

# Focus Restrictions on Grammatical Relations in Besemah

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## In this talk, I argue that in Besemah...

- 1 the basic means of universal quantification is with ‘floated’ quantifiers.
- 2 the PRIMARY ARGUMENT is almost exclusively the argument quantified by the universal quantifier
  - ▶ under certain conditions oblique and SECONDARY ARGUMENTS can be quantified.
- 3 this restriction can be tied to information structural properties whereby the universal quantifier marks a focus domain

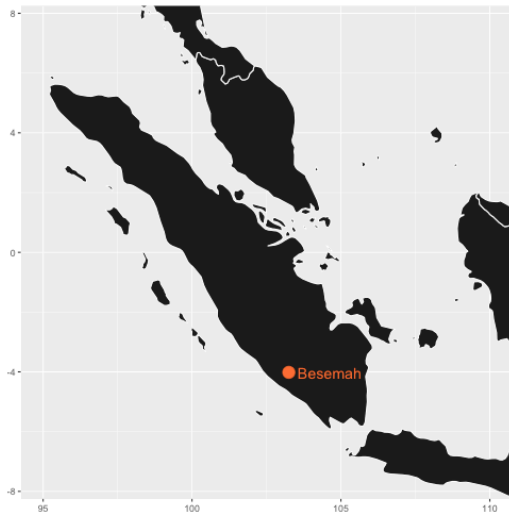
# Overview

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- ▶ Part One: Background information
  - 1 Symmetrical voice in Besemah
  - 2 GRs: Primary Arguments & Secondary Arguments
- ▶ Part Two: Universal quantifiers & symmetrical voice
  - 1 Universal quantifiers: *gale*, *se-gale*, *ge-gale* 'all'
  - 2 Universal quantifiers & Primary Arguments
- ▶ Part Three: Universal quantifiers & information structure
  - 1 Restrictions on GR can explained by information structure
  - 2 *gale* = focus-marker
  - 3 Exhaustive focus

# Besemah

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- ▶  $\approx$  400,000 speakers
  - ▶ highlands of southwest Sumatra
  - ▶ South Barisan Malay (cf. Central/Middle Malay)
- ▶ Vernacular Malay
  - ▶ regularly inherited from Proto-Malayic
  - ▶ in contrast to **Pidgin-Derived Malays** and **Literary Malay** varieties.
- ▶ Diglossia
  - ▶ Standard Indonesian = acrolect
  - ▶ Palembang Malay = mesolect



# Besemah Voice

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## Symmetrical Voice

- 1 more than one transitive construction
- 2 neither of which is clearly 'derived' from the other

# Besemah Voice

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## Symmetrical Voice in Besemah

- So-called 'Indonesian-type' symmetrical voice system

- 1 AGENTIVE VOICE (AV)
- 2 PATIENTIVE VOICE (PV)

## Grammatical Relations in Besemah

- Limited evidence for grammatical relations:

- 1 **PRIMARY ARGUMENT** (PA)  $\approx$  'subject argument'
- 2 SECONDARY ARGUMENT (SA)  $\approx$  'non-subject (core) argument'

# Besemah Voice

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## BARE INTRANSITIVE

- (1) *jeme lah datang nian.*  
 people PFV come really  
 'people really came already.'

(Rumsiah, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-015, 00:26:27.100–00:26:28.250)

# Besemah Voice

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## AGENTIVE VOICE (me)N-

- (2) *Duski* *n-(t)anam* *empat* *ratus* *batang* *di* *kebun* *sini*.  
D. AV-plant four hundred tree LOC field here

'*Duski* planted four hundred trees in the field here.'

(Aripin, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-010, 00:23:48.854–00:23:51.689)

# Besemah Voice

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## PATIENTIVE VOICE–1/2

(3) *jeme ka- Rambai Kace lah ku=gaghi ni.*  
people HES R. K. PFV 1SG=[PV]visit DEM.PROX

'I visited people from Rambai Kace.'

(Sarkani, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-002, 00:15:29.280–00:15:31.490)



# Besemah Voice

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## Symmetrical Voice Summary

Voice	Form	Primary Argument	Secondary Argument
AGENTIVE VOICE	<i>N</i> -ROOT [homorganic nasal]	A	<u>P</u>
PATIENTIVE VOICE	1-2: PRO(=)V 3: ( <i>di</i> -)ROOT=pro ( <i>di</i> -)ROOT NP	P	<u>A</u>





# Word Order

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## BARE INTRANSITIVE

(6) *dide pageghan jeme,*  
NEG surprised people  
S

‘people aren’t surprised.’

(Raffles, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-004, 00:12:43.035–00:12:44.052)

# Word Order

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## AGENTIVE VOICE

(7) *dik beghani ng-ambik=(ny)e jeme ku=rupuk eh,*  
 NEG brave AV-take=3 people 1SG=think yeah  
   =P           A

‘*people* aren’t brave (enough) to take it, I think, yeah.’

(Hairil, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-004, 01:00:03.498–01:00:05.250)

# Word Order

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## PATIENTIVE VOICE

- (8) *pacak* *ku=ijakkah* *talinye* *tu*,  
can 1SG=[PV]step-APPL rope DET  
A= P

'I can step on *its rope*.'

(Jamisah, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-011, 00:14:02.868–00:14:05.070)

- (9) *di-sakat* *jeme* *dighi*.  
PV-bother people self  
A P

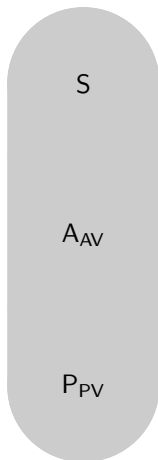
'thank God, people didn't bother me.'

(Jamisah, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-011, 00:28:29.773–00:28:33.229)

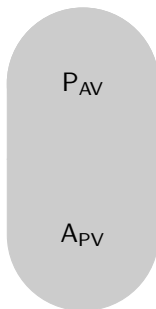
# Alignment summary

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## PRIMARY ARGUMENT



## SECONDARY ARGUMENT



- ✓ word order
- ✓ quantifier float?

- ✗ relativization
- ✗ reflexivization
- ✗ control
- ✗ raising

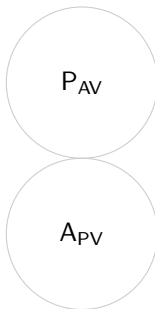
# Alignment summary

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## PRIMARY ARGUMENT



## SECONDARY ARGUMENT



- ✓ word order
- ✓ quantifier float?

- ✗ relativization
- ✗ reflexivization
- ✗ control
- ✗ raising

# Preliminaries

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## Quantifier float:

Quantifiers that do not appear within the NP that they modify.  
(Kayne 1969, 1975, Sportiche 1988, Bobaljik 2001)

- (10) a. [ **All** the students ]<sub>NP</sub> have finished the assignment.  
b. [ The students ]<sub>NP</sub> have **all** finished the assignment.

(Bobaljik 2001)

# Preliminaries

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## Previous Research on Quantifier Float

- ▶ many, but not all languages float quantifiers (Whaley 2001)
- ▶ languages restrict arguments that 'launch' quantifiers
  - ▶ French, Indonesian = core arguments (e.g., Musgrave 2001)
  - ▶ English, Tagalog = subject arguments (e.g., Kroeger 1993)
- ▶ 'stranding' vs. 'adverbial' analyses (e.g., Sportiche 1988, Bobaljik 1995)
  - ▶ elicited examples, English, French.
- ▶ only recent connection to information structure (Jenks 2013)

# Universal Quantification

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There are two forms of *gale* 'all' that express universal quantification:

## 'FLOATED'

- ▶ *gale* 'all' without any morphology
- ▶ occurs in many different positions
- ▶ only quantifies PRIMARY ARGUMENT

## PRE-NOMINAL

- ▶ *se-gale* with prefix *se-* 'one'
- ▶ *ge-gale* with partial reduplication
- ▶ precedes the noun it quantifies



## PRE-NOMINAL

- (11) NP[ *se-gale jeme tu* ] *lah udim balik*.  
all people that PFV finish return

'All the people returned home.'

## FLOATED

- (12)
- 
- Jeme tu* *lah udim* *ng-ambik sidu* *sandi gedah*  
people that PFV finish AV-took spoon from glass

'All the people took a spoon from the glass.'

# Universal Quantifiers in the Corpus

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- ▶ 50,000 word corpus of conversations and narratives
- ▶ 256 instances of the universal quantifier
  - ▶ 6 instances excluded due to unintelligible speech or truncation
- ▶ ‘floating’ quantifiers are by far the most frequent
- ▶ ‘floating’ quantifiers most frequently occur after predicates

## adjacency

pre-nominal	‘floated’
12	238
$n = 250$	

## ‘floated’ position

PA-Q	AUX-Q	PRED-Q	OBL-Q
4	4	229	1
$n = 238$			

# Primary Argument-Only Constraint

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- ▶ many languages restrict ‘quantifier float’ to...
  - 1 core arguments
  - 2 subject argument
- ▶ only these argument can ‘launch’ floating quantifiers

## Besemah looks different...

- ▶ stronger restriction that limits which arguments can be quantified  
Under most conditions... (we’ll revisit this later!)
- ▶ PRIMARY ARGUMENTS **can** quantified
- ▶ SECONDARY ARGUMENT **cannot** be quantified

# Some People, All Spoons

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## PRE-NOMINAL

- (13) a. ?\* *Jeme* *ng-ambik* *ge-gale* *sidu*. [AGENTIVE VOICE]  
 people AV-take RDP-all spoon  
 INTENDED: 'People took all the spoons.'
- b. *Ge-gale* *sidu* (*di-*)*ambik* *jeme*. [PATIENTIVE VOICE]  
 RDP-all spoon (PV-)take people  
 'All the spoons were taken by the people.'

## FLOATED

- (14) *Sidu* *di-ambik* *jeme* *gale*.  
 spoon PV-take people all
- '(All) the spoons were taken by (\*all) the people.'
-

# All People, Some Spoons

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## PRE-NOMINAL

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- (15) a. **Ge-gale** *jeme* *ng-ambik* sidu. [AGENTIVE VOICE]  
 RDP-all people AV-take spoon  
 'All the people took spoons.'
- b. \**Sidu* (di-)ambik **ge-gale** jeme. [PATIENTIVE VOICE]  
 spoon (PV-)take RDP-all people  
 INTENDED: 'All the people took spoons.'

## FLOATED

- (16) *Jeme* *ng-ambik* sidu **gale**.  
 people AV-take spoon all
- '(All) the people took (\*all) the spoons.'
-

# Topic, Focus & Quantifiers

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- Examples from the Besemah corpus reveal that **information structure** may help explain restrictions on quantifiers

## Information Structure

**TOPIC** the referent that the proposition is about

- PREDICTABLE, part of pragmatic presupposition (Lambrecht 1994: 131)

**FOCUS** the pragmatically non-recoverable element in an utterance

- UNPREDICTABLE, makes utterance an assertion (Lambrecht 1994: 207)

**QUANTIFIERS** serve as focus markers in various languages (Givón 2001)



## Focus in Besemah

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- 1 Focus in Besemah does not appear to be marked prosodically  
(McDonnell & Turnbull 2018)
  - ▶ applies to other Malay varieties  
(e.g., Ambonese Malay, Maskikit-Essed & Gussenhoven 2016)
- 2 Focus is marked by...
  - ▶ Clitic =*lah*
  - ▶ Word order
  - ▶ Universal quantifier *gale*, possibly other adverbs

# Focus in Besemah

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(17) ((oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-011, 00:11:33.459–00:11:35.773, Jamisah))

*die ni                    galak anu   ng-ambik-i=nye<sub>i</sub>                    kiung<sub>i</sub>.*

3   DEM.PROX   want   umm   AV-take-LOC.APPL=3   snail

'she wanted umm to take them, the snails.'

## Fronting focused element

(18) ((oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-011, 00:23:43.877–00:23:48.371, Jamisah))

*anye ame ne                    ujik                    galak n-(t)agih ni,*

but   TOP   N.LI   motorcycle.taxi   want   AV-bill   DEM.PROX

'but as for the motorcycle taxi drivers that like to ask for (the fare),'

*dide galak aku   n-(n)aik-i=nye,*

NEG   want   1SG   AV-rise-APPL=3

'I don't want to get on it,'

# Post-predicate Quantifier

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(19) ((Emi, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-007, 00:22:34.105–00:22:36.670))

E: *jeme jungut itu ji=ku,* 'people on that corner, I  
people corner that said=1SG said,'

→ *lah [ng-icik-kah die] FOCUS gale.* 'all TALKED ABOUT  
PFV AV-talk-CAUS 3 all HER.'

***gale*** in its 'default' location after the predicate marks PREDICATE FOCUS

# Post-oblique Quantifier

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(20) ((Rumsiah, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-015, 00:13:40.390–00:13:55.340))

- R: *ji=ku umak aku kah ke iligh,* 'I said, mother, I'm going  
say=1SG mother 1SG FUT to downriver  
*ji=ku Santo matik.* 'I said, Santo died.  
say=1SG S. die
- taghik=(ny)e aku,* 'I was taken by her (i.e.,  
[PV]pull=3 1SG mother),'
- *ghumah Minu tu kah sedekah.* 'Minu's family (lit. house) was  
house M that FUT wedding  
going to have a wedding.'
- ramu-an=anye cabi cung kapuh,* 'the ingredients, peppers, toma-  
prepare-NMZR=3 pepper tomato etcetera  
toes and the like,'
- *laju [di-batak ke ghumah Santo ]<sub>FOC</sub> gale.* 'then were all BROUGHT TO  
then PV-bring to house S all SANTO'S HOUSE.'

***gale*** is after the oblique PP because the speaker is contrastively focusing Santo's house (funeral) with Minu's house (wedding).



# Post PA Quantifier

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(22) ((Emi, oai:paradisec.org.au:BJM01-007, 00:05:53.320 – 00:06:00.690))

E: *kabah tu dik masuk jiku,* 'you didn't enroll (in the  
2SG that NEG enter said=1SG, farmer's co-op) I said,'

*temasuk kabah Kudar,* 'including you, Kudar,'  
include 2SG K.

*kaman endung Peringik kapuh tu.* 'Peringik's mom's group and  
group mother P. etcetera that the like,'

→ [*aku*]<sub>FOCUS</sub> *gale ji=ku m-asuk-i=nye,* 'IT WAS ONLY ME that en-  
1SG all said=1SG AV-enter-APPL=3 rolled them (into the group),'

***gale*** after the PRIMARY ARGUMENT marks exhaustive focus, meaning 'only' NP.

# Interim summary

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## Semantics of *gale* 'all' and 'only'

- 1 Primary argument ( $A_{AV}$ ,  $P_{PV}$ ) are exclusively targets of *gale* in corpus
- 2 Two readings available: 'all' and 'only'
  - ▶ reminiscent of focus sensitive operators (e.g., *always* and *only*, Beaver & Clark 2003)

## Further elicitation reveals...

- ▶ 'all' broad scope reading available to  $P_{AV}$ , oblique arguments
- ▶ 'only' narrow scope reading available to  $P_{AV}$ , oblique arguments
- ▶  $A_{PV}$  cannot be targeted by *gale*

# Focusing secondary arguments: $P_{AV}$

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## $P_{AV}$ exhaustive (narrow) focus

- ▶ When  $A_{AV}$  is singular, it's possible for the  $P_{AV}$  argument to take an exhaustive focus reading, when *gale* immediately follows it.

(23) ((Elicited Example))

A: *Aku m-beli deghian gale di warung Miko tadi.*  
 1SG AV-buy durian all LOC store M. earlier  
 'I bought only durian at Miko's store earlier.'  
 \*'I bought all the durian at Miko's store earlier.'

B: #*Kabah m-beli sangsile pule?*  
 2SG AV-buy papaya also  
 'Did you buy papaya also?'







# Quantification in secondary arguments: $A_{PV}$

## Secondary arguments summary

- ▶ When  $P_{AV}$  is the only (possible) plural argument, it can be quantified.
  - ▶ ...doesn't appear to take narrow scope.
- ▶ When  $A_{PV}$  is the only (possible) plural argument, it still cannot be quantified.

### (26) ((Elicited Example))

- a. *Refki n-(t)unde-ka kami ke Karang Caye gale.*  
 R AV-tow-CAUS/APPL 1PL.EXCL to K. C. all

INTENDED: 'Refki took us all to Karang Caye.'

- b. \**Refki tadi kami tunde-ka ke Karang Caye gale.*  
 R earlier 1PL.EXCL PV.tow-CAUS/APPL to K. C. all

INTENDED: 'We all (or only us) took Refki to Karang Caye.'

## Focusing obliques

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## Oblique exhaustive focus

- ▶ When *gale* occurs after adjuncts it can take an exhaustive (narrow) focus reading.
- ▶ ...although broad scope reading is possible (as in the example from the corpus above).

(27) ((Elicited Example))

A: *Refki n-(t)unde-ka aku ke pughuk Ulu Ayik gale.*

R. AV-carry-APPL 1SG to area U. A. all

'Refki took me only to the *Ulu Ayik* area.'

... dide ke pughuk Tengah Padang.

NEG area to T. P.

'not to *Tengah Padang* area.'

# Overview of restrictions

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AV:	A	<b>gale</b>	AUX	V	P	OBL	=	narrow A
	A	AUX	<b>gale</b>	V	P	OBL	=	broad A
	A	AUX	V	<b>gale</b>	P	OBL	=	broad A
	A	AUX	V	P	<b>gale</b>	OBL	=	broad A, narrow P
	A	AUX	V	P	OBL	<b>gale</b>	=	broad A/P, narrow OBL

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PV:	P	<b>gale</b>	AUX	V	A	OBL	=	narrow P
	P	AUX	<b>gale</b>	V	A	OBL	=	broad P
	P	AUX	V	<b>gale</b>	A	OBL	=	broad P
	P	AUX	V	A	<b>gale</b>	OBL	=	broad P <sup>1</sup>
	P	AUX	V	A	OBL	<b>gale</b>	=	broad P, narrow OBL <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Narrow A *not* possible.

<sup>2</sup>Broad A *not* possible.

# Summary

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- 1 Arguments preceding *gale* can be quantified...
  - ▶ Singular arguments cannot be universally quantified
  - ▶ ! with the exception of  $A_{PV}$  !
- 2 Arguments directly preceding *gale* can take exhaustive focus reading 'only'
  - ▶ Even singular arguments take exhaustive focus reading 'only'
  - ▶ ! with the exception of  $A_{PV}$  !
- 3 Unclear whether these readings are the separate (i.e., it's possible to get one without the other)

# Conclusions

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- ▶ Besemah universal quantification is different:
  - ▶ 'floating' is the 'basic' means of universal quantification.
  - ▶ in most conditions, only PRIMARY ARGUMENTS can be quantified with *gale*.
- ▶ the universal quantifier also marks the end of the focus constituent.
- ▶ focus marking function may reveal something about GRs
- ▶ Remaining questions:
  - 1 Why a restriction on pre-nominal universal quantifiers?
  - 2 Why do we get 'only' and 'all' readings?

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