging operations. This approach (discussed in Section 3) entails an ergative analysis for Philippine-type languages (e.g., Payne 1982; De Guzman 1988; Gerdts 1988; Mithun 1994; Aldridge 2004, 2008, 2011, 2017; Liao 2004; Chang 2011). The valency-neutral approach, by contrast, maintains that voice alternations in western Austronesian languages have little to do with valency rearrangement. This approach subsumes two families of analyses. The symmetrical voice approach (e.g., Himmelmann 2002a, 2005; Foley 2008; Riesberg 2014; Kuo 2015; McDonnell 2016) holds that voice alternations indicate a change in how semantic roles and syntactic positions are aligned within the clause. The accusative approach, under a Minimalist Program framework (e.g., Richards 2000; Pearson 2001, 2005; Rackowski 2002; Rackowski & Richards 2005; Chen 2016, 2017a), maintains that voice morphology in Philippine-type languages is essentially an A' phenomenon (i.e., A' agreement), whereby voice alternations reflect a change in the information structure of a clause. In this view, Philippine-type languages exhibit a nominative–accusative case system with obligatory topic–agreement morphology. Crucially, for both lines of analysis, western Austronesian voice is not valency-indicating morphology—which is assumed by the first approach.

³The terms actor and undergoer were originally proposed as semantic macroroles by Foley & van Valin (1984) in a Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) framework. The actor typically includes semantic roles like agent and experiencer, while the undergoer includes patient, theme, and recipient, among others. Most research on Austronesian voice is not done within an RRG framework; these terms are nonetheless common among Austronesianists.



This review is structured to critique these two main approaches to western Austronesian voice. In Section 2, we provide a basic typological overview of western Austronesian voice systems, outlining basic syntactic properties of Philippine-type and Indonesian-type languages. In Sections 3 and 4, we review valency-changing and valency-neutral approaches, respectively, touching upon some of the controversies. In Section 5, we present a critical evaluation of both approaches. In Section 6, we conclude the review.

2. WESTERN AUSTRONESIAN VOICE

A major typological distinction in western Austronesian languages is that between Philippine-type languages and Indonesian-type languages (Wolff 1996; Arka 2003b; Himmelmann 2002a,b, 2005; Zobel 2002).⁴ Generally speaking, Philippine-type refers to the voice system that exhibits multiple—typically three—nonactor voices (i.e., PV, LV, CV), as shown in examples 1*a–d* from Paiwan. This type system is found in Austronesian languages spoken in Taiwan, the Philippines, northern Borneo, and northern Sulawesi, as well as in Malagasy (Madagascar) and Chamorro (Guam). The term Indonesian-type generally refers to the voice system found in languages like Madurese and Indonesian, which usually evince a two-way contrast in voice and lack phrase-marking clitics (Arka & Ross 2005). Indonesian-type languages usually include languages spoken throughout western Indonesia—specifically, languages spoken in parts of Sulawesi and all the major islands west of it (e.g., Java, Sumatra, Bali, Lombok), parts of mainland Southeast Asia, and Borneo.

There are also languages that fall somewhere in between Philippine-type and Indonesian-type (Hemmings 2015). These languages—found primarily in northern Borneo and northern Sulawesi—have fewer nonactor voices and may have fully or partially lost phrase-marking clitics, suggesting that there is probably not a clear-cut division between these two types. The remainder of this section describes voice in Philippine-type and Indonesian-type languages.

2.1. Philippine-Type Voice System

A canonical Philippine-type voice system, illustrated with the Paiwan examples above, can be defined by four traits:

- Every clause must have one and only one phrase that is syntactically privileged and bears pivot marking. The selection of the pivot is cross-referenced by obligatory affixal morphology on the verb, conventionally called “voice.”
- All verbs are obligatorily marked with a voice affix.
- When a phrase is nonpivot marked, it carries a fixed argument marking regardless of voice.
- In relative clauses or pseudoclefts, voice morphology must indicate that the relativized phrase is the pivot.

As shown by the Paiwan examples 1*a–d*, in Philippine-type languages, voice morphology on the verb indexes the selection of the pivot; when a phrase is nonpivot marked, it carries a fixed phrase-marking clitic regardless of the voice alternation. In conservative languages that inherit a more elaborate case system from Proto-Austronesian, nonpivot agents and nonpivot themes carry two distinct markers (Blust 2015, Chen 2017a), labeled NPIV1 and NPIV2, respectively, throughout this review. A nonpivot locative is marked by a locative marker, whereas a nonpivot oblique-like phrase

⁴Note, however, that a number of Austronesian languages spoken in this rough geographical designation (e.g., Rukai, Nias, Chamic languages, Moken and Moklen, and various languages of southern Sulawesi) lack a western Austronesian-style voice system and thus do not belong to this typology (Himmelmann 2005).



Table 1 Basic argument-marking pattern of Philippine-type Austronesian languages

	Actor voice	Patient voice	Locative voice	Circumstantial voice
Agent	PIVOT	NPIV1	NPIV1	NPIV1
Theme	NPIV2	PIVOT	NPIV2	NPIV2
Locative	LOC	LOC	PIVOT	LOC
Instrument	OBL/P ^a	OBL/P	OBL/P	PIVOT

^aNote that in a number of Philippine-type languages, including Paiwan, the oblique marker shares the same form as NPIV2. In these languages, the oblique status of a nonpivot instrument or benefactor is indicated by the fact that they can be freely omitted, as opposed to themes marked with NPIV2, which cannot be omitted.

such as an instrument or benefactor carries a specific preposition or oblique marker. Although the exact form of each marker varies from one language to another, this argument marking pattern (summarized in **Table 1**) is shared across Philippine-type languages under different Austronesian primary branches (Chen 2017a).

Note that all intransitive verbs are obligatorily marked in AV. Even if an unaccusative verb carries a theme-like argument, it is incompatible with a PV affix, as shown in the data below from Tagalog (examples 3a and 3b) and from Seediq (examples 4a and 4b), an Atayalic language of northern Taiwan:

- Tagalog
- (3a) K<um>anta si Juan. [Actor voice with agent-like subject]
 <AV>sing PN.PIV Juan
 ‘Juan sang.’
- (3b) L<um>ubog si Juan. [Actor voice with theme-like subject]
 <AV>sink PN.PIV Juan
 ‘Juan sank.’
- Seediq
- (4a) K<m><n>eeki ka Temi. [Actor voice with agent-like subject]
 <AV><PRF>dance PIV Temi
 ‘Temi danced.’
- (4b) M<n>huqil ka Temi. [Actor voice with theme-like subject]
 AV<PRF>die PIV Temi
 ‘Temi died.’

As these examples show, contra the conventional labels AV and PV, the mapping between the selection of the pivot and voice morphology is in essence not conditioned by the thematic role of the pivot. Rather, the selection of the pivot in these four examples shows a mechanism more similar to that of a “subject” in nominative–accusative languages—in which the agent (external argument) in unergative and transitive clauses shares the same status as the theme in unaccusative clauses. This mechanism also indicates that there is no one-to-one correspondence between voice marking and the semantic properties of the pivot in Philippine-type languages (see, e.g., Rackowski 2002 and Chen 2017a for details).

On the basis of comparative data, recent research has further revealed that possible arguments that qualify for pivot status show much more variation than previously thought. Prototypical mappings between voice and possible pivots (Chen 2017a) are summarized in **Table 2**. These shared traits across Philippine-type languages, which have not received much attention until



Table 2 The mapping between voice and pivot selection in prototypical Philippine-type languages

Voice	Pivot selection
Actor voice	Agent, theme (in unaccusatives), causer (in causatives), experiencer (in statives)
Patient voice	Theme (in transitives), causee (in causatives), recipient (in ditransitives)
Locative voice	Locative, temporal, event nominal, goal, source
Circumstantial voice	Instrument, benefactor, reason, cause, purpose, causand (in causatives), theme (in ditransitives)

recently, thus enable us to reevaluate the existing analyses of Philippine-type voice (see Section 5.1 for details).

Finally, Philippine-type languages exhibit a special “pivot-only” constraint on relativization, in which all relative clauses (including the presupposed clause of pseudoclefts, which are standardly analyzed as a headless relative) must indicate that the relativized phrase is the pivot. As shown by the Seediq examples 5*a–d*, when an agent is relativized, the relative clause must be in AV, as in example 5*a*. When a theme in a transitive clause, location, or benefactor is relativized, the relative clause must be in PV, as in example 5*b*; LV, as in example 5*c*; and CV, as in example 5*d*. Note that other voice affixes are ungrammatical in each of these examples, as indicated by the starred affixes separated by slashes within the braces:

“Pivot-only” constraint in Seediq pseudoclefts

- (5*a*) Ima ka [s<u>eeliq/{*-un/*-an/*s-} Ø rodux]?
 who PIV [<AV><PFV>butcher/{*PV/*LV/*CV} NPIV2 chicken]
 ‘Who is the one that butchered the/a chicken?’
- (5*b*) Maanu ka [s<n>eeliq/{*<m>/*-an/*s-}=na]?
 what PIV [butcher<PV.PFV>/{*AV/*LV/*CV}=3SG.NPIV1]
 ‘What is the thing that he/she butchered?’
- (5*c*) Inu ka [s<n>eeliq-an/{*<m>/*-un/*s-}=na Ø rodux]?
 where PIV [butcher<PFV>-LV/{*AV/*PV/*CV}=3SG.NPIV1 NPIV2 chicken]
 ‘Where did he/she butcher the/a chicken?’
- (5*d*) Ima ka [s-seeliq/{*<m>/*-un/*-an}=na Ø rodux]?
 who PIV [CV-butcher/{*AV/*PV/*LV}=3SG.NPIV1 NPIV2 chicken]
 ‘Who did he/she butcher the/a chicken for?’

2.2. Indonesian-Type Voice System

Indonesian-type languages have a simpler two-way distinction between actor voice (AV) and undergoer voice (UV). The verb in the AV construction is typically marked by some sort of nasal prefix, abstractly represented by *N-*, that is homorganic to the place of articulation of the first consonant of the root, while the verb in the UV construction may have a prefix, as in Madurese in examples 2*a–b*, or does not receive any overt marking, as in Balinese in example 6. The pivot—usually referred to as the “subject” in Indonesian-type languages—is the actor in the AV construction, as in example 2*a*, or the undergoer in the UV constructions, as in examples 2*b* and 6. The nonpivot argument—the undergoer in AV constructions or the actor in UV constructions—is typically considered a core argument (see Section 3.2) but not an object (Riesberg 2014). Unlike Philippine-type languages, intransitive verbs in Indonesian-type languages vary in how they are realized; in many languages, they are commonly unmarked, but can occur with a number of prefixes, each with its own semantics:



- Balinese (high register)
- (6) Bawi-ne punika tumbas tiang. [Bare undergoer voice]
 pig-DEF that UV.buy 1
 ‘I bought the pig.’
 (Arka 2003a, p. 5)

UV constructions such as example 6 are characterized by the fact that they lack overt voice marking on the verb and that the nonpivot actor is immediately adjacent to the verb (Chung 1976a, Guilfoyle et al. 1992, Musgrave 2001). These constructions—commonly called object(ive) voice (e.g., Arka 2003a)—are referred to as bare UV constructions in this review. These contrast with prefixal UV constructions in Madurese in example 2*b*, in which the actor nonpivot argument is still adjacent to the verb but is marked by a verbal prefix not found in the bare UV. Some Indonesian-type languages have both bare UV and prefixal UV constructions. For example, in Besemah, a Malayic language of southwest Sumatra, the verb either is unmarked, as in example 7*a*, or occurs with a UV prefix *di-*, as in example 7*b*. In both constructions, the actor nonpivot argument is adjacent to the verb; first- and second-person arguments precede the verb, whereas third-person arguments follow the verb, but languages differ in such restrictions:

- Besemah
- (7a) Ijat tu la kami ambik. [Bare undergoer voice]
 seed that PFV 1PL.EXCL UV.take
 ‘We already took the seeds.’
- (7b) Ijat tu la di-ambik=(ny)e [Prefixal undergoer voice]
 seed that PFV UV-read=3
 ‘She already took the seeds.’
 (based on McDonnell 2016, p. 55)

Indonesian-type languages also have one or more applicative suffixes that express various functions (e.g., benefactive, locative, instrumental), many of which also have a syncretic causative function (e.g., Cole & Son 2004). Unlike Philippine-type languages, these suffixes freely combine with voice prefixes, and in many cases are valency-increasing suffixes (see Himmelmann & Riesberg 2013).

Indonesian-type languages also have a true passive construction. In some languages, the affix is formally distinct from the UV affix. Balinese, for example, has a dedicated passive prefix *ka-* in the high register, as in example 8. In other languages, the UV and apparent passive constructions take the same prefix. The difference between the two is the position of the actor in these constructions. In passives, it is unexpressed or expressed in an oblique *by*-phrase, while in UV constructions, it is encliticized or at least adjacent to the verb. The formal similarities between passive and UV constructions have given rise to much discussion concerning the nature of UV and passive constructions in Indonesian-type languages (see Section 3.2.1):

- Balinese (high register)
- (8) Nyoman sampun ka-rereh (antuk ida). [Passive voice]
 Nyoman PFV PASS-search by 3
 ‘Nyoman has been searched for (by him/her).’
 (Arka & Simpson 2008, p. 98)

A major focus of syntactic studies of Indonesian-type languages has been the status of grammatical relations (e.g., Wechsler & Arka 1998, Musgrave 2001, Arka 2003a, Riesberg 2014, McDonnell 2016), including the privileged syntactic status of pivot arguments and the core argument status of nonpivot arguments. Syntactic phenomena such as relativization, control, raising, and secondary predicates have been diagnostic for pivot in a number of Indonesian-type languages, but there have been far fewer diagnostics for nonpivot core arguments. Quantifier float has been diagnostic for core arguments in Balinese and Standard Indonesian (Musgrave 2001, Riesberg 2014), but is restricted to pivot arguments in Besemah (McDonnell 2016). Because pivots are better established, this review is concerned primarily with the status of nonpivot core arguments, particularly nonpivot actors in UV and passive constructions.

3. VALENCY-CHANGING APPROACHES

In this section, we review key properties of valency-changing approaches to western Austronesian voice. In Section 3.1, we discuss how an ergative approach accounts for the main characteristics of the Philippine-type voice system, and in Section 3.2, we describe valency-changing approaches in Indonesian-type languages, with a focus on the treatment of UV and passive constructions.

3.1. Philippine-Type Voice System

Existing valency-changing approaches to Philippine-type languages, regardless of framework or language, are built on one core assumption: Philippine-type voice affixes are transitivity/applicative markers, according to which AV and PV clauses are distinguished by transitivity. AV clauses are intransitive and PV clauses are the “basic” transitive construction, whereas LV and CV clauses are two types of applicative constructions. Under this analysis, the AV affix is an intransitive marker and the PV affix a transitive marker. This treatment entails a controversial but often-adopted analysis, that Philippine-type two-place AV clauses are antipassive constructions that contain an intransitive subject and a “noncore” object (e.g., Gerds 1980; Payne 1982; De Guzman 1988; Ross 2002; Aldridge 2004, 2011; Liao 2004). This analysis is illustrated with examples 9a–c from Amis, a language of eastern Taiwan:

	The valency-changing approach to Philippine-type languages				
(9a)	Mi-danguy	k-una	wacu.		[One-place AV clause: “intransitive”]
	AV-swim	PIV-that	dog		
	‘That dog swam.’				
(9b)	Mi-kalat	k-una	wacu	t-una	pusi. [Two-place AV clause: “antipassive”]
	AV-bite	PIV-that	dog	NPIV2-that	cat
	‘That dog bit that cat.’				
(9c)	Kalat-en	n-una	wacu	k-una	pusi. [PV clause: “basic transitive”]
	bite-PV	NPIV1-that	dog	PIV-that	cat
	‘The dog bit that cat.’				

Thus, under the assumption that the AV affix is an intransitive marker in both monovalent clauses, as in example 9a, and two-place AV clauses, as in example 9b, the latter AV clause types are necessarily analyzed as antipassives that contain an oblique object. This treatment enables an ergative analysis of Philippine-type languages. As shown in **Table 3**, the purported intransitive subject in AV clauses in examples 9a and 9b shares the same argument marking (pivot) as the object in PV clauses in example 9c, giving rise to an ergative patterning of S (subject of intransitive)=O (object of transitive). Thus, under an analysis of the pivot marker as absolutive case, Philippine-type languages have been claimed to manifest syntactic ergativity similar to that in Mayan and Inuit



Table 3 The ergative approach to the basic argument marking pattern in Philippine-type languages

	Actor voice	Patient voice
Agent (external argument)	PIVOT(=absolute)	NPIV1(=ergative)
Theme (internal argument)	NPIV2(=oblique)	PIVOT(=absolute)

languages, in which S patterns with O in both case marking and eligibility for operations such as relativization. Pursuant to the assumption that Philippine-type PV clauses are the basic transitive clauses and two-place AV clauses are antipassives, the marker NPIV1 is analyzed as realizing ergative case, which is assumed to mark the agent in transitive clauses; the marker NPIV2 is analyzed as realizing oblique case, which marks purported antipassive objects in AV clauses (**Table 3**).

Under this line of analysis, Philippine-type LV and CV affixes are analyzed as applicative affixes, each of which licenses different types of obliques as a core argument (i.e., an applied object licensed by a high applicative head in a Minimalist Program framework), which receives absolutive case (e.g., Rackowski 2002; Aldridge 2004, 2008, 2011, 2017; Liao 2004; Rackowski & Richards 2005; Chang 2011, 2013; Wu 2013). Others have treated PV, LV, and CV clauses as three different types of transitive constructions, each selecting a different type of phrase (e.g., theme, location, instrument) as the pivot while maintaining AV as an antipassive (see, e.g., Huang 2005, Teng 2008 for details).

In summary, the valency-changing approach to Philippine-type languages maintains that voice alternations manifest an ergative–antipassive alternation (PV versus AV), together with valency-increasing applicative alternations (PV versus LV/CV). The validity of this approach thus relies crucially on the validity of these fundamental assumptions: PV is basic, two-place AV constructions are antipassives, and CV and LV affixes are applicatives.

3.2. Indonesian-Type Voice System

Valency-changing approaches in Indonesian-type languages differ in many ways from those in Philippine-type languages because few have attempted a more canonical ergative analysis of these languages—one in which there is an ergative–antipassive alternation—for several reasons but primarily because the AV construction is pretty clearly transitive and not an antipassive (see Aldridge 2008). However, there have long been approaches that purport to have an ergative analysis but lack major valency-changing alternations (Cartier 1979; Rafferty 1982; Hopper 1983, 1988; Verhaar 1983, 1988; Aldridge 2008; Arka & Manning 2008). These “noncanonical ergative” approaches are therefore discussed alongside other valency-neutral approaches in Section 4, below.

In earlier studies on and some descriptions of Indonesian-type languages (e.g., Chung 1976a, Sneddon 1996 for Standard Indonesian), the voice system is generally assumed to have an active–passive alternation, but to our knowledge there are no current valency-changing proposals on par with the ergative analysis of the Philippine-type voice system. Most recent research on Indonesian-type languages recognizes that the voice system as a whole cannot be analyzed as a (set of) valency-changing alternation(s). Rather, the controversies lie in the analysis of particular voice constructions within the system (i.e., whether particular constructions should be considered valency changing or not). Specifically, this situation is found in the passive analysis that is extended to certain UV constructions (Arka 2008; Arka & Manning 2008; Cole et al. 2008; Legate 2012, 2014; Kroeger 2014). While earlier research on the analysis of UV constructions has convincingly shown that the undergoer argument in all of these constructions is the pivot (e.g., Chung 1976a,b; Arka 2003a), the question has turned to the core/oblique status of the nonpivot actor argument (Riesberg 2014, chapter 4).



Arka & Manning's (2008) foundational analysis of Standard Indonesian, which prompted a number of studies (e.g., Aldridge 2008, Cole et al. 2008, Legate 2014, Riesberg 2014), posits a somewhat unexpected distinction between the UV construction in example 10*a* and the passive constructions in examples 10*b* and 10*c*, primarily on the basis of evidence from reflexive binding:

Standard Indonesian

- (10a) Buku ini tidak akan di-baca=nya.
 book this not will UV-read=3SG
 'He will not read this book.'
- (10b) Buku ini tidak akan di-baca (oleh Siti).
 book this not will PASS-read by Siti
 'This book will not be read by Siti.'
- (10c) Buku ini tidak akan di-baca Siti.
 book this not will PASS-read Siti
 'This book will not be read by Siti.'
- (based on Cole et al. 2008, pp. 1512–13)

Arka & Manning's (2008) proposal is that only core arguments can bind a reflexive pronoun. If an argument cannot bind its antecedent, it must be oblique, and the construction is therefore passive. Binding in AV is uncontroversial, but binding in UV is a different story. In the bare UV construction in example 11*a* and the prefixal UV construction in example 11*b*, the nonpivot actor can bind the reflexive pronoun as long as it is pronominal. The passive constructions in examples 12*a* and 12*b* differ crucially in the presence of an NP actor argument, irrespective of whether this argument is marked by the preposition *oleh* 'by'; both example 12*a* (without a preposition) and example 12*b* (marked by preposition) are unacceptable:

Standard Indonesian

- (11a) Diri=nya mesti dia serahkan ke polisi. [Bare undergoer voice]
 self=3SG must 3SG UV.surrender to police
 'S/he must surrender herself/himself to the police.'
- (11b) Diri=nya selalu di-utamakan=nya. [Prefixal undergoer voice]
 self=3SG always UV-prioritize=3SG
 'S/he [is] always giving priority to herself/himself.'
- (Arka & Manning 2008, pp. 54, 59)

Standard Indonesian

- (12a) ?*Diri=nya di-serahkan ke polisi oleh Amir. [Passive voice]
 self=3SG PASS-surrender to police by Amir
 Intended: 'Himself was surrendered to the police by Amir.'
- (12b) ?*Diri=nya tidak di-perhatikan Amir. [Passive voice]
 self=3SG not PASS-care Amir
 Intended: 'Himself was not taken care of by Amir.'
- (Arka & Manning 2008, pp. 49, 61)

While this evidence has been widely accepted in the literature (e.g., Aldridge 2008, Cole et al. 2008, Riesberg 2014), Kroeger (2014) argues that the distinction between the passive and prefixal

UV constructions is pragmatic in nature and not syntactic because apparent reflexive pronouns in Standard Indonesian are not true anaphors but rather can be bound by discourse antecedents like any other nonreflexive pronoun (see also Cole & Hermon 2005). A comparison of the UV constructions in examples 11*a* and 11*b*, above, with those in examples 13*a* and 13*b*, below, shows that the differences in acceptability between them depend on whether or not the nonpivot actor is expressed as a pronoun or NP. In example 13*b*, the nonpivot actor is acceptable even though it is marked by the prepositional phrase. Kroeger attributes these differences in acceptability to the inherently higher topicality found in pronominal forms:

Standard Indonesian⁵

- (13a) ?*Diri=nya sendiri di-serahkan ke polisi oleh Amir.
 self=3SG self PASS-surrender to police by Amir
 Intended: ‘Himself was surrendered to the police by Amir.’
- (13b) Diri=nya sendiri selalu di-utamakan oleh=nya.
 self=3SG self always PASS-prioritize by=3
 ‘Himself is always prioritized by him.’ (I.e., ‘He always gives priority to himself.’)
 (Kroeger 2014, pp. 18–19)

For Kroeger, the lack of binding evidence for the nonpivot actor means that any verb prefixed with *di-* is a true passive regardless of the position of the actor argument, whether that be adjacent to the verb as an enclitic or an NP or in an optional *by*-phrase. This raises a number of questions concerning the nature of the nonpivot arguments not only in apparent prefixal UV constructions but also in bare UV constructions, which Kroeger does not discuss in detail. While the data and analysis are straightforward, the conclusion is not. The lack of binding evidence does not necessarily demonstrate that these actor arguments are core or oblique; it simply shows that reflexive binding is not a good diagnostic for nonpivot core arguments. Kroeger shows that we lack a diagnostic for distinguishing nonpivot core argument actors from oblique actors. We address this issue in Section 5.2.2.

A different type of passive has been proposed for several languages (e.g., for Balinese, see Arka 2008; for Acehnese, see Legate 2012, 2014). In Balinese, the third-person actor enclitic *=a* can attach to the verb in the bare UV argument, as in example 14*a*, but when the same form is accompanied by an NP actor in a *by*-phrase, Arka analyzes the construction as a passive with the suffix *-a*, as in example 14*b*:

- Balinese (low register)
- (14a) Nyoman baang=*a* pipis. [Bare undergoer voice]
 Nyoman give=3 money
 ‘She gave Nyoman money.’
- (14b) Nyoman baang-*a* pipis (teken Wayan). [Passive voice]
 Nyoman give-PASS money by Wayan
 ‘Nyoman was given money (by Wayan).’
 (Arka 2008, p. 70)

⁵ Reflexive pronouns in Standard Indonesian come in short (e.g., *diri=nya*) and long (e.g., *diri=nya sendiri*) forms. Cole & Hermon (2005) have proposed that the long and not the short forms are true reflexive pronouns, so the long forms in this example demonstrate that even long forms can be bound by antecedents outside of the clause.



Arka argues that while the enclitic *=a* possesses many properties of the core argument (e.g., ability to bind an antecedent), the combination of the passive *-a* and the actor in a *by*-phrase do not (e.g., inability to bind an antecedent). Legate (2012, 2014) offers similar arguments for Acehnese, which typically is not considered an Indonesian-type language but would be according to Legate's analysis. The syntactic evidence convincingly shows that the actor in the *by*-phrase is indeed oblique in both cases. Some questions remain, however, about the status of these constructions as passive. First, Arka (2008) and Legate (2012, 2014) show that the actor cannot be anything other than third person, in a sense "agreeing" with the passive affixes. One might expect the passive to allow non-third-person actors. Second, in order for these constructions to be considered passives, it appears to be the case that the actor *by*-phrase must be present. If not, the construction is a bare UV. Strictly speaking, this means that the actor *by*-phrase is optional, but to get a passive interpretation, it is obligatory. This is certainly a marked feature for a passive. It is possible that this construction and others like it in other Indonesian-type languages are in a process of grammaticalization whereby the erstwhile third-person clitic is becoming a passive marker; precedence for this pathway is found in several languages (Heine & Kuteva 2002, pp. 236–37). We return to the analysis of both passive constructions in Section 5.2.2.

4. VALENCY-NEUTRAL APPROACHES

We now turn to the valency-neutral approaches to western Austronesian voice. In Section 4.1, we introduce the accusative analysis to Philippine-type languages (e.g., Chung 1994; Richards 2000; Pearson 2001, 2005; Rackowski 2002; Rackowski & Richards 2005; Chen 2016, 2017a), and in Section 4.2, we describe noncanonical ergative analyses of Indonesian-type languages, which also fall under a valency-neutral approach (e.g., Aldridge 2008). Finally, another approach, known as symmetrical voice, applies to both Indonesian-type and Philippine-type languages with little difference; we therefore discuss this topic separately in Section 4.3.

4.1. Philippine-Type Voice System

Existing valency-neutral approaches to Philippine-type languages, regardless of framework or language, share a core proposal: Voice alternations in Philippine-type languages are *not* valency-rearranging operations. One group of analyses, commonly referred to as the accusative approach under a generative paradigm, explicitly argues that the pivot phrase in Philippine-type languages is the topic of the clause, according to which Philippine-type voice morphology is a type of A'-agreement morphology that indicates the selection of the topic in the sentence (Richards 2000; Pearson 2001, 2005; Rackowski & Richards 2005; Chen 2016, 2017a; see also Chung 1994, 1998). Under this analysis, voice alternations in Philippine-type languages encode a change in the information structure of a clause and have no interaction with case-licensing and/or valency-rearranging operations.⁶ In this view, Philippine-type languages exhibit a nominative–accusative case system, morphologically realized by the markers NP_{IV1} (nominative) and NP_{IV2} (accusative). The pivot marker is independent of case (e.g., Schachter & Otanes 1972; Shibatani 1988; Richards 2000; Pearson 2001, 2005; Chen 2017a) and overrides morphological case (Chen 2016, 2017a).

⁶This summary excludes some interauthor differences in the topic analysis of the pivot. Several authors, such as Rackowski & Richards (2005) and Erlewine et al. (2017), have argued that the pivot in Philippine-type languages is simultaneously a topic and a subject. Others, including Pearson (2001, 2005) and Chen (2016, 2017a,b), maintain that topichood and subjecthood are distinct in Philippine-type languages. See also Keenan (1976) and Guilfoyle et al. (1992) for a different view.



Table 4 The accusative approach to the argument-marking pattern in Philippine-type languages

	Actor voice	Patient voice	Locative voice	Circumstantial voice
Agent	nominative Topic	Nominative	Nominative	Nominative
Theme	Accusative	accusative Topic	Accusative	Accusative
Locative	Locative (P)	Locative (P)	locative (P) Topic	Locative (P)
Instrument	Oblique (P)	Oblique (P)	Oblique (P)	oblique (P) Topic

Table 4 illustrates the nature of the shared argument-marking pattern among Philippine-type languages (see Section 2.1) under this analysis.

This line of analysis has two major implications. First, Philippine-type “voice” is fundamentally different from more canonical voice systems, which are associated with a transitivity/valency-changing operation. Rather, the differences in argument-marking patterns among the four clause types in Philippine-type languages essentially reflect a change in topic placement in a sentence. Under this analysis, Philippine-type languages are not as unique as previously thought, and do not need to be placed in a typologically unique class—they exhibit a run-of-the-mill nominative–accusative case system with obligatory topic marking in each clause. Second, Philippine-type languages are typical discourse configurational languages (Li & Thompson 1976; Kiss 1995; Miyagawa 2010, 2017) that employ elaborate verbal morphology to indicate the semantic role of the topic. This property assigns these languages to a small group of languages that employ A'-agreement morphology to mark the grammatical relation of the topic/focus in a clause (e.g., for Dinka, see van Urk 2015; for Kilega and Kinande, see Miyagawa 2010, 2017). Under this approach, therefore, the Philippine-type “pivot-only” constraint in relativization is not a manifestation of an “absolutive-only” restriction, and is independent of syntactic ergativity.

4.2. Indonesian-Type Voice System

Several analyses of Indonesian-type languages fall under what we call a noncanonical ergative approach, one that diverges from the syntactic alignment of S and O to the exclusion of A. These do not, however, propose a change in valence per se and are thus treated in this section (e.g., for Balinese, see Artawa 1994, Artawa & Blake 1997, Wechsler & Arka 1998; for Indonesian, see Cartier 1979; Verhaar 1983, 1988; Arka & Manning 2008). While these analyses are often lumped together (compare with Legate 2014, Erlewine et al. 2017), their notions of ergativity are significantly different. One type is discourse ergativity (Hopper 1983, 1988; Verhaar 1983, 1988), which defines ergative constructions on the basis of their discourse function (Cumming & Wouk 1987). Another type includes a general category of syntactically motivated approaches that continue to be developed (e.g., Aldridge 2008). We discuss only the latter approaches.

While some details of these approaches and the ways in which they are implemented in various theoretical frameworks differ, all of them analyze UV constructions as ergative. Although the analyses of AV constructions vary, none of these approaches analyze it as an antipassive. Artawa (1994), for example, posits that the UV construction is the basic transitive construction because the verb is unmarked and, thus, P aligns with the single argument of an intransitive verb. One ergative approach that has received considerable attention was developed in a Minimalist Program framework by Aldridge (2008). In this analysis, Aldridge extends the ergative analysis of Tagalog discussed above to Standard Indonesian, which has in turn been extended to various other Indonesian-type languages (e.g., for Acehnese, see Legate 2012, 2014; for Sasak, see Asikin-Garmager 2017). In this approach, AV and the passive can be analyzed straightforwardly



as following an accusative pattern. Following Arka & Manning (2008), the bare UV and prefixal UV constructions with an enclitic actor are ergative. According to this analysis, in AV clauses, the external argument receives nominative case from T with the internal argument case-licensed with accusative case from *v*. UV constructions, by contrast, are assumed to employ a different case-licensing mechanism, whereby the external argument receives inherent ergative case from *v*, with the internal argument checking absolutive case with T. In short, this analysis entails the assumption that Indonesian-type languages exhibit a split-alignment system, whereby *v* is capable of licensing structural accusative case in AV clauses and inherent ergative case in UV clauses. Despite several particulars of the theory, this approach essentially follows Arka & Manning (2008), who distinguish AV from UV and divide UV into two constructions: an ergative construction and a passive construction. It is unclear, however, how such a split is motivated, even though this type of analysis is permissible in formal syntactic theories. Section 5.2.1 discusses this issue in detail.

4.3. Symmetrical Voice Approaches in Philippine-Type and Indonesian-Type Languages

Symmetrical voice approaches apply to both Philippine-type and Indonesian-type languages, with only minor differences (Himmelmann 2002b, 2005; Arka 2003a; Foley 2008; Riesberg 2014; Kuo 2015; McDonnell 2016). This approach maintains that among the multiple transitive constructions within the voice system none is basic or derived from another, and each voice employs a different mapping between semantic roles and grammatical relations. In this view, symmetrical voice alternations are typologically distinct and separate from active–passive and ergative–antipassive alternations. This approach differs from others in that it was developed in direct response to the problems that these western Austronesian languages pose for many theoretical frameworks and typological classifications. This approach does not necessarily assume a strict definition of symmetry across the different voice constructions (i.e., nonpivot undergoer arguments in AV behave in exactly the same way as nonpivot actor arguments in UV). By and large, pivot arguments do behave in the same way—or are symmetrical—across the different voices, but nonpivot arguments are more variable across languages in how symmetrical they are across the different voices (Riesberg 2014). Another major issue for the symmetrical voice approach is the nature of what is considered basicness. In some languages, each voice has the same level of morphological marking, but in others, one construction is—at least superficially—unmarked. Some scholars have proposed zero marking, and others have pointed out that there is no clear evidence that one is derived from the other, but this issue remains unresolved for Indonesian-type languages (Arka 2009).

5. DISCUSSION

In this section, we present a critical review of the existing approaches to western Austronesian voice introduced in Sections 3 and 4.

5.1. Philippine-Type Voice System

The major differences between the valency-changing and valency-neutral approaches to Philippine-type languages are essentially how Philippine-type voice affixes are analyzed—or, in the sense of generative syntax, whether these affixes are reflexes of *v*/Appl or hosted at C. In this subsection, we outline four main points that favor the valency-neutral approach.



As discussed in Section 3, the valency-changing approach to the Philippine-type voice system subsumes two basic assumptions. First, Philippine-type two-place AV clauses are antipassive constructions. Second, Philippine-type LV and CV clauses are applicative constructions that license an oblique phrase (e.g., locative, benefactive, instrumental) as an applied object. The soundness of this approach depends on the validity of these analyses. In the following subsections, we describe issues in these two fundamental assumptions.

5.1.1. Issues in the antipassive analysis of two-place actor voice clauses. As pointed out in previous research (see, e.g., Paul & Travis 2006, Foley 2008, Chen 2017a), Philippine-type two-place AV clauses differ from canonical antipassives in three important aspects. First, canonical antipassive constructions employ a dedicated (antipassive) marker that does not appear in monovalent intransitive clauses (e.g., Dixon 1994, Manning 1996, Polinsky 2016, Heaton 2017), as shown in the Chukchi examples 15*b* and 15*c*. Philippine-type two-place AV clauses, however, lack valency-decreasing morphology that distinguish them from monovalent intransitive clauses, as shown in the Tagalog examples 16*a–c*. The antipassive approach to two-place AV clauses thus entails an undesirable assumption that antipassivization in Philippine-type languages is morphologically unmarked, whereas the basic transitives are marked with a transitive marker (i.e., the PV affix):

- Chukchi
- (15a) Tumg-e ḡinḡey rəyegtetew-nin. [Transitive]
 friend-ERG boy.ABS save-AOR.3SG:3SG
 ‘The friend saved the boy.’
- (15b) Tumgətum (ḡinḡey-ək) ine-nyegtele-gʔi. [Antipassive]
 friend.ABS (boy-LOC) AP-save-AOR.3SG
 ‘The friend saved the boy.’
- (15c) Dinqey pəkir-gʔi. [Intransitive]
 boy.ABS arrive-AOR.3SG
 ‘The boy arrived.’
 (Polinsky 2017, p. 14)
- Tagalog
- (16a) S<um>ayaw ang babae. [Intransitive AV clause]
 <AV>dance PIV woman
 ‘The woman danced.’
- (16b) S<um>ulat ang babae *(ng liham). [Two-place “antipassive” AV clause]
 <AV>write PIV woman (ID.PPIV2 letter)
 ‘The woman wrote a letter.’
- (16c) Su-sulat-in ng babae ang liham. [Two-place AV clause]
CONT-write-PV NPIV1 woman PIV letter
 ‘The woman will write the letter.’

Second, an oblique in canonical antipassives usually receives indefinite/nonspecific interpretation and can be freely omitted. However, the putative “noncore” object in various Philippine-type two-place AV clauses is not omissible, as shown by example 16*b*, and can be definite and specific in various Philippine-type languages (see, e.g., Paul & Travis 2006, Chen 2017a for details). Third,



canonical antipassive objects can be freely omitted, as shown by example 15*b*, whereas the object in Philippine-type two-place AV clauses is not, as shown by example 16*b*.

Other than the empirical differences between typical antipassives and Philippine-type AV clauses, recent research has presented independently motivated evidence against the intransitive/antipassive analysis of two-place AV clauses. Chen & Fukuda (2016) argue from the perspective of case licensing that the distribution of the phrase-marking clitic NPIV2, which marks the object of AV verbs, shows all the hallmarks of structural accusative case, and it is difficult to fit it into a lexical oblique case analysis. According to these authors, two-place AV clauses are best analyzed as transitive constructions, rather than antipassives. These issues in the intransitive analysis of Philippine-type AV clauses present important challenges to the valency-changing approach to Philippine-type voice system.

5.1.2. Issues in the applicative analysis of locative voice and circumstantial voice clauses.

The applicative analysis of Philippine-type LV and CV clauses has also been challenged by recent investigations of LV/CV constructions in less-known Philippine-type languages. On the basis of comparative data, Chen (2016, 2017a) argues that the applicative analysis of LV and CV affixes involves two major weaknesses. First, this analysis faces difficulty in accounting for an overlooked fact that a number of oblique-like phrases—which are theoretically infelicitous for being analyzed as an applied object—can be licensed as the pivot in LV or CV clauses across various Philippine-type languages (see Section 2 for details). This includes temporal expressions, event nominals, reason/purpose phrases, and the theme of a caused event in productive causatives. Second, binding diagnoses of PV/LV/CV-marked ditransitives and causatives suggest invariable structural relations among the arguments regardless of voice, leaving the applicative analysis of LV/CV clauses unsupported. Contra the prediction from the valency-changing/ergative approach to Philippine-type languages, Rackowski (2002) and Chen (2017a,b) show that causatives and ditransitives constructions in four Philippine-type languages do not manifest a phenomenon similar to dative alternation but rather show invariable binding facts unaffected by voice alternations. These observations, found across four languages under different primary branches of Austronesian (Tagalog, Puyuma, Amis, and Seediq), are consistent with earlier observations in Malagasy (Keenan 1976; Pearson 2001, 2005), lending empirical support to the valency-neutral approach to Philippine-type languages, which predicts that voice alternation in Philippine-type languages is independent of subject selection and/or case licensing.

5.1.3. The distribution of the nonpivot phrase-marking clitics. The final issue in the valency-changing/ergative approach to Philippine-type languages lies in its analysis of the basic phrase-marking clitics. As discussed in Sections 3 and 4, under this approach, the markers PIVOT, NPIV1, and NPIV2 are analyzed as absolutive case (assigned by C/T), ergative case (assigned by transitive *v*), and oblique case (assigned by the lexical verb), respectively (e.g., Aldridge 2004, 2008, 2011, 2017). Under the valency-neutral/accusative approach, by contrast, the markers NPIV1 and NPIV2 realize nominative case (assigned by C/T) and accusative case (assigned by *v*), respectively, and the pivot marking is analyzed as a topic marker (e.g., Richards 2000, Pearson 2005, Rackowski & Richards 2005, Chen 2017a). Whether the distribution of these markers indeed follows from the prediction of these analyses thus helps evaluate the strength of the two approaches (Table 5).

Recent investigations of the case system of four Philippine-type languages reveal that the distribution of markers PIVOT, NPIV1, and NPIV2 is difficult to account for under an ergative analysis. According to Chen (2017a) and Chen & Fukuda (2017), an inherent ergative case analysis of the marker NPIV1 is difficult to maintain, as this marker may appear in both external and internal argument positions and in both transitive and intransitive clauses, showing the hallmarks



Table 5 The analysis of the basic markers under the ergative and accusative approaches

	Ergative approach	Accusative approach
PIVOT	Absolutive case	Topic marker
NPIV1	Ergative case	Nominative case
NPIV2	Oblique case	Accusative case

of nominative case. The lexical oblique case analysis for the marker NPIV2 is also problematic, given the availability of this marker at the external argument position in Exceptional Case Marking configuration, and its obligatory absence in the restructuring environment (Chen 2017a). These observations suggest that NPIV2 is better analyzed as realizing structural accusative case, rather than as a marker for antipassive objects. Finally, the lack of voice-conditioned argument structure alternation among PV/LV/CV-marked constructions in multiple Philippine-type languages (Rackowski 2002; Chen 2017a,b) indicates that the licensing of pivot marking does not respect locality conditions on absolutive case licensing, posing serious challenges to the absolutive case analysis of pivot marking. Given the empirical and theoretical shortcomings in the valency-changing approach to Philippine-type voice system summarized above, one can conclude that the ergative-like phenomena found in Philippine-type languages are only superficially apparent.

5.2. Indonesian-Type Voice System

Two controversial issues that arise in the discussion of Indonesian-type voice systems revolve around the UV constructions, and not AV constructions as in Philippine-type languages. The first issue is whether we can analyze the UV construction as an ergative construction and, thus, the Indonesian-type voice system as a split-alignment system. The second issue concerns the analysis of passive constructions, specifically the core/oblique status of nonpivot actors in putative UV and passive constructions.

5.2.1. Motivations for split alignment in Indonesian-type languages. Unlike the ergative analysis in Philippine-type languages, the ergative analysis in Indonesian-type languages represents a valency-neutral approach. All of these analyses propose that the two transitive constructions represent two different patterns of alignment, an accusative pattern in AV constructions and an ergative one in UV constructions, which allow them to account for how these two different transitive constructions exist together in a single system. Thus, this approach readily fits into formal syntactic theories that can independently account for accusative and ergative structures but not necessarily a symmetrical voice analysis (compare with Riesberg 2014).

The issue, however, concerns how such a split is motivated (Dixon 1994). In other languages that show properties of split ergativity, the motivation is fairly apparent; the split is typically based on tense–aspect–mood marking (e.g., Burshaski), the person of the argument (e.g., Dyirbal), or the status of the clause as main or subordinate (e.g., Tsimshian). However, in Indonesian-type languages, there has been no clear motivation for such a split, and to our knowledge none has been explicitly offered. While this does not necessarily rule out such an analysis, it does mean that if a split-system analysis is adopted it should be motivated by some sort of mechanism.

5.2.2. Nonpivot actors and the nature of passives. Section 3.2 outlines a fundamental issue in the analysis of UV and passives, which is the status of nonpivot actors: Are they core or oblique arguments? In the absence of binding evidence in constructions with the prefix *di-* in Standard



Indonesian, Kroeger (2014) analyzes any actor as oblique, irrespective of its marking or position with respect to the verb. In other passive constructions in Balinese and Acehnese, the passive “agrees” with the actor, but Arka (2008) and Legate (2012, 2014) provide evidence that the *by*-phrase accompanying the putative passive affix is an oblique argument and not strictly coreferential with the passive affix. Looking more broadly at the status of the actor in UV construction, Riesberg (2014)—following the lead of Arka (2005), among others—proposes that these actors may in fact fall somewhere in between core and oblique, a category that Arka calls “semicore.” While such an analysis may be more difficult to capture in a formal syntactic theory, it appears to capture the data on actors in UV constructions well.

McDonnell (2016) offers a perspective that is consistent with that of Riesberg (2014), one that is informed by the use of UV constructions in examples 17*a–c* and passives in example 18 in a corpus of conversation in Besemah. Besemah UV constructions are generally unmarked, as in example 17*a*, but if the actor is third person, as in example 17*b*, it can optionally be prefixed by *di-* (i.e., there is no real syntactic difference between bare UV and prefixal UV). First- and second-person arguments are proclitics or occur immediately before the verb, as in example 17*c*, and third-person pronominal arguments are enclitics on the verb, as in example 17*b*. NP arguments may occur immediately after the verb, as in example 17*a*, as long as they are not “heavy” (i.e., typically have no more than a single word). If this NP actor occurs alongside the pronominal clitic, it is placed within an oblique *by*-phrase, marked by *li* ‘by’ or *nga* ‘with,’ as in example 17*b*. Passives may occur with or without *di-*, and the actor is omitted or occurs in a *by*-phrase, as in example 18. All of these forms are attested in the corpus, but in elicitation passives without *di-* are not acceptable to all speakers:

- Besemah
- (17a) Puntung la=udim tetak-i Raffles. [Undergoer voice]
 firewood PFV=finish UV.chop-LOC.APPL Raffles
 ‘Raffles already chopped the firewood.’
- (17b) Puntung la=udim (di-)tetak-i=(ny)e (li/nga Raffles). [Undergoer voice]
 firewood PFV=finish UV-chop-LOC.APPL=3 by/with Raffles
 ‘He/(Raffles) already chopped the firewood.’
- (17c) Puntung la=udim ku=tetak-i. [Undergoer voice]
 firewood PFV=finish 1SG=chop-LOC.APPL
 ‘I already chopped the firewood.’
- Besemah
- (18) Puntung la=udim (di-)tetak-i (li/nga Raffles). [Passive voice]
 firewood PFV=finish UV-chop-LOC.APPL by/with Raffles
 ‘The firewood was already chopped (by Raffles).’

When the actor is an enclitic, it is highly topical and tracked throughout the discourse; nothing is necessarily pragmatically marked regarding the actor in these constructions. When the third-person enclitic and the actor are present—the same structure as the passive in Balinese—the function appears to be one of antitopicalization to confirm, reestablish, or resolve any ambiguity of a referent in discourse (Chafe 1976). In some cases, to emphasize agentivity, the first-/second-person actor is procliticized to the verb and appears in a *by*-phrase, as in example 19. These properties are not typically expected in canonical passive constructions:



Besemah

- (19) langsung ku=tulak-ka li=ku, [Undergoer voice]
 direct 1SG=push-APPL by=1SG
 ‘I pushed (him) right away,’
 (McDonnell 2016, p. 141)

When the verb is unmarked or prefixed with *di-* and the actor occurs only in a *by*-phrase, its use is much more in line with the pragmatic motivations for a passive. In example 20, the actor is referring to the speaker’s own wife, who made a mistake by selling their cocoa seeds for much less than they are worth. He uses this construction and the general noun *jeme* ‘person’ to avoid assigning responsibility to his wife (Shibatani 1985, Mithun 2008):

Besemah

- (20) empat ribu jual-ka li jeme. [Undergoer voice]
 four thousand UV.sell-APPL by people
 ‘(for) four thousand (the cocoa seeds) were sold by someone (i.e., his wife).’
 (McDonnell 2016, p. 146)

When the actor is expressed as an NP adjacent to the verb, which is quite rare in the corpus, the actor is neither highly topical, as is expected for the UV, nor marked pragmatically like a passive; it appears to fall somewhere in between the two.

A salient point here is that, while it would be circular to define passive purely in terms of its function in discourse without regard for its structural properties (Cumming & Wouk 1987, Kroeger 2014), it is important to understand how such constructions function in discourse; syntactic tests used in a vacuum can be misleading, as Kroeger (2014) shows in the case of binding in Standard Indonesian. Thus, left without reliable syntactic diagnostics for the core/oblique status of the actor in Besemah UV constructions, the analysis as UV or passive is based on the position of the actor argument. If the actor is adjacent to the verb, it is UV, but if it is present only in a *by*-phrase, it is a passive. The corpus reveals a cline from most core-like arguments (pronominal enclitics) to semicore arguments (adjacent NP actors) to least core-like arguments (actors in a *by*-phrase).

6. CONCLUSION

In this review, we have reassessed the core features of western Austronesian voice and provided a critique of two different analytical approaches to the Philippine-type and the Indonesian-type voice systems: the valency-changing approach and the valency-neutral approach. We have shown some major shortcomings of the valency-changing approaches for Philippine-type languages and evaluated more nuanced distinctions between UV and passive constructions in Indonesian-type languages. We have also discussed how valency-neutral approaches—whether they be an accusative analysis under a generative paradigm or a symmetrical voice analysis—provide an optimal account on the basis of data from a variety of western Austronesian languages.

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