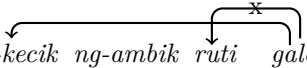
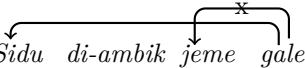


Universal quantification in Besemah

In western Austronesian languages, there has been a fruitful connection between ‘floated’ quantifiers and grammatical relations such that languages vary in regards to the restrictions that they place on the arguments of the verb that can be targeted by (or ‘launch’) a ‘floated’ quantifier (Donohue 2004). In Tagalog, for example, Kroeger (1993) finds that only subject arguments can be targeted by a ‘floated’ quantifier, while in Indonesian Musgrave (2001) finds that only core arguments can be targeted by a ‘floated’ quantifier. However, the universal quantifier *gale* ‘all’ in Besemah, an under-described Malayic language of southwest Sumatra, evinces a much stronger restriction on the arguments it can modify. That is, subject arguments are the *only* arguments that can be modified by a quantifier, whether it is ‘floated’ or within the NP it is modifying. Non-subject arguments simply *cannot* be quantified with the universal quantifier under any condition (see the examples in (1) and (2) below). For this reason, I introduce the term *quantifiability* as ‘the ability for an argument to be modified by quantifier’ to describe this situation.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|---|----|--|
| (1) | a. |  | b. |  |
| | | <i>Dak-kecik ng-ambik ruti gale.</i>
child AV-take cookie all | | <i>Sidu di-ambik jeme gale.</i>
spoon PV-take people all |
| (2) | a. | <i>(Se-gale) dak-kecik ng-ambik (*se-gale) ruti.</i>
(one-all) child AV-take (one-all) cookie
‘(All) the children took (*all) the cookies.’ | b. | <i>(Se-gale) sidu di-ambik (se-gale) jeme.</i>
(one-all) spoon PV-take (one-all) people
‘(*All) the people took (all) the spoons.’ |

Besemah has a symmetrical voice system (McDonnell 2016), meaning there are two equally transitive voices, neither of which is considered ‘basic’ (Himmelmann 2005). The examples in (a) are in the agentive voice (AV), and the examples in (b) are in the patientive voice (PV). In AV, the agent (*dak-kecik* ‘children’) is subject, while in PV the patient (*sidu* ‘spoon’) is subject. In both constructions, the non-subject argument is considered core (*ruti* ‘cookie’ and *jeme* ‘people’, respectively). The examples show that *only* the subject argument can be modified by the universal quantifier, whether it is ‘floated’ in (1) or it is within the NP in (2).

Based on an exhaustive analysis of a 50,000 word corpus of everyday conversation, this study demonstrates that the restrictions on the universal quantifier can only be understood, if (i) the ‘floated’ quantifier construction in (1) is considered the basic means of universal quantification, (ii) *gale* ‘all’ is analyzed as an adverbial, and, most importantly, (iii) information structural functions of *gale* ‘all’ as marking the end of the focus domain are taken into account. In the terminology of Lambrecht (1994), then, restrictions on quantifiability is explained by the fact that the subject is the default ‘topic expression’ of the proposition, while the remaining portion of the clause that precedes the quantifier is the ‘focus constituent’. This paper proposes that it is this focusing function of *gale* ‘all’ that is responsible for the subject-only restriction on quantifiability in Besemah.

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