1 Introduction

Initial Generalizations:

- there are no unmarked ergatives (unmarked accusatives are attested, e.g., Harar Oromo, Tuvan, Kumyk, Kazakh, Khanty, Finnish)
- historically, ergatives develop from passives/middles or clauses with a topicalized possessor/locative, often with a nominalization
- there are no ergative languages with the SVO word order

Are these generalizations simple accidents of cross-linguistic distribution?

Goal of this Talk:

- present a new analysis of the ergative case (with a particular emphasis on Austronesian languages) that ties these three generalizations together
- develop the conception that morphologically ergative languages are not structurally uniform

Outline of the Talk:

- three initial descriptive generalizations
- ergative as a prepositional phrase (in V-initial ergative languages)
- an aside on Niuean
- outstanding questions and some answers
- conclusions

2 Three initial descriptive generalizations

2.1 G1: No morphologically unmarked ergative

(1) Ergative is always morphologically marked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERGATIVE MARKED</th>
<th>ABSOLUTIVE MARKED</th>
<th>ABSOLUTIVE UNMARKED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tongan, Chukchi</td>
<td>Rennellese, Avar</td>
<td>unattested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERGATIVE UNMARKED</td>
<td>unattested</td>
<td>unattested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the absence of unmarked ergatives an accidental gap?

2.2 G2: Diachrony of ergativity

Two main scenarios:


(2) Passive-to-ergative reanalysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial stage</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>PP adjunct (by-phrase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End stage</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By way of illustration: Pukapukan (Polynesian), based on Chung (1978: Ch. 7)

(3) *na patu-a te tamaiti e mātou →
PAST hit-PASS DET child by us
Predicate Passive subj By-phrase

na patu Ø te tamaiti e mātou
PAST hit ABS DET child ERG we
Predicate Object Subject

‘We hit the child.’

(4) Clause with a possessor/locative and perfect(ive) reanalyzed as ergative:

[Possessor/locative XP [SC Subject VRESULTATIVE] BE] → DP'ERG DP'ABS PredP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial stage</th>
<th>Possessor/locative PP</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject of a small clause with a resultative predicate</td>
<td>BE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intermediate stage</th>
<th>Possessor/locative XP</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Perfective predicate (+ BE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End stage</td>
<td>Subject (Agent)</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(5) tád vā ṛṣīṇām ānuśrutam āśa → Early Vedic Sanskrit
that.NOM PRT poet.GEN.PL hear.PAST.PART.NOM was
subject possessor resultative BE

ṛṣīṇām tád vā ānuśrutam āśa Modern Indo-Aryan
poet.ERG that.ABS PRT hear AUX.PAST
subject object analytical predicate

‘The bards heard that.’ (after Bynon 2005: 24)

2.3 G3: No ergative languages with the SVO basic order

Ergative languages tend to be verb-peripheral (Trask 1979, Mahajan 1994, 1997)

Comrie (2008): 38 languages with ergative case marking; 34 languages are (S)OV, 4 languages are VSO/VOS

(6) morphological ergativity and word order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language family/group</th>
<th>Word order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sino-Tibetan</td>
<td>SOV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Caucasian</td>
<td>SOV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakh-Dagestanian</td>
<td>SOV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paleo-Siberian</td>
<td>SOV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eskimo-Aleut</td>
<td>SOV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pama-Nyungan</td>
<td>SOV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salish</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayan</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austronesian</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In those languages that have split ergative/non-ergative marking, the ergative marking is associated with the verb-final order (Hindi), Pama-Nyungan languages—cf. Tsunoda 1981.

(7) Austronesian languages with morphological ergativity (see also Ball 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Word order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roviana</td>
<td>VSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nēlēmwa</td>
<td>VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nēmi</td>
<td>VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rennellese</td>
<td>VOS/VOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>VSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.Futuna/Uvea</td>
<td>VSO/VOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both scenarios the source of the ergative DP is a prepositional phrase
SVO languages (Rotuman, Indonesian, Chuukese, Drehu, etc.) do not show morphological ergativity (see also Trask 1979, Mahajan 1994, 1997 for this generalization outside Austronesian)

Is this an accidental gap?

3 Whence the ergative in verb-initial languages?

Proposal: in head initial ergative languages, the ergative expression is a PP base-generated in spec,vP

Role of v:
1. introduces an external Θ-role
3. provides structural case to an internal argument

3.1 The ergative is higher than the absolutive


3.2 The ergative is a PP

Evidence for a P head: overt morphological marking; peripheral placement under stacking; inability to license depictives; PP island effects

Churchward (1953), Broschart (1994): Tongan ‘e is a preposition

theta-licensing (Williams 1985; Goodall 1997, Neeleman 1997): base-generated PP whose complement (DP) is theta-licensed by the v head from the outside

the interpretation of the DP complement changes depending on the predicate that it co-occurs with
overt marking

- the ergative is always overtly marked

head-initial ergative, prepositional; head-final ergative, postpositional

(10) a. PP
    P   DP
    e     D     NP   ‘doctor.ERG’
    le   foma’i

b. PP
    DP   P
    ya  ‘girl.ERG’

(11) a. ata ‘brain’

b. ata-ma-r-ce-zā
   brain-OBL-STEM-LAT-EQUATIVE-ERG
   ‘the one that behaves like s/he is inside the brain’

c. ata-ce-r-zā
   brain-EQUATIVE-LAT-ERG
   ‘the one that is moving towards what is brain-like’

d. *ata-ma-r-zā-ce
   brain-OBL-STEM-LAT- ERG-EQUATIVE

e. *ata-ce-zā-r
   brain-EQUATIVE-ERG-LAT

(12) John brought Mary, the cat sick English
(13) Napoleon sent General Legrand, new soldiers barely awake
(14) *This cathedral was painted by Picasso angry
(15) Chagall, was remembered by Picasso, tired

(16) a. na’e manatu’i ‘e Siale ‘a Mele ‘aneafi Tongan
   PAST remember ERG C ABS M yesterday
   ta’e konā sober

b. na’e manatu’i ‘e Mele ‘e Siale ‘aneafi ta’e konā
   PAST remember ABS M ERG C yesterday sober
   ‘Yesterday Charlie, remembered Mary, sober.’

(17) a. na su’esu’e televa e le foma’i le tama Samoan
   PAST examine naked ERG DET doctor DET boy
   ‘The doctor examined the boy.’

b. na su’esu’e televa le tama e le foma’i
   PAST examine naked DET boy ERG DET doctor
   ‘The doctor examined the boy.’

(18) a. na su’esu’e e le foma’i le tama ananafi televa
   PAST examine ERG DET doctor DET boy yesterday naked
   ‘Yesterday the doctor examined the boy.’

b. na su’esu’e le tama e le foma’i ananafi televa
   PAST examine DET boy ERG DET doctor yesterday naked
   ‘Yesterday the doctor examined the boy.’

(19) ne togā he hoana hana taane Niuean
    PAST embarrass ERG wife 3.POSS husband
    he toloaga tagata he itafua
    OBL gathering people OBL angry
    ‘The wife shamed her husband in front of the people as he/she was angry.’ (based on Sperlich 1997: 316)

(20) a. buch-ul tyi chām-i Chol
    seated-POS(ITIONAL) PERF(ECTIVE) die-INTRANS
    ‘He died sitting down.’

b. buch-ul tyi majl-i-yoñ
    seated-POS PERF go-INTRANS-ABS1
    ‘I went seated (e.g. in a car).’

always the peripheral marker in a sequence of stacked elements

- Nakh-Dagestanian languages (Comrie and Polinsky 1998)

(11) a. ata ‘brain’

b. ata-ma-r-ce-zā
   brain-OBL-STEM-LAT-EQUATIVE-ERG
   ‘the one that behaves like s/he is inside the brain’

c. ata-ce-r-zā
   brain-EQUATIVE-LAT-ERG
   ‘the one that is moving towards what is brain-like’

d. *ata-ma-r-zā-ce
   brain-OBL-STEM-LAT- ERG-EQUATIVE

e. *ata-ce-zā-r
   brain-EQUATIVE-ERG-LAT

- Australian languages (Dench and Evans 1988; Schweiger 2000)

- irrelevant for Polynesian where stacking is impossible
  (Churchward 1953: 115; Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1993: 347)
(21) a. buch-ul tyi k-tyaj-a-yety  
sat~ed-POS PERF ERG1-find-TRANS-ABS2  
‘I found you seated’  
NOT: ‘I was seated when I found you.’  
b. buch-ul-ety tyi k-tyaj-a-yety  
sat~ed-POS-ABS2 PERF ERG1-find-TRANS-ABS2  
‘I found you seated’  
NOT: ‘I was seated when I found you.’  
c. *buch-ul-oñ tyi k-tyaj-a-yety  
sat~ed-POS ABS1 PERF ERG1-find-TRANS-ABS2  
(‘I found you while I was seated.’) (Jessica Coon, pers. comm.)  

quantifier float?  
quantifier float data are more equivocal: there is a strong preference for the  
absolutive (e.g., Mosel and Hovhaugen 1993: 712-14 for Samoan), but it is  
not categorical; see Massam (2002) for an overview of the Polynesian data  
and an alternative explanation based on event semantics  

comparison with quantifier float from English PPs  
(22) a. ?Who did we give all a toy?  
b. *To which children did she give all a toy?  
c. *By which speakers was this question addressed all yesterday?  
d. *She put a napkin next to the knives each  

opacity  
Salish: possessor extraction is possible out of absolutes but not out of  
ergatives (Gerds 1988: 76)  

extraction out of the absolute subject  
(23) a. ni xčënəm kʷθə sq̑?aq-s  
Halkomelem  
AUX run DET younger_brother-3POSS DET woman  
‘The woman’s younger brother ran.’  
b. *xe s̱k̑eni? [ni xčenəm kʷθə sq̑?aq-s]  
DET woman AUX run DET younger_brother-3POSS  
‘the woman whose younger brother ran’  (Gerds 1988: 74)  

eextraction out of the absolute object  
(24) a. ni č q̱á.y-t kʷθə sq̑?aq-s  
AUX 2SG.SBJ kill-TRANS DET younger_brother-3POSS  
‡e s̱k̑eni?  
DET woman  
‘You killed the woman’s younger brother.’  
b. *‡e s̱k̑eni? [ni q̱á.y-t-ox]  
DET woman AUX kill-TRANS-2SG.SBJ  
kʷθə sq̑?aq-s  
DET younger_brother-3POSS  
‘the woman whose younger brother you killed’ (Gerds 1988: 75)  

no extraction out of the ergative subject  
(25) a. ni qʷ“əl-əs kʷθə sq̑?aq-s  
AUX bake-TRANS-3ERG DET younger_brother-3POSS  
‡e s̱k̑eni? kʷθə sc̱.ṯn  
DET woman DET salmon  
‘The woman’s younger brother baked the salmon.’  
b. *‡e s̱k̑eni? [ni qʷ“əl-əs kʷθə sq̑?aq-s]  
DET woman AUX bake-TRANS-3ERG DET younger_brother-3POSS  
kʷθə sc̱.ṯn]  
DET salmon  
(‘the woman whose younger brother baked the salmon’)  
(Gerds 1988: 74)  

Mayan: extraction out of the absolutive but not ergative documented for  
Jacaltec (Craig 1977), Chol (Coon 2009), Tzotzil (Aissen 1996), Tzutujil  
(Dailey 1981)  

coordination  
in languages where P does not cliticize on DP, coordination should produce  
(26) ERG [NP+CONJ+NP]  

A-bar movement restriction  
imperfect comparison with indirect object in English ditransitives  

(27) a. sā fasi le maile e [le teine ma le tama] Samoan  
PAST hit DET dog ERG DET girl and DET boy  
‘The girl and the boy hit the dog.’  
b. *sā fasi le maile [e le teine] ma [e le tama]  
PAST hit DET dog ERG DET girl and ERG DET boy  

(28) a. ??/*this is the student [she has never given _ a B]  
b. *this is the student [that she has never given _ a B]  
c. *who is (it) pleasant to give __ comments?
accessibility to A-bar movement: verb-initial ergative languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Does ABS A'-move</th>
<th>Does ERG A'-move</th>
<th>Compensatory strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halkomelem</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nominalization, antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakaltec</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Agent focus/antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption or antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roviana</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futunan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption or antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rennellese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption or antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukapukan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NA?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interim conclusion: the ergative is a PP, base-generated in spec, vP

\[ \text{Motivating the descriptive generalizations:} \]
G1: The constant overt marking of the ergative is determined by its categorical status as a PP
G2: The PP status of the ergative is consistent with the diachronic path of morphological ergativity (passive-to-ergative reanalysis)

4 Morphological ergativity and verb-initial orders
4.1 Pathways to verb-initiality
- Extraposition of preverbal subject—e.g., Maori (Bauer 1993, see also Woolford 1991)
- Subject lowering—e.g., Chamorro (Chung 1998)

4.2 Satisfying the EPP in a verb-initial morphologically ergative language
4.2.1 Phrasal movement

Main ingredients:
the EPP is satisfied by phrasal movement of VP
moved VP is an island
(a PP in spec, v is not “good enough” to satisfy the EPP?)

\[ \text{very popular in analysis of Austronesian languages (Aldridge 2004, 2006; Chung 2006; Cole and Hermon 2008; Cole et al. 2002; Massam 2000, 2001; Massam and Smallwood 1997; Oda 2005; Pearson 2001, 2005, 2006; Potsdam 2007 and in press; Rackowski and Travis 2000; Travis 2008, a.o.)} \]

inasmuch as phrasal movement is independently attested in Austronesian, it provides a reasonable mechanism for satisfying the EPP in a morphologically ergative verb-initial language

VOS order follows; VSO order can also be derived via object shift if needed for particular languages (see Massam 2000; Chung 2006)
4.2.2 Head movement

(33)

```
XP
  X
  T
  v-V

V

v-V

v-

v
```

(34) VP- and V-raising in a sample of Austronesian languages (based on Potsdam in press)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>WORD ORDER</th>
<th>V1 STRATEGY</th>
<th>SOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malagasy</td>
<td>VOS</td>
<td>VP raising</td>
<td>Pearson 2006, Potsdam 2006a,b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>VP raising</td>
<td>Herd 2003, Bauer 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toba Batak</td>
<td>VOS</td>
<td>VP raising</td>
<td>Cole &amp; Hermon 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>VSO, VOS</td>
<td>V raising</td>
<td>Aldridge 2002, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>VSO, VOS</td>
<td>V raising</td>
<td>Otsuka 2000, Custis 2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Subject starts out high

Subject lowering (Chung 1998, 2005)

(35)

```
CP
  C
  T
  vP

T

T'

v-P

v'

v
```

Prediction: Verb initial languages derived by subject lowering and by subject extraposition should not display morphological ergativity

(36) morphological ergativity vis-à-vis V1-derivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VP-raising</th>
<th>Verb raising</th>
<th>Subject extraposition (e.g., Chamorro)</th>
<th>Subject lowering (e.g., Palauan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base position of subject</strong></td>
<td>low</td>
<td>can be low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morphological ergativity possible</strong></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivating the descriptive generalizations:
G1: The consistent overt marking of the ergative is determined by its categorial status as a PP
G2: The PP status of the ergative is consistent with the diachronic path of morphological ergativity
G3: The co-occurrence of morphological ergativity with verb-initial orders is not accidental
5  Is Niuean an exception?

5.1  An aside on Niuean relativization

Niuean vs. Tongan: ergative extracts with a gap in Niuean but has to be resumed
by a clitic in Tongan

(37) a. to kai he tama e tau pateta  
    FUT eat  ERG child ABS PL potato
    ‘The child will eat the potatoes.’

b. e tama ka kai (*e ia) e tau pateta  
    ABS child FUT.DEP eat  ERG 3SG ABS PL potato
    ‘the child who will eat the potatoes’ (Seiter 1980: 94)

(38) a. na’e kai ‘e ta’ahine ‘a e iká  
    PAST eat ERG girl ABS DET fish
    ‘The girl ate the fish.’

b. e ta’ahine na’a *(de) kai ‘a e ika  
    DET girl PAST RP eat  ABS DET fish
    ‘the girl that ate the fish’

All other relativization works the same in Tongan and Niuean:
absolutives extract with a gap
comitatives do not extract at all
all other constituents require resumption

absolutive extraction

(39) a. e tagata ne moto  
    ABS person NON.FUT punch
    ‘the person that you punched’ (Seiter 1980: 94)

b. e ta’ahine na’a taa’i ‘e Mele  
    DET girl PAST hit ERG M
    (*‘a ia)
    ABS 3SG
    ‘the girl that Mary hit’

no extraction of comitatives

(40) a. *e tama ne fakatau ō hifo  
    ABS child NON.FUT together go.down.PL
    ‘the child that Maka came down with’) (Seiter 1980: 95)

b. *e ta’ahine na’a ‘alu ‘a Sione Tongan
    DET girl PAST go ABS John
    (mo ia)
    with 3SG
    (*the girl that John went with’)

resumption

(41) a. e fakamatalaaga ne fanogonogo  
    ABS speech NON.FUT listen
    ‘the speech which I listened to’ (Seiter 1980: 95)

b. e ta’ahine na’a fakatau tohi  
    DET girl PAST sell book
    ‘the girl that John sold books to’

5.2  Proposal

Niuean ergative relativization involves a null resumptive pronoun

(42) a. e tama ka kai O e tau pateta  
    ABS child FUT.DEP eat  ERG RP ABS PL potato
    ‘the child who will eat the potatoes’

ABS extraction—true gap

(43) [DP DP [NPi [CPi [TP ... t]]]]

ERG extraction—null resumptive

(44) [DP DP [NPi [CPi [TP ... Null RP]]]]

Extraction of other PPs—overt resumption

(45) [DP DP [NPi [CPi [TP ... Prp ai]]]]

5.3  Preliminary evidence: aggressively non-d-linked questions (what-the-hell questions)

descriptive generalization in search of an explanation:
resumptive pronouns are incompatible with de dicto reading and aggressively
(46) a. Which car did Gary say that the man who borrowed it impressed his friends?  
(English) (Alexopoulou and Keller 2007, Xiang et al. 2008)
b. Which the hell did Gary say that the man who borrowed it impressed his friends?

(47) a. What gadget is it that she complained that it doesn’t work in the kitchen?  
b. What on earth is it that she complained that it doesn’t work in the kitchen?

(48) a. Which secretary is it that she complained that it doesn’t work in the kitchen?  
(b. *What on earth is it that she complained that it doesn’t work in the kitchen?)

(49) a. Which building is already in ruins?  
b. *What the hell is already in ruins?

(50) a. Which (book)/What did he say that he had read?

(51) a. Which (book)/What did he say that he had read?

(52) a. Who did you give your book to?

(53) a. Who does the media asking whether Sarkozy likes him?

(54) a. What did you cry about?

(55) a. Who ate my stuff?

Fijian, Tongan: overt resumptives are incompatible with aggressively non-d-linked wh-questions

(52) a. ko cei o a soli-a kina  
 Fijian  
KO who 2SG.SU PAST give-TRANS RP  
nam nomu i vola?  
DET 2SG.POSS NMLZ book  
‘Who did you give your book to?’

(53) a. ko hai hen ‘oku ne manatu’i ‘a Mele?  
Tongan  
KO who here PRES ERG.RP remember ABS M  
‘Who remembers Mary?’

(54) a. ko e hā e mena ne tagi  
 Niuean  
KO DET what DET thing DEP.TENSE cry  
ai a koe?  
RP ABS 2SG  
‘What did you cry about?’ (Sperlich 1997: 267)

(55) a. ko hai ne kai e tau mena haaku?  
Niuean: no aggressively non-d-linked wh-questions with the ergative “gap”  
KO who DEP.TENSE eat ABS PL thing my  
‘Who ate my stuff?’

b. *ko hai nī ne kai e tau mena haaku?  
KO who EMPH DEP.TENSE eat ABS PL thing my  
(‘Who the hell ate my stuff?’)
Aggressively non-d-linked wh-questions with intransitive predicates are allowed:

(56) a. ko hai ne tala atu ki a koe
KO who DEP.TENSE say/tell DIR to DET 2SG
ke hau?
COMP come
‘Who told you to come?’ (Sperlich 1997: 106)

b. ko hai nī ne tala atu ki
KO who EMPH DEP.TENSE say/tell DIR to
a koe ke hau?
DET 2SG COMP come
‘Who the hell told you to come?’

Preliminary evidence from aggressively non-d-linked wh-words supports the notion that Niuean ergative leaves a null resumptive pronoun

If so, Niuean is not different from its close relatives in disallowing extraction of the ergative phrase with a gap

(57) accessibility to A-bar movement: verb-initial ergative languages (revised)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Does ABS A’-move</th>
<th>Does ERG A’-move</th>
<th>Compensatory Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halkomelem</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nominalization, antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakaltec</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Agent focus/antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption or antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roviana</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futuna</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption or antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rennelese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Resumption or antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukapukan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Resumption (null)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Outstanding questions

6.1 Binding out of a PP?

The ergative binds anaphors in the absolutive and other lower positions

(58) ‘Oku tokanga’i pē ‘e Mele ia Tongan
PRES watch INTENS ERG M 3SG
‘Mary looks after herself.’
‘Mary LOOKS after him/her.’

(59) ‘Oku sai’ia pē ‘a Mele ‘i a ia
PRES like INTENS ABS M DAT DET 3SG
‘Mary likes only herself.’
‘Mary LIKES him/her.’

Two possible solutions:
- The burden on the binder: binding from a PP as the phi-features of D get transferred to P (Rezač 2008)
- The burden on the bindee: the “bound” element is exempt from Binding Theory principles

Category of the bound element

Range of possibilities:
- Explicit pronouns :: explicit reflexives :: (indeterminate forms), e.g., in Standard Malay and Standard Javanese (Cole and Hermon 1998, 2005, 2008b)
- Generic pronouns not subject to Binding Theory (Cole and Hermon 2008b, Davies 2008)

(60) distribution of reflexive-like forms in languages in question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Generic form (same as pronoun)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halkomelem</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakaltec</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roviana</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Futuna</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rennelese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukapukan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focused assertion of identity: Generic pronouns co-occur with intensifiers whose main function is to limit the set of alternatives to the referent of the NP (McKay 1991, Baker 1995, Levinson 2000, Gast and König 2006)

(61) *If Cassandra has filled my bed with fleas I am sure they will bite herself* (Jane Austen, cited in Baker 1995, (9i))

(62) a. *Oku tokanga‘i ‘e Mele pē ia Tongan* PRES watch ERG M INTENS 3SG

b. *Oku tokanga‘i ia pē ‘e Mele* PRES watch 3SG INTENS ERG M

('Mary looks after herself.' )

Generic pronouns: In languages under consideration, pronouns and reflexive anaphors do not have different lexical forms and do not express different features, hence Binding Theory is not violated

UNRESOLVED QUESTION: assuming that morphologically ergative languages have bound variables, what allows for binding by the DP inside the ergative PP?

(63) a. [Every student’s certificate] was signed by his supervisor

b. [No girl’s parents] could understand why she was so sad (Kayne 1994)

6.2 Unergatives

Standard assumption: unergatives include an outer v shell (Hale and Kayser 1993; Chomsky 1995)

(64) PP?

\[ \text{vP} \]

\[ \text{v} \]

\[ \text{VP} \]

\[ \text{V} \]

Split intransitivity—some intransitive verbs have an ergative argument, others have an absolutive argument; e.g., Batsbi (Holisky and Gagua 1994), Northern Pomo (O’Connor 1992), Imonda (Seiler 1985), Basque (Levin 1983a,b, Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina 2003, Laka 2006), Nepali (Li 2007)

Two possible solutions:

- v is not generated
- v is generated, but the external argument does not have to be present (Bennis 2004); if the external argument is present, split intransitivity would follow (see also Garrett 1990 on its origins)

UNRESOLVED QUESTION: what motivates the optionality of the external argument on the latter solution?

6.3 Split ergativity

(65) ERG ~ PERFECTIVE:

a. if a language has split case marking based on aspect/tense, the ergative pattern correlates with perfective/past

b. if the ergative pattern is found in the imperfective/non-past, it is also found in the perfective/past (Tsunoda 1981; Van Valin 1991)


(66) \[ \text{TP} \]

\[ \text{T'} \]

\[ \text{T} \]

\[ \text{AspP} \]

\[ \text{imperfective} \]

\[ \text{DP} \]

\[ \text{Asp'} \]

\[ \text{Asp} \]

\[ \text{vP} \]

UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS:

- Is there independent evidence for parametrized projection of aspectual heads, and if yes, does it correlate with split ergativity?
- Are tense-induced splits aspectual splits in disguise?
- Can a similar analysis be extended to nominal/pronominal split?
ERG ~ NOUNS:
   a. if a language has split case marking based on the nominal/pronominal distinction, the ergative pattern occurs with nouns
   b. if the ergative pattern occurs with pronouns, it also occurs with nouns

7 Conclusions

Back to the three initial descriptive generalizations

G1: there are no unmarked ergatives because ergatives are PPs, not DPs, and the P head remains visible (either as a free standing adposition or cliticized to the DP)
   • alternative: all ergatives include a silent P head which assigns an indirect case (by analogy with English indirect objects)

G2: historically, Austronesian ergatives develop from passives, which is reflected in their structural position (specifier of the highest v) and related syntactic properties (inability to license depictives, difficulty in floating quantifiers, inaccessibility to movement)

G3: ergative languages have verb-peripheral order—motivated by phrasal movement in verb-initial languages, with the ergative staying in spec, v
   • However, the correlation between morphological ergativity and verb-final order still needs to be explained
   • Morphologically ergative languages are not uniform, with some parametric variation following from headedness (cf. also Manning 1996, Bobaljik and Wurmbrand 2008)

The properties of ergative languages (overt marking, historical connection to passive, and verb peripheral characteristics) are correlated

Implications beyond ergativity

• Architecture of ergative languages: If the ergative is a PP, no special case assignment mechanism is required for ergative languages, hence no need for differentiated T based on transitivity (pace Legate 2008)

• Syntactic effects of morphology: If the ergative is a PP the syntactic ramifications of ergativity are predictable; they may simply disguise a more uniform syntax.

• Criterial freezing (Rizzi 2006, to appear) makes wrong predictions for ergative languages:
   The ergative never appears in a criterial position but fails to A-bar move. By contrast, the absolutive raises to a criterial position (presumably the same position that the nominative raises into in nominative-accusative languages) but is not frozen for further movement (while there are restrictions on the extraction of the nominative, there are no such restrictions on the extraction of the absolutive)

References


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Koopman, Hilda. 2008. Samoan ergativity as double passives. MS., UCLA.


Watanabe, Akira. 1996. *Case absorption and wh-agreement*. Dordrecht:
This project was supported in part by NSF grants BCS-0131993 and BCS-0231946 and by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University. I would like to thank my language consultants Sisilia Lutui and Melenaite Taumoefolau (Tongan), Tammy King (Niuean), Line Faalevalea (Samoan), and Taina Rokotuiuvekau (Fijian). The Greek examples are courtesy of Sabine Iatridou and Alexia Ioannidou.

I am grateful to Edith Aldridge, Jeremy Aron-Dine, Winifred Bauer, Ivano Caponigro, Jessica Coon, Norbert Corver, Marcel den Dikken, Nomi Ertshik-Shir, Shin Fukuda, Grant Goodall, Valentine Hacquard, Vincent Homer, Roni Katzir, Hilda Koopman, Manfred Krifka, Beth Levin, Anoop Mahajan, Diane Massam, Ulrike Mosel, Andrew Nevins, Yuko Otsuka, Eric Potsdam, Omer Preminger, and Peter Sells for helpful discussions. All errors are my responsibility.
APPENDIX

Some speculations about head-final ergative languages

Two pathways to ergativity:
- Possessive/locative PP in a higher projection → high ergative
- by-phrase in spec,vP (as in the verb-initial type); may raise to satisfy the EPP → low ergative

(68) high ergative

(69) low ergative

(70) properties of the two types of morphological ergativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HIGH ERGATIVE</th>
<th>LOW ERGATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERG is directly accessible to A-bar movement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG is uniformly used regardless of theta-role (affective construction)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS is inside</td>
<td>Small clause</td>
<td>VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive predicate</td>
<td>Intransitive (BE, STAY)</td>
<td>Intransitive or transitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>example languages</td>
<td>NE Caucasian, Tibeto-Burman</td>
<td>Chukchi, Circassian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNRESOLVED QUESTION:
- What exactly motivates the verb-final structure—object case assignment?

Does extraction/non-extraction out of the ergative PP correlate with extraction/non-extraction out of other PPs?

(71) extraction out of PPs in morphologically ergative languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>EXTRACTION OUT OF PP</th>
<th>IF RESUMPTION IS AVAILABLE, DOES THE ERGATIVE RESUMPTIVE ELEMENT MATCH OTHER RESUMPTIVES?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ergative Polynesian languages</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
<td>No: Special form for ergative, same form for all other PPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Caucasian (Circassian, Abaza)</td>
<td>Resumption</td>
<td>Yes: Same resumptive form for all PPs including ergative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukchi</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halkomelem</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagestanian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ergative Tibeto-Burman languages</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dagestanian (NE Caucasian): extraction out of all PPs with a cliticized postposition; no extraction out of a PP with a heavy postposition, no postposition stranding

(72) a. kid-bā čanta imx-ox-r kur-no Tsez
   girl-ERG bag.ABS hollow-APUD-LAT throw-PAST
   ‘The girl tossed the bag into (inside) the tree hollow.’

b. [ __ čanta imx-ox-r kāru] kid
   bag.ABS hollow-APUD-LAT throw-PST.PART girl
   ‘the girl that tossed the bag into the tree hollow’

c. [kid-bā čanta __ kāru] imx-o
   girl-ERG bag.ABS throw-PST.PART hollow
   ‘the tree hollow into which the girl tossed the bag’

(73) a. kid-bā čanta imx-ā tel-ox-r kur-no
   girl-ERG bag.ABS hollow-INESS inside-APUD-LAT throw-PAST
   ‘The girl tossed the bag inside the tree hollow.’

b. *[ kid-bā čanta __ tel-ox-r kāru] imx-o
   girl-ERG bag.ABS inside-APUD-LAT throw-PST.PART hollow
   ‘the tree hollow into which the girl tossed the bag’

c. *[ kid-bā čanta __ kāru] imx-ā tel
   girl-ERG bag.ABS throw-PST.PART hollow-INESS inside
   ‘the tree hollow into which the girl tossed the bag’

Basque: ergative and dative A-bar move; PPs with overt postpositions do not (de Rijk 1972)

Raising

Can ergative still be a DP in an inherent case?
Argument from case preservation (cf. Koopman 2008 for other arguments against the inherent case analysis of the ergative)

Crucial example: Tongan lava ‘be able to’ (Woolford 2006, citing Chung 1978)

(74) a. ‘e lava ‘o ako ‘e Pita
   TENSE be able COMP learn ERG P
   ‘a e lea faka-Tonga
   ABS DET language Tongan
   ‘Peter can learn the Tongan language.’

b. ‘e lava ‘e Pita ‘o ako
   TENSE be able ERG P COMP learn
   ‘a e lea faka-Tonga
   ABS DET language Tongan
   ‘Peter can learn the Tongan language.’

(75) a. ‘e lava expl ['o ako ‘e Pita ‘a e lea…]
   TNS be able COMP learn ERG P ABS DET language
   ‘It is possible that Peter will learn Tongan.
   UNRAISED

b. ‘e lava ‘a Pita ‘o ako ‘t ‘a e lea
   TNS be able ABS P COMP learn ABS DET language
   ‘Peter is able to learn Tongan.’
   Raising

c. [TP ‘e [vP lavak ‘e Pita [vP ‘o ako ‘a e lea…]]
   TNS be able ERG P CONN learn ABS DET lg
   ‘Peter is able to learn Tongan.’
   SERIAL VERB
   CONSTRUCTION

(76) evidence in support of structural differences between (b) and (c):
   a. serialization is attested in Tongan (Otsuka 2000)
   b. ‘o is ambiguous between complementizer and conjunction (Churchward 1953, Chung 1978)
   c. wh-in-situ possible for both DPs in (c) but not for the absolutive DP in (b)
   d. the embedded complement of (b) can be fronted, the “embedded” portion in (c) cannot

느 No reliable evidence of ergative preservation under raising, lack of support for the idea that ergative is an inherent case
느 The “raised” DP is always ABS upstairs