Subjects in Acehnese and the Nature of the Passive

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This paper demonstrates that Acehnese has a passive in which a verbal prefix bears person and politeness features of the agent rather than the surface subject (see Lawler 1977, contra Durie 1988). In demonstrating the construction is a passive, I provide evidence for grammatical relations in Acehnese, contra Durie 1988 and followers. However, unlike much work following Lawler, I do not take the construction to provide evidence for a demotion analysis of the passive. Instead, I demonstrate that the apparent agreement morpheme is a morphological realization of the functional head that introduces the external argument. The Acehnese passive thus provides striking evidence that the functional head that introduces the external argument is present in passives. I analyse the apparent agent agreement as interpretable features that restrict the external argument position (rather than saturate it).
1. **Introduction.** Acehnese² came to the attention of linguistic researchers with Lawler’s 1977 claim that the language exhibits a passive in which, surprisingly, it is the agent, not the surface subject, that triggers subject agreement. Due to this unusual property, in the subsequent decade Acehnese was often cited as compelling evidence for a demotion analysis of the passive, whereby the agent originates in subject position, triggers subject agreement, and subsequently demotes to adjunct status (see for example Perlmutter 1982, Baker 1985, Dryer 1986). However, Durie’s 1988 reply in these pages argued that Lawler had made fundamental mistakes in translation and analysis of the data, and that the construction in question is not a passive. Durie’s (1985) grammar of Acehnese lays out his own analysis: the construction consists of a topicalized theme with an ergative-marked agent. Acehnese thereafter has largely been cited as a language that lacks a grammatical subject, thus providing evidence that grammatical functions are not universal (Durie 1987, Dixon 1994, Van Valin & LaPolla 1997).³

In this article, I re-examine the construction at the center of the debate between Lawler and Durie. I argue that despite Lawler’s errors, the analysis of the construction as a passive is correct (see also Asyik 1982, who assumes the passive analysis). Upon close examination of the apparent agreement prefix on the verb, I determine that rather than true agreement, it consists of a pronunciation of the functional head that introduces the thematic subject, which I shall refer to as \( v \).

The Acehnese discussion in this paper has two important broader implications. First, the Acehnese case has important theoretical consequences for our understanding of the passive. Acehnese provides striking evidence for the proposal that the external-argument introducing \( v \) is present in passives (e.g. Pylkkänen 1999, Embick 2004, Landau 2009).⁴ This head is morphologically realized in Acehnese passives, and is realized in such a way that its function is transparent – through the features of the external argument position that it introduces.
Second, the Acehnese case is methodologically instructive. Acehnese is frequently confidently cited as a language with no evidence for grammatical relations, or, relatedly, a language in which the object of an unaccusative patterns as an object (see e.g. Dixon 1994, Tomasello 1995:139, Bittner & Hale 1996:57-59, Van Valin & Lapolla 1997, Newmeyer 2002:73, ...). And yet, the claim is entirely based on the work of a single researcher, Mark Durie, whose work dates from the 1980s. Before the current paper, the Acehnese data had never been re-examined using the battery of established syntactic tests that we now have at our disposal. And the result of applying these tests is a complete reversal of the import of Acehnese – Acehnese is revealed to exhibit grammatical functions after all, and so is consistent with the universality of grammatical functions, rather than contradicting this. Specifically, there is evidence in Acehnese not only for a thematic subject position identified with the specifier of vP, but also for a grammatical subject position, identified with the specifier of IP;5 I provide a number of arguments that the thematic object of a passive raises to become the grammatical subject (in sections 3 and 4.1). Pursuing the moral further, even though Lawler was correct in analysing the relevant Acehnese construction as a passive, not only did he have insufficient arguments for doing so (hence Durie’s rejoinder), but he could not have arrived at the analysis proposed in this paper – v as a functional category would not be discovered for another twenty years. The Acehnese case then underlines the need for re-evaluating theoretical and typological claims based on data from understudied languages that have not been investigated using modern syntactic tools, rather than simply citing and reciting the inadequate data.

I begin the re-examination of the Acehnese data in the next section with an outline of the construction in question.

2. The LE-Construction. At the centre of the debate is the alternation between 1a and 1b.6
On one analysis, (1a) is an active clause, and the LE-construction in (1b) as the passive alternate. The agent in the LE-construction is in a prepositional phrase, like the by phrase in English, and lé is properly glossed as by and compared to the Indonesian cognate oleh. On the other (advocated by Durie, e.g. Durie 1985), the LE-construction is a theme topic construction, and lé is identified as an ergative case marker; (1a), in contrast, is analysed as an agent topic construction, the ergative case marker being omitted when the agent is topicalized. Crucially, notice that the verbal prefix di in (1b) realizes the 3rd person familiar features of the agent rather than the first person features of the theme. Replacing this prefix with lôn, which realizes features of the theme, results in ungrammaticality:

(2)  *Lon lôn-kap lé uleue nyan.

   I 1-bite LE snake that

   ‘I was bitten by the snake.’

Furthermore, this pattern is not dependent on this particular constellation of features, but is entirely general. The prefix tracks the person and politeness features of the agent:

(3)  a. Aneuk miet nyan meu-tingkue lé kamoe.

   child small that 1excl-carry LE us(excl)

   ‘The child is carried by us.’

   b. Aneuk miet nyan neu-tingkue lé droeneuh.

   child small that 2Pol-carry LE you.Pol
‘The child is carried by you.’

c. Aneuk miet nyan geu-tingkue lé gopnyan.
  child small that 3Pol-carry LE him/her.Pol
  ‘The child is carried by him/her.’

In addition to the agreement morphology, there are two properties of that appear to lend support to the initial DP being a topic. First, the initial DP in both constructions must be old information (Durie 1985:192). For example, indefinite subjects are expressed through an existential construction with the initial DP position left empty:

(4) a. Na ureureng nyang peu-beukah mangkok.
   Exist person CRel Cause-break bowl
   ‘Someone broke the bowl.’ (‘There is a person who broke the bowl.’)

b. Peue *(na) ureueng nyang ka taguen sie?
   C.Q Exist person C.Rel Perf cook meat
   ‘Did anyone cook the meat?’ (‘Is there a person who cooked the meat?’)

Second, it is not possible to topicalize a DP in front of the initial DP, which could be taken as a constraint against multiple DP topicalization.

(5) a. *Ibrahim dokto ka geu-peu-ubat.
   Ibrahim doctor Perf 3Pol-Caus-medicine
   ‘The doctor treated Ibrahim.’

   1sg dog Perf 3Fam-bite yesterday
   ‘The dog bit me yesterday.’

Notice crucially that in these examples, the initial DP is in its standard position above any negation/modal/aspectual particles, and the verb is prefixed. As discussed in section 4.2,
there is an additional non-active construction in Acehnese, which I term object voice, wherein the thematic subject remains in its \( \theta \)-position below negation/modal/aspectual particles, the verb is unprefixed, and the object may raise to the initial DP position.\(^{10}\) Thus, in contrast with 5, 6 is grammatical as an object voice construction.

(6) Lôn uleue nyan kap.
    I snake that bite
    ‘The snake bit me.’

I suspect that the restriction against A’-movement of a DP over the initial DP\(^{11}\) is a remnant of an earlier diachronic stage in which the initial DP was indeed a topic (see Wolff 1996), but I will not provide a synchronic analysis here.\(^{12}\) I do note, however, that the initial DP does not seem to occupy a topic position high in the left periphery of the clause. For example, it follows the wh-phrase, rather than preceding it as would be expected of a topic (see Rizzi 1997, Benincà 2001, Benincà & Poletto 2004, and subsequent):

(7)  a. Dari soe Zaki pinjam glah?
    from who Zaki borrow glass
    ‘From whom did Zaki borrow the glass?’

    b. Pajan Fatimah geu-kalon Ibrahim?
    when Fatimah 3Pol-see Ibrahim
    ‘When did Fatimah see Ibrahim?’

These opposing analyses make several testable predictions for the behaviour of the LE-construction. Regarding the raised object, a passive analysis predicts that this DP will show properties of an A-position, whereas a topicalization analysis predicts that it will show properties of an A-bar position. For the post-verbal agent, the passive analysis predicts that it will pattern as a PP adjunct, whereas the topicalization analysis predicts that it will pattern as a DP argument. I present a number of tests in section 4, all of which
support the passive analysis. Before that, I begin to test these predictions in section 3 with a discussion of control in Acehnese. Control was a core point of disagreement between Lawler and Durie – Lawler claimed that the raised object in the LE-construction could be controlled PRO, and so must be a surface subject, whereas Durie claimed that Lawler’s examples did not exemplify control, and that true control examples actually showed that the raised object in the LE-construction could not be controlled PRO, and thus was not a surface subject. My investigation concludes that the raised object can be controlled PRO in Acehnese and that Durie’s examples involve restructuring verbs. Thus, the discussion provides evidence for a passive analysis of the LE-construction, and for a \( \nu \) analysis of the verbal prefix. I turn to this immediately.

3. Control and Restructuring. A key argument for a passive analysis from Lawler 1977 is that Acehnese exhibits control in embedded clauses, and that this can be fed by the passive. His examples follow, the first illustrating control, and the second control of the object of a passive.

(8)  a. Dokto geu-usaha geu-pérek\(s\)a ureung agam nyan.\(^{16}\)

   doctor 3Pol-arrange 3Pol-examine person male that

   ‘The doctor arranged to examine that man.’

   b. Jih lôn-pue-ingat lê lôn geu-pérek\(s\)a lê dokto.

   s/he.Fam 1sg-Cause-remember by me 3Pol-examine by doctor

   ‘He was reminded by me to be examined by the doctor.’ (Durie 1988:109)

Durie (1988, see also Durie 1987), however, points out that these embedded clauses are well-formed matrix clauses; since Acehnese exhibits pro-drop, there is no need to appeal to control to explain the null embedded subjects in Lawler’s data.

(9)  a. Geu-pérek\(s\)a ureung agam nyan.

   3Pol-examine person male that
‘(He) examined that man.’

b. Geu-peuréksa lé dokto.
   3Pol-examine by doctor
   ‘(He) was examined by the doctor.’ (Durie 1988:109)

Furthermore, Durie continues, there are control predicates in Acehnese, but they don’t embed the LE-construction. He thus concludes that the raised theme in the LE-construction is not the grammatical subject, since it may not be controlled PRO. Durie’s examples are the following, involving the matrix verb ci ‘try’:

      doctor 3Pol-try 3Pol-examine person male that
      ‘The doctor tried to examine that man.’

b. * Ureueng agam nyan ji-ci geu-peuréksa lé dokto.
   person male that 3Fam-try 3Pol-examine doctor
   ‘The man tried to be examined by the doctor.’ (Durie 1988:109)

Durie points out that the verbal prefix is not possible in the complement of these predicates (in contrast with Lawler’s examples). Assuming that the prefix represents subject agreement on finite INFL, Durie takes this as evidence of the non-finite status of the embedded clause.

The same pattern is also found with another matrix verb meaning ‘try’, cuba:

(11) Aneuk miet nyan ji-cuba (*ji-)pajoh batée.
    child small that 3Fam-try 3Fam-eat rock
    ‘The child tried to eat a rock.’

Anticipating the analysis of the verbal prefix as v to be developed in section 4, the absence of the verbal prefix indicates not the presence of non-finite INFL, but the absence of vP.
From this perspective, these matrix predicates ‘try’ are not embedding a non-finite clause, but rather a radically truncated structure, consisting only of the lexical verb phrase. Such constructions thereby analysed exemplify restructuring rather than control, under an analysis like that of Wurmbrand 2001. And indeed, predicates meaning ‘try’ are typical restructuring predicates crosslinguistically. 12 illustrates the syntactic structure of restructuring ‘try’:

(12)
```
vP
  \_/ 
 v'    
  \   
    Subj  v 
    \   
     \ 
      \ 
       V  VP
       \ 
        try  V  Obj
```

Under the restructuring analysis, the embedded truncated clause lacks both an external argument and the ability to assign accusative case (both of which are associated with the vP projection). The embedded object is dependent for case on the embedding verb (more precisely, the vP associated with it). This makes it possible for restructuring predicates to exhibit the long passive, whereby passivization of the embedding verb results in the raising of the embedded object. 13 illustrates for German:

(13) dass der Traktor zu reparieren versucht wurde
    that the tractor.NOM to repair tried was
    ‘that they tried to repair the tractor’

The proposed restructuring analysis of the Acehnese data thus predicts the possibility for long passive. This prediction is borne out:
Such sentences under Durie’s control analysis could be analysed as long-distance topicalization. Indeed, Durie proposes long-distance topicalization for other predicates like dawa ‘make a legal claim’ (notice that the embedded verb is marked with the prefix under this predicate):

(15) Jih geu-dawa lé hakém ka ji-cu leumo nyan.
    3Fam 3Pol-claim by judge Perf 3Fam-steal cow that
    ‘He is claimed by the judge to have stolen that cow.’ (Durie 1988:110)

An additional property, however, distinguishes the analyses. It has been observed (e.g. Miyagawa 1987) that restructuring predicates do not allow PPs to intervene between the embedding and embedded predicate. This restriction may be characterized as the embedded VP not being subject to extraposition. Thus, on a restructuring analysis, we expect this restriction to hold true for these predicates. On a topicalization analysis, such a restriction is not expected; note the intervening PP in the long-distance topicalization example above, 15, and in 16. (On the present analysis, both of these would be raising-to-subject constructions.)

(16) Kah geu-anggap lé gopnyan meunang-keuh.
    you.Fam 3Pol-consider by s/he win-2Fam
    ‘You are considered by him/her to have won.’ (Durie 1987:381)
The restriction does hold true for the relevant predicates in Acehnese, for example:

(17)  a. *Batée ji-cuba lé aneuk miet nyan (ji-)pajoh.
    rock 3Fam-try by child small that 3Fam-eat
    ‘The rock was tried to be eaten by the child.’

    b. *Aneuk agam nyan geu-ci lé dokto peureksa.
    child male that 3Pol-try by doctor diagnose
    ‘The child was tried to be diagnosed by the doctor.’

I conclude that Durie’s purported control examples are actually restructuring constructions, and thus do not speak to the status of the raised theme as a topic or grammatical subject. This reopens the question of whether there exist control predicates in Acehnese. Since the language lacks tense morphology, we will not be able to use the lack of tense to identify nonfinite clauses; as discussed above and in section 4 below, nor can we use the agreement prefixes – a nonfinite clause will exhibit the prefixes. We must therefore use established tests to diagnose the pro vs PRO distinction.

For this purpose, I enlist strict versus sloppy interpretation under ellipsis (see Landau 2004 for discussion of this diagnostic). Pronouns, including pro, give rise to a strict versus sloppy identity ambiguity under ellipsis, corresponding to their status as coreferent versus bound. Control, on the other hand, only allows the sloppy interpretation; coreference is impossible, since PRO cannot refer.

(18)  a. Kim promised that she would behave, and the teacher did too.
    YES Strict: the teacher promised that Kim would behave
    YES Sloppy: the teacher promised that the teacher would behave

    b. Kim promised to behave, and the teacher did too.
    NOT Strict: the teacher promised that Kim would behave
    YES Sloppy: the teacher promised that the teacher would behave
Using this test, let us revisit the disputed control examples. They involve the matrix predicates `useuha` ‘arrange’ and `peu-ingat` ‘remind’. I first confirm that these predicates indeed allow an embedded LE-construction:

(19) a. Fatimah geu-useuha geu-peuréksa lé dokto.
    Fatimah 3Pol-arrange 3Pol-diagnose by doctor
    ‘Fatimah arranged to be diagnosed by the doctor.’

b. Fatimah lôn-peu-ingat geu-peuréksa lé dokto.
    Fatimah 1sg-Cause-remember 3Pol-diagnose by doctor
    ‘Fatimah was reminded by me to be diagnosed by the doctor.’

The question is whether the null embedded subject should be identified as pro or PRO. A pro analysis predicts both strict and sloppy identity under ellipsis, whereas a PRO analysis predicts only sloppy. As illustrated in 20, only sloppy identity is possible under ellipsis.

(20) a. Fatimah geu-useuha geu-peuréksa lé dokto, meunan cit Ibrahim.
    Fatimah 3Pol-arrange 3Pol-diagnose by doctor, like.that also Ibrahim
    ‘Fatimah arranged to be diagnosed by the doctor, and so did Ibrahim.’
    NOT Strict: Ibrahim arranged for Fatimah to be diagnosed by the doctor.
    YES Sloppy: Ibrahim arranged for Ibrahim to be diagnosed by the doctor.

b. Fatimah lôn-peu-ingat geu-peuréksa lé dokto, meunan cit Ibrahim.
    Fatimah 1sg-Cause-remember 3Pol-diagnose by doctor, like.that also Ibrahim
    ‘Fatimah was reminded by me to be diagnosed by the doctor, and so was Ibrahim.’
    NOT Strict: Ibrahim was reminded by me that Fatimah should be diagnosed by the doctor.
    YES Sloppy: Ibrahim was reminded by me that Ibrahim should be diagnosed by the doctor.
Furthermore, these contrast with embedded finite clauses with a pronominal subject, which allow both strict and sloppy identity. For example, in the following, the matrix predicate piké ‘think’ takes an embedded finite clause, with the modal akan ‘will’, and a pro subject. Both strict and sloppy identity are possible.

(21) a. Fatimah geu-piké akan geu-beurangkat singoh,  Ibrahim geu-piké
    Fatimah 3Pol-think will 3Pol-leave tomorrow, Ibrahim 3Pol-think
    meunan cit.
    like.that also
    ‘Fatimah thinks that she will leave tomorrow, and Ibrahim thinks so too.’
    YES: Ibrahim thinks that Ibrahim will leave tomorrow.
    YES: Ibrahim thinks that Fatimah will leave tomorrow.

b. Fatimah geu-piké akan geu-beurangkat singoh,  meunan cit Ibrahim.
    Fatimah 3Pol-think will 3Pol-leave tomorrow, like.that also Ibrahim
    ‘Fatimah thinks that she will leave tomorrow, and Ibrahim does too.’
    YES: Ibrahim thinks that Ibrahim will leave tomorrow.
    YES: Ibrahim thinks that Fatimah will leave tomorrow.

The data in 19 and 20 therefore contain control clauses in which the raised theme in the LE-construction is controlled PRO. This constitutes a strong argument that the raised object is a grammatical subject, and thus that the LE-construction is a passive, rather than a theme-topic.

In the following section, I provide additional supporting arguments for this conclusion, first considering the status of the raised theme, and then turning to the post-verbal agent.

4. The LE-Construction as a Passive.

4.1. The Raised Object as a Grammatical Subject. In this subsection, I consider the status of the raised object in the LE-construction. I present two additional tests to distinguish its surface position as an A or A’-position. In both instances, the position of
the raised object patterns as an A-position, as predicted by a passive analysis of the LE-construction, rather than an A’-position as would be expected on a theme-topic analysis.

The first test comes from Condition C reconstruction effects. It is well known that Condition C reconstruction effects are found with A-bar movement, but not with A-movement (e.g. Lebeaux 1995, Fox 1999; see also Sportiche 2011 for an insightful analysis). In other words, A-movement repairs an underlying Condition C violation, while A’-movement cannot. To begin, I note that in active SVO clauses in Acehnese, standard Condition C effects apply.25

(22) SVO Active

   cat  child-child  small that 3Fam-bite they
      ‘The children’s cat bit them.’

   b. Awaknyan ji-poh mie aneuk-aneuk miet nyan.
      they 3Fam-hit cat child-child small that
      ‘They hit the children’s cat.’

Furthermore, A’-movement in Acehnese, as in English, does not repair a Condition C violation. Since A’-movement of a DP over a subject is not permitted, I use a PP based on the preposition keu ‘to’. 23a illustrates the underlying Condition C violation with a keu-phrase, and 23b illustrates that the violation remains under uncontroversial A’-movement: the pronoun cannot covary with the R-expression embedded inside the wh-phrase; it must be free.

(23) a. Awaknyan ji-jök eumpeuen keu mie aneuk-aneuk nyan.
     they 3Fam-give animal.food to cat child-child that
     ‘They gave food to the children’s cat.’
b. Keu mie aneuk-aneuk nyan nyang toh awaknyan ji-jôk eumpeuen?
to cat child-child that C which they 3Fam-give animal.food
‘To which children’s cat did they give food?’

Now consider the LE-construction. If it is a theme topic construction, the agent is a subject that c-commands the object before A’-movement. Therefore, if the subject is a pronoun coindexed with an R-expression inside the object, we should find Condition C effects (under reconstruction). If, however, the construction is a passive, the agent is in a by-phrase adjunct and there is no Condition C violation at any point in the structure. Therefore, we should not find Condition C effects. As illustrated in 24, a pronominal agent may be grammatically coindexed with an R-expression inside the raised object – no Condition C effects are found.

(24) Mie aneuk-aneuk miet nyan ji-poh lé awaknyan.
cat child-child small that 3Pol-hit by them
‘The children’s cat was hit by them.’

This lack of Condition C reconstruction effects supports the passive analysis.

For the second test, consider Weak Crossover effects. The theoretical formulation of the principle underlying these effects is controversial; for our purposes, the crucial aspect of this principle is that it differentiates between A and A’-positions. For example, Büring 2004:24 states:

(25) The A-command Requirement on Pronoun Binding: Pronoun binding can only take place from a c-commanding A-position.

(see also Reinhart 1983, Ruys 2000, inter alia). In addition, since the task is to differentiate a grammatical subject position from a topic position, we must use quantificational objects attempting to bind a pronoun inside the agent. By using a quantificational object, we
avoid the issue of Weakest Crossover, whereby a non-quantificational DP undergoing A'-movement (including topicalization) may fail to exhibit Weak Crossover effects (see Lasnik & Stowell 1991, Postal 1993, Ruys 2004). The objects in the examples are based on the Acehnese quantifiers tieptiep ‘every’ and karap mandeum ‘almost all’. Phrases based on these quantifiers show the expected quantificational behaviour in the SVO active: the agent can bind into the theme, but not vice versa, since the agent asymmetrically c-commands the theme from an A-position:

(26) SVO Active
   a. Tieptiep maq geu-lindong aneuq geuh.
      every mother 3Pol-protect child 3Pol
      ‘Every mother, protects her, child.’
   b. Aneuk geuh geu-lindong tieptiep maq.
      child 3Pol 3Pol-protect every mother
      ‘His/her, child protects every mother.’

(27) SVO Active
   a. Karap mandeum gurée geu-peu-runoe mured geuh.
      almost all teacher 3Pol-Cause-learn student 3Pol
      ‘Almost all the teachers, taught their, students.’
   b. Gurée jih geu-peu-runoe karap mandeum mured.
      teacher 3Fam 3Pol-Cause-learn almost all student
      ‘His/her, teacher taught almost all the students.’
Furthermore, uncontroversial A'-movement does exhibit the expected WCO effects in Acehnese. Again, since A'-movement of a DP over a subject is not permitted, I use a keu-PP. A quantifier phrase embedded inside a keu-PP can bind out of the PP:
(28) Dokto nyan akan geu-jök keu tieptiep mak aneuk geuh.
   doctor that will 3Pol-give to every mother child 3Pol
   ‘The doctor will give to every mother, her\textsubscript{i/k} child.’

But cannot bind into the subject:

(29) Mak jih geu-jök meuneu’en keu tieptiep aneuk.
    mother 3Fam 3Pol-give toy to every child
    ‘His\textsubscript{si/k} mother gives toys to every child\textsubscript{i}.’

A’-movement of the keu-PP does not create new binding possibilities, but instead shows
WCO effects. Thus, 30 is grammatical only on the interpretation whereby the pronoun
refers independently rather than covarying with the wh-phrase.

(30) Keu soe mak jih geu-jök meuneu’en?
    to who mother 3Fam 3Pol-give toy
    ‘To whom, does his\textsubscript{si/k} mother give toys?’

Turning to the LE-construction, I use the quantifier phrase as the raised object and
attempt to bind into the agent. The raised object position patterns as a grammatical
subject position (i.e. A-position), not a topicalized position (i.e. A’-position): the raised
theme binds into the agent.

(31) a. Tieptiep aneuk geu-lindong lé maq droe-jih.
    every child 3Pol-protect by mother self-3Fam
    ‘Every child\textsubscript{i} is protected by his/her\textsubscript{i} mother.’

b. Karap mandeum mured geu-peu-runoe lé gurée droe-jih.
    almost all student 3Pol-Cause-learn by teacher self-3Fam
    ‘Almost all the students\textsubscript{i} were being taught by their\textsubscript{i} own teacher.’
In summary, the raised object in the LE-construction behaves as a grammatical subject occupying an A-position rather than a topic occupying an A’-position. The raised object may be controlled PRO, the raising does not exhibit Condition C reconstruction effects, and creates new binding configurations, rather than triggering Weak Crossover effects.

4.2. The LE-marked Agent as a PP Adjunct. In this subsection, I turn to the status of the LE-marked agent. Durie’s analysis treats the agent as the thematic subject, overtly marked with ergative case morphology when not topicalized. In contrast, a passive analysis treats the agent as an adjunct inside a prepositional phrase akin to the English by-phrase. Several tests support the passive approach.

First, consider the generalization mentioned in section 2 that topicalization of a DP before the initial DP position is ungrammatical; examples were provided in 5 above. As Durie demonstrates (e.g. 1987:380), this restriction does not extend to prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases may topicalize to a position before the initial DP position:

   to person female that fruit mango Perf 1sg-give
   ‘To that woman the mango I gave.’

   b. Dari blang lôn ka lôn-gisa.
      from field 1sg Perf 1sg-return
      ‘From the field I returned.’

   c. Di sinoe aneuk miet meukên-meukên.
      at here child small play-play
      ‘Children play here.’

Durie did not test whether the LE-marked agent may topicalize. His analysis predicts that it should not for two reasons. First, the agent is a DP, not a PP. Second, to explain the absence of lé in the SVO active construction, Durie claims that topicalization of the
agent results in elimination of the ergative case marker lé; therefore, the agent should not topicalize while retaining lé. Durie’s prediction is not borne out, however; the LE-phrase may topicalize:

\[(33)\]  
\[a. \text{Lé } \text{uleue } \text{nyan } \text{aneuk } \text{miet } \text{nyan } \text{di-kap.}\]  
by snake that child small that 3Fam-bite  
‘By the snake, that child was bitten.’

\[b. \text{Lé } \text{dokto } \text{Ibrahim } \text{ka } \text{geu-peu-ubat.}\]  
by doctor Ibrahim Perf 3Pol-Cause-medicine  
‘By the doctor, Ibrahim was treated.’

The LE-phrase thus patterns for this test as a prepositional phrase, rather than a DP, as expected on the passive analysis.

Next, I discuss another test that distinguishes noun phrases from prepositional phrases, based on questions with the complementizer (n)yang. Wh-questions involving nominal wh-phrases show two extraction strategies, one with the complementizer and one without.

\[(34)\]  
\[\text{Soe (yang) geu-peu-ubat lé dokto?}\]  
who RelC 3Pol-Caus-medicine by doctor  
“Who was treated by the doctor?”

The distinction between these two strategies is not yet well understood, although this complementizer is otherwise found in relative clauses, and similar phenomena in other Austronesian languages have been argued to involve clefts or pseudoclefts (e.g. Paul 2001, Massam 2003, Aldridge 2002, Potsdam 2006, 2009). What is most relevant for current purposes is that wh-questions involving prepositional phrases and adjuncts may not be questioned using the complementizer strategy. This is illustrated in 35 for the wh-phrases pajan ‘when’, pat ‘where’, and keu soe ‘to whom’.
a. Pajan (*yang) Fatima geu-kalon Ibrahim?
   when RelC Fatima 3Pol-see Ibrahim
   ‘When did Fatima see Ibrahim?’

b. Pat (*yang) Fatima geu-kalon Ibrahim?
   where RelC Fatima 3Pol-see Ibrahim
   ‘Where did Fatima see Ibrahim?’

c. Keu soe (*yang) geu-jok lé ureueng agam nyan aneuk miet nyan?
   to who RelC 3Pol-give by person male Dem child small Dem
   ‘To whom was the child given by the man?’

Thus we have another test that distinguishes DPs from adjuncts and PPs. Considering the
behaviour of LE-marked wh-agents, we discover that they pattern with prepositional
phrases and adjuncts: the lé-phrase cannot be questioned with (n)yang:27

a. Lé soe (*yang) aneuk miet nyan geu-jok keu ureueng inong nyan
   by who RelC child small Dem 3Pol-give to person female Dem
   ‘By whom was the baby given to the woman?’

b. Lé soe (*nyang) Ibrahim geu-peu-ubat?
   by who RelC Ibrahim 3Pol-Cause-medicine
   ‘By whom was Ibrahim treated?’

Floating quantifiers, like dum ‘much’ and mandum ‘all’, also distinguish between DPs
and PPs. Internally to a DP, quantifiers may appear initially, post-nominally, or finally:

a. mandum ureueng agam nyan
   all person male that
   ‘all the men’

b. ureueng agam mandum nyan
   person male all that
‘all the men’

c. mandum asée nyoe
   all   dog   this
   ‘all these dogs’

d. asée nyoe mandum
   dog   this   all
   ‘all these dogs’

Floated quantifiers appear in several positions in the clause, including immediately preverbally, immediately postverbally, and among/after other postverbal elements. It is important to note that quantifiers may float not only from the initial DP, but also from other DPs in the clause. The following illustrate several possible floated positions, 38a for the subject and 38b for the object.

(38) a. Ureueng agam nyan (mandum) geu-keumenkoh28 (mandum) di blang.
   person   male   that   all   3Pol-harvest   all   in   rice.field
   ‘All the men are going to harvest rice in the field.’

   b. Ureueng nyan ka (dum) geu-pajoh (dum) boh drien (dum) uroe nyoe.
   person   that   Perf   much   3Pol-eat   much   fruit   durian   much   day   this
   ‘That person ate a lot of durian today.’

Floating is not possible, however, from prepositional phrases. For example, 38a with the quantifier in either position cannot mean ‘The men are going to harvest rice in all the fields’. For the quantifier to modify a DP within a PP, the quantifier must be internal to the DP. In 39a, the quantifier is unambiguously internal to the DP ‘the rice fields’ within the PP ‘in the rice fields’, and that is the only possible interpretation. In 39b, the string is structurally ambiguous, the quantifier could be final within the DP ‘the rice fields’, or it could be floated; accordingly ‘all’ can be associated either with ‘the rice fields’ or with the
object ‘rice’. 39c disambiguates 39b in favour of the floated structure by placing a clausal \(^\text{adverb}\) between the demonstrative and the quantifier; revealingly, the quantifier may no longer be associated with the DP embedded within a PP, but may still be associated with the object.

(39)  

\begin{align*}
\text{a. Ureueng agam nyan geu-koh pade lam mandeum blang nyan baroe.} \\
\text{\quad person \quad male \quad that \quad 3Pol-cut \quad rice \quad in \quad all \quad rice.field \quad that \quad yesterday} \\
\text{\quad ‘That man cut rice in all the rice fields yesterday.’} \\
\text{OR ‘That man cut rice in all the rice fields yesterday.’} \\
\text{b. Ureueng agam nyan geu-koh pade lam blang nyan mandeum baroe.} \\
\text{\quad person \quad male \quad that \quad 3Pol-cut \quad rice \quad in \quad rice.field \quad all \quad yesterday} \\
\text{\quad ‘That man cut all the rice in the rice fields yesterday.’} \\
\text{\quad OR ‘That man cut rice in all the rice fields yesterday.’} \\
\text{c. Ureueng agam nyan geu-koh pade lam blang nyan baroe mandeum.} \\
\text{\quad person \quad male \quad that \quad 3Pol-cut \quad rice \quad in \quad rice.field \quad that \quad yesterday \quad all} \\
\text{\quad ‘That man cut all the rice in the rice fields yesterday.’} \\
\text{\quad NOT ‘That man cut rice in all the rice fields yesterday.’}
\end{align*}

If the LE-phrase is a prepositional phrase, we therefore expect it not to allow quantifier float from the agent. If the LE-phrase is a DP, we expect it to allow quantifier float, like the subjects and objects in 38. In fact, the agent in a LE-phrase does not allow quantifier float, as illustrated in 40, which provides the identical paradigm to 39.

(40)  

\begin{align*}
\text{a. Boh drien geu-pajöh lé mandum ureueng nyan baroe.} \\
\text{\quad fruit.CL durian 3Pol-eat \quad by \quad all \quad person \quad that \quad yesterday} \\
\text{\quad ‘Durian was eaten by all the people yesterday.’} \\
\text{b. Boh drien geu-pajöh lé ureueng nyan mandum baroe.} \\
\text{\quad fruit.CL durian 3Pol-eat \quad by \quad person \quad that \quad all \quad yesterday} \\
\text{\quad ‘All the durian was eaten by that person yesterday.’}
\end{align*}
OR ‘Durian was eaten by all the people yesterday.’

c. Boh drien geu-pajôh lê ureueng nyan baroe mandum.
fruit.CL durian 3Pol-eat by person that yesterday all
‘All the durian was eaten by that person yesterday.’

NOT ‘The durian was eaten by all the people yesterday.’

The LE-marked agent also exhibits the distribution of a prepositional phrase. In this respect, it is instructive to compare the LE-construction to the object voice construction, introduced in section 2 (see 6 above), since the object voice construction reveals the behaviour of an agent that fails to raise to the initial position. In the object voice construction, the agent appears obligatorily pre-adjacent to the verb (in its θ-position in the specifier of vP). In the LE-construction, in contrast, the agent appears post-verbally, freely ordered with other prepositional phrases.

(41) LE-construction

a. Sie ji-tagun lê Fatimah keu lôn bak dapu.
meat 3Fam-cook by Fatimah to me at kitchen
‘The meat was cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

b. Sie ji-tagun keu lôn lê Fatimah bak dapu.
meat 3Fam-cook to me by Fatimah at kitchen
‘The meat was cooked for me by Fatimah in the kitchen.’

c. Sie ji-tagun bak dapu keu lôn lê Fatimah.
meat 3Fam-cook at kitchen to me by Fatimah
‘The meat was cooked in the kitchen for me by Fatimah.’

(42) Object voice

a. Sie akan Fatimah tagun keu lôn bak dapu.
meat will Fatimah cook to me at kitchen
Meat will be cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

   meat Fatimah will cook to me at kitchen
   ‘Meat will be cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

c. Sie hana Fatimah tagun keu lôn bak dapu.
   meat NEG Fatimah cook to me at kitchen
   ‘Meat was not cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

d. * Sie Fatimah hana tagun keu lôn bak dapu.
   meat Fatimah NEG cook to me at kitchen
   ‘Meat was not cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

e. Sie teungoh Fatimah tagun keu lôn bak dapu.
   meat PROG Fatimah cook to me at kitchen
   ‘Meat is being cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

f. * Sie Fatimah teungoh tagun keu lôn bak dapu.
   meat Fatimah PROG cook to me at kitchen
   ‘Meat is being cooked by Fatimah for me in the kitchen.’

Furthermore, in the object voice, the agent is obligatory, as the thematic subject. In the LE-construction, in contrast, the agent is optional, as expected of a PP adjunct.

(43) a. LE-construction

   Aneuk nyan di-kap (lé uleue nyan).
   child that 3Fam-bite by snake that
   ‘The child was bitten (by the snake).’

b. Object voice

   Aneuk nyan *(uleue nyan) kap.
   child that snake that bite
'The child was bitten (by the snake).'

Finally, when the agent is not phonetically present, the interpretation is as expected of a passive rather than an active. If the LE-construction were an active clause with omission of the agent due to pro-drop, we would expect a pronominal interpretation. If, on the other hand, the LE-construction is a passive, with omission of the agent due to the optionality of PP adjuncts, we expect an existential interpretation. The following illustrate that the interpretation is existential rather than pronominal.

(44) a. Aneuk miet nyan ka i-kap, tapi lôn hana lôn-tupeue lé peue.
    child small that Perf 3Fam-bite but I not 1sg-know by what
    ‘The child was bitten, but I don’t know by what.’

b. Kalon uleue nyan! Aneuk miet nyan i-kap  # (lé jih).
    look snake that child small that 3Fam-bite by it
    ‘Look at that snake! The child was bitten by it.’

We have now seen a number of tests, which all lead to the same conclusions: the raised object occupies the grammatical subject position, and the LE-marked agent is a PP adjunct. Given the weight of evidence, I conclude that the LE-construction in Acehnese is a passive. Durie’s competing theme-topic analysis must be abandoned.

Recall, however, that this conclusion reopens the puzzle of the verbal prefix. How is it that a verbal prefix in Acehnese registers the person and politeness features of the agent of a passive? I turn to this question immediately.

5. The Verbal Prefix as v. Given the conclusion of the previous sections that the LE-construction in Acehnese is a passive, the fact that the verb registers agreement with the agent is remarkable. I repeat illustrative examples below.

(45) a. Aneuk miet nyan meu-tingkue lé kamoe.
    child small that 1excl-carry by us(excl)
‘The child is carried by us.’

b. Aneuk miet nyan neu-tingkue lé droeneuh.
   child small that 2Pol-carry by you.Pol
   ‘The child is carried by you.’

c. Aneuk miet nyan geu-tingkue lé gopnyan.
   child small that 3Pol-carry by him/her.Pol
   ‘The child is carried by him/her.’

I argue that the Acehnese verbal prefix is not a clausal agreement marker (e.g. associated with finite INFL, as assumed by Durie 1988), but rather the morphological realization of the functional head that introduces the external argument. We have already seen evidence in section 3 above that when the clause is truncated to the VP, the prefix is omitted, whereas the prefix appears in nonfinite (control) clauses. Thus, we know that the prefix is associated with a projection above VP, but is not associated with finiteness. However, we can place the morpheme more precisely.

First, consider its positioning with respect to functional heads outside the verb phrase. It appears low in the clausal structure, below modals, negation, aspect (all of which are free morphemes):

   (s)he may 3Pol-eat CL mango that
   ‘He may eat the mango.’

b. Gopnyan hana geu-poh asée nyan baroe.
   (s)he Neg 3Pol-hit dog that yesterday
   ‘He didn’t hit the dog yesterday.’

c. Gopnyan teungoh geu-plueng jinoe.
   (s)he Prog 3Pol-run now
   ‘He is running now.’
d. Gopnyan ka geu-kalon buya nyan.
   (s)he Perf 3Pol-see crocodile that
   ‘He has seen the crocodile.’

If this were clausal agreement morphology, in contrast, we would normally expect it to be associated with a high functional projection in the clause (e.g. INFL). Indeed, attempts to place the morpheme on higher modal or aspecual markers results in ungrammaticality:

    you.Pol 2- must Perf 2- eat meat
    ‘You must have eaten meat.’

    person female that 3Pol- Prog 3Pol- cook rice
    ‘The woman is cooking rice.’

So, the higher bound of its possible syntactic positions is below aspect. We can identify the lower bound by considering verb phrase internal morphemes. When there is a causative morpheme, the prefix appears outside the causative morpheme, not on the lexical root, 48, (on Acehnese causatives, see Cowan 1981:536-538, Durie 1985:78-86, Asyik 1987:84-92, Ko 2008).

(48) a. Hasan geu-peu-reubah aneuk nyan.
    Hasan 3Pol-Cause-fall child small
    ‘Hasan caused the child to fall.’

b. Hasan geu-peu-raya rumoh gopnyan.
    Hasan 3Pol-Cause-big house (s)he
    ‘Hasan enlarges his house.’

Although causative morphemes have been analysed as instances of _v_ (e.g. Svenonius 2001, Folli & Harley 2004, Travis 2005, Harley 2008), other work has argued for a distinction
between a head that introduces causation but no argument, and a head that introduces the external argument (e.g. Pylkkänen 1999b, 2008; Marantz 2001; Alexiadou et al 2006; Schäfer 2008; Serratos 2008; Tubino Blanco 2010; Harley to appear). In Acehnese, both heads can be overtly morphologically realized, with the causative head inside the head that introduces the external argument, as expected on semantic grounds. In this vein, it is instructive to return to restructuring. I argued in section 3 that restructuring predicates like *cuba* ‘try’ and *ci* ‘try’ embed a truncated structure lacking the projection that introduces the external argument. The prefix registering the features of the agent is accordingly eliminated. The causative head, however, remains, indicating that it is independent of, and lower than, the head introducing the external argument:

(49) Peurahò nyan gen-cuba peu-ngop lé ureueng agam nyan.

    boat    that 3Pol-try Cause-sink by person male that

    ‘The boat was tried to be sunk by that man.’

    (i.e. ‘The man tried to sink the boat.’)

Researchers that separate the head introducing the external argument from the head introducing causation often refer to the former as the head of VoiceP and the latter as the head of vP. I do not follow this convention here for the sole reason that vP as the head that introduces the external argument is more familiar, and the VoiceP vs vP distinction is not central to this paper (but see Legate 2011a). The crucial observation here is that the prefix appears between aspect and cause, in the structural position of the projection that introduces the external argument:

(50)
Furthermore, unlike clausal agreement, the prefix shows a close relationship with the external argument introduced by \( \overline{\text{v}} \). It invariably registers features of the external argument, not the surface subject. In the absence of an external argument, i.e. with unaccusative, 53, or nonverbal predicates, 54, the prefix is simply absent (thus the split-S property discussed in Asyik 1982, Durie 1985, and subsequent).

(51) Transitive

a. Lôn ka lôn-jok boh mamplam keu ureung inong nyan.
   I Perf 1sg-give CL mango to person female that
   ‘I already gave the mango to the woman.’

b. Droeneuh ka neu-jok boh mamplam keu ureung inong nyan.
   you.Pol Perf 2Pol-give CL mango to person female that
   ‘You already gave the mango to the woman.’

c. Ibrahim geu-jok boh mamplam keu Fatima.
   Ibrahim 3Pol-give CL mango to Fatima
   ‘Ibrahim gave the mango to Fatima.’
31(52) Unergative

a. Lôn lôn-duek ateueh kursi.
   I 1-sit above chair
   ‘I sat on the chair.’

b. Ureueng agam nyan geu-plueng.
   person male that 3Pol-run
   ‘The man is running.’

c. Aneuk miet nyan di-meulangue.
   child small that 3Fam-swim
   ‘The child swam’

(53) Unaccusative

a. Lôn ka (*lôn)-reubah.
   1sg Perf 1sg-fall
   ‘I fell.’

b. Dokto ka (*geu)-troh.
   doctor Perf 3Pol-arrive
   ‘The doctor arrived.’

c. Ureueng (*geu)-meunggai.
   person 3Pol-leave
   ‘The person died.’

(54) Nonverbal

a. Rumoh Hasan raya.
   house Hasan big.
   ‘Hasan’s house is big.’

b. Hasan teungoh seunang that.
   Hasan Prog happy very
‘Hasan is very happy.’

With psychological verbs, the prefix appears to be optional:

(55)  a. Ibrahim geu-galak keu Fatima.

    Ibrahim 3Pol-like to Fatima

    ‘Ibrahim likes Fatima.’

  b. Ibrahim galak keu Fatima.

    Ibrahim like to Fatima

    ‘Ibrahim likes Fatima.’

Asyik 1982 argues, however, that the alternation is indicative of an agentive/experiencer alternation: the prefix occurs when the subject is an agent, and is absent when it is an experiencer. In the following quote, he refers to the prefix as ‘pfx AM’ (for prefixal agreement marker). (He also refers to a ‘sfx AM’, an optional verbal suffix typically related to the thematic object; this suffix has not arisen naturally in my data.)

As a native speaker I have the feeling that when the verb galak ‘to like’, for instance, is used with the sfx AM the subject is the experiencer, but when it is used with the pfx AM the subject is the doer – in the sense that he makes a conscious effort to have the feeling denoted by the verb. (Asyik 1982:16)

He provides the following example, naturally uttered in a situation in which the speaker is accused of hating a cat:

(56)   Hana lôn-banci keu mie nyan.

    Neg 1sg-hate at cat that

    ‘I don’t (make an effort to) hate the cat.’ (Asyik 1982:16)

Durie 1985 (p56-57) makes a similar observation, that verbs like galak ‘to like’ are “also used in an intentional sense, with an Agent liker”, providing the following example, of
which he comments “the liker gata ‘you’ is thought of as being able to choose to like the girl.”

(57) Gata bek ta-galak keu dara nyan.

you Neg.Hort 2Fam-like to girl that

‘Don’t you take a fancy to that girl.’ (Durie 1985:57)

If we assume (as argued by e.g. McGinnis 2001, Cuervo 2003, Adger & Ramchand 2007) that experiencer subjects are generated in an applicative phrase rather than in vP, these data again indicate that prefix appears only in the presence of the head that assigns the external thematic role.

Finally, the prefix patterns like voice morphemes in related languages in its obligatory absence in the object voice (e.g. for Indonesian/Malay dialects see Chung 1976; Sneddon 1996; Cole, Hermon, Yanti 2008; Aldridge 2008). 33 58 illustrates for Acehnese object voice.

(58) Aneuk miet nyan uleue nyan (*di)-kap.

child small that snake that 3Fam-bite

‘The snake bit the child.’

a. Aneuk miet nyan akan ureueng inong nyan (*geu)-tingkue.

child small that will person female that 3-Pol-carry.in.cloth

‘The woman will carry the child.’

This identical patterning is notable in that the relevant morphemes in related languages do not exhibit agreement. For example, Indonesian exhibits the active prefix meN and the passive prefix di. The single set of Acehnese agreement prefixes subsumes both these environments. The following illustrates for Indonesian the prefixes on the active and passive and the absence of the prefix on the object voice.

(59) Indonesian
a. Active

Kami tidak akan mem-baca buku ini.
1pl not will Active-read book this
‘We will not read this book.’

b. Passive

Buku ini tidak akan di-baca (oleh) Siti.
book this not will Pass-read by Siti
‘This book will not be read by Siti.’

c. Object Voice

Buku ini tidak akan kami baca.
book this not will 1pl read
‘This book will not be read by us.’ (Cole, Hermon, & Yanti 2008:1512)

Moreover, in some varieties of related languages (see e.g. Chung 1978 on informal Indonesian; Cole & Hermon 1998 on Singaporean Malay; Cole, Hermon, & Yanti 2008 on Mudung Darat Malay), the active prefix is optional, while the passive prefix is obligatory. My consultants from Lho-nga and Aceh Utara also show this additional sensitivity to voice; thus, despite the fact that the same set of prefixes is used in the active and passive, the prefix is optional in the active, but obligatory in the passive. The following data are from my Lho-nga consultant.

(60)  

a. Jih (i)-peu-luka droen

s/he 3Fam-Cause-wound you.Pol
“He hurt you”

b. Droen *(i)-peuluka lé jih

you.Pol 3Fam-Case-wound by him/her
“You were hurt by him”
I conclude that the Acehnese prefix is located in \( v \). Let us now consider possible analyses. To begin, consider whether the prefix should be analysed as agreement with the agent. Agreement is a term that is used in many different ways, for phenomena that are syntactically and/or morphologically distinct (see Corbett 2006 for a recent survey). It is clear that in a broad sense the prefix may be termed agreement: it is a dependent morpheme that registers the features of an argument. I am interested here in a more theoretically precise question: is the prefix agreement in a syntactic sense, i.e. the morphological reflex of a syntactic relationship between a functional head and an argument? I assume that this syntactic relationship is established through closest c-command (see Chomsky’s (2000 and subsequent) Agree operation). I argue that the prefix is not agreement in this sense.

There are two main difficulties with analysing the prefix as agreement. First, in a handful of situations the preverbal morpheme does not consist of material that is plausibly analysed as agreement. One type of example consists of a full pronoun in place of the prefix. Only a subset of pronouns allow for this possibility (lontuwan ‘I’, kamoe ‘we (exclusive)’, gata ‘you’ (Asyik 1987: 274)).

\[\text{(61) Kamoe kamoe=préh bak meulasah.}\]

\[\text{we.Excl we.Excl=wait at village.centre}\]

‘We are waiting at the village centre.’ (Asyik 1987:274)
Crucially, the pronoun in such examples occupies the prefixal position, as can be illustrated by its placement after verb phrase-external functional projections, like that headed by modals:

(62)  a. Kamoe meusti kamoe=jak jinoe.
       we.Excl must we.Excl=go now
       ‘We must leave now.’

       b. * Kamoe kamoe=meusti jak jinoe.
          we.Excl we.Excl=must go now
          ‘We must leave now.’ (Asyik 1987:275)

A more striking type of example involves a kinship term or title replacing the prefix (e.g. ayah father, guru ‘teacher’), resulting in a second person interpretation. In this case, the kinship term or title alternates with a second person prefix. One of my consultants commented that such examples are more polite than use of the 2nd person polite pronoun and prefix droe(neuh) ... neu-. The examples in 63 illustrate the use of a kinship term / title with a second person prefix, and 64 illustrate a kinship term / title substituting for the second person prefix.

(63)  a. Macut han jeuet neu-woe meunyo goh lom bu.
       aunt NEG can 2Pol-go.home if not.yet rice
       ‘You aunt cannot go home if you have not eaten rice with us yet.’

       b. Teungku neu-piyoh u dalam.
          religious.scholar 2Pol-rest to inside
          ‘You teungku, please rest inside here.’

(64)  a. Macut h’an jeuet macut=woe meunyo golom bu
       aunt NEG can aunt-go.home if not.yet rice
'You aunt cannot go home if you have not eaten rice with us yet.' (Asyik 1987:275)

b. Teungku = piyōh u dalam
   religious.scholar religious.scholar-rest to inside

Again, the kinship term or title appears in place of the prefix, below verb-phrase external functional projections; see 64a and the following:

(65) * Macut macut=h’an jeuet woe meunyo golum bu.
     aunt aunt=NEG can go.home if not.yet rice
     ‘You aunt cannot go home if you have not eaten rice with us yet.’ (Asyik 1987:275)

Asyik 1987:275 states that the pronouns, kinship terms, and titles are cliticized to the verb: they are inseparable from the verb, and do not receive independent stress.

This phenomenon differentiates the prefix from agreement. The substitution of a kinship term or title for a pronoun in formal discourse contexts is well-attested crosslinguistically, and is prevalent in the languages of the region. In English we find Your Honour, My Lady, Holy Father, and so on, 66.

(66) a. “what your majesty is pleased to attribute to me as profound perspicacity is simply owing to chance” (Alexandre Dumas, The Count of Monte-Cristo)

     b. “If Your Honor can hang a boy at eighteen, some other judge can hang him at seventeen, or sixteen, or fourteen.” (Clarence Darrow’s Closing Argument in the Trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, 1924)

This type of usage, found only in very formal situations in English, is much more prevalent in many languages, e.g. Wallace (1983:577) describes Jakarta Malay:
Paired with /kitɛ/ and /saya/ ‘I’ to indicate the addressee in most circumstances are not personal pronouns but kinship terms, titles, and personal names. For example, a young person just meeting another named /udun/ might use /kitɛ/ for himself and /udun/ instead of a pronoun to refer to his interlocutor; or /baŋ ṭomli/ ‘older brother Romli’ instead of a pronoun for ‘you’ with a somewhat older male addressee. If the addressee is of considerably higher status, the speaker uses /saya/ ‘I’, and a kinship term (e.g. /ibuʔ/ ‘mother’) or title (e.g. /tuan/ ‘mister’) in place of a pronoun for ‘you’.

An example from Malay follows:

(67) Grandson to grandfather

“atuk kidal-la. Ni kalau main gitar ‘rock’ cepat popla ni grandpa left-handed-EMPH this if play guitar rock fast popular this tuk ...”

grandpa

‘Grandpa (=you) is left-handed, grandpa. (You) would become popular very quickly if (you) played rock guitar.’ (Koh 1990:133)

Goddard (2005:19-20) describes a similar situation for Thai (where names are used to avoid pronouns), so does Kenesei (1998:267) for Hungarian (where names and titles are used to avoid pronouns); also note the use for formal second person of o senhor / a senhora in Portuguese, and of hadritak ‘your grace’ in Egyptian Arabic. Examples multiply. These pronoun-replacements may trigger the agreement expected of them in other contexts, or may appear with the agreement expected of the pronoun they replace; Corbett provides the following from Tamil:

(68) a. Mohan peecur-een

Mohan speak.PRES-1sg
‘Mohan speaking.’ (literally ‘Mohan am speaking’)

b. Ammaa edo paNNaa por-een.

mother something do go.PRES-1sg

‘Mother is going to do something.’ (literally ‘am’) (Corbett 2006:161)

In stark contrast, the substitution of a kinship term or title for an agreement affix is entirely unexpected on crosslinguistic grounds. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge, such a situation is unattested (in addition to language descriptions, see inter alia Siewierska 2004; Corbett 1991, 2000, 2006; Harbour et al 2008; Song 2011). The Acehnese prefix is not patterning as agreement in this respect.

The second main difficulty with an agreement analysis lies in the trigger. Syntactic agreement must be between a head and an XP, but an appropriate XP is not available in the Acehnese constructions. This is the case in both the active and passive, although perhaps more acutely so in the passive. In the active, the agent is in the wrong structural position to be able to trigger agreement, in the specifier of v rather than in its complement. Although specifier-head agreement is commonly assumed, it standardly crucially involves movement of an XP from below the agreeing head to the specifier of this head (hence Chomsky’s (2000) reanalysis in terms of in-situ Agree plus subsequent movement to the specifier position). This instance would be crucially different in involving agreement between a head and a DP base-generated in its specifier; no movement is involved.

Therefore we would need to invoke a new type of specifier-head agreement, call it inherent agreement (on analogy with inherent case). Although I acknowledge an inherent agreement analysis is conceivable for the active case, it is not for the passive.

Consider what could be triggering the agreement in the passive. The agent in the lé-phrase is is too deeply embedded (inside a PP), and in the wrong structural position (adjoined to vP) to be able to agree with v. Furthermore, in the passive, the lé-phrase is optional (as discussed in section 4 above), but the prefix is obligatory.
Therefore, the prefix in the passive cannot be agreement triggered by the agent in the lé-phrase. In line with the inherent agreement possibility for the active, could it be agreement triggered by an implicit agent in the specifier of vP? If so, this agent would need to appear even in the presence of a by-phrase, otherwise we would expect the agreement only in the absence of a by-phrase, contrary to fact. The empirical arguments against this approach are identical to those against a pronominal analysis of the prefix, so I present them together.\[37\]

We have already seen one argument against a pronominal analysis of the prefixes in section 4, where I showed that in a passive with the prefix but no lé-phrase, the interpretation was existential not pronominal, 44 above, repeated in 70 below.

\[(70)\]  
\[(69)\] Aneuk miet nyan *(di-)kap (lé ure uleue nyan)  
\[
\text{child small that 3Fam-bite (by dog that)}
\]

\[“The child was bitten (by the dog)”\]

An additional argument comes from binding properties. If the prefix is pronominal, we expect it to behave as a pronoun for binding. The following example, which exploits the possibility for the grammatical subject position to be left empty,\[38\] illustrates that the prefix does not trigger a Condition C violation when coindexed with an R-expression embedded inside the object.\[39\]
I conclude that neither an agreement or pronominal analysis of the prefix is appropriate. Let us develop an alternative. We need an analysis that allows the features of the prefix to be interpretable, but not pronominal. The location of the prefix in \_v\_ where the external argument \( \theta \)-role is introduced but not yet saturated, provides for just such an analysis. I propose that the features modify the external argument position, but do not saturate it. Thus, for example, the \_v\_ morphologically realized as \textit{geu-} introduces an external argument position, specifying that it bears an \textit{Initiator} \( \theta \)-role,\footnote{\textit{Initiator}} bears third person features, and is of a rank higher than the speaker. More formally, Chung & Ladusaw (2004) propose two modes of semantic combination: (i) \textit{Saturation} satisfies the argument position through function application or existential closure; and (ii) \textit{Predicate Restriction}, modifies the argument position, which must then be satisfied either through function application or quantificational binding. They provide as an example of Predicate Restriction, object incorporation in Chamorro.\footnote{\textit{Predicate Restriction}} In 72, ‘pet’ restricts the object position of ‘have’, and then the object position is saturated by ‘cat’.

\begin{equation}
\text{(72) G\={a}i-ga' \quad yu' k\=atu, lao matai}
\end{equation}

\text{Agr.haye-pet I \quad cat \quad but Agr.die}

“I had a pet cat, but it died” (Chung & Ladusaw 1998:76)

From this perspective, the Acehnese prefix can be understood as an instance of predicate restriction applying internally to the \_v\_ head. Just as ‘pet’ restricts the object position in 72, ‘third person of lower rank than speaker’ restricts the subject position in 73.\footnote{\textit{Predicate Restriction}}

\begin{equation}
\text{(73) a. Uleue nyan di-kap \quad l\=on.}
\end{equation}

\text{snake that \quad 3Fam-bite me}
'The snake bit me.'

b. Lôn di-kap lé uleue nyan.
   I 3Fam-bite by snake that

'I was bitten by the snake.'

Subsequent to predicate modification, in 73a, the external argument position is saturated by ‘that snake’, while in 73b, the position is existentially bound.43

This analysis successfully explains the core properties of the prefix. It appears in the passive, and in the active with transitive and unergative but not unaccusative predicates, because these are the predicates that include an external-argument introducing v. It appears low in the tree, at the high edge of the verb phrase, because it realizes v. It tracks the features of the thematic subject, rather than the surface subject, because its features semantically restrict the thematic subject position, rather than being semantically uninterpretable agreement. The explanation of these properties are achieved without adding additional syntactic or semantic machinery. All of the elements of the analysis: φ-features, an external-argument introducing functional projection v, and the predicate restriction mode of composition are independently required. What makes Acehnese unusual is simply the particular combination of these three elements.44

It is instructive to compare the proposed analysis of the Acehnese prefix with the analysis of Perlmutter 1982. Perlmutter (working within the Relational Grammar framework) proposes the following:45

(74)  Verb Agreement in Achenese

The verb of a clause b agrees with the initial 1 of the clause.

where the initial 1 is a noun phrase that bears the subject grammatical function at an initial stage in the derivation. He takes this agreement in Acehnese as strong argument for the necessity of an initial 1, and thus for a demotion analysis of the passive and for the
unergative/unaccusative distinction. The proposal developed here adopts significant elements of the analysis he advocates. The three-way distinction between an initial subject position (now identified with the specifier of vP), a surface subject position (now identified with the specifier of IP), and the initial object position are now standard, as is the unergative/unaccusative distinction. The demotion analysis of the passive, however, is of a different nature on the framework assumed here, in that the relationship between a subject and an adjunct cannot be simply captured through base-generation and upwards movement. The proposal here avoids these issues by identifying the agreement with the functional head that introduces the external argument, rather than agreement triggered by the argument itself. Perlmutter argues against a thematic analysis of the Acehnese agreement, for example one in which the verb agrees with the agent of the clause, noting that initial subjects of different θ-roles all trigger the agreement. A few of his examples follow.46 The first two illustrate agreement triggered by a non-agent, the second two illustrate a recipient subject triggering agreement, but not a recipient object.

(75) a. Bubóng nyan ji-tumpang lé tamēh.
   roof Dem 3Fam-support by column
   ‘The roof is supported by columns.’

b. Lôn ji-peu-ingat gadoh gopnyan lé haba.
   I 3Fam-Cause-remember lost s/he by story
   ‘I was reminded of his disappearance by a message.’ (Perlmutter 1982:330)

c. Gopnyan geu-teurimong surat.
   s/he 3Pol-receive letter
   ‘He received a letter.’

d. Gopnyan ka geu-bri buku nyan keu kamoe.
   s/he Perf 3Pol-give book Dem to we.Excl
   ‘He gave a book to us.’ (Perlmutter 1982:331)
This argument does not impact the current proposal. Although the prefix realizes the features of the head that introduces the thematic subject, there is no relationship posited between the prefix and any particular $\theta$-role. All and only those DPs that are external arguments will be accompanied by the prefix, regardless of their thematic interpretation.  

6. Conclusions In this paper, I have demonstrated that Acehnese has a passive in which a verbal prefix bears person and politeness features of the (implicit) agent. The same prefix in the active bears person and politeness features of the external argument. I have developed an analysis whereby the prefix realizes interpretable features of the functional head that introduces the external argument. These features restrict, but do not saturate, the external argument position. Acehnese understood in this way clearly demonstrates the existence in the passive of the functional head that introduces the external argument. I have also demonstrated that Acehnese exhibits evidence of a grammatical subject position; thus, the language should no longer be cited as evidence that grammatical functions are not universal.
Notes

1 Unreferenced data are from my consultant notes. Thank you to my Acehnese consultants Saiful Mahdi, Dian Rubianty, Abdul Jalil, Cut Zahara, and Muhammad Zaki for teaching me about their language. Saiful speaks a mixture of the Pidie and Banda Aceh dialects; Dian speaks the Banda Aceh dialect; Abdul and Cut speak the North Aceh dialect; Zaki speaks a variety of the Banda Aceh dialect spoken in Lho-nga. Acehnese examples are written largely following the orthography of Daud & Durie 1999. Some of the data were collected in conjunction with two field methods classes, one at the University of Cornell and the other at the University of Pennsylvania; I thank my co-teachers, Abby Cohn and Gene Buckley, and the participants in both classes. This work was partially supported by a grant from the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University, held jointly by me and Abby Cohn. Thank you to Heidi Harley, Howard Lasnik, and the audiences at the East and Southeast Asian Linguistics Discussion Group at Cornell University (2007), the 39th Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society at Cornell University (2008), Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association XVII at Stony Brook University (2010), GLOW in Asia VIII in Beijing (2010), the North East Linguistic Society at the University of Pennsylvania (2010), and at the Linguistics Colloquium Series at UCLA (2008), Rutgers University (2010), the University of Delaware (2011), and Georgetown University (2011) for comments and discussion on (earlier versions of) (parts of) this work. Thank you also to two anonymous Language reviewers for comments which led to improvements throughout.

2 Acehnese, also known as Aceh, Atjeh, Atjehnese, Achinese, and Achehnese, is an Austronesian language of the Malayo-Polynesian branch spoken by approximately three million people, mainly in the costal area of Aceh Province, the northern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia.

3 Lawler’s own position on Acehnese evolved; already in the 1977 paper, his first footnote disavows the Relational Grammar framework he uses for analysis of the construction as a passive, and in his 1988 reply to Durie, he concludes that Acehnese can be adequately described both with the notion subject (as in Asyik 1987), and without it (as in Durie 1985).

4 The Acehnese data provides additional differentiation among analyses. For example, Collins 2005 also proposes that y is present in passives, but claims that the thematic subject is in fact present in the specifier of vP, either as a null PROARB or as the overt DP previously thought to be embedded in a by-phrase (thus the by-phrase not being a prepositional phrase at all). My data is not compatible with such an analysis. We will see in section 5 evidence that the LE-phrase patterns as a prepositional phrase in the passive, in contrast with an in situ agent in the object voice. See Legate 2010b, in preparation, for further discussion of the contrast between passive and object voice. When the by-phrase is absent, the prefix continues to
register specific features of the agent, thus there cannot be a thematic subject \( \text{PRO}_{ARB} \); nor can there be a thematic subject pro, since the passive without the by-phrase is not pronominal either for the interpretation or for binding, see section 5.

5 Unlike English, filling this position appears to be non-obligatory, see 4 and 71, and footnote 38.

6 Acehnese does not exhibit tense marking. The tenses used in the translations are those provided when the data were collected; other tense translations are possible.

7 Other quantificational DPs are allowed in the initial position; see section 4.1.

8 The question complementizer pene is also the wh-word ‘what’.

9 although a hanging topic with comma intonation is possible.

10 See Legate 2010b, in preparation, for a fuller consideration of Acehnese object voice as contrasted with the LE-construction. This construction is described in Asyik 1982 and Asyik 1987 as the agent serving as an agreement “substitute” (since the agreement prefix is lost, see section 4.2), and in Durie 1985:205-207 and Asyik 1987 as agent cliticization. For the Indonesian cognate, sometimes referred to as passive type 2, see for example Chung 1976, Guilfoyle, Hung, & Travis 1992, Arka & Manning 1998, Cole, Hermon, & Yanti 2008.

11 It is indeed a restriction on A’-movement, not just topicalization. A’-movement over the initial DP in relative clauses and wh-questions is ungrammatical (e.g. Durie 1985) or disfavoured, perhaps with some sensitivity to the presence or absence of the verbal prefix, and perhaps with dialectal variation. For example, relativization or wh-movement of an object (or of a DP from an embedded clause) is only consistently accepted as fully grammatical by my consultants if the initial DP position is not filled. Given the complexity of the issues involved, and given that they are not central to the present discussion, I leave them aside for future research.

12 I do provide an analysis in Legate 2011b, whereby only a single high specifier position is available for checking of both the subject A-features and the DP A’-features (due to failure of Chomsky’s 2008 Inheritance operation). See that work for details.

13 He referred to this as being able to undergo Equi Deletion.

14 They assumed, as I do, that only subjects may be controlled PRO; see also Manning 1996.

15 Henceforth I will gloss le as ‘by’, in anticipation of my analysis.

16 Durie attributes this sentence as Lawler 1977:[8a], but the correct citation is [10a]. Durie standardizes Lawler’s spelling and improves his glosses and translations, thus I cite Durie’s version of the data rather than Lawler’s. I have adjusted Durie’s glossing slightly (e.g. glossing le as by, separating out causative
morphemes, using **Pol** for Polite and **Fam** for Familiar), and I have corrected typos (e.g. in the following example *jih* is the familiar 3 pronoun, not the polite).

This is a slight simplification, in that the causative morpheme may appear. See section 5 below for discussion.


Thank you to Heidi Harley for pointing this out.

Durie cites this example from Lawler 1977, and retains Lawler’s translation as ‘He is considered by the judge to have stolen that cow.’ In the immediately following text, Durie argues that the translation is inaccurate, so I have amended it accordingly.

As noted by Heidi Harley (pc), the inability of VP to extrapose may be explained by the fact that it is not a phase, in the sense of Chomsky 2000 and subsequent.

The restructuring analysis may also explain conflicting judgements as inter-speaker variation in the class of restructuring predicates. Durie 1987:373 reports the following as ungrammatical, whereas all my consultants find it grammatical. (This includes my speakers from the North Aceh dialect, which is the dialect spoken by Durie’s consultants.)

```
i. % Aneuk agam nyan ji-t´ em geu-peur´ eksa l´ e dokto
    child   male   that  3Fam-want 3Pol-examine by doctor
    ‘That boy wants to be examined by the doctor.’ (Durie 1987:373)
```

This is explained if the speakers Durie consulted use *t´ em* ‘want’ only as a restructuring predicate, whereas those I consulted allow a control structure. This would also explain the ungrammaticality for Durie’s consultants of an unaccusative predicate under *t´ em* ‘want’: the embedded verb in a restructuring structure is semantically interpreted as sharing the same thematic subject as the embedding verb, and yet the unaccusative verb cannot have a thematic subject. Durie’s example follows:

```
i. * Gopnyan geu-t´ em rh¨ et.
    s/he   3Pol-want fall
    ‘(S)he wants to fall.’ (Durie 1987:373)
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Note that on Durie’s analysis the restriction against embedded unaccusatives must simply be imposed by fiat, e.g. Durie (1987:373) states that “the controlee must be an Actor.” On the restructuring analysis, the restriction is explained, as detailed above.
In my Lho-nga consultant’s dialect, the verb is useuha rather than usaha; he suggested ‘try, attempt, effort’ as possible alternative translations.

My Lho-nga consultant consistently translates the verb peurëksa as ‘diagnose’, so I have changed the gloss and translation accordingly.

These data are neutral with respect to the two analyses, since the underlying and surface c-command relationships of the subject and object are identical.

There is variability in the pronunciation of this complementizer.

That it may be questioned at all in the presence of a distinct surface subject would be surprising if it were a DP; see footnote 11.

The root of this word is koh ‘cut; harvest rice’; the function of the prefixes keu- and meu- are unclear; see Cowan 1981 for discussion.

Pro-drop does not seem possible for the agent in the object voice.

Lawler (1977:224 ftn11) remarks that the lé-phrase is not omissible, unlike the English by-phrase. Durie (1988:108 ftn 8) states ”[t]his claim is false, and it is hard to understand L[awler]’s basis for making it. Sentences with the lé-phrase ‘deleted’ are not only perfectly acceptable, but are much more numerous in actual discourse than sentences with an overt lé-phrase.” Our consultants confirm that the lé-phrase can certainly be dropped. However, Lawler’s initial claim is understandable (indeed, several students in the field methods class I co-taught with Abby Cohn initially made the same claim): given the lack of a passive morpheme, the passive without a lé-phrase can be misinterpreted as an active out of context, and thus rejected by the consultant as ungrammatical (due to agreement/thematic/meaning mismatches).

This interpretation arises through existential closure of the argument position for the thematic subject.

The label VoiceP originates in Kratzer 1996, where she proposes that the head introducing the external argument is distinct from the lexical verb. The label vP originates with Chomsky 1995.

I leave aside the explanation of this pattern. One possibility is Sportiche’s (1992) Doubly Filled Voice Filter, adapted by Travis (2000) for Tagalog, Pearson (2001) for Malagasy, and Legate (2008) for Acehnese. Such an analysis of the object voice requires that the prefix is v: it claims that the head and specifier of vP cannot both be pronounced, thus identifying the prefix as the head of vP. See Legate, in preparation, for further discussion of the Acehnese case.

It is perhaps also worth mentioning that the World Atlas of Language Structures Online (wals.info) includes a category of ‘pronouns avoided for politeness’ (listing Burmese, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese), but does not include any such category in any of the sections relevant to
agreement.

Note also that it would not fall under the type of agreement between a head and its base-generated specifier that is proposed in Béjar & Rezac 2009. (As may be expected – the Acehnese case shows none of the person hierarchy effects that are the core issue of Béjar & Rezac’s paper.) In their examples, it is crucial that the head first attempts to agree with an element in its complement (Chomsky’s Agree operation); only if this attempt fails to produce (full) agreement do they propose that the head then agrees with its specifier. In the Acehnese case, agreement between \( v \) and an element in its complement would not fail (for transitive verbs) – the object would agree with \( v \). The fact that the Acehnese \( v \) shows agent agreement rather than object agreement indicates that the Agree operation does not apply – Acehnese \( v \) does not attempt to agree with an element in its complement.

Positing a null \( le \) phrase that is obligatory in the absence of an overt one would run afoul of the existential interpretation of the passive without a \( le \)-phrase; see section 4 above.

Collins 2005 proposes an analysis of the passive whereby the thematic subject position is always filled, but an implicit agent is analysed as \( PRO_{ARB} \); thus he avoids the prediction of a pronominal interpretation of the implicit agent. Such an avenue is not available for Acehnese, since the prefix registers specific person and politeness features of the implicit agent, not reduced or default features as would be expected of agreement with \( PRO_{ARB} \).

This possibility was noted in 4 above. For discussion of other languages in which the grammatical subject position may be left empty, see inter alia McCloskey 1996, Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, Doron 2000, Roberts 2005, and Cable, to appear (thank you to a reviewer for providing me with Cable’s paper).

These arguments equally rule out a clitic doubling analysis. A clitic in the absence of an associated DP would be interpreted as pronominal, and the scope of a DP related to a clitic is at least as high as the clitic. In addition, a clitic doubling analysis would not allow for the possibility of an indefinite linked to the prefix, as in:

i. Aneuk miet nyan hana ji-kap \( le \) sa peue pih.
   child small that Neg 3Fam-bite by one what even
   ‘The child wasn’t bitten by anything.’

ii. Aneuk miet nyan hana ji-kap \( le \) beurang-ka-peue.
   child small that Neg 3Fam-bite by any-PRT-what
   ‘The child wasn’t bitten by anything.’

I use Initiator as a inclusive $\theta$-role that abstracts away from the thematic distinctions among external arguments, following e.g. Ramchand 2008. See also Baker 1997, who argued for only three coarse-grained syntactic $\theta$-roles, and Hale & Keyser’s (2002) related reduction of $\theta$-roles to syntactic configurations.

For related work on the semantics of incorporation and pseudo-incorporation, see e.g. van Geenhoven 1998, Dayal 2010.

And the title restricts the subject position in 64. The association of second person features with the title is achieved for Acehnese in whatever manner it is achieved for the other languages cited.

More precisely, there are two $\mathrm{v}s$, an active and a passive. Both introduce an Initiator $\theta$-role and include features that restrict the Initiator; they differ in that the passive existentially binds the Initiator. The by-phrase is licensed by the passive $\mathrm{v}$, and incorporated into the structure by tying it to the event argument of the verb. See Legate 2011a for details.

One may wonder whether any other language has restrictive $\phi$-features. In Legate (2010a), I proposed that the Chamorro passive morpheme does as well. In Chamorro, implicit agents must be third person, the passive morpheme $\mathrm{ma}$- is used for plural (implicit) agents, whereas $\mathrm{-in}$ is used for singular (see e.g. Topping & Dungca 1973, Cooreman 1987, Chung 1998, 2004 for discussion).

This pattern is explained if the passive $\mathrm{v}$ morpheme $\mathrm{ma}$- has restrictive third person plural features, while $\mathrm{-in}$ has restrictive third person (singular).

Also related is Wiltschko 2008, which argues that the plural in Halkomelem Salish is an adjunct, modifying category-neutral roots.

Perlmutter follows Lawler’s spelling of Acehnese as ‘Achenese’.

Spelling has been standardized and glosses added.

In the active and passive; as mentioned above, the object voice morpheme is uniformly null.
A reviewer correctly points out that the Perlmutter's argument also does not impact a thematic agreement analysis that also employs a coarse-grained Initiator $\theta$-role.
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