

In Austronesian “voice system” languages:

- a. Each clause has one **subject** (nominative);
- b. Verbal morphology reflects the choice of **subject**.
(AV = Actor Voice, PV = Patient Voice, ...)
- c. **Only the subject can be A'-extracted.**
(Keenan & Comrie 1977, Schachter and Otnes, 1972;
Aldridge, 2004; Rackowski and Richards, 2005, a.o.)

Q: Why is A'-extraction limited to the subject?

A'-extraction attracts **the closest DP** (Aldridge 2004, 2017) and **subjects are (normally) highest**.

We present novel evidence for this view from **Bikol** (Central Philippines). Our data considers **clefing** and **two types of topics** in Bikol, and their interaction.

(We only consider Actor Voice and Patient Voice core argument DPs here.)

Local clefting

- (1) **Local clefting from a Patient Voice clause:**
- G<in>adan su **lalaki** **ni** **Andrew**.
PV-kill NOM man GEN Andrew
'**Andrew** killed **the man**.'
 - Su **lalaki** su [g<in>adan __ **ni** **A.**].
NOM man NOM PV-kill GEN A.
'It's **the man** that **Andrew** killed.'
 - * **Si/ni** **A.** su [g<in>adan su **lalaki** __].
NOM/GEN A. NOM PV-kill NOM man
Intended: 'It's **Andrew** that killed **the man**.'
- (2) **Local clefting from an Actor Voice clause:**
- Nag-gadan **si** **Andrew** **ning eskwela**.
AV-kill NOM Andrew GEN student
'**Andrew** killed **a student**.'
 - Si** **A.** su [nag-gadan __ **ning eskwela**].
NOM A. NOM AV-kill GEN student
'It's **Andrew** that killed **a student**.'
 - * **Su/ning eskwela** su [nag-gadan **si** **A.** __].
NOM/GEN student NOM AV-kill NOM A.
Intended: 'It's **the/a student** that **A.** killed.'

→ Only **the subject** can be clefted, as expected.

Note: Local clefting must have a **gap**, not a pronoun.

Two types of topics

→ Bikol has two types of pre-verbal topics:

1. **Topicalization:** no pause, corresponding **gap**
 2. **Hanging-topic left dislocation (HTLD):** pause and **pronoun**
- (3) **Topics from a Patient Voice clause:**
- a. Su lalaki (,) [g<in>adan (=siya) ni Andrew].
NOM man PV-kill NOM.3sg GEN Andrew
 - b. Si Andrew (,) [g<in>adan (=niya) su lalaki].
NOM Andrew PV-kill GEN.3sg NOM man
'Andrew killed the man.'
- (4) **Topics from an Actor Voice clause:**
- a. Si Andrew (,) [nag-gadan (=siya) ning eskwela].
NOM Andrew AV-kill NOM.3sg GEN student
 - b. Su eskwela (,) [nag-gadan si Andrew *(sainya)].
NOM student AV-kill NOM Andrew DAT.3SG
'Andrew killed a/the student.'

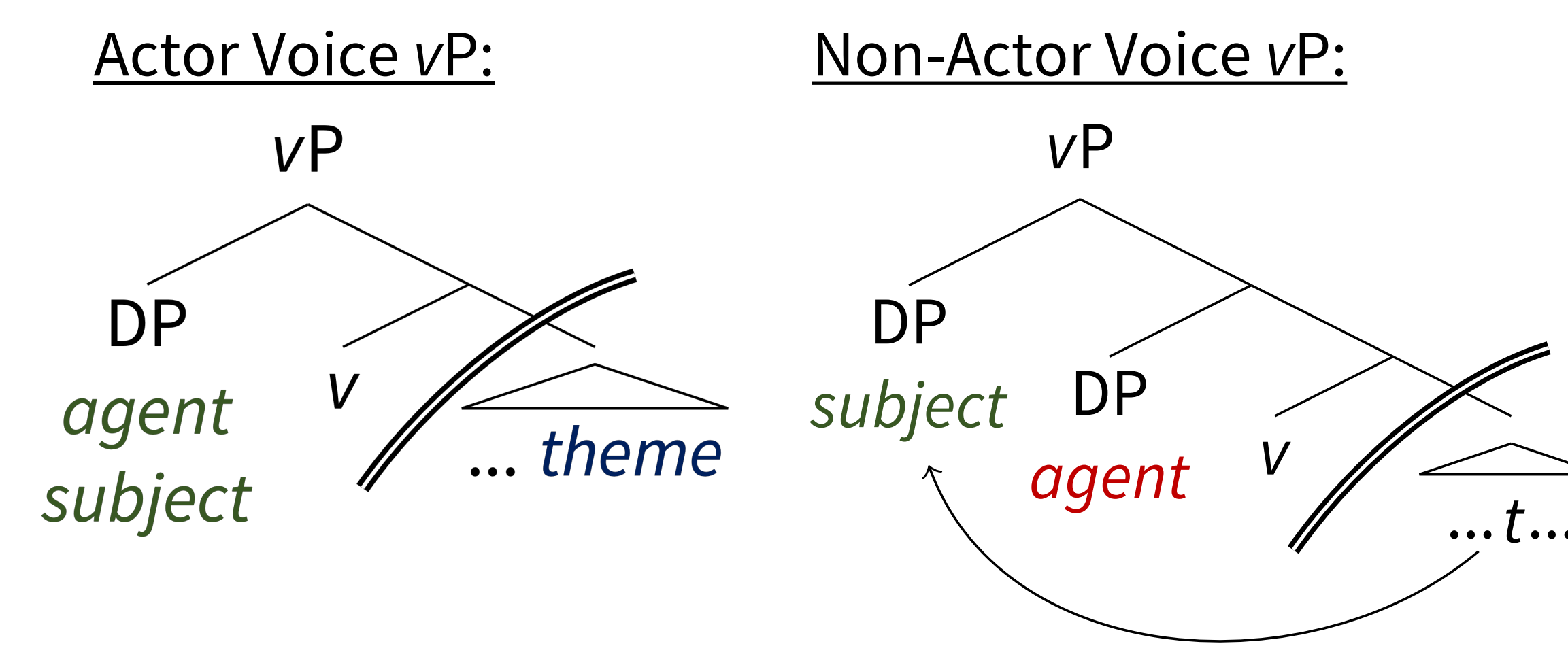
→ **Topicalization and HTLD are *not* strictly subject-oriented:**

- Topicalization targets **subjects** and **non-subject agents**.
- HTLD can target *any DP argument*.

Note for (4b): Specific non-subject themes are in dative case.

Proposal

1. The subject moves to outer Spec,vP in non-Actor Voices:



(Aldridge 2004, 2008, Rackowski & Richards 2005, Erlewine & Levin 2018, a.o.)

2. Clefting and topicalization involve different probes:
 - **Clefting uses [PROBE:D]**, attracting the closest (highest) DP: always the **subject** in local clauses (Aldridge 2004, 2017).
 - **Topicalization uses [PROBE:TOP]**, a more articulated probe.

All probing is subject to **Phase Impenetrability**, explaining topicalization targeting **non-subject agents** (at the phase edge) but not **non-subject themes**.

3. Hanging-topic left dislocation does not involve movement.
(See paper for island sensitivity data.)

Long-distance clefting

→ Long-distance clefting differs from local clefting (1-2) in **two ways**:

1. Long-distance clefts can have a corresponding gap or a **pronoun**.
 2. Long-distance clefts are **not strictly subject-oriented**.
- (5) Long-distance **subject cleft** (gap or pronoun):
- Si A. su [pig-balita ning radyo [_{CP} na g<in>adan (=siya) kaso lalaki.
 NOM A. NOM PV-report GEN radio that PV-kill NOM.3sg GEN man
 It's Andrew_i that the radio reported that the man killed t/him_i.
- (6) Long-distance **non-subject agent cleft** (gap or pronoun):
- Si A. su [pig-balita ning radyo [_{CP} na g<in>adan (=niya) su lalaki.
 NOM A. NOM PV-report GEN radio that PV-kill GEN.3sg NOM man
 'It's Andrew_i that the radio reported that t/he_i killed the man.'
- (7) Long-distance **non-subject theme cleft** (pronoun only):
- Si A. su [pig-balita ning radyo [_{CP} na nag-gadan su lalaki *(sainya).
 NOM A. NOM PV-report GEN radio that AV-kill NOM man DAT.3sg
 'It's Andrew_i that the radio reported that the man killed t/*^{ok}him_i.'

Summary and lessons

	subject	non-subj ag	non-subj th
local cleft (gap)	○ (1b, 2b)	✕ (1c)	✕ (2c)
local topicalization (gap)	○ (3a, 4a)	○ (3b)	✕ (4b)
local HTLD (pronoun)	○ (3a, 4a)	○ (3b)	○ (4b)
long-distance clefting (gap)	○ (5)	○ (6)	✕ (7)
long-distance clefting (pronoun)	○ (5)	○ (6)	○ (7)

→ Long-distance clefting behaves differently because **embedded topicalization** and **HTLD** can *feed* clefting.

- (8) **An embedded (moved or hanging) topic is highest in the lower clause:**
- CLEFT=[PROBE:D] ... PV-V ... [_{CP} DP_{topic,i} ... V **subject** t/pro_i]
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- **Clefting** — which manifests the subject-only extraction restriction in simple examples (1–2) — is *not* actually “subject-oriented.”
 - Rather, it always attracts the *closest* (highest) DP.

The Austronesian subject-only extraction restriction reflects syntactic locality (Attract Closest), rather than any restriction on thematic roles.

Read the paper: Erlewine & Lim 2018 on LingBuzz