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**The Grammar of Politics:  
Morality, Agency, and Voice Selection in Toraja Political Discourse**

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**Abstract.** Voice alternations in Austronesian languages have typically been explained either in terms of clausal transitivity or in terms of nominal pragmatic salience. Here I combine grammatical and ethnographic analysis to argue that speakers of Toraja (a language of Sulawesi) select grammatical voice forms to represent moral and political stances with respect to ongoing actions; voice selection is connected to the micropolitics of situated interaction and to the broader cultural context (vernacular moral theories and local styles of self-presentation). Patient voice mitigates the assignment of agency, and thus aids in reproducing local models of the disinterested and subdued political self; conversely, actor voice projects an agentive and authoritative speaking subject. Such integrated analysis not only reveals the essential role of linguistic practices in reproducing a community's moral system, but also advances the understanding of voice alternation.

**1. Introduction.** Voice phenomena, such as the opposition between active and passive constructions, play a central role in the linguistic representation of the speaker's stance towards ongoing actions that have moral value and political implications. The present article focuses on morality as a discourse-mediated activity, showing how in Toraja—a language of upland Sulawesi—the pragmatics of voice selection is associated with the performance of speech acts aimed at assigning or disclaiming agency. Voice selection constitutes a key resource for representing and assessing moral behaviors; more generally, the analysis in this article demonstrates the importance of grammatical choices in the reproduction—or subversion—of the cultural attitudes underlying a community's moral system.

The relation between language, action, and moral reasoning is an important aspect of human experience—one that has constituted a core theoretical question for both the humanities and social sciences. Beginning with Malinowski's (1923:316, 1935:7) pragmatic understanding of language as a form of action and Whorf's (1956) seminal reflections on how grammatical categories shape human philosophies and behaviors, "the idea that a moral philosophy . . . is embodied in everyday talk and conduct" (Sidnell 2010:123) has oriented a broad cross-disciplinary interest in language and action.<sup>1</sup>

Linguistics has made an important contribution to the theoretical understanding of the intersection between language and action, as shown by a vast literature on the semantics of agency (DeLancey 1984; Dowty 1991; Fillmore

1968; Jackendoff 1972, 1990; Klaiman 1991;<sup>2</sup> Langacker 1990; Hopper and Thompson 1980; Talmy 1988; Van Valin and Wilkins 1996, among many others). The analysis of the different semantic and morphosyntactic resources available to speakers of historical-natural languages for expressing and performing actions<sup>3</sup> can indeed shed light on culturally different modes of doing and locally specific structures of agency.<sup>4</sup>

However, explorations of “folk theories of action” (Jackendoff 2007:255) developed by scholars of linguistics and cognitive philosophy have mostly provided mentalist accounts in which priority is given to truth judgments,<sup>5</sup> rather than analyzing actual and situated interaction. In contrast to such formalist approaches, discourse-based studies of language use have illuminated how morality is not so much a cognitive system of rules and principles, but rather a situated activity and an intersubjective construct emerging in and through discourse.

A large body of interdisciplinary scholarship has contributed to show how, rather than being a mere device for the transmission of information, language is deeply embedded within human practice and moral reasoning, constituting one of the main domains of “everyday ethics” (Lambek 2010a:30). The pragmatic analysis of the interactional processes through which speakers use language-specific morphologies to attribute, disavow, and mitigate agency, intentionality, and responsibility and to perform speech acts such as blaming, praising, promising, and exhorting sheds light on how the micropolitics of language contributes to the reproduction or modification of the sociocultural order.

For example, Duranti’s (1990, 1994) examination of the interplay between grammar and politics in Western Samoa exemplifies a tradition of research that focuses on cultural underpinnings of the grammatical encoding of moral and epistemological notions (see, e.g., Hill and Irvine 1993; Goldman 1993; Kulick 1992; Ochs 1988; Rosaldo 1982; Schieffelin 1990). The parallel exploration of conversational practices sheds light on the “fundamental ethical domain” of social interaction, revealing the labor of conversation that lies at the heart of human sociality (Sidnell 2010:124). Ordinary interaction and narrative activity turn out to be saturated with moral and political dynamics (M. Goodwin 2006; Hill 1995; Hill and Zepeda 1993; Ochs and Taylor 2009; Sterponi 2003). The ways in which speakers quote or allude to other people’s words, choose among multiple registers, voices, and ways of speaking, and use prosodic and grammatical resources to signal their moral and affective stances (Du Bois 2007; Englebretson 2007; C. Goodwin 2007; Jaffe 2009) relate to the constant processes of evaluation and judgment that characterize human interaction. Finally, the exploration of semiotic ideologies—“basic assumptions about what signs are and how they function in the world” (Keane 2003:419)—reveals different historically and socioculturally rooted representations of the relation between words, objects, and human deeds (Keane 1997a, 1997b; Rosaldo 1982).

A common theme underlying these different approaches to the intersection between language and morality is the idea that “speech does not have to be . . . ethically explicit to have moral implications” (Keane 2010:73). The mutually constitutive (yet not always “ethically explicit”) interplay between speech and morality is apparent in political speech. Its highly context-creating nature and its metapragmatic function (i.e., the fact that it is language about action) makes political speech a particularly appropriate locus for exploring the interplay between linguistic practices and moral subjectivities.

This article examines a corpus of political debates videotaped between 2002 and 2004 in the Toraja highlands of Sulawesi, in Indonesia. I focus on the grammatical resources that speakers deploy to allocate or disclaim agency and responsibility for their own or others’ actions. A particularly important resource of this sort is the choice between different grammatical voice forms to represent and assess moral behaviors. Through a fine-grained pragmatic analysis of a wide array of political interactions, we see below how voice alternation plays a fundamental role in reproducing (and, at times, challenging) vernacular moral attitudes and cultural styles of self-presentation.

Examining the intersection of grammar, morality, and discursive activity is essential for advancing our understanding of both Toraja grammar and Toraja cultural practices. While, on the one hand, I intend to highlight how the alternation of voice forms is an important linguistic resource for negotiating moral and political interpretations of events, on the other hand, I demonstrate how taking into account both the “context of situation”<sup>6</sup> (the here-and-now of interaction) and the larger cultural context (vernacular concepts of political power and styles for the presentation of the political self) is essential for advancing our understanding of a grammatical phenomenon (voice alternation) that remains to a large extent unexplained within Austronesian linguistics. My analysis thus advocates for a stronger dialogue between linguistics and anthropology.

**2. Methodology.** While attention to the multiple intradiscursive and extradiscursive layers that contribute to the production and interpretation of meaning by social actors broadly characterizes any anthropological endeavor, a distinctive way of studying the language-culture interface is provided by linguistic anthropological work in ethnopragmatics.<sup>7</sup> This approach uses the formal analysis of language structures to build an understanding of how language-specific morphologies can be used to convey social and cultural meanings that speakers employ to reproduce or modify their sociocultural order (Duranti 1994). This perspective helps enrich the existing linguistic scholarship through complementing semantic analyses with a fine-grained ethnographic perspective (see, among other studies, Ahearn 2001a, 2001b; Duranti 1990, 1994, 2004; Goldman 1993; Keating 1998, 2005; Schieffelin 1990). Building on this scholarship, the present article aims to highlight the relevance of grammar for the understanding of Toraja moral and political experience.

Drawing on a corpus of natural-language data—video and audio recorded during political rallies, village councils, and family disputes<sup>8</sup>—I analyze speakers' usage of specific morphosyntactic constructions to perform deontological "speech acts" (Austin 1962) such as blaming, praising, and exhorting. More specifically, I argue that verbal voice alternation in Toraja constitutes a resource to foreground or mitigate the assignment of political agency and moral responsibility. This intersection between grammar and social processes helps to achieve an understanding of two sets of observations I came across during my long-term fieldwork in Toraja. The former—ethnographic in nature—pertain to cultural notions of political agency and are discussed in section 3; the latter concern the dynamics of grammatical voice alternation in Toraja and are discussed in section 4. At first sight, these two sets of cultural and linguistic facts are unrelated to each other; the rest of this article draws out their connections.

**3. Cultural notions of political agency.** In the course of my ethnographic work on the electoral campaigns that took place in the Toraja highlands during the regional autonomy reforms of the early 2000s, I was struck by what, to my eyes, seemed an unusual style for the presentation of the political self. Shaped by classical rhetoric, my imagination of political candidates and speechmakers supposed them to be masterful and energetic orators capable of deploying words and passions in order to win listeners' favor and make them "do things." According to this classical view, eloquently conveyed by Cicero in his famous *De oratore* (2.72.291–294, 2.52.211–214), orators should be able to 'move men's minds' (*movere animos hominum*), transform (*commutare*) humans' feelings (*animos*), and influence (*flectere*) them as they wish. In surprising contrast to this "soul-bending" and "mind-stirring" representation of the classical orator, the Toraja aesthetics of persuasion shows a surprising general avoidance of oratorical pathos.<sup>9</sup>

From a grammatical and pragmatic standpoint, this ethos<sup>10</sup> is associated with a preference for desiderative formulas (e.g., "hopefully," "if there is luck") over exhortative ones, the widespread usage of elaborate honorific patterns combined with self-deprecating expressions (e.g., "I am not able to speak," "I am only a poor guy"),<sup>11</sup> a pronounced inclination for understatement and belittling (e.g., "let me say one or two words"), and a high frequency of topicalizations and of grammatical constructions that foreground the affectedness of the object over the semantic saliency of the agent. Furthermore, candidates for office had to avoid as much as possible any display of their personal involvement in the political race. This cultural model implies that candidates should remain detached and silent at political events, relying instead on a team of supporters (IND *tim sukses*) to speak on their behalf.

**4. Linguistic dynamics of voice alternation.** Like many other western Austronesian languages, Toraja presents an array of morphological alterations

in the verb that affect the mapping between grammatical relations and semantic macroroles, a phenomenon which grammarians often refer to as "voice" (more on this below). A more complete account of Toraja voice forms is provided below; for immediate purposes, the important point is that Toraja has two main voice types: actor voice and patient voice. While students of Western Malayo-Polynesian languages may diverge on many issues, they agree that voice systems play an important role in these languages and that the mechanics of the functioning of the voice categories remains quite opaque (see Arka and Ross 2005; Austin and Musgrave 2008; Wouk and Ross 2002). Indeed, scholars working on these languages have tried to correlate verb form (or voice) alternations with pragmatic, syntactic, and semantic factors, but it is still not completely clear what determines the choice between actor voice and patient voice (see Barr 1988; Friberg 1991; Himmelmann 1996; Lee 2006; Martens 1988; Matti 1994; Naylor 1986; Saclot 2006; K. Valkama 1995; S. Valkama 1995).

In the rest of this article, I seek to establish a correlation between ethnographic and grammatical data. In analyzing the microinteractional processes through which speakers use different voice constructions to represent their faculty to act, I have two aims. First, I wish to suggest that we can achieve a better understanding of the mechanics underlying the alternation of grammatical voice forms—an important issue in Austronesian linguistics, and one still not completely understood—by taking into account the illocutionary assignment of responsibility and deontological agency within natural interaction. Second, I wish to show that actual language usage is an important locus for the construction of Toraja political ethos and everyday practical philosophy, thus highlighting how the pragmatics of grammatical voice partakes in the cultural reproduction of local notions of power, charisma, and political conduct.<sup>12</sup> First, however, a brief account of the characteristics of Toraja and Austronesian voice systems is needed.

**5. Grammatical voice and the Austronesian puzzle.** Voice is a very complex linguistic notion that relates to the domains of morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics; providing a comprehensive overview of the discussion of this topic in the linguistic literature would fall far beyond the scope and purpose of this article.<sup>13</sup>

In English and other Indo-European languages, the most common voice phenomenon is the alternation between active and passive, which corresponds to a reassignment of semantic roles and grammatical functions of core arguments and to reduction of the verb's valence in the passive. Passivization of an active sentence in English generally entails that the argument that is assigned the role of patient and (in an active sentence) is associated with the grammatical function of object is promoted to the subject position, while the agent (the subject of the active sentence) gets demoted and is either omitted or is encoded as a noncore argument. Simultaneously, the verb undergoes a reduction in valence.

However, voice can also be identified as a broader phenomenon in the domain of predicate-argument relations, encompassing all alterations in the shape of the verb that involve a reconfiguration of “nominal statuses with which verbs are in particular relationships” (Klaiman 1991:1).

Austronesian languages are renowned for their rich and typologically interesting voice systems.<sup>14</sup> Although the fact that “voice systems of Austronesian languages are typologically quite diverse” (Arka and Ross 2005:7) makes it difficult to establish a clear-cut classification of different types, it has become common to differentiate between “Philippine-type” and “Indonesian-type” systems (Arka and Ross 2005:7; Cole and Hermon 2008; Himmelmann 2002).

Philippine-type languages (which include not only languages from the Philippines but also languages of north and central Borneo, north Sulawesi, Madagascar, and Taiwan) are characterized by a system of verb affixes (often working in association with case-marking of free nominal arguments) that mark the semantic role of the syntactic pivot. The typical Philippine system, widely considered to be the most conservative form of the Proto-Austronesian voice system, distinguishes four principal voices: actor, patient, locative, and conveyance (Himmelmann 2005). This elaborate multiple-voice system is believed to have evolved into what has been labeled the Indonesian-type voice system (Arka and Ross 2005:7; Ross 2002), found in languages located in Malaysia and in the western half of the Indonesian archipelago.

Indonesian-type languages simplify the Philippine-type (presumed Proto-Austronesian) voice system (Cole and Hermon 2008), reducing its multiple voices to a simpler opposition between actor and patient voice.<sup>15</sup> The result is a symmetrical voice system in which morphological alternations on the verb signal that either the actor or the undergoer is the syntactic pivot (actor voice and patient or undergoer voice, respectively) (Himmelmann 2002:14). A prototypical example of this mechanism is provided by standard Indonesian; (1a) is in actor voice, while (1b) is in patient voice (both examples are elicited).

(1a) *Anak saya me-lihat orang itu.*  
child 1S AV-see person that

‘My child saw that person.’ (adapted from Himmelmann [2005:112])

(1b) *Orang itu di-lihat anak saya.*  
person that PV-see child 1S

‘My child saw that person.’ (adapted from Himmelmann [2005:112])

Sentences (1a) and (1b) provide two equivalent representations of a transitive event. Several scholars call this a symmetrical system because both clauses share the same transitivity value and neither can be clearly regarded as the basic form.<sup>16</sup>

However, Austronesian voice remains a rather enigmatic phenomenon (Arka and Ross 2005:8–10; Gil 2002). Aside from syntactic issues—such as

whether we can consider the nominal selected by voice morphology as the subject,<sup>17</sup> what the transitivity status of the actor voice might be, and how Austronesian voice should be considered in terms of syntactic typology—Arka and Ross (2005:8) note that, at the level of discourse, the pragmatic factors influencing how speakers decide which voice to use are still largely unclear. But before exploring the pragmatic factors regulating voice selection in Toraja political discourse, we should examine more closely some of the basic morphological characteristics of the language and its basic clausal types.

**6. Toraja verbal morphology and basic clausal types.** Toraja (ISO code “sda”) is a Western Malayo-Polynesian Austronesian language spoken in the highlands of the southwestern peninsula of Sulawesi by approximately 500,000 people, most of them in the Tana Toraja Regency (*Kabupaten Tana Toraja*) and the North Toraja Regency (*Kabupaten Toraja Utara*), and by over one million Torajas who, despite having migrated to other parts of the archipelago in search of work, tend to maintain a strong sense of membership in the Toraja ethnic community.

Typologically, the position of the Toraja language is somewhat problematic. Himmelmann (2005) defined it, along with other languages belonging to the South Sulawesi subgroup,<sup>18</sup> as a “transitional language.” The principal reason why Toraja is assigned to this hybrid and somewhat fuzzy typological slot is that Toraja does not share the characteristics of the preposed possessor languages of the eastern part of the archipelago,<sup>19</sup> which have lost focus marking, nor does it share the characteristics of the symmetrical voice languages<sup>20</sup> that are mostly located in the western part of Indonesia (Himmelmann 2005). Indeed, Toraja presents an asymmetrical voice system; like the other South Sulawesi languages, Toraja can express a two-argument clause through two different constructions. The most common is the patient voice, which is characterized by the presence of person markers that cliticize on the predicate.<sup>21</sup> These person markers may act as pronominals themselves, or may occur with a coreferential full nominal expression.

In clauses with full nominal arguments, as in (2)–(5) below—the proclitic pronominal cross-references the noun phrase (NP) that is in A function (i.e., the agent or subject of a transitive clause), while the enclitic pronominal optionally cross-references the NP that is in P function (i.e., the patient or object of the transitive verb), as in (4). Word order varies, but the agent noun phrase generally occurs in postverbal position, while the patient noun phrase is often fronted, topicalized, or focused by means of clefting, as in (5).

(2) *Pao marassan na=kande Tato'*  
mango<sub>P</sub> PROG 3=eat Tato'<sub>A</sub>

(elicited)

‘Tato’ is eating a mango.’

- (3) *Pao mangka na=kande Salma nina' melambi'* (elicited)  
 mango<sub>P</sub> PFV 3=eat Salma<sub>A</sub> earlier morning  
 'Salma ate a mango this morning.'
- (4) *Puang Batu na=pile=i tau* (natural language data)  
 Puang Batu<sub>P</sub> 3=choose=3 people<sub>A</sub>  
 'The people chose/elected Puang Batu.'
- (5) *ka-tongan-an ri tu na=tiro masyarakat* (natural language data)  
 NMZ-true-NMZ<sub>P</sub> LIM REL 3=look people<sub>A</sub>  
 '[It is] only the truth that the people consider.'
- (6) *Pak Lurah un-jama=i te sura'* (natural language data)  
 Mr. Mayor<sub>A</sub> AV-work=3 DEF document<sub>P</sub>  
 'The mayor compile(s/d) the document.'
- (7) *Sita marassan un-kande pao* (elicited)  
 Sita<sub>A</sub> PROG AV-eat mango<sub>P</sub>  
 'Sita is eating a mango.'
- (8) *Salma mangka un-kande pao nina' melambi'* (elicited)  
 Salma<sub>A</sub> PFV AV-eat mango<sub>P</sub> earlier morning  
 'Salma ate a mango this morning.'

An alternative derived form of actor voice has an enclitic pronoun referring to A. This construction, referred to as "antipassive," may entail object incorporation and generally occurs when the object is indefinite or not fully affected.<sup>22</sup> In addition to patient voice, actor voice, and antipassive, an agentless passive voice is marked by the prefix *di-*.<sup>23</sup>

The semantic, pragmatic, and morphosyntactic factors regulating voice selection in Toraja are examined below.

**7. Patient and actor voice selection in Toraja.** An alternation between constructions exhibiting a similar structure, but different clitics and prefixes, is common to several Sulawesi languages. Linguists who have discussed verb morphology and voice selection in South and Central Sulawesi languages generally agree that patient voice constructions are the canonical, unmarked, transitive construction, while actor voice is rarely used, marked, and endowed with a low

degree of transitivity (Barr 1988; Friberg 1991, 1996; Jukes 2006; Kaufman 2008; Lee 2006; Martens 1988; Matti 1994; Strømme 1994; K. Valkama 1995; S. Valkama 1995).<sup>24</sup> But if it is easy to conclude that voice alternations in these languages are clearly of an asymmetrical nature, it is more difficult to pin down just what factors determine voice alternations. As Wouk (1999) points out, two main discourse frameworks have been applied for the understanding of voice alternation in Austronesian languages: that of topicality (Cooreman 1982, 1987; Givón 1983, 1994) and that of transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980).

Studies following the first approach have identified a correlation between the pragmatics of voice selection and "the relative topicality"<sup>25</sup> of the nominal referents covering the semantic role "of the agent and patient in the semantically-transitive event" (Givón 1994:9). According to this view, actor voice and antipassive are associated with higher degrees of actor topicality, while patient voice and passive are associated with higher degrees of patient topicality. For example, highlighting an opposition between new and old information, Barr (1988) analyzes pragmatic factors involved in voice alternations in several Da'a (Central Sulawesi) discursive genres and notes that in narratives, actor voice (his "actor focus") generally introduces new information, while patient voice (his "goal focus") is used with old information to advance the story line.

Analyses following the second framework have correlated the distribution of voice forms with degrees of discourse transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980) of the clause.<sup>26</sup> These studies (see Wouk [1986] on Tagalog and Toba Batak and Hopper [1988] on Early Modern Malay; Barr [1988] on Da'a; Lee [2006] on Mandar; S. Valkama [1995] on Duri; Friberg [1991] on languages of South Sulawesi, show that actor voice is associated with low discourse transitivity, and hence occurs with indeterminate objects in "clauses that are unrealis, imperfective, durative, and/or subordinate," while patient voice "correlates with high discourse transitivity, tending to occur in clauses which are realis, perfective, punctual, and/or main" (Wouk 1999:103). Indeed, actor voice has been variously labeled "extended intransitive" (Lee 2006) or "semi-transitive" (Friberg 1991; Jukes 2006:271) to indicate its association with low discourse transitivity.

However, both my own data and the data discussed in the literature on closely related languages indicate that the parameters connected to degrees of nominal topicality and to discourse transitivity cannot fully predict or explain voice selection in Toraja and other Sulawesi languages. Difficulties in identifying the semantico-pragmatic factors behind voice selection have also been encountered in other Austronesian languages. For example, Wouk notes that "spoken Jakarta Indonesian does not show particularly striking correlations between the focus forms and either topicality as defined by Givón and others, or transitivity as defined by Hopper and Thompson (1980)" (1999:104). Huang, analyzing the pragmatics of voice selection in two Formosan languages (Tsou and Seediq), observes that "no pragmatic difference appears to underlie the

choice between agent focus and non-agent focus clauses in the language. Neither discourse transitivity nor grounding can be shown to be a significant determinant for the choice of focus" (2002:687). Discussing the typology of western Austronesian languages, Himmelmann (2005:76) notes that the correlation between actor voice constructions and indefinite objects is not categorical. Indeed, as is seen even in the Toraja examples above, actor voice sometimes appears with definite and referential patients, as in (6), or in perfective and punctual clause, as in (8). Conversely, patient voice may occur with an indefinite P, as in (5), and with progressive predicates and nonpunctual events, as in (2).

I argue that these difficulties, in arriving at strict correlations between voice and semantic transitivity, or, conversely, between voice and the management of information structure indicate that the mechanics of voice selection may also reflect (and be determined by) cultural notions of responsibility and ethics. In order to shed better light on this, I provide examples in the next section of the microinteractional processes whereby speakers use language to represent their own agency and to assign responsibility to themselves and others during verbal performances recorded at political rallies, village councils, and family meetings. As the analysis below shows, while the marked deployment of the actor voice plays an important role in emphasizing unusual explicit assignments of agency and responsibility, the unmarked prominence of patient voice constructions foregrounds the affectedness of the object over the semantic saliency of the agent, thus partaking in the linguistic reproduction of Toraja notions of power and political understatement.

**8. The pragmatics of actor voice in Toraja political speech.** As I mentioned above, while patient voice constructions with pronominal clitics are the natural and unmarked category, actor voice constructions appear quite rarely in Toraja political speech and are undoubtedly the marked choice. However, their rarity is paralleled by their pragmatic saliency, in that they are clearly associated with the assignment of agency and responsibility to oneself or to a third party. As argued elsewhere (Donzelli 2010), Toraja actor voice constructions play a pragmatic function similar to the ergative markers in Western Samoan political speech where, as Duranti (1990, 1994) found out, ergative particles marking the agent of a transitive clause appeared only rarely within natural interactions—a fact that he explained as due to ergative-marked NPs having the politically delicate pragmatic function of explicitly assigning agency and responsibility to the referent of the A nominal.<sup>27</sup>

Let us now take a closer look at how Toraja speakers deploy actor voice constructions across different subgenres of the local political discourse. In excerpts (9) and (10), we can see an interesting instance of self-attribution of agency through the use of an actor voice construction in a speech delivered by Pak Batara, a noble and influential man, during a *rapat* (IND 'state-sponsored political meeting') organized in the village of Marinding. The meeting was the

first of a series of encounters aimed at merging the two villages (IND *desa*) of Lemo and Marinding into a bigger administrative unit (TOR *lembang*), to be called simply "Marinding." However, the proceedings were obstructed by the Lemo representatives, who declared that if the new administrative unit was to be given only the name of Marinding, they would refuse to join the process and would "stand by themselves" (TOR *bendan misa*'). In response to Lemo autonomist threats, Pak Batara argues that, when he was the chief of an even bigger administrative unit comprising the three villages of Lemo, Marinding, and Kandora, he had never favored any of the villages. He thus starts by recalling, through actor voice constructions, his tenure as a village or district chief, in order to authenticate himself as a just and impartial administrator. In the excerpt in (9), we may observe Batara's choice of a construction with the actor voice prefix /uN-/ and the free personal pronoun *aku*, which strengthens the sense of his own personal agency.

(9) *tonna ke-betul-an aku un-parenta-i.*  
then NMZ-true-NMZ 1S AV-rule-3

'At that time, as a matter of fact, I [was the one who] ruled it' (Feb\_24\_2003\_tape 24, line 2237)

(actor voice, punctual, pronominal A, pronominal P)

Batara's intervention is aimed at reestablishing his control over the Lemo secessionists. Hence he reminds them that it was his grandfather who had actually bought the land where the village of Lemo is now located. In order to remind the Lemonese of their subordinate position, Batara describes the actions of his ancestors in a very agentive way, using actor voice and cleft constructions. In (10), for example, he declares that it was his father who increased the number of the *tongkonan* (TOR 'ancestral houses') in Lemo from two to five.

(10) *iatu um-pa-lima-i tongkonan lo' ambe'-ku.*  
that.TOP AV-CAUS-five-3 ancestral house there father-1S

'The one [who] turned the *tongkonans* into five down there (who increased the number of *tongkonans* to five units) was my father!' (Feb\_24\_2003\_tape 24, line 2253)

(actor voice, punctual, determinate A, determinate P)

Another pragmatic context in which actor voice constructions are deployed is that of threats and accusations; a family meeting organized by Batara's opponents provides good examples. The examples below are drawn from the recording of a traditional meeting (TOR *kombongan*) organized by the members of a *tongkonan* 'ancestral house' named Mebali, around which the opposition to Batara had gathered. The meeting was convened to discuss the offenses and wrongdoings that, according to the Mebali group, had been perpetrated against them by Batara, who in turn was affiliated with another ancestral house known by the name Singki'.

Papa Era, one of the leaders of the "Mebali faction," who at the time was also running for election as the village (TOR *lembang*) chief, had decided to convene this meeting after a funeral that had been celebrated under Batara's supervision a few days before. Since the family of the deceased was affiliated with Singki' (of which Batara was an undisputed leader), Batara had been charged with providing guidance on how to handle the organization of the ceremony. Toraja funerals are known for their ritual slaughtering of cattle (water buffalos and pigs) and for the intricate patterns through which the meat is distributed among the participants. In the area where I did my fieldwork, the most important form of meat distribution was the *tila' tongkonan* (TOR 'the ancestral house's share'), which prescribes that the heads and livers of the best water buffalos should be collectively assigned to the twelve ancestral houses in the village.

However, on the last day of the ceremony, something went wrong with the distribution of the buffalo heads. Fueled by ancient family animosities and by the fact that the two *tongkonan* had endorsed two different candidates for the forthcoming village election, the mounting political tension between Singki' and Mebali culminated in a ritual incident. Although the distribution had apparently followed the standard procedure, a faux pas occurred—when the members of the Mebali group went to collect the buffalo head that had been assigned to their *tongkonan*, Pak Batara stopped them, insisting that they had to recite the *tongkonan* genealogies (TOR *massalu nene*). Batara's request was taken as a serious insult. The Mebali group interpreted it as a way of questioning their legitimate (genealogical) right to the buffalo head, embittering further the rivalry between the group of Pak Batara (associated with the Singki' *tongkonan*) and that of Papa Era (associated with the Mebali *tongkonan*). Thus, in light of the forthcoming elections, the Mebali group took this incident as a pretext to build an accusation against Batara.

The attempt to portray Batara in a negative light was extremely appealing in terms of the new rhetoric of traditions, which pervaded the political climate at that time and constituted a leitmotif in speeches in campaigns for the election of new village chiefs. Drawing on a mixture of this new revivalist rhetoric and on the authoritarian procedures that had marked the military regime of President Suharto (1966–98), Batara's offence was thus presented as a *pelanggaran adat* (IND 'infraction of customary law') that had to be reported to the police.

In the excerpts presented as (11a) and (11b), one of the participants argued that Batara had already disrespected the ancestral traditions when he had destroyed the house that a Catholic priest had built on his land without asking prior permission. The accusation is phrased through the use of actor voice constructions to represent both punctual and iterative actions ((11a) and (11b), respectively) that affect an indeterminate patient and a determinate one (again, (11a) and (11b), respectively).

- (11a) *Dia mangka-mo un-lutu aluk*  
 3S PFV-PFV AV-destroy religion  
 'He has already attacked religion' (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 705)  
 (actor voice, punctual, pronominal A, indeterminate P)
- (11b) *anna tontong pa um-balittua' tu banua-n-na sambai'*  
 COMP repeatedly IPF AV-turn upside down REL house=LK-DEF there  
 'and [he] would always turn that house down there (in Pangulu where the priest had built the hut) upside down!' (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 710)  
 (actor voice, iterative, pronominal A, determinate P)

Similarly, when the topic of the meeting shifted to discuss the assassination of a local lord (*puang* Patadungan) by the people of Patua', we encounter another instance of actor voice construction, seen in the last line of (12).

- (12) *Ah ya te puang lan Kaero puang Patadungan ah...*  
 Ah TOP DEF lord in Kaero lord Patadungan ah  
 'Ah as for the lord of Kaero (the most powerful ancestral house in Sangalla'), lord Paradungan,'  
*di-pongko*  
 PASS-kill  
 '[he] was killed;'  
 (passive)  
*To Patua' un-pongko-i*  
 person Patua' AV-kill-3  
 'the people of Patua killed him.' (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, lines 793–95)  
 (actor voice, punctual, indeterminate A, pronominal P)

Later on in the same meeting we can observe the use of actor voice constructions, not to assign responsibility for violating customary law or for murder, as in (1a)–(11b) and (12), respectively, but rather to express support. A rich real-estate entrepreneur named Tarra' conveys his support of Papa Era's candidacy in the forthcoming village elections by highlighting (through the use of the actor voice construction) Papa Era's responsibility for preventing Batara from committing other violations against religion and customary law. He first makes this claim in (13), and repeats it a few lines below, in (14).

- (13) *Na iko mo<sup>28</sup> la=un-tanga'-i lan tondok to*  
 COMP 2S PFV FUT=AV-think-3 in village this  
 'And [it is] you [who] will [have to] be in charge (think) in this village.'  
 (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 737)
- (14) *Iko mo un-torro-i di-sanga sokkong bayu*  
 2S PFV AV-live-LOC PASS-name sokkong bayu  
 '[It is] you [who] occupy [the position] called sokkong bayu (highest political office).' (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 777)



Papa Era appears very receptive of Tarra's endorsement. At the end of the meeting, he declares his willingness to take upon himself the leading role envisioned for him by Tarra' and, adopting a very proactive and threatening tone, he sums up the meeting's final decision taken to report Batara's wrongdoings to the police. In the closing of the meeting he makes the emphatic declaration in (15), using actor voice (irrealis).<sup>29</sup>

- (15) *ianna noka' polisi un-n-ala-i kita un-tingkan-n-i*  
 if do.not.want police AV-LK-take-3 1PL.EXCL AV-catch-LK-3  
*perangi to?*  
 hear this  
 'If the police do not want to arrest him, we [will] catch him, have you heard it?'  
 (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 1211)  
 (actor voice, irrealis)

The proposal that he and his group might take personal initiative in the hypothetical scenario in which the police failed to arrest Batara is repeated immediately afterwards, in (16a), followed by a threatening climax in (16b) in which the use of the free pronoun combined with the use of actor voice and reported speech strongly emphasizes the speaker's agency and will to act.

- (16a) *ia-ri ke noka' polisi la=un-n-ala-i kita un-tingkan-n-i*  
 if-LIM if do.not.want police FUT=AV-LK-take-3 1PL.EXCL AV-catch-LK-3  
 'If only the police will not want to arrest him, we catch him (we will be the ones to catch him).' (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 1213)  
 (actor voice, irrealis)
- (16b) *tae' kamu...na kamu, aku un-tingkan-n-i diong-mai Ma'kale*  
 NEG 2S COMP 2S 1S AV-take-LK-3 down-there Makale  
 'You [do] not ... you [do not arrest him], I catch him down there in Makale.'  
 (Dec\_23\_2002\_tape 41, line 1215)  
 (actor voice, irrealis)

Besides being used to express contrastive focus ("if the police won't arrest him, I will be the one who catches him"), actor voice constructions tend to occur in pragmatic contexts where the illocutionary assignment of responsibility and deontological agency are at stake. In my corpus, actor voice constructions are infrequent and are deployed to emphasize the assignment of blame, praise, responsibility, and agency to the speaker (and his immediate allies) ((9), (15), (16a–16b)) or to a third party ((10), (11a)–(11b), (12), (13), (14)). Outside these pragmatic contexts, patient voice constructions with pronominal clitics constitute the unmarked category (see Donzelli 2010).

**9. Patient voice in the construction of Toraja political understatement.** Together with agentless passives, patient voice constructions are

used to foreground the affectedness of the object over the semantic saliency of the agent, thus linguistically producing a political ethos characterized by understatement and unassertiveness.

Indeed, as already mentioned in section 1, one of the distinctive characteristics of Toraja verbal aesthetics is the tendency to avoid establishing direct causal relations between efforts or desires and political outcomes, appealing instead to the role of fate (TOR *dalle'*) in determining the course of events. This acquiescent attitude and fatalistic ethos are achieved through discursive practices marked by grammatical strategies of agency mitigation combined with candidates' overall detached and noncommittal style, which is epitomized by their deliberately marginal presence during rallies and by their reliance on the discursive labor of spokespersons in charge of vicariously running the campaign on their behalf.

The understatement underlying Toraja aesthetics of persuasion is conveyed by the excerpt in (17), which was recorded during an electoral gathering that took place in July 2002. After opening his speech with a lengthy formulaic and honorific apology (TOR *mekatabe'*), the orator launches, through patient voice and passive constructions, an appeal to the audience to support the candidate (named Pong Jaka) on the elections scheduled for 3 August.

- (17) *tae'=mo ki=la=m-buni*  
 NEG=PFV 1PL.EXCL=FUT=LK-hide  
 'We will not conceal'  
 (patient voice)
- kumua ianna tanggala' tallu tae' apa bisa di-pogau'*  
 that if.TOP date third NEG what can PASS-do  
 'that as for the third, nothing could be done,'  
 (passive)
- tae' apa bisa ki=pogau' ke tae' na dukung-am-mi*  
 NEG what can 1PL.EXCL=do if NEG COMP support-NMZ-2PL  
 'there is nothing we could do, if not with your support (without your support).'  
 (July\_31\_2002\_tape 48, lines 73–74a)  
 (patient voice)

It should be noted that the request for support is grammatically constructed through a complete avoidance of imperative constructions and a profuse deployment of ellipsis, as is seen in (18).

- (18) *Dadi inde'-te kini ber-harap dukung-an secara moril lako kami*  
 so here-DEM now ber-hope support-NMZ ADV moral to 1PL.EXCL  
 'So here now [we] hope moral support (support in a moral way) [will be given] to us.'  
 (July\_31\_2002\_tape 48, line 77)

As shown in (19), desiderative circumlocutions are also used ('if there is luck' in the third line), along with passive constructions and topicalizations (i.e., 'as for the 3rd of August' and '[as for] what is looked for' in the first and second lines).

- (19) *supaya ianna tanggala' tallu bisa di-lendu'i melo*  
 so.that if.TOP date third can PASS-pass-LOC well  
 'So that as for the 3rd [of August], it could be spent (could go) well.'  
 (passive)
- na inde'-to iatu apa tu di-daka'*  
 COMP here-DEM that.TOP what REL PASS-search  
 'And here [as for] what is looked for,'  
 (passive)
- na den-sia mani upa' den-sia mani upa'*  
 COMP exist-LIM LOC hope exist-LIM LOC hope  
 '[it is] just [that] there is luck/hope, just [that] there is luck/hope.'  
 (July\_31\_2002\_tape 48, lines 78–79a)  
 (existential)

All these discourse strategies (i.e., the nonuse of actor voice and the profusion of patient voice, as well as of existential and passive constructions) contribute to achieving the effect of smoothing the representation of a direct causal relation between the acts of the audience and the result of the electoral race.

These strategies contribute to tempering the explicit allocation of agency and intentionality to a specific party. In this light, Pong Jaka's potential victory is portrayed as a desirable outcome for which no one would be fully responsible. A few lines below (in (20)), the invitation to support the candidate is framed through a construction with an oblique object: through the use of the preposition *diomai* ('from') the audience is presented as a source and not as an agent of support. The emphasis is placed on the direct object ('the support'), rather than on the electors, with the result of bracketing again the audience's responsibility and agency.

- (20) *maka-nya totemo na sampai tanggala' tallu*  
 then-nya now COMP until date third  
 'so from now up until the third'
- na se-terus-nya iatu dukung-an*  
 COMP ADV-straight-nya that.TOP support-NMZ  
 'and onwards it is the support'
- diomai kita mintu massola nasang memang betul-betul*  
 from 1PL.INCL all altogether all indeed true-RDP
- ki=harap-kan*  
 1PL.EXCL-hope-kan  
 'from you (honorific) all (lit., us all together) what we really look forward to (hope).'  
 (July\_31\_2002\_tape 48, lines 90–91)

Unlike the psychological model of classical rhetoric—according to which, political candidates and orators should use words to move the listeners' minds and wills—this electoral appeal is replete with discursive strategies aimed at mitigating the assignment of deontological and causal agency. These stylistic and grammatical features hint at an interesting connection between cultural and linguistic practice.

**10. Voice selection, morality, and the local aesthetics of persuasion.** As mentioned in the section 1, the grammatical articulation of Toraja persuasive discourse partakes in the cultural reproduction of local notions of power, charisma, emotion, and political conduct.

The ethnographic literature on Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific in general emphasizes that emotional restraint and control over one's desires are prominent features of vernacular moralities (see, e.g., Bateson and Mead 1942; Belo 1970; Donzelli and Hollan 2005; J. Errington 1984; H. Geertz 1959, 1961; Hollan 1988; Hollan and Wellenkamp 1994; Just 1991; Keeler 1987; Levy 1973; Lutz 1988; Throop 2010; Wellenkamp 1988). Aside from being connected to a belief in the potential dangers deriving from passions, the importance given to the virtues of restraint and self-governance has often been related to vernacular conceptions of power or spiritual potency (S. Errington 1983, 1989; C. Geertz 1960; Wikan 1989).

Control of desire and emotional restraint are deemed essential for the accumulation of power. For example, in his classic analysis of Javanese idea of power and charisma, Anderson (1990) showed that in Southeast Asian political philosophy, power is not something that should be made an object of active pursuit (see also Keane 1997a). On the contrary, ascetic practices and withdrawal from desire allow the accumulation of spiritual potency and the enhancement of power. By engaging in a form of "emotion work" (Hochschild 1979) aimed at controlling the temptation of getting caught in an active pursuit of power, the subject should achieve the ability to act "like a magnet that aligns scattered iron filings in a patterned field of force" (Anderson 1990:43). This ideal of power as "magnetic attraction" is tied to the idea of the exemplary center (Tambiah 1977; Wolters 1982). Epitomized by Geertz's (1980) classic description of the Balinese ideal of the immobile king at the center of the universe, centripetality constitutes one of the most pervasive and overarching characteristics of moral and political philosophies and political systems of Southeast Asia, which revolve around a model of the state typically defined "not by its perimeter, but by its center" (Anderson 1990:41).

While these cultural forms of moral and political philosophies have been amply documented in the ethnographic literature on Southeast Asia (Anderson 1990; S. Errington 1989; Geertz 1980; Tambiah 1977; Wolters 1982), little attention has been given to the investigation of how these cultural models and ideals are reproduced through everyday practices and behaviors.

One of the points made in the present article is that a fine-grained linguistic and ethnographic analysis of the details of communicative interaction may contribute to an understanding of how language and grammar in particular partake in the reproduction of larger cultural formations. In this light, the prominence of Toraja grammatical constructions that foreground the pragmatic salience of the patient and the correlated rarity of explicit assignment of deontological agency (i.e., infrequent use of actor voice constructions) may be seen as connected to the cultural preference for styles of self-presentation marked by understatement and avoidance of exhortatory and volitional modes of discourse. Against this general preference for subdued political styles realized through patient voice constructions, actor voice constructions stand out as rare and marked pragmatic strategies for the politically delicate task of assigning agency and responsibility to oneself or to a third party.

**11. Conclusions.** One of the aims of the analysis developed in this article is to broaden the intradiscursive scope of pragmatic description, providing the ethnographic context for speakers' grammatical practices. Besides corroborating the idea that pragmatic factors play an important role in the dynamics of voice selection, my analysis is also intended to show how choices of grammatical voice, which are often unconscious but always meaningful, constitute an important locus for the unfolding of the participants' moral reasoning. Unlike previous discourse-based analyses of voice selection in languages typologically related to Toraja, which have mostly been concerned with parameters such as semantic transitivity and informational structure, my account aims at interpreting specific grammatical choices in the light of a broader ethnographic context.

Indeed, voice selection is not simply a resource for assigning pragmatic salience to nominals, it is also motivated by a cultural politics of action, persuasion, and political demeanor, which reflects an overarching cultural concern for affecting others and being affected by others' actions and passions (Donzelli and Hollan 2005). As is shown by examples at various points above in this article, actor voice constructions play a key role within the articulation of Toraja linguistic strategies for the assignment of agency and responsibility. Speakers use this rare and marked construction in a variety of contexts to perform threats and accusations (as in (11a)–(11b) and (12)), to refer to their own achievements or to the accomplishments of a third party (as in (9) and (10)), to claim agency for themselves and their immediate allies (as in (15) and (16a)–(16b)), or to endorse and assign responsibility to their interlocutors (as in (13) and (14)). Conversely, the prominence of patient voice and passive construction in contexts that require the display of persuasive techniques (as in the case of electoral rallies; see (17), (18), (19), and (20)) resonates with a cultural model of conduct marked by the avoidance of overt forms of intentional engagement.

In light of these findings, the asymmetrical distribution of patient voice and actor voice forms in Toraja can also be connected to cultural and extralinguistic

elements. Both the general attitude displayed by candidates for office and the grammatical articulation of Toraja persuasive discourse found in the speeches delivered by the candidates' spokespersons point toward downplaying of the participants' involvement in the plan they propose. A number of ethnographic analyses (Anderson 1990; S. Errington 1983, 1989; Geertz 1980) have shown that an important principle within local political philosophies across the Indonesian archipelago prescribes that power should not be made an object of active pursuit (Anderson 1990:67; Keane 1997a:10). My account aims to complement these earlier descriptions through an analysis of the microprocesses of actual communicative interaction. This methodological approach may help to produce nuanced and fine-grained ethnographic descriptions, showing how, far from being the result of a fixed and predetermined cultural matrix, social attitudes and moral values are produced or challenged in concrete instances of human interaction. For example, it is seen above that individual speakers may deploy actor voice constructions to perform assertive speech acts where the assignment of deontological agency is explicit and unequivocal. This was the case in Pak Batara's attempt to regain control over the secessionist policy pursued by the Lemo delegation in (9) and (10), in Papa Era's endeavor to present himself as a resolute opponent of Batara's authority in (15), (16a), and (16b), and in Tarra's eagerness to endorse Papa Era and at the same time portray himself as the ultimate grantor of the legitimacy of Papa Era's initiative in (13) and (14). The occurrence of actor voice constructions in the utterances of these three leading figures in the village political scene suggests that the explicit encoding of agency constitutes an important ingredient in their different ways of presenting their political self. Despite their very different personalities, Pak Batara, an energetic and authoritative elder aristocrat, Papa Era, a young nobleman striving to be elected as the new village chief, and Tarra', a rich commoner who emphasizes his economic success as a way of climbing the social ladder, share a similar political style that involves the foregrounding of their involvement in the local political life. This foregrounding is rather unusual in the context of the general style of Toraja political conduct, which aims at conveying the idea of minimum effort and participation.

Drawing on Hopper and Thompson's (1980) classic definition of semantic transitivity, several writers who have discussed voice selection in other related Austronesian languages argue that patient voice correlates with high discourse transitivity (and with past tense, punctual aspect, and determinate objects), while actor voice, variously labeled "extended intransitive" (Lee 2006) or "semi-transitive" (Friberg 1991), is associated with low discourse transitivity (i.e., with indeterminate objects and durative clauses). The data presented above aim instead at showing that, while actor voice constructions are definitely not strictly associated with definite and referential patients or perfective and punctual clauses, they tend to encode a deontological and human-centered form of agency, while patient voice constructions correspond to a more mechanical form of

efficient cause that does not imply that the agent is human, intentional, or morally accountable. In this perspective, patient voice and actor voice constructions perform an interesting division of labor within the Toraja cultural politics of action.

This article argues that the study of how agency is grammatically encoded within situated instances of language usage may advance our understanding of both cross-cultural and culture specific theories of agency. While speech acts that entail the assessment of the participants' involvement in particular states of affairs universally tend to evoke careful political reasoning and linguistic behavior, the fine-grained analysis of language-specific modes for encoding deontological agency may advance our understanding of local forms of morality and cultural theories of political action.

### Notes

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*Transcription.* Typographic conventions for examples are as follows. In transcribing natural speech, I based my line divisions on intonation units. Underlining marks Indonesian interference and loans in Toraja (in standard Indonesian orthography). Parenthetical source notes for natural-speech examples include line numbering based on the position of the example in the transcription of the entire event. Toraja forms appear in a practical orthography; note that the apostrophe ' represents glottal stop, and *ng* represents the velar nasal. Occasional instances of underlying forms are enclosed in slashes / /. In underlying forms, /N/ indicates a nasal that is homorganic with, and sometimes replaces, the following consonant.

*Abbreviations.* The following abbreviations are used: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; ADV = adverbial; AV = actor voice; *ber* = (Indonesian) middle voice marker; CAUS = causative; COMP = complementizer; DEF = definite; DEM = demonstrative; EXCL = exclusive; FUT = future; IND = Indonesian; INCL = inclusive; IPF = imperfective; *kan* = (Indonesian) functions such as applicative, causative, benefactive, and transitivizer; LIM = limitative; LK = linker; LOC = locative; NEG = negator; NMZ = nominalizer; *nya* = (Indonesian) possession, definiteness or a generalized relationship of association; PASS =

passive; PFV = perfective; PL = plural; PV = patient voice construction; PROG = progressive; RDP = reduplication; REL = relativizer/relative clause marker; S = singular; TOR = Toraja; TOP = topicalizer.

1. For the possible influence of Malinowski's (1923, 1935) view of language as a form action on Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1953) philosophy of language (epitomized by his notions of "language games" [section 7], "words as deeds" [section 546], and "meaning is use" [section 43]), see, among others, Rose (1980) and Gellner (1998). For recent intra- and transdisciplinary explorations of this fundamental nexus, see Enfield and Levinson (2006) and Lambek (2010b).

2. The notion of agency and the study of the ways in which different languages grammaticize it are important elements of Klaiman's (1991) attempt at formulating a typology of voice systems. However, it should be noted that rather than agency, Klaiman (1991:140) prefers to use a broader term (i.e., "control" or "control construct"); this is not limited to agency, since it also encompasses affectedness.

3. Duranti (2004) refers to this duality, distinguishing between action and language as, respectively, the performance and the encoding of agency.

4. I understand agency as the "socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn 2001a:112), which entails, at least to some degree, having "control over one's behavior," affecting other's entities, and being evaluated for one's actions (Duranti 2004:453).

5. For example, in a recent lecture at Harvard University (<http://blip.tv/file/509192>), Jackendoff criticizes semanticists who are only interested in understanding how language works and "don't care about people." One of the primary contentions of the conceptual approach he advocates is that "sentences wouldn't exist if there weren't people to use them. . . . So we have to think about how sentences work in people's heads. How sentences are judged true" (my emphasis).

6. Originally introduced in 1923 by Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the founding fathers of British anthropology, the notion of "context of situation" later became a key notion within functionally oriented linguistic theories (Firth 1957; Halliday 1978).

7. Duranti defines the ethnopragmatic perspective as "a study of language use which relies on ethnography to illuminate the ways in which speech is both constituted by and constitutive of social interaction" (1994:11).

8. Data were collected during long-term fieldwork that I carried out in Toraja for ten consecutive months in 2002 and 2003 and six consecutive months in 2004. A corpus of spontaneous language use (roughly sixty hours of audio and videotaped material) has been supplemented by elicitation work conducted in Toraja in 2006 and 2007. The English translations of examples here result from consultations with native speakers with whom I glossed and translated the material.

9. For the target of orators' persuasive efforts, Cicero, in his famous *De oratore*—a dialogue he composed in 55 BCE—used the Latin term *animus*, which in one English translation (Sutton 1942) is variously rendered as 'heart', 'mind', 'feelings'. Although limitations of space prevent me from providing a thorough discussion, these terms point to important cross-cultural differences in theories of personhood and in paradigms of how people are able to assess (and, I would add, influence) the minds of others. For a recent discussion of these issues, see Robbins and Rumsey (2008). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

10. The term "ethos" is widely used by anthropologists to refer to a cultural style that pervades different aspects of life within a society; it was introduced to the anthropological vocabulary by Gregory Bateson, who defined it as "the emotional tone" of a culture (1936:2), "a certain systematic aspect . . . [that can be defined] as the expression of a culturally standardized system of organization of the instincts and emotions of the individuals" (1936:118).

11. For an example within the Pacific context, see Elizabeth Keating's (1998, 2005) discussions of "humiliatives" and self-lowering expressions in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

12. I understand power as the ability to control events and people, and authority as the right to command—that is, power that has been delegated. The former entails a capacity to influence people's conduct that to some degree comes (at least in an ideological sense) from within; the latter refers to processes of delegation and entrustment. In this article, I am primarily concerned with how the use of certain grammatical constructions (actor voice) may project a powerful, agentive, and charismatic speaking subject. In so doing, I show how, far from being inherent prerogatives, power and charisma may be built through specific (though not necessarily deliberate or intentional) grammatical choices.

13. The first chapter of Klaiman's (1991) book provides an overview of the different ways in which the notion of verbal voice has been used in the linguistic literature. She distinguishes three sorts of voice: derived voice (e.g., passivization); basic voice (e.g., alternations between active and middle voice, which encode transformations in the degree of affectedness of the subject by the action encoded in the verb, even though subject and object retain their respective functions, their respective structural positions, or both); and pragmatic voice (characterized mostly in functional rather than formal terms, as alternations in verbal morphology that encode nominals' relative ontological saliency or their relative centrality to the informational objectives of the discourse).

14. Austronesian voice seems to differ substantially from voice systems found elsewhere in the world. Hence, not all Austronesian linguists agree that the term "voice" is appropriate; an alternative term that has often been used, especially in reference to Philippine-type languages, is "focus." Three important edited volumes published in the last few years (Arka and Ross 2005; Austin and Musgrave 2008; Wouk and Ross 2002), however, have strongly argued that "voice," rather than "focus," is a far more appropriate term for describing Western Austronesian languages, including Philippine-type ones.

15. Arka and Ross, however, point out that "throughout much of Western Indonesia and Malaysia" the simplification of the Philippine voice system has resulted in a system that can be described as reduced to contrast between actor and undergoer voice only at the surface level, since "applicative suffixes have been recruited to allow the selection of a variety of semantic roles as subjects, resulting in a system with the same flexibility as the Philippine system" (2005:6).

16. As Himmelmann points out, "there is no unmarked or basic form from which the other form is derived. Furthermore, both examples appear to be syntactically equivalent in that both involve two nominal arguments (*anak saya* and *orang itu*), one preceding, the other following the verb without further overt marking by a preposition or case marker" (2005:112).

17. The problematic status of the subject argument in Tagalog was first noted by Schachter (1976).

18. There are nine primary language subgroups in Sulawesi (Noorydun 1991): Sangiric, Minahasan, Gorontalo-Mongondic, Tomini-Tolitoli, Kaili-Pomona, Bungku-Mori-Tolaki, Muna-Buton, and South Sulawesi. A number of scholars have provided solid evidence in favor of grouping Toraja with South Sulawesi languages such as Buginese and Makassarese (Friberg 1991; Grimes and Grimes 1987; Jukes 2006; Mills 1975; Noorduyndun 1991; Sirk 1981, 1989).

19. According to Himmelmann (2005), these should include non-Oceanic Austronesian languages of Timor, the Moluccas, and West Papua, as well as the pidgin-derived varieties of Malay.

20. That is, the Austronesian languages of Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Madagascar, western Indonesia (with the exception of Acehnese and the Barrier Island

languages), and the northern half of Sulawesi (Saluan, but not Banggai), Kaili-Pomona, Tomini-Tolitoli, Gorontalo-Mongondlow, Minahasan, and Sangiric (Himmelmann 2005).

21. These person markers follow an ergative-absolutive alignment, with the proclitic set marking the subject of transitive verbs (A) and the enclitic set marking both the object of transitive verbs (P) and the subject of intransitive verbs; see Donzelli (2010) for discussion. This alignment of clitic person markers is suspended in several syntactic contexts: after negation, question markers, temporal or location adverbials, and certain conjunctions, subjects of intransitive verbs are cross-referenced by the ergative proclitic.

22. I adopt Klaiman's definition of the main difference between passive and anti-passive: "Under passivization, a logical nonsubject, . . . [most likely an object], takes on properties characteristic of (basic) subjects (such as case assignment and government of verbal person indices). By contrast, with antipassivization the transitive subject takes on properties characteristic typical of the (basic) object" (1991:230).

23. From a pragmatic standpoint, the alternation between actor voice and patient voice encodes the respective saliency of the agent or the patient and their relative centrality to the discourse's informational objectives; from a syntactic standpoint, when a transitive subject is relativized, as in cleft or focused sentences, the verb of the relative clause must occur in actor voice. Conversely, when a the object of a transitive is relativized, the verb of the relative clause must occur in patient voice. Additionally, in Toraja the distinction between verbal and equative cleft clauses is somewhat fuzzy. That is, verbal clauses such as (i) and (ii) may be understood as reanalyses of equative cleft clauses, as in (iii) and (iv). For an overview of the literature on the long-standing claim that the basic clause structure in Philippine-type languages is equational, see Himmelmann (2005:140–57). I thank an anonymous reviewer for emphasizing this point.

(i) *Tato' ungrande pao.*

'Tato' eats a mango.'  
(actor voice)

(ii) *Pao nakande Tato'.*

'Tato' eats a mango.'  
(patient voice)

(iii) 'It is Tato' that eats a mango.'

(iv) 'It is a mango that Tato' eats.'

24. See also Naylor (1986) and Saclot (2006).

25. The degree of topicality of nominal referents is measured by "anaphoric accessibility" (i.e., whether the current referent has an antecedent earlier in the text, and if so, how far back that antecedent is to be found) and "cataphoric persistence" (i.e., whether the referent recurs in the following text, and if so how frequently) (Givón 1994:9). Topicality was at the center of important linguistic debates in the 1970s and 1980s, which produced a large body of scholarship; see, for example, Givón (1983), Hawkinson and Hyman (1974), Li (1976), and Shibatani (1991).

26. In their classic analysis, Hopper and Thompson (1980) proposed an understanding of transitivity based on semantics and pragmatics, rather than seeing it as a merely syntactic phenomenon. In their view, transitivity is measured through a set of ten loosely cooccurring and covarying parameters; higher degrees of transitivity correlate with greater activeness and volitionality of the agent and with greater telicity

and punctuality of the event, as well as with higher levels of individuation and affectedness of the object.

27. In his well-known discussion of the discursive basis of ergativity, Du Bois (1987) offers a different interpretation for the relative scarcity of ergative agents within natural speech. Instead of this resulting from agents being endowed with distinctive pragmatic force and saliency, Du Bois argues that the rarity of ergative agents reflects a universal dispreference for the production of transitive clauses with two overt lexical arguments. While speakers may "readily produce such two-lexical argument structures under elicitation conditions, where each sentence is produced in isolation," they are less likely to employ clauses with two lexical arguments when speaking fluently (Du Bois 1987: 817).

28. Note that the perfective marker *-mo* also conveys emphasis.

29. In (15), the prefix /uN-/ in *un-n-ala-i* 'arrest him', although glossed 'AV', does not actually mark actor voice, but rather marks the verb as an infinitive; infinitive complements in Toraja obligatorily take the prefix /uN-/. The true instance of actor voice in (15) is *un-tingkan-n-i* 'catch him'.

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