

On the emerging “get” passive in Balinese

Hiroki Nomoto (TUFS), Gede Primahadi Wijaya Rajeg,
Ida Bagus Made Ari Segara (Universitas Udayana)

LSJ @ Oberlin University, 27 June 2026

Balinese (ISO 639-3: ban)

- Spoken on the Indonesian island of Bali, Nusa Penida and Western Lombok
- Approx. 3.3 million speakers (Shiohara & Arka 2024)
- Austronesian
 - > Malayo-Polynesian
 - ...
 - > Bali-Sasak-Sumbawa



(Location of Province Bali in Indonesia by TUBS)

Introduction

- **Target construction:** *Bakat* passives in Balinese

(1) Nasi-n cang-é **bakat** **amah** tekén bangkung-é.
rice-LK* 1-DEF BAKAT eat by pig-DEF (*LK: linker)

bakat ‘get’ + bare verb stem

‘My rice was **accidentally/unintentionally** eaten by the pig.’

- *Bakat* passives have not been reported in the literature.
- **Claims:** *Bakat* passives...
 1. are emerging as the first analytical passive in Balinese
 2. align with the *-a* morphological passive rather than the morphologically bare passive
 3. have emerged under the influence of *kena* passives in Indonesian

Roadmap

1. The emerging status of *bakat* passives
2. Established voice constructions in Balinese
 - a. *N*- active
 - b. *-a* passive
 - c. *ka*- passive
 - d. bare passive
3. Evidence for alignment with the *-a* passive
4. How *bakat* passives have developed
5. Implications for the structures and historical sources of analytical passives

1.

**The emerging
status of *bakat*
passives**

Supporting facts (1): Lack of textual evidence

1. No previous study reports *bakat* passives.
2. They are absent from
 - a. our corpus (texts from the website *Suara Saking Bali*) and
 - b. the Balinese subcorpus of the Leipzig Corpora Collection (Goldhahn et al. 2012).



Supporting facts (2): Variable judgements

- Many speakers reject *bakat* passives.
- But some accept them.
- An informal survey
 - 13 speakers from various regions and age groups
 - Reject 9, Accept 4
 - Those who accepted *bakat* passives are either from Denpasar, or have lived there for an extended period, suggesting ongoing urban-centred change.
 - Those who rejected them suggested that the verb should be suffixed with the passive marker *-a*.

(2) Nasi-n cang-é **bakat** **amah-a** tekén bangkung-é.
rice-LK 1-DEF BAKAT eat-PASS by pig-DEF

***bakat* 'get' + ~~bare verb stem~~ passive verb**

'My rice was accidentally/unintentionally eaten by the pig.'

Supporting facts (3): Incomplete generality

- Not all verbs can participate in the construction.

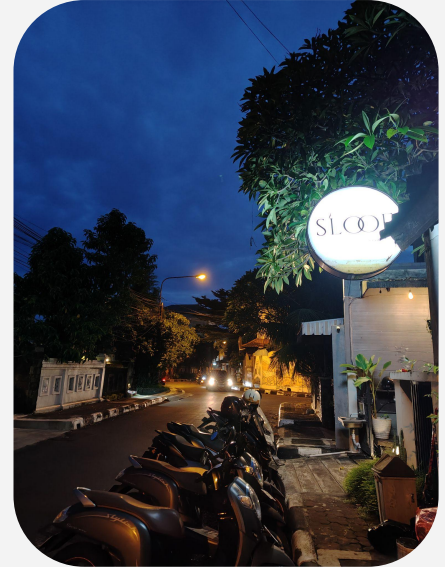
(3) I Madé bakat **édéng-in*(-a)** awak-né di gambar tekén Ni Putu.
ART Made BAKAT show-APPL-PASS self-3 at picture by ART Putu
'Made was accidentally **shown** himself in a picture by Putu.'

(4) I Madé bakat **orah-in*(-a)** indik awak-né tekén Ni Putu.
ART Made BAKAT tell-APPL-PASS about self-3 by ART Putu
'Made was accidentally **told** about himself by Putu.'

(5) Buku-né Madé bakat **kisid-in✓(-a)** kemu tekén Ni Putu.
book-POSS Made BAKAT move-APPL-PASS there by ART Putu
'Made's book was accidentally **moved** there by Putu.'

Section summary

- The construction remains in an early stage of emergence.
- The change is currently centred in urban areas.



2.

Established voice constructions in Balinese

Active and passive: Formal definitions

Active: Transitive verb phrase whose *internal* argument **is** licensed within it.

Passive: Transitive verb phrase whose *internal* argument **is not** licensed within it.

cf. Passive as detransitivized verb phrase (e.g. by external argument demotion)

Syntactic presence of the external argument in passives (Collins 2005: 101–102)

- (6) Such privileges should be kept to oneself. (Baker, Johnson & Roberts 1989: 228)
(*implicit external argument binding a reflexive*)
- (7) The book was written drunk. (Collins 2005: 101)
(*implicit external argument licensing a depictive secondary predicate*)

Voice system in Balinese

- All established voices are synthetic (employing verbal morphology).
- No analytical voice (employing an auxiliary).

Morpholgy	Active	Passive
Unmarked	*	Bare passive
Marked	<i>N-</i> active	<i>-a</i> passive <i>ka-</i> passive (high register)

N- active

(8) Tiang ng-adeP sampi-né (ka anak-é ento).
1SG ACT-sell cow-DEF to person-DEF that
'I sold the cow (to that person).' (Artawa 2013: 8)

Alternative names:

- agentive voice (Arka 2003)
- agent voice (Driemal & Tebay 2022)
- nasal verb construction (Artawa 2013)
- actor voice (Shiohara & Arka 2024)

Bare passive

- (9) Sampi-né **adep** tiang (ka anak-é ento).
cow-DEF sell 1SG to person-DEF that
'I sold the cow (to that person).' (Artawa 2013: 8)

Alternative names:

- object(ive) voice (Arka & Wechsler 1996; Arka 2003, 2008)
- basic verb construction (Artawa 2013)
- patient voice (Driemal & Tebay 2022)
- undergoer voice (Shiohara & Arka 2024)

-A passive

- (10) la **orah-in-a** kema tekén mémé-né.
3SG tell-APPL-PASS go.there by mother-DEF
'She was told to go there by her mother.'

(Artawa 2013: 22)

- (11) Krupak **goréng-a** I Narti di paon.
cracker fry-PASS ART Narti in kitchen
'Some crackers were fried by Narti in the kitchen.'

(Artawa 2013: 22)

Alternative names:

- -a construction (Artawa 2013)

Section summary

- All established voices are synthetic, characterized by the presence/absence of (overt) voice morphology in the verb.
- No analytical voice, involving an auxiliary.

3.

**Evidence for
alignment with
the *-a* passive**

Alignment with *-a* passives

- *Bakat* passives involve bare verb stems like bare passives.
- But they systematically pattern with *-a* passives.

Supporting facts:

1. Agent expression using *tekén* ‘by’
2. No definiteness restriction on agent
3. No reconstruction effects (binding condition C)

Fact 1: Agent expression using *tekén* 'by'

- OK for *bakat* and *-a* passive, but * for bare passive.

- (12) Nasi-n cang-é **bakat** **amah** tekén bangkung. (*bakat*)
rice-LK 1-DEF BAKAT eat by pig
'My rice was accidentally/unintentionally eaten by a pig.'
- (13) Nasi-n cang-é **amah-a** tekén bangkung. (*-a*)
rice-LK 1-DEF eat-PASS by pig
'My rice was eaten by a pig.'
- (14) *Nasi-n cang-é **amah** tekén bangkung. (bare)
rice-LK 1-DEF eat by pig

Fact 2: Definiteness restriction on agent

- Bare passive agents are restricted to indefinites (only for common nouns) (Arka & Wechsler 1996; Udayana 2012; Artawa 2013).

(15) a. I Ketut **gutgut** lelipi tetelu. (indefinite)
ART Ketut bite snake three
'Three snakes bit Ketut.'

b. *I Ketut **gutgut** lelipi-né tetelu. (definite)
ART Ketut bite snake-DEF three
Intended: '**The** three snakes bit Ketut.'

(Udayana 2012: 90–91)

Fact 2: No definiteness restriction on agent

- No such restriction exists for *bakat* and *-a* passives.

- (1) Nasi-n cang-é **bakat** **amah** tekén bangkung-é. (*bakat*)
rice-LK 1-DEF BAKAT eat by pig-DEF
'My rice was accidentally/unintentionally eaten by **the** pig.'
- (16) Nasi-n cang-é **amah-a** tekén bangkung-é. (*-a*)
rice-LK 1-DEF eat-PASS by pig-DEF
'My rice was eaten by **the** pig.'

Fact 3: Binding Condition C & reconstruction

- **Binding Condition C:** R-expressions must be free (= not bound).

(17) ***He_i** likes **John_i** very much.

(18) ***la_i** ng-[k]auk-in cicing **Nyoman_i-é.**
3SG ACT-call-APPL dog Nyoman-POSS
Intended: 'Nyoman called his own dog.'

- **Reconstruction:** R-expression is interpreted at its original position.

(19) *Which picture of **John_i** does **he_i** like ____ ?

(20) *Which picture of **John_i** does **he_i** like [which picture of **John_i**] ?

Fact 3: Reconstruction

- Reconstruction takes place in bare passive, but not in *bakat* and *-a* passives.

(21) **la_i** **gutgut** cicing **Nyoman_i-é.** (bare)
 3SG bite dog Nyoman-POSS
 ‘Nyoman was bitten by a dog of his own.’

(22) *la_i **bakat** **gutgut** tekén cicing **Nyoman_i-é.** (*bakat*)
3SG BAKAT bite by dog Nyoman-POSS

(23) *la_i gutgut-a tekén cicing Nyoman_i-é. (-a)
3SG bite-PASS by dog Nyoman-POSS

(24) Base structure of (21)

la_i gutgut [cicing **Nyoman**_i-é] gutgut ia_i

The diagram shows the base structure of (21) as la_i gutgut [cicing **Nyoman**_i-é] gutgut ia_i. Arrows indicate the relationship between the first and last elements: an arrow from the first la_i to the first gutgut, an arrow from the first gutgut to the first element of the bracketed phrase (cicing), and an arrow from the last element of the bracketed phrase (é) to the last ia_i.

Section summary

Phenomenon	<i>bakat</i>	<i>-a</i>	bare
<i>tekén</i> ‘by’ + agent	✓	✓	✗
definite agent	✓	✓	✗
reconstruction	✗	✗	✓

4.

**How have *bakat*
passives
developed?**

Development of *bakat* passive: A hypothesis

Theme **bakat** **V-a** tekén Agent

(*bakat* + -*a* passive)

phonological reduction

-*a* [ə] > ∅

Theme **bakat** **V** tekén Agent

(*bakat* passive)

- *Bakat* serves as an auxiliary signalling the passive syntax.
(cf. Agent is optional.)
- Therefore, *bakat* passive is the first analytical passive in Balinese.

***Bakat* + established voices**

(25) *N*- active

Cang **bakat** [m-[b]eli baju busan].
1SG BAKAT ACT-buy clothes just.now
'I accidentally bought clothes just now.'

(Udayana et al. 2025)

(26) Bare passive

Jaja **bakat** [adep mémé ditu].
snack BAKAT sell mother there
'Snacks were accidentally sold there by Mother.'

(Udayana et al. 2025)

(27) -A passive

Jaja **bakat** [adep-a tekén mémé ditu].
snack BAKAT sell-PASS by mother there
'Snacks were accidentally sold there by Mother.'

(Udayana et al. 2025)

***Bakat* + established voices → *bakat* passive**

(25) *N*- active

Cang **bakat** [m-[b]eli baju busan].
1SG BAKAT ACT-buy clothes just.now
'I accidentally bought clothes just now.'

(Udayana et al. 2025)

(26) Bare passive

Jaja **bakat** [adep mémé ditu].
snack BAKAT sell mother there
'Snacks were accidentally sold there by Mother.'

(Udayana et al. 2025)

(27') -A passive → *bakat* passive

Jaja **bakat** [adep-Ø tekén mémé ditu].
snack BAKAT sell-PASS by mother there
'Snacks were accidentally sold there by Mother.'

(Udayana et al. 2025)

Why not in the other voices?

- **Claim:** The change was facilitated by contact with Indonesian *kena* passives.
- *Kena* passives typically select bare verb stems and express modal meanings (Nomoto & Kartini 2011).
- *Kena* does not occur in active clauses in Indonesian (unlike in Malay)

(28) Indonesian (Nomoto & Kartini 2011)

- a. Ali **kena** **tipu** oleh wanita itu. cf. **di-tipu** [PASS-cheat]
Ali KENA cheat by woman that
'Ali got cheated by the woman.'
- b. Ali **kena** **tipu** ~~oleh~~ wanita itu.
(i) 'Ali got cheated by the woman.' (passive, cf. **di-tipu** [PASS-cheat])
(ii) *'Ali has got to cheat the woman.' (active, cf. **men-[t]ipu** [ACT-cheat])

5.

Conclusion

Summary

- *Bakat* passives are emerging as the first analytical passive in Balinese.
- They align with the *-a* morphological passive rather than the morphologically bare passive.
- They have emerged under the influence of *kena* passives in Indonesian.

Future directions

- What are the structures of (i) *bakat* passives and (ii) ‘*bakat* + established voices’?
1. V: $[_{VP} \text{ bakat } [_{VoiceP} \text{ (i) } \emptyset \quad [_{VP} \text{ Agent } \emptyset \quad [_{VP} \text{ V Theme }]]]]$ (biclausal)
(ii) N-/Ø/-a
 2. Adv: $[_{VoiceP} \text{ bakat } [_{VoiceP} \text{ (i) } \emptyset \quad [_{VP} \text{ Agent } \emptyset \quad [_{VP} \text{ V Theme }]]]]$ (monoclausal)
(ii) N-/Ø/-a
 3. Voice: $[_{VoiceP} \text{ bakat } [_{VP} \text{ Agent } \emptyset \quad [_{VP} \text{ V Theme }]]]$ (monoclausal)
- *Bakat* is a “passive marker” in 3, but not in 1 and 2. (cf. Nomoto 2015, 2024 for “passive marker” vs. “passive maker/passivizer”)
 - Answering this question will advance our understanding of the typology and diachrony of analytical passives. (cf. Nomoto 2024, LSJ169)

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP23K25336.

References (1)

- Arka, I Wayan and Stephen Wechsler. 1996. [Argument structure and linear order in Balinese binding](#). In Miriam Butt and Tracy Holloway King (eds.) *The Proceedings of the LFG '96 Conference*. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Arka, I Wayan. 2003. *Balinese Morphosyntax: A Lexical-Functional Approach*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Arka, I Wayan. 2008. Voice and the syntax of =a/-a verbs in Balinese. In Simon Musgrave and Peter Austin (eds.) *Voice and Grammatical Relations in Austronesian Languages*, 70–89. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.
- Artawa, I Ketut. 2013. The basic verb construction in Balinese. In Alexander Adelaar (ed.) *Voice Variation in Austronesian Languages of Indonesia*, 5–27. Volume 54 of *NUSA*. Jakarta and Tokyo: Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Baker, Mark, Kyle Johnson & Ian Roberts. 1989. Passive arguments raised. *Linguistic Inquiry* 20: 219–251.
- Collins, Chris. 2005. A smuggling approach to the passive in English. *Syntax* 8: 81–120.
- Driemel, Imke and Sören E. Tebay. 2022. Determiner removal in Balinese nonpivot agents. *Syntax* 25: 276–298.

References (2)

- Goldhahn, Dirk, Thomas Eckart and Uwe Quasthoff. 2012. Building large monolingual dictionaries at the Leipzig Corpora Collection: From 100 to 200 languages. *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC '12)*, 759–765. Istanbul: European Language Resources Association.
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2015. [Person restriction on passive agents in Malay and givenness](#). *Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Information Structure of Austronesian Languages*, 83–101. Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Nomoto, Hiroki. 2024. [Bunsekitekijudoubun no ruikei nikansuru shiron: Tounanajia no gengo o chuushin ni \[A preliminary analysis of the typology of analytical passives: With a focus on Southeast Asian languages\]](#). The 169th Meeting of the Linguistic Society of Japan (LSJ).
- Nomoto, Hiroki and Kartini Abd. Wahab. 2011. Konstruksi *kena* dalam bahasa Indonesia: Perbandingan dengan bahasa Melayu [The *kena* construction in Indonesian: A comparison with Malay]. *Linguistik Indonesia* 29: 111–131.

References (3)

- Shiohara, Asako and I Wayan Arka. 2024. Balinese, Sasak, and Sumbawa. In Alexander Adelaar and Antoinette Schapper (eds.) *The Oxford Guide to the Malayo-Polynesian Languages of Southeast Asia*, 489-506. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Udayana, I Nyoman. 2012. Indefiniteness constraints of (monotransitive) OV-agents in Balinese. *Jurnal Kajian Bali* 2: 87–112.
- Udayana, I Nyoman, Gede Primahadi Wijaya Rajeg and Ida Ayu Made Puspani. 2025. The (non)canonical status of the *ka*- passive in Balinese. *Linguistics Vanguard* 11: 103–117.
- Udayana, I Nyoman, Ni Luh Ketut Mas Indrawati, I Putu Utama, Hiroki Nomoto, Kadek Audrey Alia Maharani and Ni Kadek Riska Antari. 2025. Pasif *bakat* pada Bahasa Bali dan pasif *kena* pada Bahasa Indonesia: Sebuah studi komparatif [*Bakat* passives in Balinese and *kena* passives in Indonesian: A comparative study]. Unpublished manuscript. Universitas Udayana.
- Suara Saking Bali*. <https://www.suarasakingbali.com>