



## Distinguishing subjects and topics in Javanese

- (5) Q: **Kudu**    toh   Gayus m-bayar dendo?                    A: **Kudu.**  
 ROOT.NEC FOC Gayus AV-pay fine                                    ROOT.NEC  
 ‘MUST Gayus pay a fine?’    ‘Yes.’

**II. Testing for topichood.** Having established that a TAM marker (*kudu*) has raised to Focus<sup>0</sup>, we are now in a position to test the nature of the two positions available for subjects in (3A/A’). Using quantifiers such as ‘at most’, ‘less than’, or ‘few’ which cannot be topicalized (Endriss 2009), such quantifiers are predicted to be unacceptable in topic positions, but acceptable in subject positions. In answer to (6Q), the quantified subject in (6A) located above the focused TAM (*kudu*) is ungrammatical, showing that this position is necessarily a topic position. In contrast, the quantified subject in (6A’) in Spec,TP (located below the modifier *ketoke*) is grammatical, showing that Spec,TP is a grammatical subject position.

- (6) Q: *Do at most 10 students have to bring a computer?*  
 A: \*<sub>[TopP]</sub> Paling akeh 10 mahasiswa<sub>2</sub> [<sub>FocP</sub> **kudu**<sub>1</sub> [**ketoke** [<sub>TP</sub> *t*<sub>2</sub> [<sub>AuxP</sub> *t*<sub>1</sub> nggowo]]]]  
 -EST many10 univ.student ROOT.NEC DIR.EVID AV.bring  
 A’: ✓<sub>[FocP]</sub> **Kudu**<sub>1</sub> [**ketoke** [<sub>TP</sub> paling akeh 10 mahasiswa [<sub>AuxP</sub> *t*<sub>1</sub> nggowo]]]]  
 ROOT.NEC DIR.EVID -EST many10 univ.student AV.bring  
 ‘Yes, at most 10 students must, it seems, bring [one].’

I propose that Javanese has a **syntax-pragmatics interface constraint**, where subjects are interpreted as topics. In Spec,TP the pragmatic preference for a topic interpretation can be cancelled, such as in (6A’). In Spec,TopP, however, there is a semantic requirement for a topic interpretation, which cannot be cancelled, resulting in the ungrammaticality of (6A).

**III. Additional test for topic vs. subject: Intervention.** Object relative clauses are possible in Javanese, (7). If the subject (*muride* ‘the student’ in (7)) were a topic in an  $\bar{A}$  position, it would act as an intervener, blocking movement of the object (cf. Pearson 2005 for Malagasy).

- (7) ✓ Buku [sing murid-e ape woco] iku uw-apik.  
 book REL student-DEF PROSP read DEM <INT>good  
 ‘The book that the student is going to read is good.’

**Consequences: I.** Aldridge (*to appear*) proposes that in Austronesian languages, only one feature [*uΦ*] on C drives movement. One main result is that subjects are either in Spec,CP or in Spec,vP. This account would not be able to derive the Javanese data, nor other ‘Indonesian-type’ languages, where subjects are argued to occur in Spec,TP (e.g. Chung 2008).

**II.** The pragmatic preference for subjects to be interpreted as topics in Javanese accounts for why subjects cannot be indefinite in Javanese. I suggest that Indonesian has the same pragmatic preference, but it can be cancelled when indefinites are used as subjects such as *sesuatu* ‘something’ or *seorang* ‘someone’ (Chung 2008).

**III.** Returning to the data in (1), why are *wh*-subjects in-situ ungrammatical? Javanese grammatically focuses *wh*-subjects, but not necessarily *wh*-objects, reflecting a crosslinguistic pattern where only focused subjects tend to be grammatically marked (Zimmermann & Onéa 2011). I suggest that subject questions in Modern Javanese have maintained the cleft strategy from Old Javanese, which as a V1 language observes Oda’s generalization (Oda 2002, 2005; Potsdam 2009): if a language uses VP-raising to derive V1 order, then it will have a cleft strategy available to form *wh*-questions.

**Selected References** Aldridge, E. *to appear*. PHI-feature competition: A unified approach to the Austronesian extraction restriction. | Chung, S. 2008. Indonesian clause structure from an Austronesian perspective. | Cole, P., Hermon, G., Inoha, K., & Tjung, Y. 2002. A constraint on *wh* in-situ in Javanese. | Endriss, C. 2009. *Quantificational Topics*. | Holmberg, A. 2015. *The syntax of yes and no*. | Jacobs, J. 2001. The dimensions of topic-comment. | Oda, K. 2005. V1 and *wh*-questions: A typology. | Pearson, M. 2005. The Malagasy subject/topic as an A’ element. | Vander Klok, J. 2012. TAM in Paciran Javanese.