

On the subject of ‘Subjects’

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1. Introduction

- ❖ The grammatical function ‘subject’ is often taken as fundamental in typological and syntactic work (see e.g. Bresnan et al. 2016, Li 1976).
- ❖ However, it remains controversial as to whether subjects really exist in Western Austronesian languages on account of their unusual systems of verbal morphology and the so-called ‘split’ in subject properties between the actor and the argument privileged by the verbal morphology (Schachter 1976, Falk 2006).
- ❖ This has led some to claim that ‘subject’ is not an applicable notion, treating the privileged argument as a topic, and others to argue over whether the subject is best equated with the actor or the privileged argument (Kroeger 1993a).
- ❖ In this paper, I consider the evidence for identifying subjects from two closely-related languages in Northern Sarawak: Kelabit and Sa’ban.
- ❖ Using cross linguistic and language specific tests, I show that there are good arguments for considering the privileged argument to be the grammatical subject in both languages, rather than a topic or absolutive.
- ❖ Moreover, there are arguments for treating the actor as an object in non-actor voice constructions.
- ❖ Consequently, I will argue that the privileged argument can be treated as ‘subject’ in both Kelabit and Sa’ban, and that we should therefore be wary of using Western Austronesian as evidence against the universality of the subject function.

- ❖ **Roadmap:**
 - Kelabit and Sa’ban
 - The Subject Debate
 - Privileged Argument as Subject
 - Privileged Argument as Topic?
 - Non-privileged Actor as Object
 - Conclusion

2. Kelabit and Sa’ban

- ❖ Kelabit and Sa’ban are two closely-related languages of Northern Sarawak that belong to the Apad Uat subgroup, which also includes Lun Bawang/Lundayeh dialects and Tring (Kroeger 1998).
- ❖ The data in the paper is mainly taken from fieldwork in Bario (2013-2017 for Kelabit) and Long Banga (2017 for Sa’ban), and comprises grammaticality judgements and elicited examples, as well as naturalistic texts.
- ❖ For Sa’ban, some examples are taken from Beatrice Clayre’s published and unpublished texts.

- ❖ Both languages have systems of Western Austronesian verbal morphology (SYMMETRICAL VOICE) but differ in their morphosyntactic properties.

(1) *Kelabit*¹

a. **Actor Voice**

La'ih sineh ne-nekul *nuba' nedih* ngen seduk.
 man DEM PFV-AV.spoon.up rice 3SG.POSS with spoon
 'That man spooned up his rice with a spoon.'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Sikul *lai'h sineh* nuba' nedih ngen seduk.
 UV.PFV.spoon.up man DEM rice 3SG.POSS with spoon
 'That man spooned up his rice with a spoon.'

b'. Nuba' sikul *la'ih sineh* ngen seduk
 rice UV.PFV.spoon.up man DEM with spoon
 'That man spooned up rice with a spoon.'

c. **Instrumental Voice**

Seduk pe-nekul *la'ih sineh nuba' nedih*.
 Spoon IV-spoon up man DEM rice 3SG.POSS
 'That man used a spoon to spoon up his rice.' (Hemmings 2015)

(2) *Sa'ban*

a. **Actor Voice**

Súel nah maan *bii'*
 Girl DEM AV.eat rice
 'That girl eats/is eating rice'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Bii' inaan *súel nah*
 rice UV.eat girl DEM
 'That girl ate rice'

b'. Inaan *súel nah* bii' ceh ai
 UV.eat girl DEM rice 2SG PT
 'That girl ate your rice'

- ❖ The sets of sentences in (1) and (2) encode the same notionally transitive event but differ in the verbal morphology on the verb, which in turn indicates an alternation in terms of which argument is privileged (underlined) and can appear either pre-verbally or following the non-privileged actor/undergoer (*in italics*).
- ❖ The main difference is the number of voices: Kelabit has a three-way voice system with some 'Philippine-type' characteristics (e.g. voice and mood marking morphology),

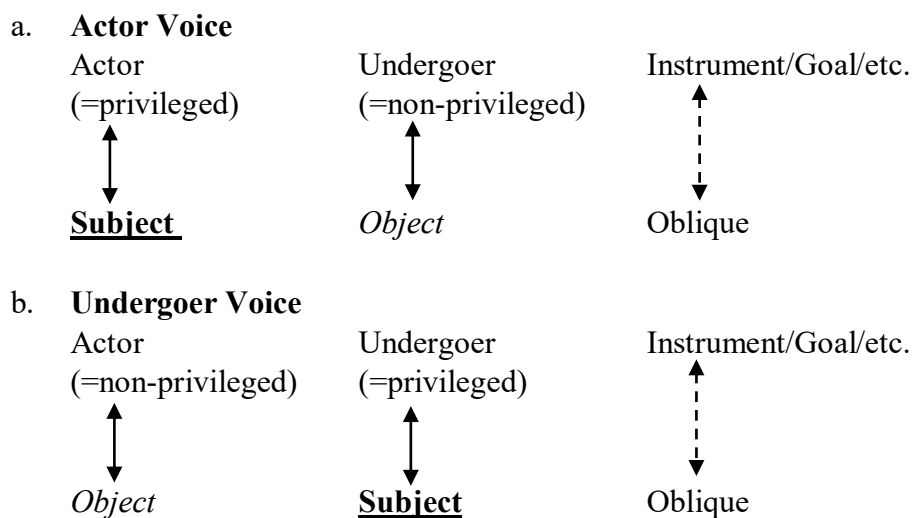
¹ The position of the 'privileged argument' is flexible – these orders reflect preferences.

whilst Sa'ban has a two-way voice system. However, neither language fits exactly within the two categories (since Kelabit does not have case-marking and Sa'ban has neither a true passive nor applicatives) (see e.g. Arka 2002).

- ❖ This may suggest that the two languages are at different stages in the transition between so-called Philippine-type and Indonesian-type languages.
- ❖ In any case, they make an interesting point of comparison, since Philippine-type and Indonesian-type languages are also argued to differ in terms of whether privileged arguments are more topic-like or more subject-like (Aldridge 2010).

3. The Subject Debate

- ❖ It follows from treating the verbal morphology as symmetrical voice (see Himmelmann 2005, Kroeger 1993b) that the mapping from arguments to functions is as follows:



- ❖ This is controversial for a number of reasons:
 - Firstly, it is cross-linguistically rare to find symmetrical voice systems and, in particular, actors with the grammatical function of object (see Riesberg 2014).
 - Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the set of properties which are cross-linguistically associated with subjects (see Table 1) are split between the privileged argument and the actor semantic role (Schachter 1976).

Table 1. Typical Subject Properties Cross-Linguistically (following Falk 2006: 6)

Coding	Behaviour
Unmarked Case	Imperative Addressee
Agreement	Reflexive Binding
	Switch Reference Systems
	Co-ordination
	Controlled Argument (PRO)
	Raising
	Extraction
	Obligatory Element
	Wide Scope
	Discourse Topic

- ❖ The ‘split’ can be seen in Kelabit and Sa’ban in the patterns of relativisation and reflexive binding:

- Only the privileged argument can be relativized on (suggesting that the privileged argument is subject):

(3) *Kelabit Relativisation*

a. **Actor Voice**

Seni’er kuh la’ih [suk ____ ne-nekul *nuba’* ngen seduk]
 UV.PFV.see 1SG man REL PFV-AV.spoon rice with spoon
 ‘I saw the man who spooned up rice with a spoon’

b. *Seni’er kuh *nuba’* [suk nekul ____ la’ih sineh]

UV.PFV.see 1SG rice REL AV.spoon man DEM

For: ‘I saw the rice that the man spooned up’

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Seni’er kuh nuba’ [suk ____ sikul *la’ih* *sineh* ngen seduk]
 UV.PFV.see 1SG rice REL UV.PFV.spoon man DEM with spoon
 ‘I saw the rice that the man spooned up with a spoon’

d. *Seni’er kuh *la’ih* [suk sikul ____ nuba’]

UV.PFV.see 1SG man REL UV.PFV.spoon rice

For: ‘I saw the man who spooned up rice’ (Hemmings 2015: 394-395)

(4) *Sa’ban Relativisation*

a. **Actor Voice**

Nai súel [nok ____ mraai *wei’* nyeh ina]
 DEM girl REL AV.give fruit to.3SG earlier
 ‘This is the girl that gave fruit to her earlier.’

b. *Nai *wei’* [nok mraai ____ súel nah nyeh ina]

DEM fruit REL AV.give girl DEM to.3SG earlier

For: ‘This is the fruit that the girl gave to her earlier.’

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Nai wei’ [nok ____ iraaí *súel* *nah* nyeh ina]
 DEM fruit REL UV.give girl DEM to.3SG earlier

‘This is the fruit that the girl gave to her earlier.’

d. *Nai *súel* [nok iraaí ____ wei’ nyeh ina]

DEM girl REL UV.give fruit to.3SG earlier

For: ‘This is the girl that gave fruit to her earlier.’

- However, the actor controls reflexive binding regardless of whether it is privileged or not (suggesting the actor is subject):²

(5) *Kelabit Reflexive Binding*

a. **Actor Voice**

Uih ne-mada' burur kudih ngedeh
 1SG PFV-AV.show body 1SG.POSS to.3PL
 'I surrendered myself to them.'

a'. Nemada' burur kudih uih ngedeh
 PFV-AV.show body 1SG.POSS 1SG to.3PL
 'I surrendered myself to them.'

b. *Burur kudih ne-mada' uih ngedeh
 body 1SG.POSS PFV-AV.show 1SG to.3PL
 For: 'I surrendered myself to them.'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Binada' kuh burur kudih ngedeh
 UV.PFV.show 1SG body 1SG.POSS to.3PL
 'I surrendered myself to them.'

d. *Binada' burur kudih uih ngedeh
 UV.PFV.show body 1SG.POSS 1SG to.3PL
 For: 'I surrendered myself to them.'

d'. *Uih binada' burur kudih ngedeh
 1SG UV.PFV.show body 1SG.POSS to.3PL
 For: 'I surrendered myself to them.'

(6) *Sa'ban Reflexive Binding*

a. **Actor Voice**

Éek madei' brúel éek ndeh
 1SG AV.show body 1SG to.3PL
 'I showed myself to them.'

b. *Brúel éek madei' éek ndeh
 Body 1SG AV.show 1SG TO.3PL
 For: 'I showed myself to them.'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Yadei' éek brúel éek ndeh
 UV.show 1SG body 1SG to.3PL
 'I showed myself to them.'

² Though note that these body reflexive constructions may differ from true reflexive constructions and reflexive meanings are more commonly expressed via reflexive verb forms.

d. *Yadei' *bríel éek éek* ndeh
 UV.show body 1SG 1SG to.3PL
 For: 'I showed myself to them.'

d'. *Éek yadei' *bríel éek* ndeh
 1SG UV.show body 1SG to.3PL
 For: 'I showed myself to them.'

- ❖ A similar split is also found in a wide range of WAn languages (including Philippine-type languages like Tagalog (Schachter 1976) and Indonesian-type languages like Indonesian (Arka & Manning 1998)) as well as syntactically ergative languages like Inuit (Manning 1996).
- ❖ Hence, Falk (2006: 16) concludes that the split is systematic and considers that typical subject properties are actually of two types:

Table 2. Type 1 and Type 2 Subject properties

Type 1 Subject Properties	Type 2 Subject Properties
Agent argument in active voice	Shared argument in co-ordinated clauses
Most likely covert argument	Raising
The addressee of an imperative	Extraction
Anaphoric prominence	Obligatory element
Switch reference systems	“External” structural position
Controlled argument (PRO) for some languages	Controlled argument (PRO) for some languages
Discourse topic	Definiteness/wide scope

- ❖ Type 1 (“role-related”) properties are associated with the highest semantic role, whilst Type 2 (“reference-related”) properties are associated with the syntactic pivot.
- ❖ But what does this mean for ‘subjects’?
- ❖ The split has led to three main approaches to grammatical functions in WAn:
 - a. **Austronesian languages do not have subjects (cf. Schachter 1976)**
 - Subjects must have all of the properties in Table 1
 - The privileged argument is a topic
 - b. **The subject in Austronesian is the actor (cf. Aldridge 2004)**
 - Only Type 1 properties are important in identifying subjects
 - The privileged argument is a topic or an absolutive
 - c. **The subject in Austronesian is the privileged argument (cf. Manning 1996, Manning and Sag 1998)**
 - Only Type 2 properties are important in identifying subjects
 - Type 1 properties are handled at argument structure

- ❖ I will argue that the Manning and Sag (1998) approach is best for Kelabit and Sa’ban because:
 - The privileged arguments have many reference-related subject properties
 - There are good arguments against treating the privileged arguments as topics
 - The AV undergoer and UV actor behave like core non-subject arguments

4. Privileged Argument as Subject

- ❖ A number of tests support the identification of the privileged argument as subject in Kelabit and Sa’ban:

Table 3. Subject Tests in Kelabit and Sa’ban

	Kelabit	Sa’ban
Particles	✓	✓
Relativisation	✓	✓
External position	✓	✓
Fronted questions	✓	✓
Raising	✓	?
Control	✓	? (just actor?)
Shared argument in co-ordination	? not limited to subjects	

1. Pre-nominal Particles

- ❖ Both Kelabit and Sa’ban have pre-nominal particles (K: *teh* and *neh*, S: *tah* and *nah*) that can occur before the privileged argument, but not other arguments in the clause:³

(7) *Kelabit Particles*

a. **Actor Voice**

Kuman **teh** Peter *bua’ kaber* *nedih* keneh
 AV.eat PT Peter pineapple 3SG.POSS he.said
 ‘Peter does eat his pineapple he said’

a'. Kuman *bua’ kaber* *nedih* **t=ieh**
 AV.eat pineapple 3SG.POSS PT=3SG
 ‘He eats his pineapple.’

b. *Kuman Peter **teh** *bua’ kaber* *nedih* keneh
 AV.eat Peter PT pineapple 3SG.POSS he.said
 For: ‘Peter does eat his pineapple he said’

³ These are optional and the exact discourse function remains to be further explored. They may have developed historically from the so-called ‘case’ markers in Philippine languages (Himmelmann 2005). Synchronically, they may form a single class with other discourse particles (e.g. K: *tebey*, *men*, *teden* etc.) that can occur in ‘second’ position following an initial constituent. They can also be used in pseudocleft structures:

(i) Peter **teh** kuman *bua’ kaber*
 Peter PT AV.eat pineapple
 ‘Peter is [the one] who eats pineapple.’

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Kenen *Peter* **teh** bua' kaber nedih keneh
 UV.eat Peter PT pineapple 3SG.POSS he.said
 'Peter will eat his pineapple he said'

d. *Kenen **teh** *Peter* bua' kaber nedih keneh
 UV.eat PT Peter pineapple 3SG.POSS he.said
 For: 'Peter will eat his pineapple he said'

(8) *Sa'ban Particles*

a. **Actor Voice**

Pi maan *wei'* *nah* [**nah** aka ai]
 already AV.eat fruit DEM PT wild.boar PT
 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

b. *pi maan [**nah** *wei'* *ai*] aka nah
 already AV.eat PT fruit DEM wild.boar PT
 For: 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Pi inaan *aka* *nah* [**nah** wei' ai]⁴
 Already UV.eat wild.boar DEM PT fruit PT
 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

d. *pi inaan [**nah** *aka* *ai*] wei' nah
 already UV.eat PT wild.boar DEM PT fruit
 For: 'The wild boar has already eaten the fruit'

2. *Relativisation and Clefting*

❖ Both Kelabit and Sa'ban have the well-known AUSTRONESIAN EXTRACTION RESTRICTION that only privileged arguments can be relativized on (see (3) and (4) above). This also applies in clefting:

(9) *Kelabit Clefting*

a. **Actor Voice**

Dih ieh dih suk la' kuman ih.
 DEM 3SG DEM REL DESID AV.eat PT
 'It's him (pointing) who wants to eat.'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Bua' kaber suk kenen *Peter* ih.
 pineapple REL UV.IRR.eat Peter PT
 'It's pineapple that Peter will eat.' (elicitation, BAR19082014CH_03)

⁴ Possibly a little strange – perhaps due to the combination of *pi* and *inaan*.

- (10) *Sa'ban Clefting*
- a. **Actor Voice**
Yeh nok mwal aka ai
 3SG REL AV.cook wild.boar DEM
 'He's the one that cooks the wild boar.' (taman iyeu, LBA20171125CH_02)
- b. **Undergoer Voice**
Suenghneu nok an éek ai Suenghneu Taman Iyeu
 story REL UV.do 1SG PT story Father Iyeu
 'The story that I'm going to tell is the story of Father Iyeu' (taman iyeu, LBA20171125CH_02)

3. External Position

- ❖ In both Kelabit and Sa'ban, the privileged argument can appear pre-verbally and post-verbally, whereas non-privileged core arguments cannot be pre-verbal (see also section 6):

- (11) *Kelabit External Position*
- a. **Actor Voice**
La'ih sineh nenekul nuba' ngen tekul ngimalem
 man DEM AV.PFV.spoon rice with spoon yesterday
 'The man spooned up rice with a spoon yesterday'
- b. *nuba' nenekul la'ih sineh ngen tekul ngimalem
 rice AV.PFV.spoon man DEM with spoon yesterday
 For: 'The man spooned up rice with a spoon yesterday'
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
Nuba' sikul la'ih sineh ngen tekul ngimalem
 rice UV.PFV.spoon man DEM with spoon yesterday
 'The man spooned up the rice with a spoon yesterday.'
- d. *la'ih sineh sikul nuba' ngen tekul ngimalem
 man DEM UV.PFV.spoon rice with spoon yesterday
 For: 'The man spooned up the rice with a spoon yesterday.'
- (12) *Sa'ban External Position*
- a. **Actor Voice**
Súel nah maan *bii'*
 girl DEM AV.eat rice
 'That girl eats rice'
- b. **bii'* maan súel nah
 rice AV.eat girl DEM
 For: 'that girl eats rice'

- c. **Undergoer Voice**
bii' ceh ai inaan *súel nah*
 rice 2SG DEM UV.eat girl DEM
 'your rice was eaten by that girl'
- d. **súel nah* inaan bii' nah
 girl DEM UV.eat rice DEM
 For: that girl ate that rice'

4. Wh-Fronting

- ❖ As in many Austronesian languages, only the privileged argument can be questioned pre-verbally in Kelabit and Sa'ban, either with a cleft structure or wh-fronting:

(13) *Kelabit Questions: Cleft Structure*

- a. **Actor Voice**
Iih suk kuman *bua' kaber?*
 who REL AV.eat fruit pineapple
 'Who is it that eats pineapple'
- b. **Enun* suk kuman Peter?
 What REL AV.eat Peter
 For: 'what does Peter eat?'
- b. **Undergoer Voice**
Enun suk kenen *Peter ih?*
 what REL UV.IRR.eat Peter PT
 'What is it that will Peter eat?'

(14) *Kelabit Questions: wh-fronting*

- a. **Actor Voice**
[Iih] kuman *bua' kaber?*
 who AV.eat fruit pineapple
 'Who eats pineapple' (elicitation, BAR19082014CH_03)
- b. **Undergoer Voice**
[Enun] seni'er *muh?*
 what UV.IRR.see 2SG.2
 'What did you see?' (pear story, BAR31072014CH_06)

(15) *Sa'ban Questions: wh-fronting*

- a. **Actor Voice**
Aai maan *bii' nah?*
 who AV.eat rice DEM
 'Who is eating that rice?'

- b. *noon maan ceh?
 what AV.eat 2SG
 For: ‘what are you eating?’
- b'. Maan noon ceh?
 AV.eat what 2SG
 ‘What are you eating?’
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
Noon nan⁵ ceh nah?
 what UV.eat 2SG DEM
 ‘What are you eating?’
- d. *aai nan bii?
 who UV.eat rice
 For: ‘who is eating the rice?’
- d'. Nan aai bii nah?
 UV.eat who rice DEM
 ‘Who is eating the rice?’

5. Raising

- ❖ In Kelabit, only the privileged argument can be raised from an embedded clause.
- ❖ The position of the adverb *tu'uh-tu'uh* ‘truly’ and the fact that the raised argument can function as the privileged argument of a main UV clause show that this is a raising construction as opposed to verb that takes a clausal argument:

(16) *Kelabit Raising*

a. **Actor Voice**

Uih ngelinuh ieh **tu'uh-tu'uh** [___ nekuman nuba' ngimalem]
 1SG AV.think 3SG real-REDUP AV.PFV.eat rice yesterday
 ‘I thought him truly to have eaten his rice yesterday’

b. Ieh leninuh kuh **tu'uh-tu'uh** [___ nekuman nuba' dih]
 3SG UV.PFV.think 1SG real-REDUP AV.PFV.eat rice DEM
 ‘I truly thought him to have eaten the rice’

c. *Uih ngelinuh nuba' **tu'uh-tu'uh** [nekuman ___ ieh ngimalem]
 1SG AV.PFV.think rice real-REDUP AV.PFV.eat 3SG yesterday
 FOR: ‘I thought the rice truly to have been eaten by him yesterday’

⁵ For a few predicates, Sa'ban has a morphological UV.IRR form (e.g. *nan* ‘UV.IRR.eat’ vs *inaan* ‘UV.PFV.eat’). UV.IRR forms are compatible with non-past time reference, whilst UV.PFV forms are compatible with past time reference. In Kelabit, there is a far greater number of these morphological forms but in both languages, they are often replaced with periphrastic constructions with a form of the verb ‘to do’ + the AV verb form.

d. **Undergoer Voice**

Uih ngelinuh nuba' **tu'uh-tu'uh** [___ kinan *neh* ngimalem]
 1SG AV.PFV.think rice real-REDUP UV.PFV.eat 3SG yesterday
 'I thought the rice truly to have been eaten by him yesterday'

e. Nuba' leninuh kuh **tu'uh-tu'uh** [___ kinan *la'ih sineh*]
 rice UV.PFV.think 1SG real-REDUP UV.PFV.eat man DEM
 'I truly thought rice to have been eaten by him'

f. *Uih ngelinuh *ieh* **tu'uh-tu'uh** [kinan ___ nuba' ngimalem]
 1SG AV.think 3SG real-REDUP UV.PFV.eat rice yesterday
 FOR: 'I thought him truly to have eaten his rice yesterday'

❖ For Sa'ban, I am not yet aware of any raising verbs. Equivalent clauses to (16) are listed below:⁶

(17) *Sa'ban Raising*

a. **Actor Voice**

Éek nnau súel nah maan *bii'* *ai*
 1SG AV.think girl DEM AV.eat rice PT
 'I thought the girl ate rice' (I thought the girl to have eaten rice?)

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Éek nnau bii' ai inaan *súel nah*
 1SG AV.think rice PT UV.eat girl DEM
 'I thought the girl ate rice' (I thought the rice to have been eaten by the girl?)

❖ However, it is not clear if (17) is really a raising construction or just contains an embedded clause. Firstly, it does not seem to be grammatical/felicitous to have an adverb following the potentially raised argument:

(18) *Sa'ban Raising*

a. **Actor Voice**

?/*Éek nnau súel nah **eu-eu** maan *bii'* *ai*
 1SG AV.think girl DEM truly-REDUP AV.eat rice PT
 For: 'I thought the girl to have eaten rice'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

?/*Éek nnau bii' ai **eu-eu** inaan *súel nah*
 1SG AV.think rice PT truly-REDUP UV.eat girl DEM
 For: 'I thought the rice to have been eaten by the girl'

❖ It is also not possible for the 'raised' argument to appear as the privileged argument of a UV clause:

⁶ In any case, these were not judged to be a natural turn of phrase. It is more usually to use the nominalisation *hnau éek* 'my thought is....' than the verbal construction *éek nnau* 'I think...'

- (19) *Sa'ban Raising*
 a. *Bii' ai inau éek inaan *suel nah*
 rice PT UV.think 1SG UV.eat girl dem
 For: 'the rice was thought by me to have been eaten by the girl'

❖ Hence, raising cannot (on the currently available data) be used as evidence for identifying grammatical functions in Sa'ban.

6. Control

❖ In Kelabit, only the privileged argument can correspond to the gap in a controlled clause:

- (20) *Kelabit Control*
 a. **Embedded Clause in Actor Voice for Controlled Actor**
 Mesurung ieh **tu'uh-tu'uh** neh kamih [___ ngabi *nuba' nedih*]
 Persuade 3SG real-REDUP PT 1PL.EXCL AV.finish rice 3SG.POSS
 'We really persuaded her to finish her rice.'
 b. **Embedded Clause in Undergoer Voice for Controlled Undergoer**
 Mesurung ieh **tu'uh-tu'uh** neh kamih [___ siren *dutur*]
 persuade 3SG real-REDUP PT 1PL.EXCL UV.see doctor
 'We really persuaded her to be seen by the doctor.'

❖ The same rules apply for any non-finite complement clause:

- (21) *Kelabit Control*
 a. **Actor Voice**
 La'ih sineh nemerey dedtur sidih **ngimalem** [___ nibu *padey*]
 man DEM AV.PFV.give woman DEM yesterday AV.plant rice
 'The man allowed the woman yesterday to plant rice'
 b. *la'ih sineh nemerey *padey* **ngimalem** [nibu ___ dedtur sidih]
 man DEM AV.PFV.give rice yesterday AV.plant woman DEM
 For: 'The man allowed the woman yesterday to plant rice'
 c. **Undergoer Voice**
 La'ih sineh nemerey padey **ngimalem** [___ sebuwen
 man DEM AV.PFV.give rice yesterday UV.IRR.plant
dedtur *sidih*]
 women DEM
 'The man gave some rice yesterday for the woman to plant'

- d. *la'ih sineh nemerey *dedtur sidih ngimalem* [sebuwen ____
 man DEM AV.PFV.give woman DEM yesterday UV.IRR.plant

padey]

rice

For: 'The man gave some rice yesterday for the woman to plant'

- ❖ In Sa'ban, there are control predicates in which the actor corresponds to a gap in an embedded AV clause:

(22) *Sa'ban Control*

a. **Actor Voice**

Supang nsúek éek [____ maan *bii*']

Supang AV.ask 1SG AV.eat rice

'Supang asked me to eat rice'

b. *Supang nsúek *éek* [inaan ____ bii']

Supang AV.ask 1SG UV.eat rice

For: 'Supang asked me to eat rice'

- ❖ However, I have not been able to construct or elicit a control construction in which the undergoer of the embedded clause is the controlled argument. For example, 'to be seen by the doctor' was translated as below with an intransitive verb:

(23) *Sa'ban Control*

a. Hnaa' nsúek *éek* [____ mai papuu' nah doctor]

Mother.1SG AV.ask 1SG go meet to doctor

'My mother ordered me to go and see the doctor.'

- ❖ Moreover, it may be possible to analyse *nsúek* 'AV.order' in (22) as taking a clausal complement (rather than a control construction, c.f. 'I asked that you eat rice').
- ❖ It is difficult to tell which is the best analysis since there is no finite/non-finite verb marking. However, the fact that it is (apparently) possible to say *nsúek nceh* 'AV.order PT=2SG' suggests that the pronoun may, in fact, be part of the lower clause, since particles typically occur before privileged arguments (see above).
- ❖ Nonetheless, you find examples like (24) in naturalistic text:

(24) *Sa'ban Control*

a. mai yeh, ooh isúek *Hnaan Iyeu* [____ arai nteu taloon
 go 3SG, ooh UV.ask Mother Iyeu come AV.seek sarong

[an yeh kkép]] éek dei
 UV.do 3SG wrap.round 1SG DEM

'So he went, and said, I have been asked my Mother Iyeu to come and request a sarong for her to make into a skirt.' (taman iyeu, LBA20171125CH_02)

- ❖ The external position of the privileged argument *éek dei* ‘1SG DEM’ at the end of the clause may suggest that it is part of the main clause, rather than embedded in the embedded clause [*arai nteu...*] where it also has a function.
- ❖ In any case, the fact that (21b) is ungrammatical suggests that control structures do not provide evidence in support of the ‘actor as subject’ view.

7. Co-ordination

- ❖ The final subject test is so-called equi-NP deletion under co-ordination.
- ❖ This has not yet been tested for Sa’ban. As for Kelabit, it appears that, in principle, co-referring arguments can be dropped, regardless of whether the two co-ordinating clauses have the same voice, or the two arguments have the same status as privileged/non-privileged.
- ❖ However, there are some restrictions. For example, it is not possible for two UV clauses to be co-ordinated with a shared actor that is elided:

(25) *Kelabit Co-ordination*

a. **Undergoer Voice**

*[Bua’ kaber kinan ____] **mey** [ebpa’ telang nirup *la’ih sineh*]
 pineapple UV.PFV.eat and water plain UV.PFV.drink man DEM
 For: ‘That man ate the pineapple and drank the water’

- ❖ When two AV clauses are co-ordinated, it is also ungrammatical to have a gapped undergoer in the second clause (though ok if the gap is in the first clause, cf. the English translation):

(26) *Kelabit Co-ordination*

a. **Actor Voice**

*[*la’ih sineh* nengulit bua’ kaber dih] **mey**
 man DEM AV.PFV.skin pineapple DEM

[dedtur sidih nengupa ____]
 woman DEM AV.PFV.halve

For: ‘the man peeled the pineapple and the woman halved [it]’

b. [La’ih sineh nengulit ____] **mey** [dedtur sidih nengupa Man DEM AV.PFV.skin and woman DEM AV.PFV.halve

bua’ kaber dih]
 pineapple DEM

‘The man peeled and the woman halved the pineapple.’

- ❖ Hence, there may be another asymmetry here between privileged and non-privileged arguments that supports the identification of the privileged argument as subject, but the patterns are quite complex (given that zero arguments are generally possible in the language) and need to be better understood.

8. Summary

- ❖ There are several syntactic tests that support the identification of the privileged argument as the subject in both Kelabit and Sa'ban.
- ❖ Moreover, though reflexive binding seems to target the actor (regardless of voice), this would be expected under the Manning & Sag approach (and in any case the binding data may not be conclusive, as discussed in the appendix below).

5. Privileged Argument as Topic

- ❖ The main alternative to treating the privileged argument as subject is to treat it as a topic.⁷ However, the privileged argument is not really a topic in either the discourse or information structure sense.

1. Discourse Topic

- ❖ Cooreman, Fox, and Givón (1984) and Givón (1983) suggest that a discourse topic has high topic continuity in the sense that it has a low referential distance (and is easy to identify in context) and a high topical persistence (remains important).
- ❖ Though this may be true of the AV actor, it does not appear to be true of the UV undergoer.
- ❖ In Kelabit UV clauses, it is the actor that has high topic continuity:

(27) *Kelabit Discourse Topic*

Nalap *neh* pupu'
UV.PFV.fetch 3SG.GEN hitting.implement
'She fetched something to hit with'

Nukab *neh* bubpu' daan
UV.PFV.open 3SG.GEN door hut
'Opened the door to the hut'

Nalap *neh* dteh kayuh
UV.PFV.fetch 3SG.GEN one stick
'Picked up a piece of wood'

Nulin *neh* kuyad sineh.
UV.PFV.throw 3SG.GEN monkey DEM
'And threw it at the monkey.' (text, PDA10112013CH_01)

- ❖ In this stretch of narrative discourse, the actor is topical throughout and expressed with a pronominal form. In contrast, the undergoers are variously non-specific, indefinite and/or not important in the discourse.

⁷ Another alternative is to treat the privileged argument as an absolutive in an ergative system but this presupposes that the AV construction is an antipassive. However, as shown in section 6, AV is a transitive construction in both Kelabit and Sa'ban.

- ❖ In Sa'ban, although privileged undergoers are often topical (and identifiable), the UV actors often have greater topic continuity and undergoers may be indefinite (e.g. (26b) in bold) and/or unimportant in the rest of the discourse (e.g. (26a) in bold):

(28) *Sa'ban Discourse Topic*

a. Pi aroo' Pwaal Payaau ntan-ntan pat yeh
 after UV.do Tree Shrew AV.steer-REDUP bottom 3SG

Mai seu taloon Beladiin ai ngaai
 Go towards cloth tortoise DEM there
 'Then the Tree Shrew turned his bottom around to face Tortoise's cloth'

Yaden yeh **ta'é'** **yeh** wan yeh.
 UV.push 3SG excretion 3SG on 3SG
 'And emptied his bowels onto it.' (from *Sii' Beladiin, Sii' Tenhlét*, published by the Saban Association Sarawak, 2003)

b. Mai n=yeh
 go PT=3SG
 'He went'

Iraai biin yeh **si'** **kaang** tan yeh
 UV.give mother.in.law 3SG a basket UV.carry 3SG
 'His mother in law gave him a basket to take with him'

Mai yeh
 go 3SG
 'He went'

Yabet yeh kaang si' pu'uen ppeu ai
 UV.tie 3SG basket a trunk sugarcane PT
 'He tied the basket to the trunk of a sugarcane'

Neh yeh abeh noknah
 DEM 3SG carry.on.back that
 'And tried to carry it'

- ❖ The undergoer may continue to be relevant to the discourse but, again, it is the UV actor that has topic continuity throughout the stretch of discourse.
- ❖ In Kelabit and Sa'ban folk tales, actors have higher measures for referential distance and topical persistence than undergoers in UV in both languages (see Hemmings 2017):

Table 4. Referential Distance in Undergoer Voice

	Actor		Undergoer		Total No.
	High (1-3)	Low (>3)	High (1-3)	Low (>3)	
Kelabit	49 92%	5 8%	36 68%	17 32%	53
Sa'ban	58 95%	3 5%	49 80%	12 20%	61

Table 5. Topical Persistence

	Actor		Undergoer		Total No.
	High (>2)	Low (0-2)	High (>2)	Low (0-2)	
Kelabit	41 77%	12 23%	23 43%	30 57%	53
Sa'ban	52 85%	9 15%	32 52%	29 48%	61

❖ Hence, the privileged argument is not (necessarily) the discourse topic.

2. Information Structure Topic

- ❖ In addition, though clause-final privileged arguments are often given, the privileged argument need not (necessarily) be the information structure topic, defined in terms of identifiability and aboutness (Lambrecht 1994).
- ❖ Indeed, the UV actor can be the information structure topic, as shown by the fact that it is possible for a UV clause to follow an actor as an overt hanging topic:

(29) *Kelabit Hanging Topics*

a. Actor Topics in UV

Paul kedieh, kinan neh bua' ebpuk
 Paul 3SG.EMPH UV.PFV.eat 3SG.GEN fruit passion
 'As for Paul, he ate the passion fruit'

- ❖ Moreover, both the AV actor and UV undergoer can have narrow focus in initial position. Focus is often assumed to be mutually exclusive with topic in the information structure sense (Butt and King 1996):

(30) *Kelabit Information Structure*

a. Undergoer Voice

Q. Enun seni'er muh?
 what UV.PFV.see 2SG
 'What did you see?'

A. [Edteh wayang]_{focus} seni'ier kuh na'ah...
 one video UV.PFV.see 1SG before
 'I just saw a video...' (pear story, BAR31072014CH_06)

b. Actor Voice

Q. Iih suk kuman bua' kaber sineh?
 who REL AV.eat fruit pineapple DEM
 'Who is eating that pineapple?'

A. [Peter]_{focus} suk kuman bua' kaber sineh
 Peter REL AV.eat fruit pineapple DEM
 'Peter is eating that pineapple.' (elicitation, BAR19082014CH_03)

- ❖ See also the Sa’ban questions in section 4.4 above.
- ❖ Consequently, the privileged argument appears to be underspecified for its information structure role.
- ❖ Thus, there are good arguments for treating the privileged argument as a subject and against treating it as a topic.

6. Non-privileged Actor as Object

- ❖ Finally, there are also arguments for treating the UV actor as an object (or non-subject core argument) rather than a subject (which argues against the ‘actor as subject’ approach).
- ❖ The same arguments also support identifying the AV undergoer as a core argument, and hence argue against an ergative analysis in which AV is an intransitive antipassive construction.

Table 6. Object Tests in Kelabit and Sa’ban

	Kelabit	Sa’ban
NP rather than PP	✓	✓
Post-verbal position	✓	✓
No subject properties	✓	✓
No adjunct-fronting	✓	✓

1. NP rather than PP

- ❖ In Kelabit and Sa’ban, obliques and adjuncts are typically prepositional phrases, whilst both non-privileged actors and undergoers are NPs:

(31) *Kelabit Obliques*⁸

a. **Actor Voice**

La’ih sineh nemerey nuba’ [ngen anak nedih]_{PP}
 man DEM PFV.AV.give rice to child 3SG.POSS
 ‘The man gave rice to his child’

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Birey la’ih sineh nuba’ [ngen anak nedih]_{PP}
 PFV.UV.give man DEM rice to child 3SG.POSS
 ‘The man gave rice to his child’

⁸ Note that when the word order is verb-initial, it may be marginally possible to realise the goal as an NP, so long as the undergoer is indefinite:

- (i) ?Nemerey la’ih sineh anak nedih nuba’
 AV.PFV.give man DEM anak 3SG.POSS rice
 ‘The man gave his child rice’
- (ii) ?Birey la’ih sineh anak nedih nuba’
 UV.PFV.give man DEM anak 3SG.POSS rice
 ‘The man gave his child rice’

(32) *Sa'ban Obliques*

a. **Actor Voice**

Súel nah mraai brée [ngaan anaak yeh]_{PP}
 girl DEM AV.give rice to child 3SG
 'The girl gave rice to her child'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Brée iraaí súel nah [ngaan anaak yeh]_{PP}
 rice UV.give girl DEM to child 3SG
 'The girl gave rice to her child'

❖ Obliques may also appear in any order:

(33) *Sa'ban Obliques*

a. Súel nah maan *pei'kat* [lem dapul] [mat luek]
 girl DEM AV.eat porridge in kitchen with spoon
 'The girl eats porridge in the kitchen with a spoon'

b. Súel nah maan *pei'kat* [mat luek] [lem dapul]
 girl DEM AV.eat porridge with spoon in kitchen
 'The girl eats porridge with a spoon in the kitchen'

2. *Post-verbal Position (and no subject properties)*

- ❖ In Kelabit and Sa'ban, not only do non-privileged actors and undergoers have none of the subject properties that privileged arguments have (see section 4), they also have a fixed position following the verb.⁹
- ❖ Adjuncts of time cannot intervene between the verb and non-privileged argument, but they can intervene between verb+non-privileged argument and obliques:¹⁰

(34) *Kelabit - Post-verbal Position (adjuncts of time)*

a. **Actor Voice**

La'ih sineh ne-kuman (*ngimalem) *bua' kabér*
 man DEM PFV-AV.eat (*yesterday) fruit pineapple
 For: 'I ate pineapple yesterday'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

Kinan (*ngimalem) *la'ih sineh* bua' kabér sineh
 UV.PFV.eat (yesterday) man DEM fruit pineapple DEM
 For: 'The man ate that pineapple yesterday.'

⁹ Note in AV, the actor can intervene between the verb and the undergoer but this is the only exception.

¹⁰ For Kelabit, the position of *ngimalem* 'yesterday' appears to be more flexible with verb-initial AV clauses.

c. **AV Oblique**
La'ih sineh nenekul *nuba'* (ngimalem) ngen tekul
 man DEM AV.PFV.spoon rice yesterday with spoon
 'The man spooned up rice yesterday with a spoon'

d. **UV Oblique**
Nuba' sikul *la'ih sineh* (ngimalem) ngen tekul
 rice UV.PFV.spoon man DEM yesterday with spoon
 'The man spooned up the rice yesterday with a spoon'

(35) *Sa'ban - Post-verbal Position (adjuncts of time)*

a. **Actor Voice**
Súel hnah maan *bii'* **salam**¹¹
 girl DEM AV.eat rice yesterday
 'The woman/girl ate rice yesterday'

b. *Súel hnah maan **salam** *bii'*
 girl DEM AV.eat yesterday rice
 For: 'The woman/girl ate rice yesterday'

c. **Undergoer Voice**
 Inaan súel hnah **salam** bii' hnah
 UV.eat girl DEM yesterday rice DEM
 'The rice was eaten yesterday by the girl'

d. *Inaan **salam** súel hnah bii' hnah
 UV.eat yesterday girl DEM rice DEM
 'The rice was eaten yesterday by the girl'

❖ In addition, it is odd (either ungrammatical or very marked) to order obliques/adjuncts before non-privileged arguments when the privileged argument is pre-verbal.¹²

(36) *Kelabit Word Order*

a. **Actor Voice**
La'ih sineh nemerey *nuba'* ngen anak nedih
 man DEM AV.PFV.give rice to child 3SG.POSS
 'The man gave rice to his child'

b. *La'ih sineh nemerey ngen anak nedih *nuba'*
 man DEM AV.PFV.give to child 3SG.POSS rice
 For: 'The man gave rice to his child'

¹¹ There are different opinions on whether it is ok for the privileged actor in AV to appear clause-finally following a time-adjunct.

¹² It may be that (31b) is ungrammatical because of a tendency to order indefinite before definite.

- c. *la'ih sineh nenekul ngen tekul nuba'
 man DEM AV.PFV.spoon with spoon rice
 For: 'The man spooned up rice with a spoon'
- d. **Undergoer Voice**
Nuba' birey la'ih sineh ngen anak nedih
 rice UV.PFV.give man DEM to child 3SG.POSS
 'The man gave RICE to his child'
- e. *Nuba' birey ngen anak nedih la'ih sineh
 rice UV.PFV.give to child 3SG.POSS man DEM
 For: 'The man gave RICE to his child'
- f. *Nuba' sikul ngen tekul la'ih sineh
 rice UV.PFV.spoon with spoon man DEM
 For: 'The man spooned up rice with a spoon'

(37) *Sa'ban Word Order*

- a. **Actor Voice**
Súel hnah maan pei'kat mat luek
 girl DEM AV.eat porridge hold spoon
 'The girl ate porridge with a spoon'
- b. *Súel hnah maan mat luek pei'kat¹³
 girl DEM AV.eat hold spoon porridge
 For: 'The girl ate porridge with a spoon'
- c. **Undergoer Voice**
Kuu' ai iloot súel hnah mat piloot
 dog PT UV.hit girl DEM hold stick
 'That dog was hit by the girl with a stick'
- d. *Kuu' ai iloot mat piloot súel hnah
 dog PT UV.hit hold stick girl DEM
 For: 'That dog was hit by the girl with a stick'

❖ Even if some examples of the order SVXO are judged ok (see fn 11), there is still a preference for verb+non-privileged argument to appear as a constituent.

¹³ Again, the ungrammaticality may be linked to the indefiniteness of the undergoer. Compare with (i) below:

- (i) Súel nah miloot mat piloot kuu' ai
 girl DEM AV.hit with stick dog pt
 The girl hit the dog with a stick'

3. No Fronting

- ❖ In both Kelabit and Sa'ban, adjuncts/obliques can be fronted before a pre-verbal subject (though the construction is information-structurally marked). However, non-privileged actors and undergoers cannot:

(38) *Kelabit Adjunct Fronting*

a. **Actor Voice**

*[*nuba'*], la'ih sineh nenekul ngen tekul
 rice man DEM AV.PFV.spoon with spoon
 For: 'Rice, the man spooned up with a spoon'

b. **AV Oblique**

[Ngen tekul], la'ih sineh nenekul *nuba'*
 with spoon man DEM AV.PFV.spoon rice
 'With a spoon, the man spooned up rice'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

*[*la'ih sineh*], nuba' sikul ngen tekul
 man DEM rice UV.PFV.spoon with spoon
 For: 'By the man, rice was spooned up with a spoon'

d. **UV Oblique**

[Ngen tekul], nuba' sikul *la'ih sineh*
 with spoon rice UV.PFV.spoon man DEM
 'With a spoon, the rice was spooned up by the man'

(39) *Sa'ban Adjunct fronting*

a. **Actor Voice**

*[*bii'*], súel nah maan¹⁴
 rice girl DEM AV.eat
 For: 'rice, the girl ate'

b. **AV Oblique**

[Ngaan anaak yeh ai], súel nah mraai *brée*
 To child 3SG DEM girl dem av.give rice
 'To her child, the girl gave rice'

c. **Undergoer Voice**

[*súel nah*], bii' nah inaan
 girl DEM rice DEM UV.eat
 For: 'the girl, rice was eaten by her'

¹⁴ It is possible that one might front the AV undergoer in a separate intonation phrase if listing contrastively the various things someone ate. This remains to be further explored.

d. **UV Oblique**

[Ngaan anak yeh ai], brée iraii *súel nah*¹⁵
 To child 3SG DEM rice UV.give girl DEM
 ‘To her child, the girl gave rice’

- ❖ In Sa’ban, it appears to be possible to stack adjuncts initially in AV (though perhaps not in UV):

(40) *Sa’ban Adjunct Fronting*

a. **Actor Voice**

[lem dapur] [mat luek], súel nah maan *pei’kat*
 in kitchen with spoon girl DEM AV.eat porridge
 ‘In the kitchen, with a spoon, the girl ate porridge’

b. **Undergoer Voice**

?/*[lem dapur] [mat luek], pei’kat inaan *súel nah*
 In kitchen with spoon porridge UV.eat girl DEM
 For: ‘In the kitchen, with a spoon, the girl ate porridge’

- ❖ A similar distinction between AV and UV exists in both languages with the fronting of wh-words before initial privileged arguments. This is possible (and frequent) in AV (which further supports the idea that the privileged actor is not a topic – see Legate 2012) but not in UV:

(41) *Kelabit non-DP questions*

a. **Actor Voice**

Idan tauh kuman *nuba*’?
 when 1PL.INCL AV.eat rice
 ‘When will we eat rice?’

b. **Undergoer Voice**

*Idan nuba’ dih kenen *muyuh*?¹⁶
 when rice DEM UV.IRR.eat 2PL
 For: ‘when will you eat the rice?’

¹⁵ Nb. judgements are not clear-cut:

- (i) *[mat luek], bii’ ai inaan *súel nah*
 with spook rice PT UV.eat girl DEM
 For: ‘With a spoon, the rice was eaten by the girl’

¹⁶ However, there are some possible counter examples to this judgement in the corpus:

- (i) Ngapeh dih seru’an *muh*
 where DEM UV.put 2SG
 ‘Where did you put it?’
- (ii) Ngudeh midih sinih nih senaru’ *deh ngilad*?
 why thing DEM DEM UV.PFV.do 3PL in.the.past
 ‘Why did they do that back then?’

b'. Kenen *tau*h idan nuba' dih?
 UV.IRR.eat 1PL.INCL when rice DEM
 'When will we eat the rice?'

(42) *Sa'ban non-DP questions*

a. **Actor Voice**

Diin ceh maan *bii'* *nah*?
 when 2SG AV.eat rice DEM
 'When will you eat that rice?'

b. **Undergoer Voice**

*Diin bii' ai inaan/nan *ce*h
 when rice PT UV.PFV.eat/UV.IRR.eat 2SG
 For: 'When did you/will you eat the rice?'

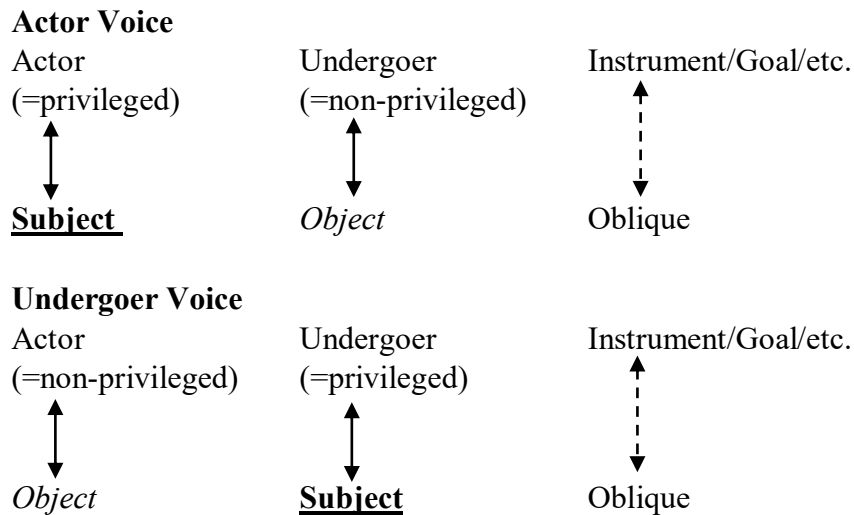
b'. Inaan *ce*h diin bii' ai?
 UV.PFV.eat 2SG when rice PT
 When did you eat the rice?'

4. Summary

- ❖ The patterns above suggest that neither the non-privileged actor in UV, nor the non-privileged undergoer in AV, is a typical oblique and hence supports the conclusion that they both have a core grammatical function.
- ❖ Since they do not have any of the typical subject properties discussed in section 4, this suggests that they are best analysed as objects.
- ❖ Hence, it argues against both an ergative analysis (in which AV is intransitive) and an actor as subject approach.

7. Conclusion

- ❖ In this paper, I have presented three main arguments for treating the privileged argument as subject in Kelabit and Sa'ban
 - They have a range of cross-linguistic 'subject properties' that distinguish them from other arguments in the clause (and binding data is inconclusive)
 - They do not appear to have the cross-linguistic properties expected of discourse or information structure topics (which is the main alternative)
 - The non-privileged actor behaves like non-privileged undergoers (and unlike privileged arguments or obliques) which suggests that they are better treated as objects than subjects.
- ❖ Consequently, the best approach to grammatical functions in both Kelabit and Sa'ban is the Manning & Sag (1998) approach and the mapping from arguments to functions can be summarised as in section 3:



- ❖ This has several important implications for Austronesian and, more generally, for the study of grammatical functions.
- ❖ Firstly, it supports the idea that verbal morphology encodes an alternation in the mapping of arguments to functions and results in multiple transitive clauses
- ❖ Hence, it suggests that the best analysis of the data is SYMMETRICAL VOICE despite morphosyntactic differences in Kelabit and Sa'ban.
- ❖ This is important as it implies that symmetrical voice systems are a common feature across typologically distinct Western Austronesian languages and that languages can have more than one transitive clause independently of their morphosyntactic typology.
- ❖ Hence, it demonstrates the importance of identifying grammatical functions in Western Austronesian languages as a necessary precursor to understanding the true nature of the verbal morphology.
- ❖ Secondly, it suggests that, on closer inspection, Western Austronesian languages and the split in subject properties may not in fact refute the notion of 'subject' being a universal grammatical function.¹⁷
- ❖ Rather, they imply the need to refine the definition on the basis of a more typologically varied set of languages.
- ❖ Hence, this work makes an important contribution to our understanding of grammatical functions and Austronesian voice systems and highlights the importance of developing theoretical models that can account for the typological facts.

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¹⁷ Though there may be independent reasons for rejecting this if one believes that constructs are always language specific and cannot really be compared cross-linguistically (see e.g. Haspelmath 2010 on COMPARATIVE CONCEPTS) or if one believes that grammatical functions are construction-specific (see e.g. Bickel 2010)

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9. Appendix: On Binding

- ❖ The patterns of binding in Kelabit may be more complicated than they seemed above when we consider quantificational objects e.g. ‘every child’ and ‘every mother’ (cf. Legate 2012)
- ❖ In AV, there is a binding asymmetry whereby a preverbal actor can bind into an undergoer, but cannot be bound by the post-verbal undergoer.
- ❖ However, in UV there is no such binding asymmetry and bound readings are possible in both instances:

(43) *Kelabit Binding*

a. **Actor Voice**

Kenep-kenep tesineh nu’uh anak nedih
 Every mother AV.look.after child 3SG.POSS
 ‘Every mother_i looks after her_i child’

- b. Tesineh nedih nu’uh kenep-kenep anak
 Mother 3SG.POSS AV.look.after every child
 ‘Her_{i/k} mother looks after every child_i’
 ➤ i.e. binding asymmetry!

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Kenep-kenep anak terenuwen tesineh nedih
 Every child UV.look.after mother 3SG.POSS
 ‘Every child_i is looked after by her_i mother’

- d. Anak nedih terenuwen kenep-kenep tesineh
 child 3SG.POSS UV.look.after every mother
 ‘Her_i child is looked after by every mother_i’
 ➤ No binding asymmetry!

- ❖ In Sa’ban, it seems as though binding of a quantificational object is possible when the binder is the privileged argument, but not otherwise:

(44) *Sa’ban Binding*

a. **Actor Voice**

Panét-panét hnaan ma’eu anaak yeh
 Each-REDUP mother AV.care.for child 3SG
 ‘Every mother cares for her child’

- b. Hnaan yeh ma’eu panét-panét anaak
 Mother 3SG AV.care.for each-REDUP child
 For: ‘Her_{i/k} mother cares for every child_i’

➤ Binding asymmetry: actor binds into undergoer

c. **Undergoer Voice**

Panét-panét anaak ya'eu hnaan yeh
Each-REDUP child UV.care.for mother 3SG
'Every child_i is cared for by their_i mother'

d. anaak yeh ya'eu panét-panét hnaan
child 3SG UV.care.for each-REDUP mother
For: 'Her_{*i/k} child is cared for by every mother_i'

➤ Binding asymmetry: undergoer binds into actor

- ❖ However, the judgements would need to be further corroborated.
- ❖ In both cases, a bound reading is preferred when the 3PL.POSS pronoun is used (K: *dedih*, S: *deh*) instead of the 3SG.POSS pronoun (K: *nedih*, S: *yeh*). This appears to remove the binding asymmetry.
- ❖ The binding patterns are also (seemingly) affected by whether the privileged argument appears pre-verbally or post-verbally. Post-verbally, different patterns may be found:

(45) *Kelabit Binding*

a. Nu'uh kenep-kenep anak tesineh nedih
AV.look.after every child mother 3SG.POSS
'Her_i mother looks after every child_i.'

(46) *Sa'ban Binding*

a. #Ma'eu anaak yeh panét-panét hnaan
AV.care.for child 3SG each-REDUP mother
'Every mother_i cares for their_{*i/k} child'

- ❖ Hence, binding in Kelabit and Sa'ban isn't (necessarily) exclusively controlled by the actor and, therefore, doesn't (necessarily) present a strong counter-argument to treating the privileged argument as subject.
- ❖ Indeed, cross-linguistically binding is subject to a range of different prominence-related factors (sometimes syntactic function, sometimes linear-prominence) as shown in Bresnan et al (2016, chapter 9).