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# BAJAU: A SYMMETRICAL AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGE

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Research on causative and applicative constructions has identified a class of symmetrical languages, in which either of two arguments may pattern like the direct object of a primary transitive verb. To date, symmetry of this sort has been identified only in a small geographically contiguous group of Bantu languages. Bajau, an Austronesian language of Indonesia and the Philippines, is shown to be symmetrical. Unlike the Bantu languages previously described, Bajau permits a benefactive applied object to be treated like an ordinary direct object. The restriction on the extraction of benefactive applied objects must therefore not be universal, contrary to the assumption of previous theories.\*

1. SYMMETRICAL LANGUAGES. SYMMETRICAL LANGUAGES,<sup>1</sup> in which two arguments in a construction can both display the properties assigned to the single object of a primary transitive verb, are both very rare and very interesting. They have been the focus of recent research into the behavior of causative and applicative constructions (De Guzman 1987, Baker 1988a, 1988b, Alsina & Mchombo 1990, Bresnan & Moshi 1990, Alsina 1993), yet so far all theoretical work done on symmetrical languages has focussed on languages from a small region of eastern Africa, from the Bantu family.<sup>2</sup> This article presents data on constructions involving two objects in Bajau, a language spoken in myriad small coastal nomadic communities located through most of Indonesia, substantial parts of the Philippines, and Malaysia as well.<sup>3</sup> Although it is an Austronesian language, it has not been successfully subgrouped with any other Austronesian languages (Pallesen 1985). The variety of Bajau spoken in the lesser Sunda islands has been described in overview by Verheijen (1986), and does not differ substantially in basic morphosyntax from the variety described here, which represents the Bajau spoken in the village of Mola, off the island of Wanci in the Kepulauan Tukang Besi, in Sulawesi Tenggara province, and is representative of the Bajau spoken in other communities in that province.<sup>4</sup> More detailed work on the verbal system of the language as spoken in the southern Philippines is given in Walton 1986, and mention is made of this variety of the language in Foley & Van Valin 1984. Bajau is a symmetrical language, a unique finding outside Bantu. Furthermore, Bajau also displays a property in its double object domain previously not described in detail for a symmetrical language, namely

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<sup>1</sup> The same as Baker's 'true double accusative' languages (1988a: 174).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Kinyarwanda (Kimenyi 1980, Dryer 1983, Alsina 1993), LuHaya (Duranti 1977), Kichaga (Bresnan & Moshi 1990), Kimeru (Hodges 1977), Kitharaka (Harford 1991), etc. See Bresnan and Moshi (1990) for a partial survey of such languages.

<sup>3</sup> Also called Sama, and more accurately spelled Bajaw.

<sup>4</sup> Mola, like most Bajau villages, is a village consisting of pile houses situated over the shallow water just off the shore of a nearby island, in this case Wanci. Many Bajau communities do not have even these landless settlements, and roam the seas in small sailing fleets.

the ability of a benefactive applied object to head a relative clause, a contentious issue in the Bantu literature (see §§6 and 7).

2. BASIC MORPHOSYNTAX. The Bajau voice system is a small version of the familiar Philippine ‘focus’ system; unlike the better-known Philippine languages, there are only two voice forms for each verb, here called actor voice (AV), marked on the verb by substitution of N for the initial consonant,<sup>5</sup> and object voice, (unglossed in the examples following) which is unmarked both morphologically and in terms of frequency in texts. Also unlike the better-known Philippine-type languages, there is no case marking on nominals, and only pronouns have different forms depending on their grammatical function.

Basic transitive verbs may select either of the two voice types; with intransitive verbs, there is no choice of focus types, and there is an obligatory split as to which focus type is chosen: an agentive verb must use AV morphology (with some apparent exceptions among motion verbs), and a nonagentive verb must use OV morphology. In addition to the choice of AV or OV, an OV verb may optionally have passive prefixes, *di-* indicating a regular passive, or *ta-*, an accidental passive;<sup>6</sup> passive prefixes may not occur in conjunction with AV verbs.

An AV verb must use a free pronominal or nominal form in the clause (the order of which is basically VOS,<sup>7</sup> though a ‘focussed’ element may be fronted to a preverbal topic position) to indicate the agent, and an OV verb optionally indexes the agent by the use of pronominal suffixes (which are also used as possessive suffixes on nouns), though a full nominal is always possible. The agent of a verb in accidental passive voice may be expressed in an oblique phrase, marked by the general oblique *ma*, though the nonagentive intransitive subject is not obliquely marked in such a construction (see 12 below). Since nominals other than pronouns show no difference in case, word order alone disambiguates an AV sentence. The full set of pronominals is given in Table 1.

Features of Bajau morphosyntax that are distinct from the better-documented Bantu languages and are worthy of note are the absence of any means of indicating the object on the verb, the fact that the causative and passive morphemes are prefixes, rather than suffixes, so that their relative ordering on the verb with respect to the applicative suffix is not immediately apparent, and the word order.

<sup>5</sup> Assimilatory rules apply to the N-, so that *b* and *p* are replaced by *m* (N-busay > *musay* ‘paddle’, N-pidda > *midda* ‘extinguish’), *t* and some *s* are replaced by *n* (N-tubba’ > *nubba*’ ‘stab’, N-susu > *nusu* ‘suckle’), *c* and some *s* are replaced by *n* (N-cuah > *nuah* ‘forge’, N-soho > *noho* ‘order’), *k* and *h* are replaced by *ŋ* (N-kita > *ŋita* ‘see’, N-hapus > *ŋapus* ‘wipe’); *ŋa-* is prefixed to *r*, *l* and some *d* (N-rijja > *ŋarijja* ‘spit’, N-lelle > *ŋalelle* ‘tease’, N-daka’ > *ŋadaka*’ ‘catch’), *ŋa-* with prenasalization is prefixed to *j*, *g*, and some *d* (N-dila’ > *ŋandila*’ ‘lick’, N-jagur > *ŋanjagur* ‘punch’, N-gaggar > *ŋangaggar* ‘snarl’). Vowel initial roots simply add *ŋ* (N-inta’ > *ŋinta*’ ‘eat’); *ŋ* is written with the digraph *ng* in the examples following.

<sup>6</sup> The accidental passive *ta-* may also be used with nonagentive verbs.

<sup>7</sup> Where the ‘subject’ is the focussed element, whether agentlike or patientlike. See Kroeger 1993 for the use of the term SUBJECT in Philippine languages.

	FREE FORM	SUFFIX
1 SINGULAR	<i>aku</i>	<i>-ku</i>
2 SINGULAR	<i>kaw</i>	<i>-nu</i>
3 SINGULAR	<i>ia</i>	<i>-na</i>
1 PLURAL EXCL.	<i>kami</i>	<i>-kami</i>
1 PLURAL INCL.	<i>kita</i>	<i>-ta</i>
2 PLURAL	<i>ka'ang</i>	<i>-ka'ang</i>
3 PLURAL	<i>(disi'iru)<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>-na</i>

TABLE 1. Pronominal forms in Bajau.

<sup>a</sup> This is actually a demonstrative form, 'those over there', and not a true pronoun.

3. THE VOICE SYSTEM AND UNDERIVED CLAUSES. Before examining the properties of derived sentences, basic intransitive, transitive and ditransitive clauses are presented. Examples of the use of the two focuses and the passives, with transitive and intransitive verbs, are given below. Examples 1–4 show that a transitive verb may occur in any of the actor voice, object voice, passive voice or accidental passive voice.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, 5–12 show that there is a split in intransitive verbs: agentive verbs may only appear in the actor voice, and non-agentive verbs may appear in the object voice or in accidental passive voice.

## BASIC TRANSITIVE CLAUSES

- (1) ACTOR VOICE  
Ng-ita uggo' aku.  
AV-see pig 1SG  
'I saw the pig.'
- (2) OBJECT VOICE  
Kita-ku uggo'.see-1SG pig  
'I saw the pig.'
- (3) PASSIVE VOICE  
Di-kita-ku uggo'.PASS-see-1SG pig  
'The pig was seen by me.'
- (4) ACCIDENTAL PASSIVE VOICE  
Ta-kita uggo' ma aku.  
ACC.PASS-see pig OBL 1SG  
'The pig happened to be seen my me.'

## BASIC INTRANSITIVE CLAUSES

## NONAGENTIVE

- (5) M-usay aku ma dilao'.  
AV-paddle 1SG OBL sea  
'I paddled in the sea.'
- (6) \*Busay-ku ma dilao'.  
paddle-1SG OBL sea  
(Good for: 'My paddle is in the sea.')

<sup>8</sup> Passives are not compatible with actor voice, regardless of order: \**Ngan-di-kita*, \**Di-ng-ita*. Pronominal suffixes may not be used with actor voice verbs: \**Ng-ita-ku*. Compare with 1–3.

- (7) \*Di-busay-ku.  
PASS-paddle-1SG
- (8) \*Ta-busay aku.  
ACC.PASS-paddle 1SG  
NONAGENTIVE
- (9) \*N-idor aku.  
AV-sleep 1SG
- (10) Tidor-ku.  
sleep-1SG  
'I slept.'
- (11) \*Di-tidor-ku.  
PASS-sleep-1SG
- (12) Ta-tidor aku.  
ACC.PASS-sleep 1SG  
'I fell asleep accidentally.'

One of the syntactic uses of this voice system is similar to the well-reported restriction on Philippine languages (e.g. Schachter 1976, 1977, Kroeger 1993) that only the focussed nominal (in the western Austronesian sense) may head a relative clause. This restriction is illustrated for Bajau in 13–19. In 13, a relative clause with a verb in actor voice can only be interpreted as being headed by a subject; the ungrammaticality of an object voice verb being used with a relative clause headed by a subject is shown in 14. Examples 15 and 16 show that for agentive verbs, the actor voice morphology must be used, as in matrix clauses. In 17, *asu* 'dog' is the object of the relative clause, and so the verb must appear in object voice (i.e. with no actor voice morphology). Example 19 shows that a nonagentive verb is not inflected with actor voice morphology, just as in main clauses.

## RELATIVE CLAUSE WITH AN ACTOR VOICE VERB FORM

- (13) Memu [<sub>RC</sub>ng-ita aku] m-anaya'.  
cuscus AV-see 1SG AV-climb  
'The cuscus that saw me climbed (away).'
- \*The cuscus that I saw climbed away.'
- (14) \*Memu [<sub>RC</sub>kita aku] m-anaya'.  
cuscus see 1SG AV-climb
- (15) Ng-ita memu [<sub>RC</sub>m-anaya'] aku.  
AV-see cuscus AV-climb 1SG  
'I saw the cuscus that climbed (away).'
- (16) \*Ng-ita memu [<sub>RC</sub>panaya'-na] aku.  
AV-see cuscus climb-3SG 1SG

## RELATIVE CLAUSE WITH AN OBJECT VOICE VERB FORM

- (17) Lallai asu [<sub>RC</sub>kita-ku].  
left dog see-SG  
'The dog that I saw left.'
- \*The dog that saw me left.'

- (18) Lallai asu [<sub>RC</sub>ng-ita].  
 left dog AV-see  
 'The dog that saw (something) left.'  
 \*'The dog that (someone) saw left.'
- (19) Ng-ita asu [<sub>RCCOCCO</sub>'] kaw?  
 AV-see dog fall 2SG  
 'Did you see the dog that fell over?'

The passive voices may also be used with relative clauses, in which case the head of the relative clause must be the passive subject, and can never be interpreted as the agent.

RELATIVE CLAUSE WITH A PASSIVE VOICE VERB FORM

- (20) Dayah [<sub>RC</sub>di-kirra'-na] inta'-ku.  
 fish PASS-chop-3SG eat-1SG  
 'I ate the fish that she chopped up.'
- (21) \*Ana' [<sub>RC</sub>di-kirra' dayah] ng-ita aku.  
 child PASS-chop fish AV-see 1SG  
 'The child that chopped up the fish saw me.'

RELATIVE CLAUSE WITH AN ACCIDENTAL PASSIVE VOICE VERB FORM

- (22) Daka' asu meoh [<sub>RC</sub>ta-kita ma disi'iru].  
 catch dog cat ACC.PASS-see OBL they  
 'The dogs caught the cat that they happened to catch sight of.'

Another consequence of being the focussed argument is the ability to appear preverbally; arguments frequently occur in a preverbal position, but only if they are focussed.

- (23) Kaw ng-ita aku.  
 2SG AV-see 1SG  
 'You saw me.'  
 \*'I saw you.'
- (24) Ali jagur Harun.  
 Ali hit Harun  
 'Harun hit Ali.'  
 \*'Ali hit Harun.'
- (25) Meoh di-daka asu.  
 cat PASS-catch dog  
 'The cat was caught by some dogs.'  
 \*'The dog was caught by some cats.'
- (26) Ana'-na iru ta-pangandea ma aku.  
 child-3SG that ACC.PASS-lie.to OBL 1SG  
 'That child happened to be lied to by me.'
- (27) \*Ma aku ta-pangandea ana'-na iru.  
 OBL 1SG ACC.PASS-lie.to child-3SG that

Having established that relativization and fronting show restrictions that are morphologically marked on the verb, I use these properties to diagnose the subject and object in clauses involving more than one object. In clauses with

underived ditransitive verbs such as *bunang* 'give', both the recipient and the theme display behavior diagnostic of objecthood. Compare the possibilities for fronting with actor voice and object voice on the verb, in 28–31. While only the actor *ana' iru* 'that child' may appear preverbally in the actor voice forms in 28 and 29, either *aku* 'me' or *badi'* 'machete' may be preverbal in the object voice forms in 30 and 31. Notice that the order for the two object nominals in the actor voice forms is not fixed; pragmatic considerations will always differentiate the two, so the order is free.

- (28) *Ana' iru m-unang badi' aku.*  
 child that AV-give machete 1SG  
 'That child gave me a machete.'
- (29) *Ana' iru m-unang aku badi.*  
 child that AV-give 1SG machete  
 'That child gave me a machete.'
- (30) *Aku bunang ana' iru badi'.*  
 1SG give child that machete  
 'That child gave me a machete.'
- (31) *Badi' bunang ana' iru aku.*  
 machete give child that 1SG  
 'That child gave me a machete.'

Either the theme or the recipient may be subject in a passive clause, or head a relative clause.

- (32) *Di-bunang badi' aku.*  
 PASS-give machete 1SG  
 'I was given a machete.'
- (33) *Di-bunan-na aku badi'.*  
 PASS-give-3SG 1SG machete  
 'A machete was given to me by him.'<sup>9</sup>
- (34) *Geger ana' [RCbunang-ku dayah].*  
 noisy child give-1SG fish  
 'The children that I gave some fish to are noisy.'
- (35) *Tarang badi' [RCbunan-na aku].*  
 sharp machete give-3SG 1SG  
 'The machete that was given to me is sharp.'

Sentences 30–35 make it clear that the two objects of the ditransitive verb *bunang* 'give' behave in the same manner; they provide evidence that Bajau can be called a symmetrical language (after Bresnan & Moshi 1990), or in Baker's (1988a) terms, a TRUE DOUBLE ACCUSATIVE LANGUAGE. With these preliminaries established, we can now examine multiple objects in derived constructions.

<sup>9</sup> Without the *na*, *aku* would be interpreted as the agent. It is, however, in the wrong case of this clause, and so the sentence would be judged ungrammatical.

4. CAUSATIVES. The causative prefix is *pa-* and it may appear on either transitive or intransitive verb stems. When it appears on an intransitive verb, the causee is treated as the object of the derived transitive verb, and the causer is the actor. When added to an already transitive verb, a ditransitive predicate is derived with two syntactically identical objects, as 36–39, illustrating fronting and relativization, show.

- (36) M-a-kang ana' dayah uma'.  
 AV-CAUS-eat child fish mother  
 'Mother made the child eat the fish.'
- (37) Ana' pa-kang uma' dayah.  
 child CAUS-eat mother fish  
 'Mother made the child eat the fish.'
- (38) Ana' [<sub>RC</sub>pa-kang uma' dayah] ma ngga?  
 child CAUS-eat mother fish OBL where  
 'Where's the child that mother made eat the fish?'
- (39) Itu dayah [<sub>RC</sub>ma pa-kang uma' ana'].  
 that fish OBL CAUS-eat mother child  
 'That's the fish that mother made the child eat.'<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting to note that word order does not differentiate an object voice sentence in which both the causee and the causer are postverbal.

- (40) Pa-kang-ku kareo ana'.  
 CAUS-eat-1SG shark child  
 'I fed the child some shark('s fin).'  
 'I fed the child to the shark.'

Sentences 36–40 establish that both the causee and the causer are treated as objects of the verb; either may be fronted, either may head an object voice relative clause. When both appear postverbally, word order is not a constraint on interpretation of causee or causer, given appropriate pragmatic situations.

5. APPLICATIVES. The applicative suffix is *-an*, invariant for the thematic role of the applied object, which may be beneficiary, instrumental, or locative. Although locatives may be expressed in oblique phrases by the oblique marker *ma*, there is no prepositional way for a beneficiary or instrument to be expressed.<sup>11</sup> Although serial verb constructions (with *pugay* 'do for someone's benefit' and *pake* 'use', respectively) may be used, some speakers consider these to be less than proper Bajau. Only applicatives based on transitive predicates will be presented here, though benefactive, instrumental and locative applicatives based on intransitive predicates are all allowed. A basic nonapplicative sentence and its applicative counterpart can be seen in 41–42.

<sup>10</sup> The oblique preposition *ma* is used as a relativizer in some relative clauses, generally when the relative clause is lengthy enough to make parsing a problem. Example 39 is grammatical with the reading given without the *ma*, but less natural.

<sup>11</sup> Borrowings from Indonesian are used by some (acculturated) speakers as prepositions/case markers: (<Malay *untu*' 'for', for beneficiaries, and *oleh* (<Malay *oleh*) 'by' in passive sentences, in place of the general oblique *ma*. These forms are strongly rejected by more traditional Bajau.

- (41) Nga-daka' manu' iru aku pugay uwa'-ku.  
 AV-catch chicken that 1SG do.for father-1SG  
 'I caught that chicken for my father.'
- (42) Nga-daka-an uwa'-ku manu' iru aku.  
 AV-catch father-1SG chicken that 1SG  
 'I caught that chicken for my father.'

Sentences 43 and 44 show that either the applied object or the base object may be fronted, and 45 and 46 show that either the applied object or the base object may head an object voice relative clause.

- (43) Pa'Harun ukir-ang-ku surat.  
 Mr. Harun write-APPL-1SG letter  
 'I wrote a letter for Mr. Harun's benefit.'
- (44) Surat ukir-ang-ku Pa'Harun.  
 letter write-APPL-1SG Mr. Harun  
 'I wrote a letter for Mr. Harun's benefit.'
- (45) Ningkolo ma kadera ana' [<sub>RC</sub>ma pa-date-an-nu dayah].  
 sit OBL chair child OBL cooked-APPL-2SG fish  
 'The child that you cooked some fish for is sitting in the chair.'
- (46) Labu [<sub>RC</sub>ma pa-date-an-nu ana'] ma ngga?  
 pumpkin OBL cooked-APPL-2SG child OBL where  
 'Where's the pumpkin that you cooked for the child?'

The same symmetry is found with the two objects of instrumental applicative constructions; either object may be fronted and either object may head a relative clause:

- (47) Pisaw na kirra'-tan-ta dayah ma di-pissi-ta.  
 knife IRR chop-APPL-1PL.IN fish OBL PASS-hook-1PL.IN  
 'We'll use knives to chop up the fish that we caught.'
- (48) Pai pissi-an-na pissi-na iru.  
 stingray hook-APPL-3SG fishhook-3SG that  
 'He caught the stingray with that fish hook.'
- (49) Ai na pa-taram pisaw [<sub>RC</sub>ma kirra'-tan-ta]?  
 who IRR CAUS-sharp knife OBL chop-APPL-1PL.IN  
 'Who's going to sharpen the knives that we used to cut with?'
- (50) 'Inta-na ana' labu [<sub>RC</sub>kirra'-tan-nu pisaw-ku].  
 eat-3SG child pumpkin chop-APPL-2SG knife-1SG  
 'The child ate the pumpkin that you cut up with my knife.'

Locative applicatives display symmetrical behavior with respect to passivization, but differ in other ways from the instrumental and benefactive applicatives discussed above. If the base object is extracted or fronted, the original preposition *ma* 'oblique' must appear on the locative applied object.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, when

<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that all locatives marked by *ma* are objects. We can differentiate the locative argument in an applicative construction from an oblique one with no applicative: 54 shows that the locative applied object may be fronted, a property of focussed subjects and objects, but not of oblique arguments.

the verb is in actor voice, the locative applied object may not appear without its preposition. Sentence 51 shows a nonapplicative construction with the oblique preposition *ma*; and 52 is the applicative equivalent.

- (51) Tagu-ku garang ma pario'.  
 put-1SG salt OBL pot  
 'I put salt in the pot.'
- (52) Tagu-ang-ku pario' garang.  
 put-APPL-1SG pot salt  
 'I put salt in the pot.'

The examples below show the resumption of the oblique preposition when the verb is in actor voice (53), when the base object is preverbal (55), or when the base object heads a relative clause (57). The applied object with objectlike behavior such as fronting and heading relative clauses is shown in 54 and 56.

- (53) N-agu-ang garang \*(ma) pario' aku.  
 AV-put-APPL salt OBL pot 1SG  
 'I put salt in the pot.'
- (54) Pario' tagu-ang-ku garang.  
 pot put-APPL-1SG salt  
 'I put salt in the pot.'
- (55) Garang tagu-ang-ku \*(ma) pario'.  
 salt put-APPL-1SG OBL pot  
 'I put salt in the pot.'
- (56) Pario' [<sub>RC</sub>tagu-ang-ku garang] masing.  
 pot put-APPL-1SG salt salty  
 'The pot that I put salt in is salty.'
- (57) Garang [<sub>RC</sub>tagu-ang-ku \*(ma) pario'] masing.  
 salt put-APPL-1SG OBL pot salty  
 'The salt that I put in the pot is salty.'

6. BENEFACTIVE APPLIED OBJECTS AND RELATIVE CLAUSES. The fact that there are no asymmetries when the applied object is a beneficiary is interesting, in the light of the Bantu data that has been the subject of previous work on symmetrical properties. In these languages beneficiary applied objects may generally not be extracted, even for otherwise symmetrical languages such as Kichaga (Bresnan & Moshi 1990). In Kichaga either object may be subject in a clause with a passive verb, or be indexed on the verb by object prefixes, but only the base object may be extracted, as seen in 58, illustrating the extractability of the theme object when an applied object and applicative morphology is present, and 59, in which the ungrammaticality of extraction of the applied object when it is a beneficiary can be seen; 60 and 61 show that applied objects other than beneficiaries may be extracted (instrumental and locative examples from Bresnan & Moshi 1990:159).

- (58) K-èlyá á-í-lyì-í-à m̄-kà kī-pùsù.  
 7-food 1.S.REL-PR-eat-APPL-FV 1-wife 7-rotten  
 'The food which he is eating for the wife is rotten.'

- (59) \*M-ka a-i-lyi-i-a k-elya nyi-ichu.  
 1-wife 1.S.REL-PR-eat-APPL-FV 7-food COP-1.this  
 'The wife for whom he is eating the food is this one.'
- (60) Ki-shù á-í-rèng-í-à kì-timá kì-òhì.  
 7-knife 1.S.REL-PR-carve-APPL-FV 7-chair 7-sharp  
 'The knife with which he is carving the chair is sharp.'
- (61) M-rì-nyì á-í-lyì-í-à k-èlyá ch'í kó-kyè pò.  
 3-homestead-LOC 1.S.REL-PR-carve-APPL-FV 7-food NEG.FOC 17-his NEG  
 'The homestead at which he is eating his food is not his.'

The Bajau data (equivalent sentences are 45, 46, 49, and 56) shows that this restriction on the extraction of benefactive applied objects is peculiar to the restricted group of Bantu languages that have been included in most work on applicative constructions, and so need not be dealt with as a universal linguistic principle. There is evidence that there are exceptions to the application of this restriction even within this group. Duranti (1977:122) has an apparent example of a benefactive applied object heading a relative clause in the Bantu language LuHaya.

- (62) Omukázy' ówó kató y-a-it-il' ómuntu.  
 woman REL Kato he-PAST.3-kill-APPL person  
 'the woman that Kato has killed for the person'  
 'the woman for whom Kato has killed the person'

The fact that data such as this has been overlooked in most theoretical accounts of symmetrical phenomena suggests that even within Bantu the restriction may not be total.

7. CONCLUSIONS. The data from ditransitive, causative, and applicative constructions shows that Bajau can be considered a completely symmetrical language; both objects in a double object construction may be fronted, relativized, and may be the subject in passive constructions (though this last point has not been exhaustively illustrated here). Furthermore, the thematic role of the applied object is irrelevant to the object-like behavior of the argument. The fact that there has not been any detailed work on symmetrical languages in families other than Bantu has led to an artificial skewing of the theories developed to account for the facts, through the assumption that the nonextraction of beneficiaries represents universal principles (Baker 1988b, Alsina & Mchombo 1990, Bresnan & Moshi 1990, Alsina 1993).<sup>13</sup> Further work on the behavior of double object constructions in other symmetrical languages from different areas is likely to provide additional surprises for theoretical work on these construc-

<sup>13</sup> Baker (1988a: 293) states that 'it is unclear whether this constraint against extraction of datives and benefactives is universal or not,' and cites Kinyarwanda, Chi-Mwi:ni, and Indonesian as potential counterexamples. 'I do predict that some differences between benefactive and instrumental applicatives will appear in every language that has both, and that the difference will be in a consistent direction: the instrumental applicatives will always be the more double-object-like of the two,' (Baker 1988b:383).

tions, just as a detailed consideration of the double object construction in Bajau has revealed that the restrictions that have been ascribed to beneficiary objects do not hold when a data set including languages from differing genetic backgrounds is considered. Although rare, symmetrical behavior has been reported for languages from diverse genetic and typological backgrounds, including Yagua, an isolate from Peru (Payne & Payne 1989) and Martuthunira, from Western Australia (Dench 1987), and more detailed studies of double object constructions in these languages could well lead to further examples of languages without asymmetries when there is a beneficiary, or reveal other idiosyncratic patterns (such as the Bantu restriction on beneficiary extraction).

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