Universal Grammar In West Sulawesi

Dan Brodkin
University of California, Santa Cruz
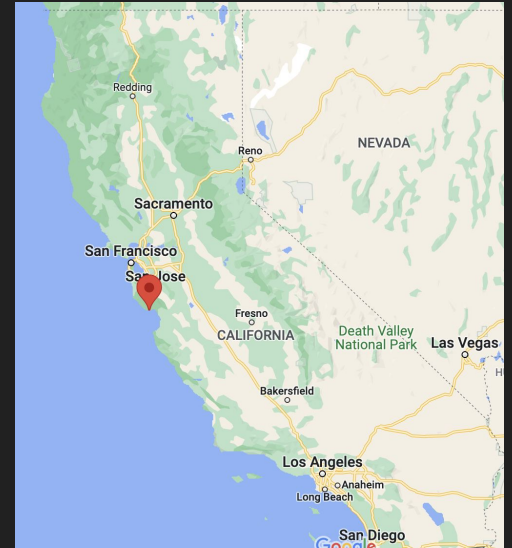**Bina Nusantara University**
August 9, 2022

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Part One:
The notion of Subject

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	Subject	Verb	Object

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  - Remains important: Modern linguistics   (Chomsky 1965)

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- In this talk, we will build a theory of subjecthood.

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- Chomsky 1965: "**The Theory of Universal Grammar**"

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(Chomsky 1965 et seq).

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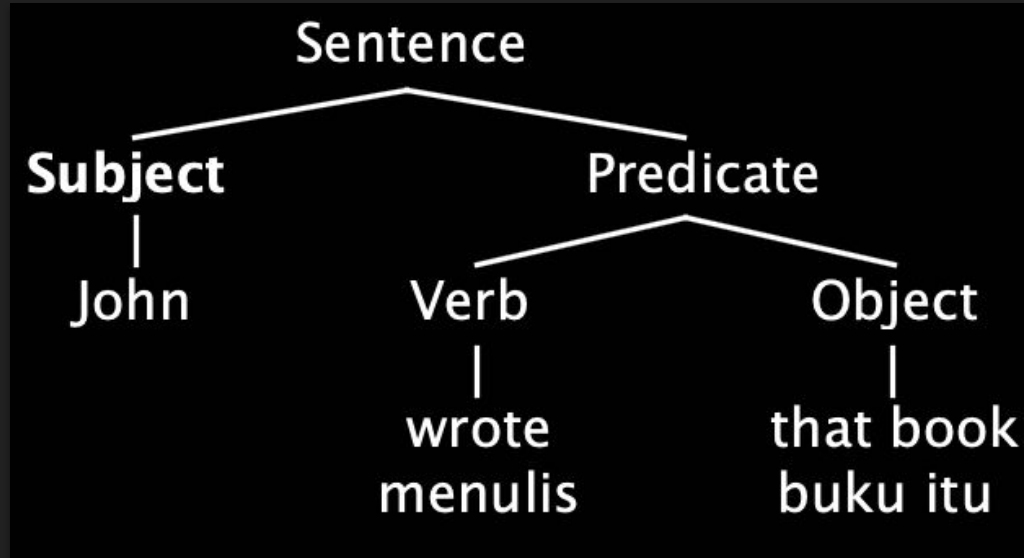
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  - In many languages, the subject always occurs before the predicate.

- This suggests that the universal theory is a good way to understand language.

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  in every language, do all sentences have this shape?
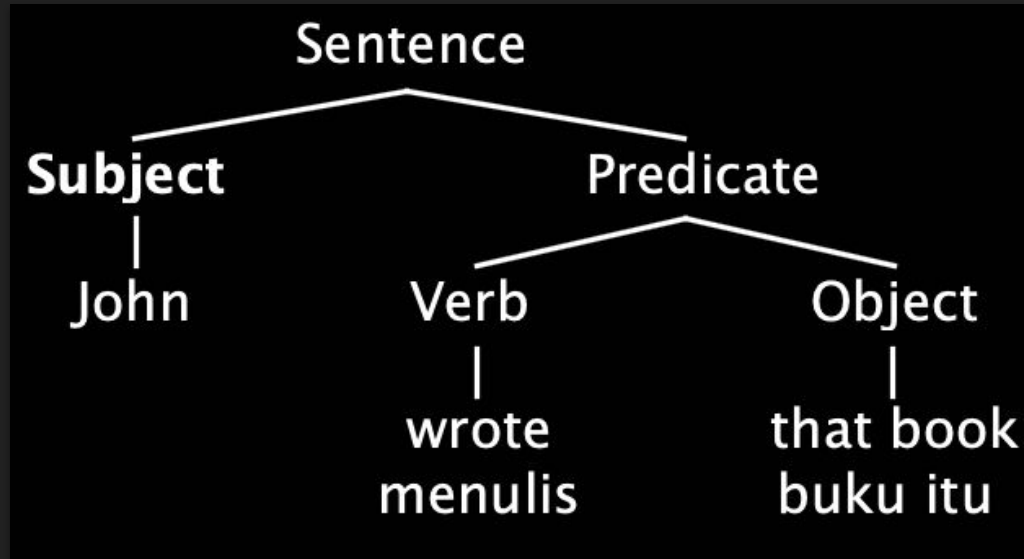
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- We can also ask a number of follow-up questions:

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  - Does every language have subjects?

  - Across different languages, do subjects have the same properties?

  - How can we understand variation between languages in this domain?

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1. Reviewing prior research on Bahasa Indonesia
2. Laying out new research on the languages of Sulawesi

Part Two:
Subjects in an Indonesian Context

The Starting Point

- Subjects have similar properties in languages all over the world.

$$(\text{Li \& Thomson 1976})$$

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(5) **John**   writes   books like that
(6) **John and Mary**   write   books like that

     Subject   **marking**

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(3)	**John**	wrote	that book
(4)	**John**	menulis	buku itu
(7)	**That book**	was written	by John
(8)	**Buku itu**	ditulis	oleh John
	Subject	passive verb	Agent

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(8)	**Buku itu**	ditulis__	oleh John
(9)	**Buku-buku itu**	ditulis__	oleh John

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Pasif Semu → **object** to the front, **agent** in place.

(10) **Buku ini**   **saya**   **tulis**
     Subject   **Agent**   **Pasif Semu**

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   but this does not require the agent to move to the end.

Compare the regular passive → **object** to the front, **agent** to the end.

(8) **Buku itu**   ditulis   oleh John
     Subject   **Passive**   **Agent**

The Emerging Theory

- From research on Indonesian, then, we might say:

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- From research on Indonesian, then, we might say:

    1. Subjects do not need to trigger agreement,
    2. The object can be a subject even if the agent stays in place, and
    3. The key factor is that subjects appear at the start of the sentence.

Part Three:
Subjects in Sulawesi

The Sulawesi Situation.

- We will have to refine this theory when we get to the island of Sulawesi.

The Quick Facts

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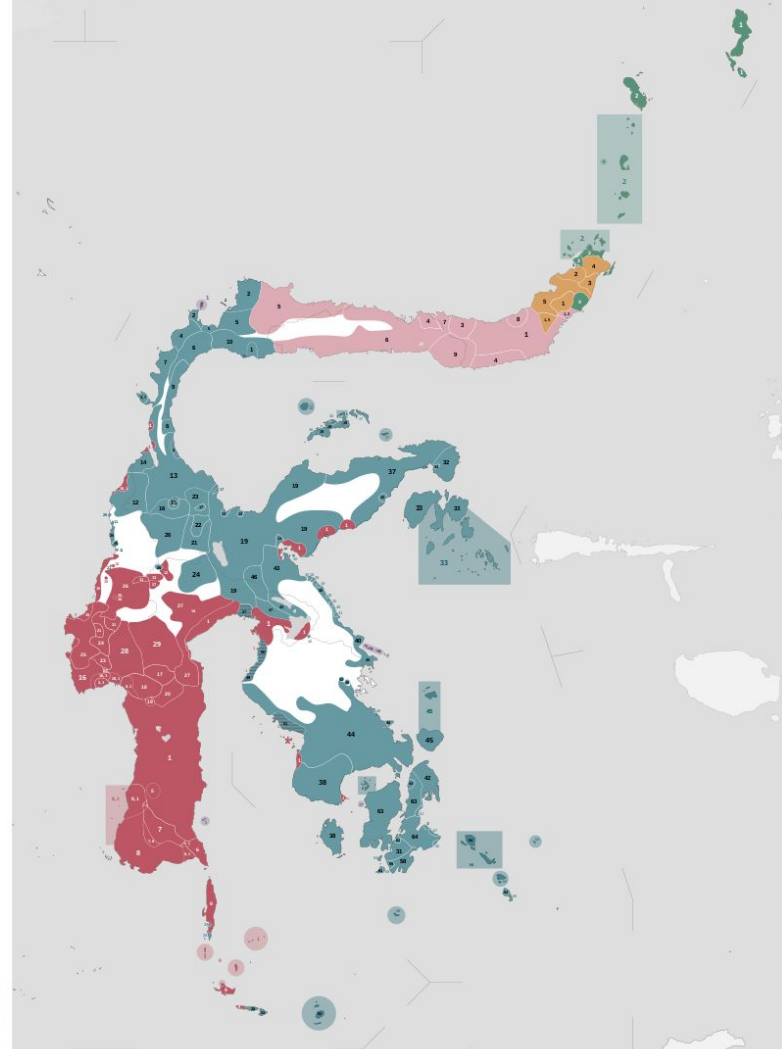 - A different word order.

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- Unlike Indonesian,
  these languages have…

  - A system of agreement, &
  - A different word order.

- This raises a puzzle.

Case Study: Mandar

- Our focus is on **Mandar**.

  - A regional language
    of West Sulawesi Province

  - South Sulawesi Subfamily
  - Northern Subgroup

  - This map → number 16

KALIMANTAN NOT SHOWN TO SCALE

BUGIS

BUGINESE
1. BUGINESE
2. CAMPALAGIAN

TAMANIC
3. EMBALOH
4. TAMAN

MAKASSARIC
5. BENTONG
6. COASTAL KONJO
7. HIGHLAND KONJO
8. MAKASSARESE
9. SELAYAR

SEKO
10. BUDONG-BUDONG
11. PANASUAN
12. SEKO PADANG
13. SEKO TENGAH

14. LEMOLANG

NORTHERN
15. MAMUJU
16. MANDAR
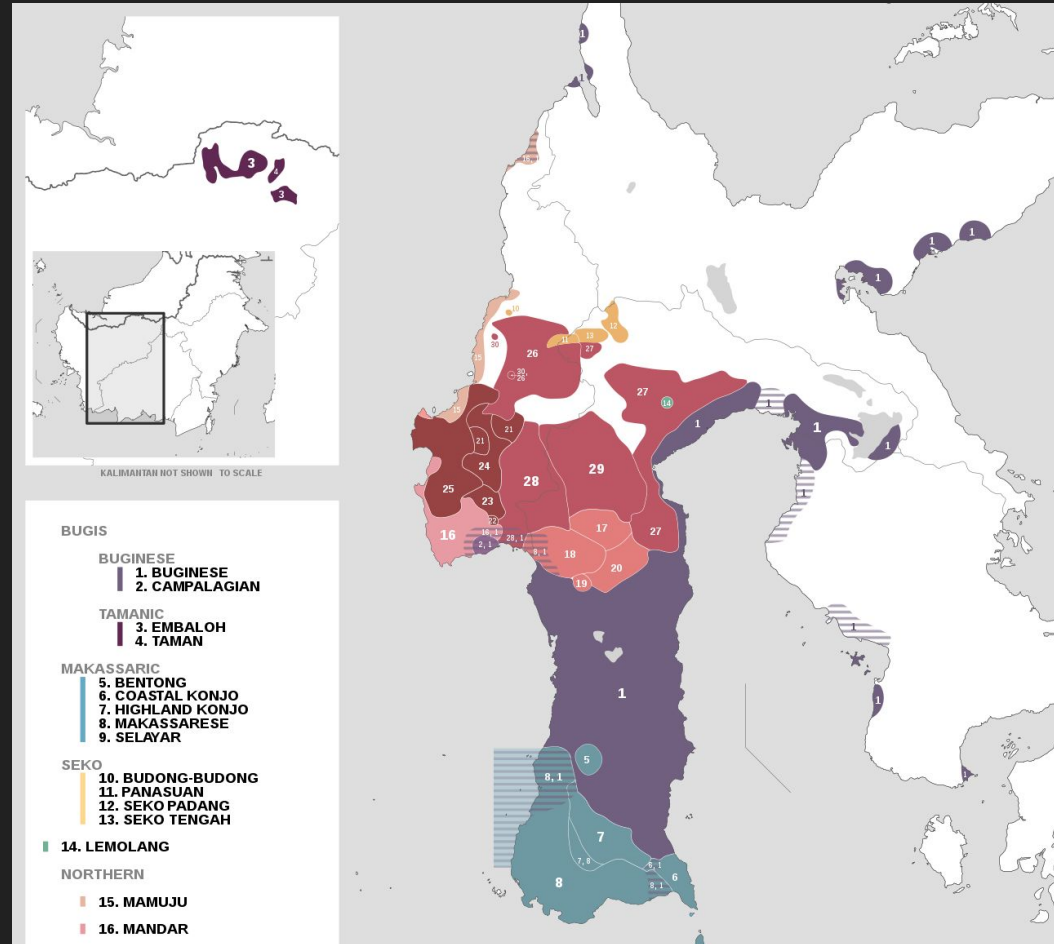
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- What will happen to our theory?

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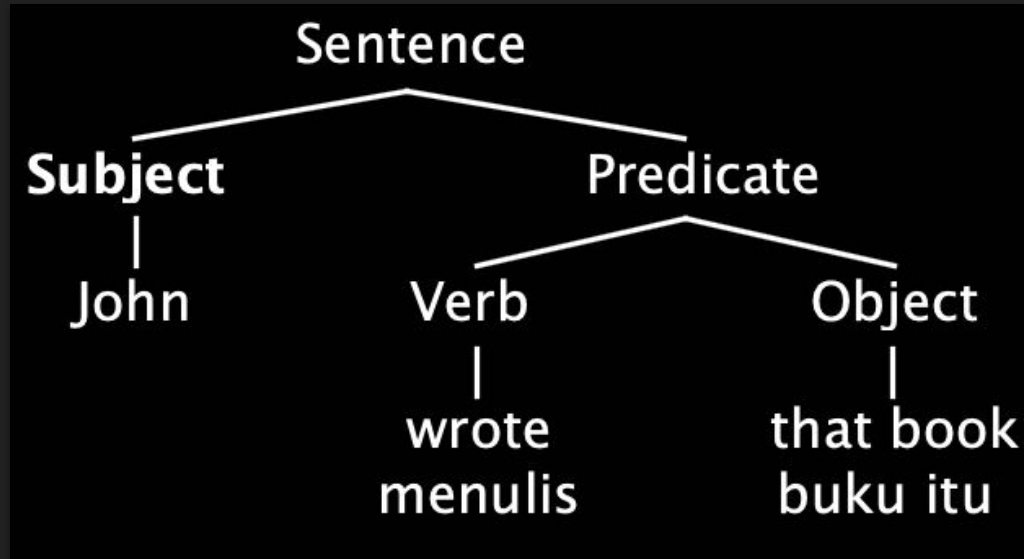
The First Problem

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  - Puzzle: where are the subject and predicate here?

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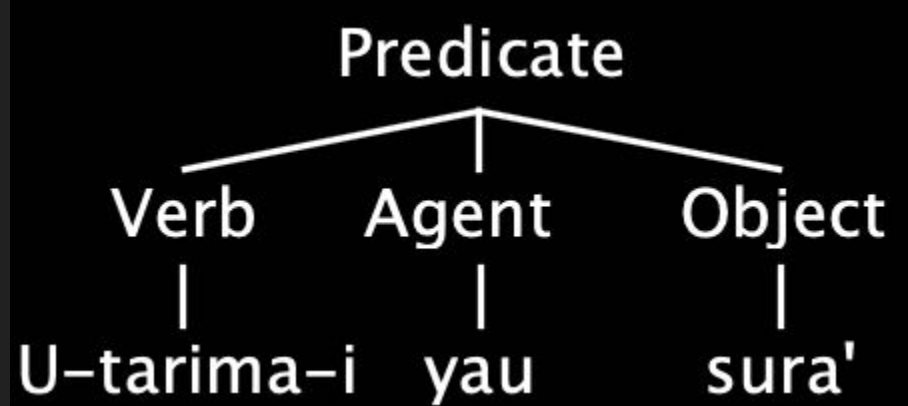
Cf. Chung 1983

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- Question: do Mandar sentences contain a subject?

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(13) Na-tarima-o   iAli   i'o
      Dia-terima-mu   si Ali   kau

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    Does Mandar have subjects?

  - Both the agent and the object trigger agreement, so:

    If there is a subject, which one is it?

The Proposal

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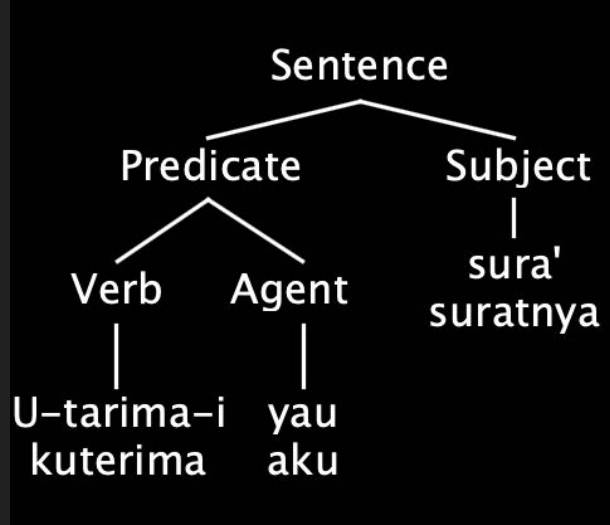
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   (19)   Surat itu   sudah   saya   terima.

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6. Linear Position: the finer facts of word order show another asymmetry.
                                    (Kayne 1994, Pearson 2005)

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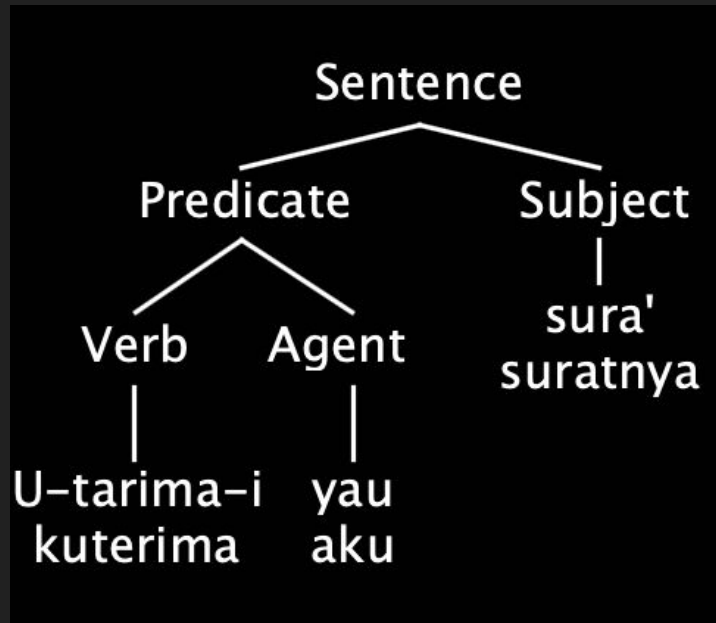
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- The normal Mandar sentence is very similar to the Pasif Semu:
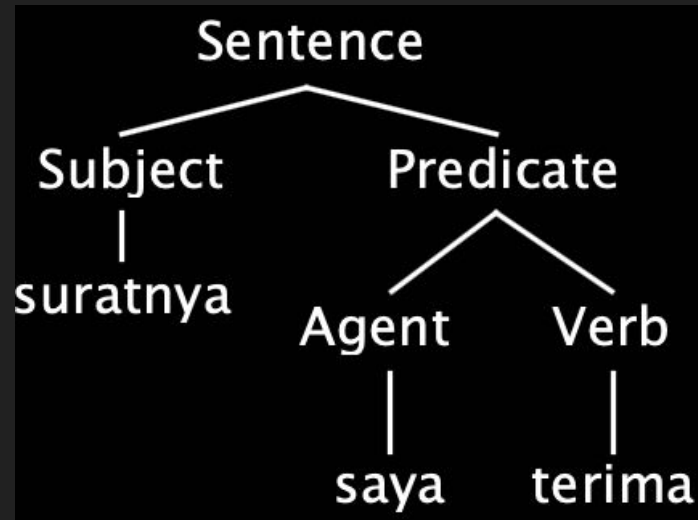
Some Syntax

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                        (Guilfoyle, Hung, & Travis 1992; Bittner & Hale 1996)

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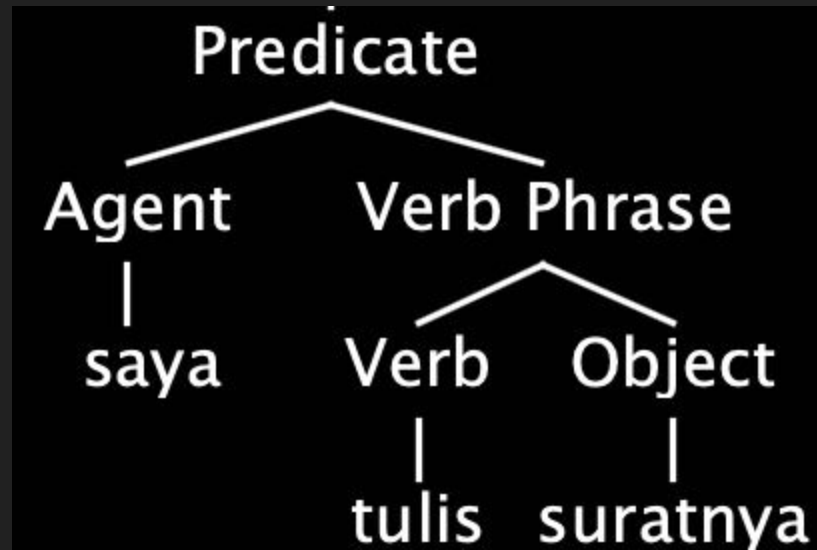
```
                    Predicate
                   /         \
              Agent          Verb Phrase
                |                /    \
              saya           Verb    Object
                               |        |
                             tulis   suratnya
```

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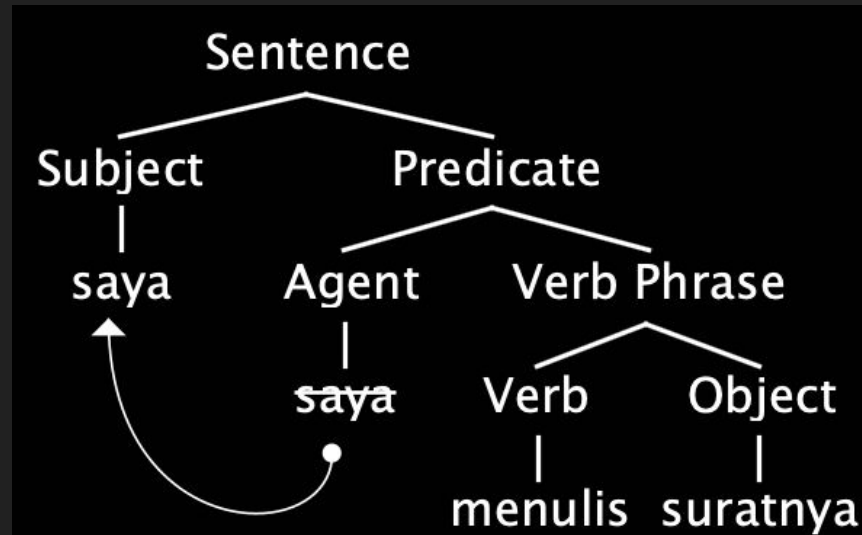
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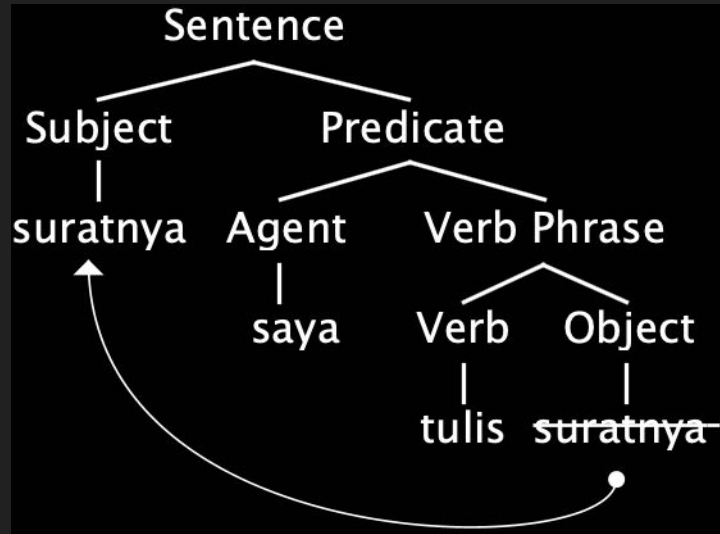
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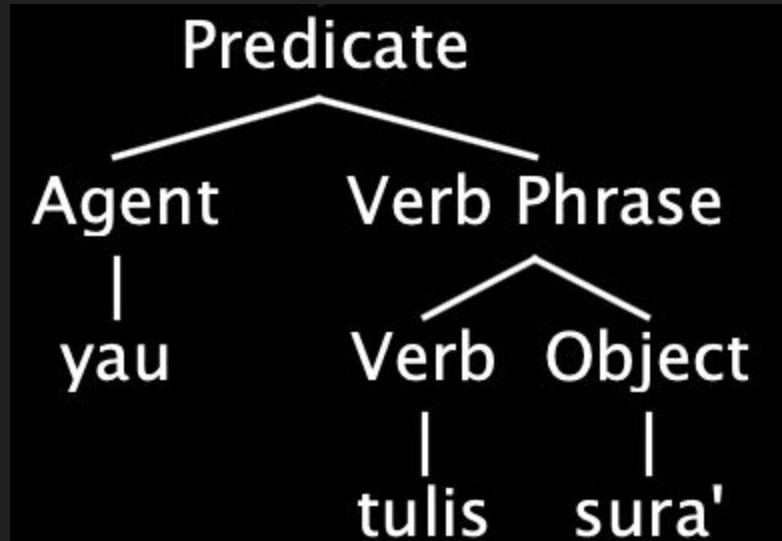
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- Turning now to Mandar,
    - Just like the pasif semu: the object moves to a subject position.
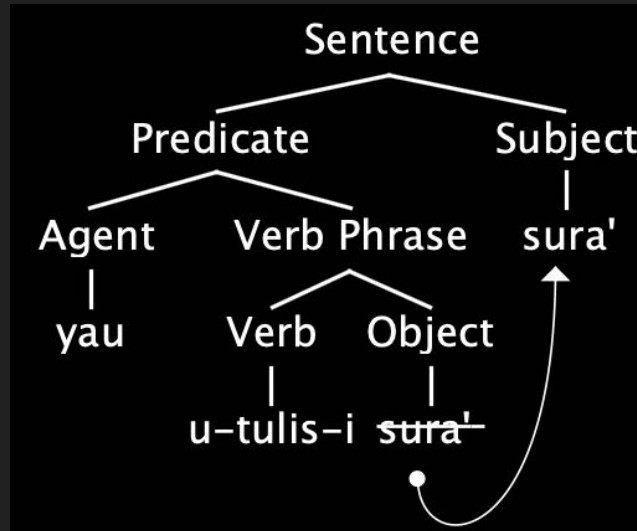
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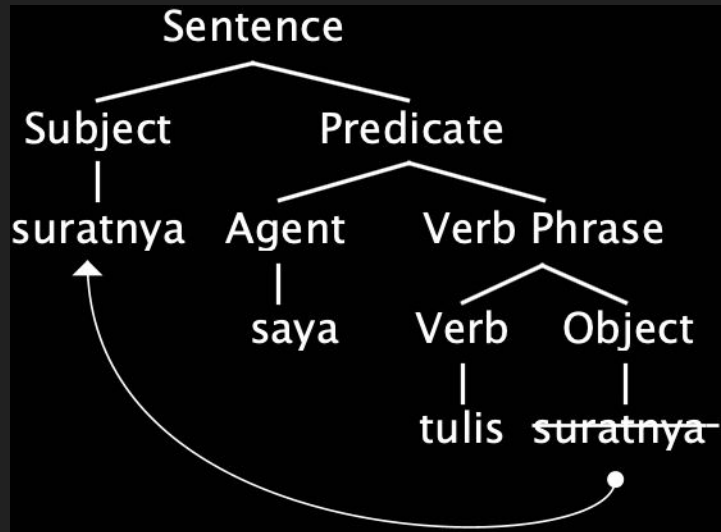
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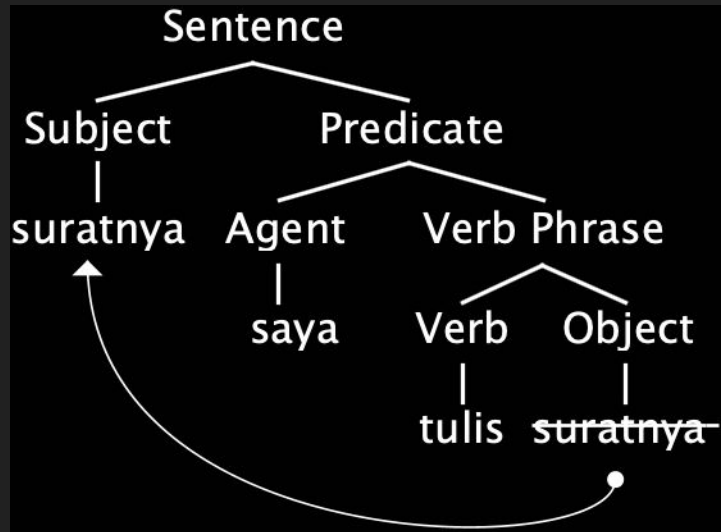
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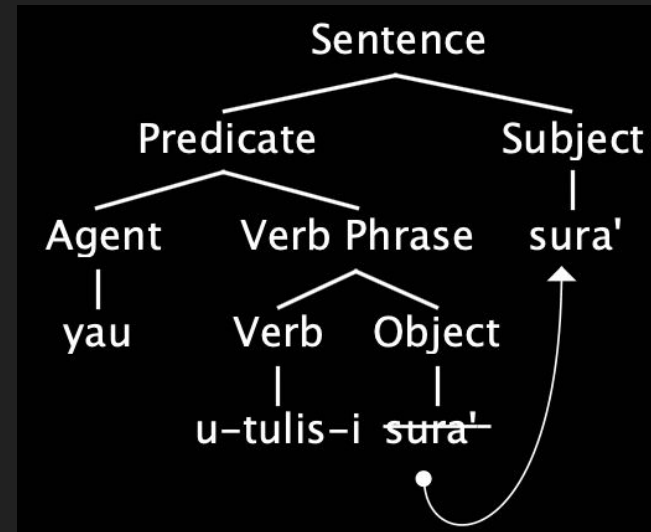
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Part Four:
Conclusion

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- For now, I'd like to focus on the positive conclusions:

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  There is no universal analysis of   "sentence = subject + predicate"

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- This suggests that there really is something universal to subjecthood after all.

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