

Ergativity, Finiteness, and Control

Jonathan David Bobaljik
Harvard University



4 Aug 2023
National University of Singapore

(Complement) Control / Equi

- (1) a. Alice tried [PRO to leave]. (Intr)
- b. Alice tried [PRO to see them]. (Tr)
- c. * Alice tried [they to see PRO]. (Tr)
- d. Alice tried/hoped [PRO to be seen (by them)].
- e. Alice told Bob_i [PRO_i {to leave, to meet Cindy,...}].

An (unexpressed) **argument** of a non-finite complement clause is understood as referentially shared with a matrix argument.

Extensions to: backwards control? non-complement control?

The Control / Equi Universal

- (2) When case/agreement and grammatical function diverge, it is the function SUBJECT and not a case category (nominative, absolutive, ergative, etc.) that determines which argument in a non-finite clause is subject to Control (PRO). (cf. Dixon 1994)

SUBJECT:

- Highest argument: AGENT > PATIENT
- Modulo Voice/Valency (Passive “demotes” Agent)
- *not* affected by Scrambling, Obj Shift, Wd. Order

The Control / Equi Universal

- (3) When case/agreement and grammatical function diverge, it is the function SUBJECT and not a case category (nominative, absolutive, ergative, etc.) that determines which argument in a non-finite clause is subject to control (PRO).

Implications for:

- Theories of Control (GB Case-theory: 🖐️)
- Theories of Case/Ergativity/Alignment
- Universal Category of SUBJECT: Highest argument in domain X

Outline

- Background: alignment, ergativity
- The controversy: syntactic ergativity
 - Alleged counter-example I (Deal 2015)
 - Alleged counter-example II (Bickel & Nichols 2001)
 - Austronesian (help, please!)
- (*aside*) Beyond control: finiteness (Legate 2008b)
- Implications

Alignment

A

O

A = Transitive Subject

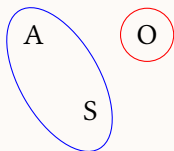
S = Intransitive Subject

O = Direct Object

S

Dixon

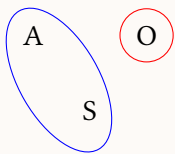
Alignment: Nominative/Accusative



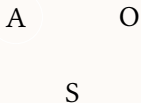
A = Transitive Subject: **nominative**
S = Intransitive Subject: **nominative**
O = Direct Object: **accusative**

Alignment Types

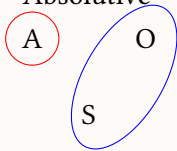
Nominative-Accusative



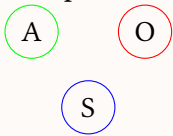
Neutral



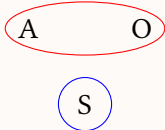
Ergative-Absolutive



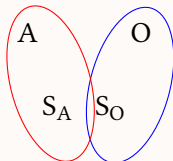
Tripartite



*Unattested



Active/Split-S

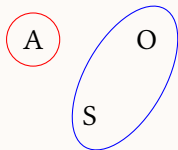


Alignment: Ergative-Absolutive

(4) a. **γəm-nan** γət tə-ʔu-γət
 1SG-ERG 2SG.ABS 1SG-see-2SG.O
 ‘I saw you.’

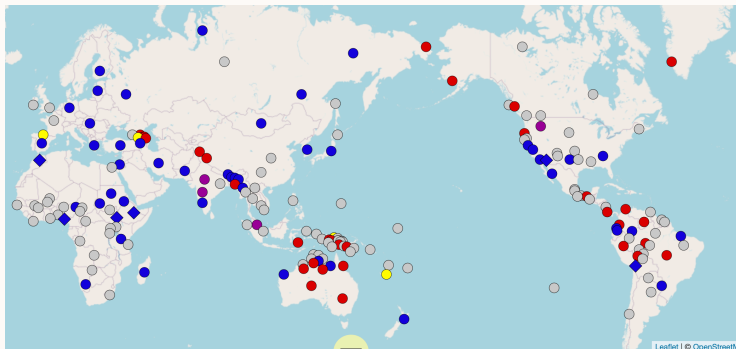
b. γə-nan **γəm** ine-ʔu-γʔi
 2SG-ERG 1SG.ABS AGR-see-2SG.S
 ‘You saw me.’

c. **γəm** tə-kətγəntat-γʔak
 1SG.ABS 1SG-run-1SG
 ‘I ran.’



Chukchi; Skorik 1977

Alignment Types (Case on non-pronominal NPs)



| Values | |
|---|----|
| ○ Neutral | 98 |
| ● Nominative - accusative (standard) | 46 |
| ◆ Nominative - accusative (marked nominative) | 6 |
| ● Ergative - absolutive | 32 |
| ● Tripartite | 4 |
| ● Active-inactive | 4 |

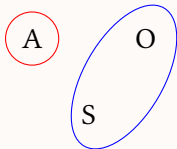
Source: Comrie 2013 in WALS.info

Alignment patterns

(5)

| | SUBJ-OBJ | ERG-ABS |
|-------------|----------|---------|
| Morphology: | | |
| Case: | Y | Y |
| Agreement: | Y | Y |

Aside: Alignment mismatches



- (6) a. **γəm-nan** γət tə-ʔʉ-γət
1SG-ERG 2SG.ABS 1SG-see-2SG.O
'I saw you.'
- b. γə-nan **γəm** ine-ʔʉ-γʔi
2SG-ERG 1SG.ABS AGR-see-2SG.S
'You saw me.'
- c. **γəm** tə-kətγəntat-γʔak
1SG.ABS 1SG-run-1SG
'I ran.'

Chukchi; Skorik 1977

Aside: Alignment mismatches

(7)

| Agreement \Rightarrow Case \Downarrow | ERG-ABS | NOM-ACC |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ERG-ABS | Basque, Inuit, Tsez | Warlpiri, Chukchi Nepali |
| NOM-ACC | ** unattested ** | Russian, German Icelandic |
| NO CASE | Chol, ... | Itelmen, Bantu... |

(8) No language has a nominative-accusative case pattern, but an ergative-absolutive agreement pattern.

(Bobaljik 2008; Baker 2008, 2015; Legate 2008b)

Alignment patterns

(9)

| | SUBJ-OBJ | ERG-ABS |
|-------------|----------|---------|
| Morphology: | | |
| Case: | Y | Y |
| Agreement: | Y | Y |
| Syntax: | | |
| Extraction: | Y | Y |
| Control: | Y | No |

- Dixon also claimed reflexivity (binding) and imperatives never show an ergative alignment.

The Ergative Control Debate

- Universalist** “Whenever ... [‘can, begin, try’ etc] are realised as lexical verbs, taking an object complement clause construction which involves another verb, the two verbs must have the same subject (S or A) irrespective of whether the language is accusative or ergative at morphological and/or syntactic levels” (Dixon 1994: 135).
- Variationist** “An additional ‘syntactic’ area in which ergativity properties have been observed is Control.” (Deal 2015: 661, citing Dixon 1994 for evidence); also Levin (1983)

(Complement) Control / Equi

NOM-ACC = SUBJ-OBJ

- (10) a. Emily tried [**PRONOM** to leave]. (Intr)
b. Emily tried [**PRONOM** to meet them_{ACC}]. (Tr)
c. *Emily tried [they_{NOM} to meet **PRO_{ACC}**]. (Tr)

(Complement) Control / Equi

Dixon: SUBJ-OBJ in ERG-ABS:

- (11) a. Emily tried [**PRO**_{ABS} to leave]. (Intr)
- b. Emily tried [**PRO**_{ERG} to meet them_{ABS}]. (Tr)
- c. *Emily tried [they_{ERG} to meet **PRO**_{ABS}]. (Tr)

Deal: ERG-ABS \neq SUBJ-OBJ

- (12) a. Emily tried [**PRO**_{ABS} to leave]. (Intr)
- b. *Emily tried [**PRO**_{ERG} to meet them_{ABS}]. (Tr)
- c. Emily tried [they_{ERG} to meet **PRO**_{ABS}]. (Tr)

Basque; (Hualde 1986)

- (13) a. Jon-ek [PRO joan] nahi du.
Jon-ERG go want AUX
'Jon wants to go.'
- b. Jon-ek [PRO libur-a irakurri] nahi du.
Jon-ERG book-DET.ABS read want AUX
'Jon wants to read the book.'

infinitive complement clause, distinct from subjunctive, nominalization, etc.

Tsez, Nakh-Dagestanian

- (14) a. **ziya** b-ikâi-s
COW.III.ABS III-go-PST.EVID
‘The cow left.’
- b. **eniy-ā** **ziya** b-išer-si
mother-ERG COW.III.ABS III-feed-PST.EVID
‘The mother fed the cow.’ (Polinsky & Potsdam 2001: 586)

Tsez, Nakh-Dagestanian

- (15) a. Dä-ri [**PRO_i** žek'u-de kec-a]
 1SG.LAT [**PRO.ABS** man.APUD.ESS sleep-.INF]IV
 r-eti-n
 IV-want-NWIT
 'I needed to sleep with a man.' (intransitive)
- b. pro_i [**PRO_i** gulu b-exad-a]
 1SG.LAT [**PRO.ERG** horse.ABS.III III-slaughter-.INF]IV
 r-eti-n
 IV-want-NWIT
 'I need to slaughter the horse.' (transitive) (Polinsky
 2016: 318-319)

West Circassian (Adyghe); (Ershova 2020)

- (16) a. č'elejeβaže-m_i [PRO_i č'alexe-r Ø-ə-λəte-n-ew]
 teacher-ERG PRO.ERG boy.PL-ABS 3A-3SG.E-count
 rjəβež'əβ
 3SG.E.begin.PST
 'The teacher began to count the children.'
- b. *č'alexe-m_i [PRO_i č'elejeβaže-m Ø-ə-λəte-n-ew]
 boy-PL-ERG PRO.ABS teacher-ERG 3A-3SG.E-count
 rəβež'əβ
 3PL.E.begin.PST
 'The children began the teacher to count (them).'

Warlpiri, Pama-Nyungan; (Hale 1999)

- (17) wawirri Ø-rna pantu-rnu ...
kangaroo PERF-1S spear-PSA
- a. [PRO parnka-nja-kurra]
run-INF-OCOMP
'I speared the kangaroo_i [PRO_i running].'
- b. [PRO marna nga-rninja-kurra]
grass eat-INF-OCOMP
'I speared the kangaroo_i [PRO_i eating grass].'

Note: adjunct, not complement, Control

Cavineña (Bolivia); (Guillaume 2010: 114-115)

Cavineña: Erg-Abs case marking on pronouns and nouns. “The subject of a clause marked by [same subject marker] *-(a)tsu* is always omitted.”

- (18) a. ... [Ø kwaba=ju ani-bute-tsu] ...
 PRO_{ABS} canoe-LOC sit-GO.DOWN-SS
 ‘... having sat down in their canoe...’
- b. ... [Ø tu-ke peta-tsu] ...
 PRO_{ERG} it-ABS look.at-SS
 ‘... looking at it ...’

Adjunct control?

Kalaallisut (Greenland); (Bittner 1994: 168-9)

Affixal verbs express control meanings: *-uma* ‘want’

Controlled element is always subject of VP[?] complement stem

- (19) inu-aqqa-t [**PRO** ilisimatuuq ikiur-]-uma-vaat
 person-small-PL.ERG scientist help-want-3PL>3SG

‘The little people wanted [**PRO** to help the scientist].’

- a. ilisimatuuq_i inu-aqqa-nik ikiur-**niqar**-uma-vuq
 scientist person-small-PL.OBL help-PASS-want-3SG

‘The scientist_i wanted **PRO**_i to be helped by little people.’

- b. ilisimatuuq inu-aqqa-nik_i ikiur-uma-**niqar**-vuq
 scientist person-small-PL.OBL help-want-PASS-3SG

‘The scientist was wanted **PRO**_i to help by little people_i.’

Interim Summary

Well attested:

Case/Agr = ERG-ABS; Control/PRO = SUBJ (Dixon)

- (20) a. Emily tried [**PRO**_{ABS} to leave]. (Intr)
b. Emily tried [**PRO**_{ERG} to meet them_{ABS}]. (Tr)
c. * Emily tried [they_{ERG} to meet **PRO**_{ABS}]. (Tr)

👉 GB Case-Theory (Vergnaud 1977; Chomsky 1981)

If the ban on certain overt elements in infinitives is due to (abstract) “case”-licensing (Vergnaud 1977; Chomsky 1981), then variation in this property should track variation in case/agreement alignment. It doesn't. (Zaenen et al. 1985)

Deal (2015: 661)

An additional “syntactic” area in which ergativity properties have been observed is control. Languages plausibly showing ergativity properties this area are very rare, however, and their existence has been repeatedly called into doubt. For many years the only clear reported example of ergativity properties in control came from Dixon’s work on Dyirbal (1994). In this language, according to the generalizations Dixon provides, ... controlled PRO ... may serve as an intransitive subject, as in [(30a)], or as a transitive object, as in [(30b)], but not as a transitive subject.

...

Dixon also reports that ergativity properties are manifested in the class of possible controllers of PRO in the main clause (1994: 136). The controller must be intransitive subject or transitive object; it cannot be transitive subject.

Dyirbal, Australia, Deal < Dixon (1994)

- (21) a. yabu ηuma-ηgu giga-n
mother.ABS father-ERG tell.to.do-NFUT

[PRO banaga-ygu]

[PRO return-PURP]

‘Father told mother_i PRO_i to return.’

- b. yabu ηuma-ηgu giga-n
mother.ABS father-ERG tell.to.do-NFUT

[gubi-ηgu mawa-li PRO]

[doctor-ERG examine-PURP PRO]

‘Father told mother_i the doctor to examine PRO_i.’

The Dyirbal purposive

- Dixon has consistently maintained (1994; 2011; 2022) that this construction is **not** [what we would call] control.
- Dixon (2022: 216): purpose clause is “best regarded as coordinated with the preceding non-[purposive] clause rather than subordinated to it”.
- See Legate (2008a) for a thorough review.

Syntactic Ergativity in Dyirbal: Topic-chaining

- complex coordination (asyndetic – no overt coordinator – marked by intonation)
- requires an S/O = ABS **pivot**:
shared argument of coordinated constituents headed by inflected verbs must be ABS

- (22) a. η uma yabu- η gu bura-n \emptyset banaga-n^yu
 father.ABS_i mother-ERG see-NFUT \emptyset_i return-NFUT
 ‘Mother saw father and returned.’ [= he returned]
- b. η uma banaga-n^yu \emptyset yabu- η gu bura-n
 father.ABS_i return-NFUT \emptyset_i mother-ERG see-NFUT
 ‘Father returned and mother saw [him].’ (Dixon 1994: 12)

Dyirbal, Australia, Dixon (1994)

We have thus far discussed ‘and’-type coordination. The same syntactic conditions apply to purposive-type coordination, ...inflection -ygu ~ -li ‘in order to, as a result of’.

(23) yabu ŋuma-ŋgu giga-n
 mother.ABS father-ERG tell.to.do-NFUT

- a. [Ø banaga-ygu]
 [Ø return-PURP]

‘Father told mother to return.’

- b. [Ø gubi-ŋgu mawa-li]
 [Ø doctor-ERG examine-PURP]

‘Father told mother to be examined by the doctor.’

The Dyirbal purposive

- No evidence that purposive is non-finite: Matrix, no missing arguments , no coreference

(24) balan dyugumbil miyanday-gu
NCII.there.ABS woman.ABS laugh-PURP

‘Woman wants to laugh’ (i.e., something has happened to make her want to laugh.’ Dixon 1972: 69)

(25) anydya bangga burubay dyulman
PRTCL NCI.there.ERG boil.ABS squeeze.NFUT
bayi nyalngga mayi-yaray-gu
NCI.there.ABS child.ABS come.out-begin-PURP

‘The boil was squeezed by him, with the result that a male child came out.’ (Dixon 1972: 369)

The Dyirbal purposive

- “purposive” not sole (or primary?) meaning
- (Dixon 2022: Ch8): “consequence”

(26) a. [ŋuma banaga-n^yu] [∅ yabu-ŋgu bura-li]
 father.ABS return-NFUT mother-ERG see-PURP

‘Father returned in order for mother to see [him].’ or
 ‘Father returned and as a result mother saw [him].’
 (Dixon 1994: 168)

b. baŋganday-gu buga-bi-li
 be.sick-PURP dead-INCH-PURP

(He was hit), as a result (he) got sick and as a further
 result (he) died.’ (Dixon 2011: 199)

The Dyirbal purposive

- (27) ŋali jidu-gu yanu-li
1DU.NOM jitta-DAT go-PURP

‘We two **must** go out for jitta timber.’

- (28) gajin ŋinda jinda-jinda-li
yamstick 2SG.NOM REDUP-sharpen-PURP

‘You **should** properly sharpen the yamstick.’ (Dixon 2022: 227)

[purposive] marking in the first clause of an utterance ... can often be translated as ‘should’ or ‘must’ or ‘let’s’.

The Dyirbal purposive

- “purposive” clause **can be finite** (modal-like meaning)
- “purposive” clause **can be coordinate** → ABS pivot
- is there a Control construction in addition (contra Dixon)?

(29) [η uma banaga-n^yu] [\emptyset yabu- η gu bura-li]
 father.ABS return-NFUT mother-ERG see-PURP

- a. ‘Father returned in order for mother to see [him].’ or
 b. ‘Father returned and as a result mother saw [him].’

c. Father returned, so/such that mother would see/saw him.

Dyirbal, Australia, (Dixon 1994: 169)

- (30) a. yabu ηuma-ηgu giga-n
mother.ABS_i father-ERG tell.to.do-NFUT

[Ø banaga-ygu]

[pro_i return-PURP]

‘Father said.sth to mother [so that [she] would return.]’

- b. yabu ηuma-ηgu giga-n
mother.ABS_i father-ERG tell.to.do-NFUT

[Ø gubi-ηgu mawa-li]

[pro_i doctor-ERG examine-PURP]

‘Father said.sth to mother [so that she (would) be examined by the doctor.]’

Dyirbal: Summary

Deal 2015 “(only) clear example” of ergative-alignment in Control
(cf. Anderson 1976:17, Levin 1983:259-267,
Bok-Bennema 1991:11)

Dixon, Legate Despite English translation,
no evidence of a Control construction
see Dixon (1972, 1994, 2011, 2022), Legate (2008a)

Belhare, Kiranti, Sino-Tibetan (Bickel & Nichols 2001; Malchukov 2014)

- (31) a. Khon-ma nui-ka
play-INF may.NPST-2s
'You may play.'
- b. Lu-ma nui-ka
tell-INF may.NPST-2s
'I/she/he/they may tell you.' or 'You may be told.'
Not: 'You may tell someone/them.'
- c. [han lu-ma] nui-ka
2 tell-INF may.NPST-2s
'[They] may tell you.' (Bickel 2004: 156)

(also Chechen, Ingush)

Argument-sharing/Clause Union

Control Semantic sharing of subject (2 θ -roles)

(32) Alice_{*i*} tried [PRO_{*i*} to meet them]. (Tr)

Restructuring Semantic sharing of subject (2 θ -roles)

+ Syntactic “sharing” of object

(33) *Lo*=volevo_{*i*} [PRO_{*i*} vedere *t* ...]
him=wanted.1SG to.see

‘I wanted to see him.’ (Italian, Wurmbrand
2004: 991)

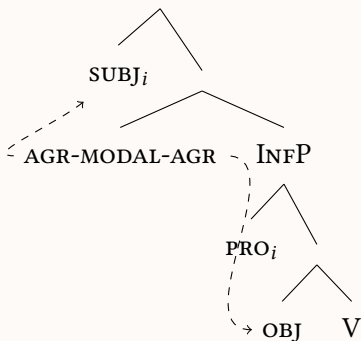
Argument-sharing/Clause Union

- (34) a. kəmma t'-utu-s-kičen [ɲekse-kaz]
 I 1SG-unable-PRES-1SG.S sleep-NFIN
 'I can't sleep.' (Field notes: SA6-A)
- b. kəmma t'-utu-z-in [kəzza əlčqu-aɫ-iɫ]
 I 1SG-unable-PRES-2SG.OBJ 2SG see-FUT-NFIN
 'I can't see you.' (Field notes: S3:19)

Itelmen (Kamchatka), Field Notes

Argument-sharing/Clause Union

(35)

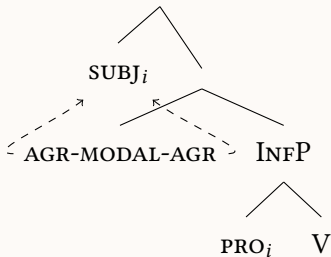


t'-utu-z-in
1SG-unable-PRES-2SG.OBJ

t'-əlčqu-z-in
1SG-see-PRES-2SG.OBJ

Argument-sharing/Clause Union

(36)



t'-utu-s-kičen
1SG-be.unable-PRES-1SG.SUBJ

t'-ŋekse-s-kičen
1SG-sleep-PRES-1SG.SUBJ

Belhare, Tibeto-Burman

“Agreement climbing” in Belhare: Matrix verb agrees with shared subject and object of infinitive. Argument-structure-sharing (syntax).

- (37) a. [hit mett-a] {ka-hiu-ka / *hiu-ka} i?
 [look CAUS-SBJV] {1s-be.able-2s / *be.able-2s} Q
 ‘Can you show me the way?’
- b. [unna han lu-ma] n-lapt-he-ga i?
 [3SG.ERG 2SG.ABS tell-INF] 3A-be.about.to-PAST-2s Q
 ‘Was s/he about to tell you?’

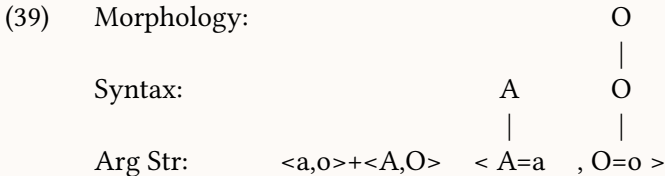
‘may, must, begin, stop, finish, can, forget, know, be about to, already, be able to, want, think’

Belhare, Tibeto-Burman

| | | | |
|------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| (38) | Morphology: | A | O |
| | | | |
| | Syntax: | A | O |
| | | | |
| | Arg Str: | <a,o>+<A,O> | < A=a , O=o > |

Belhare, Tibeto-Burman

B&N claim: *nus-* is *deponent* - syntactically transitive, but morphologically intransitive
it agrees only with its absolutive argument



Belhare, Kiranti, Sino-Tibetan

- (40) a. Khon-ma nui-ka
play-INF may.NPST-2s
'You may play.'
- b. Lu-ma nui-ka
tell-INF may.NPST-2s
'I/she/he/they may tell you.'
'You may be told.'
- c. [han lu-ma] nui-ka
2ABS tell-INF may.NPST-2s
'[They] may tell you.' (Bickel 2004: 156)

Belhare: Summary

Control One argument of non-finite clause is also also a thematic argument of matrix clause (2 θ -roles = PRO; LFG anaphoric control)

Dixon That privileged argument PRO is always the subject

Clause-Union In addition, syntactic object-sharing

Belhare Consistent: subject is (semantically) shared, object 'climbs'

+ 2 verbs have morphological irregularity in agreement (deponence)

Austronesian exceptionality

Southern Sinama (Deal < Trick 2008)

- (41) a. ka-bilahi-an-ku [tuli PRO]
 INV-want-CL-1SG.ERG sleep PRO
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to sleep.’
- b. ka-bilahi-an-ku [ni-lengan-an PRO leh si Ben]
 INV-want-CL-1SG.ERG AGR-call-CL PRO ERG PM Ben
 ‘I_i want Ben to call PRO_i.’
- c. *ka-bilahi-an si Ben [ni-lengan-an akú PRO]
 INV-want-CL PM Ben AGR-call-CL 1SG PRO
 ‘Ben_i wants PRO_i to call me.’

- Claim: Control of S,O (ABS) but not A (ERG)
- NB. Not clear this is control - embedded clauses are finite?

INV = involuntary, CL = verb classifier, PM = personal marker

Austronesian exceptionality

Seediq (Deal < Aldridge):

(42) M-n-osa [PRO.ABS m-ari patis taihoku] ka Ape.
 INTR-PRF-go PRO INTR-buy book Taipei ABS Ape
 'Ape went to buy books in Taipei.

(43) *M-n-osa [PRO.ERG burig-un T. ka patis] ka Ape.
 INTR-PRF-go PRO buy-TR T. ABS book ABS Ape
 'Ape went to buy books in Taipei.

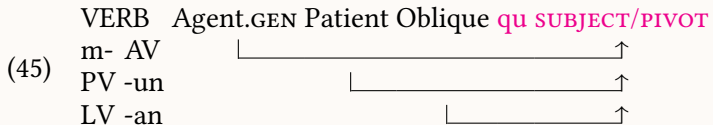
Claim: Only ABS S (intransitive subject) can be PRO
 NB. Not clear this is control - embedded clauses are finite?

Austronesian voice

- (44) a. M-aniq qulih **qu** Tali'
AV-eat fish QU Tali
 'Tali eats fish. (Actor Voice)
- b. Niq-un na' Tali' **qu** qulih qasa
 eat-**PV** GEN Tali QU fish that
 'Tali ate the fish. (Patient Voice)
- c. Niq-an na' Tali' qulih **qu** ngasal qasa
 eat-**LV** GEN Tali fish QU house that
 'Tali eats fish in that house. (Locative Voice)
- d. S-qaniq-an na' Tali' qulih **qu** qway
IV-eat GEN Tali fish QU chopsticks
 'Tali eats fish with chopsticks. (Instrumental Voice).
 (Atayal; Erlewine et al. 2017)

Austronesian voice

Atayal (also Seediq, others)



Austronesian voice

- (46) a. B⟨um⟩ili **ang** bata ng tela sa palengke para sa nanay
 ⟨AV⟩-buy ANG child DET cloth DAT market for DAT mother
 ‘The child bought cloth at the market for mother. (Actor Vc)
- b. B⟨in⟩ili ng bata **ang** tela sa palengke para sa nanay
 ⟨PV⟩-buy DET child ANG cloth DAT market for DAT mother
 ‘The child bought the cloth at the market for mother. (Pat. Vc)
- c. B⟨in⟩ili-an ng bata ng tela **ang** palengke p. s. nanay
 ⟨PV⟩-buy-LV DET child DET cloth ANG market for DAT Ma
 ‘The child bought (the) cloth at the market for mother. (Lc Vc)
 (Tagalog; Rackowski & Richards 2005: 566)

Austronesian exceptionality

Seediq *ka* = Atayal *qu*:

- (47) a. M-n-osa [m-ari patis taihoku **PRO**] ka Ape.
AV-PRF-go **AV**-buy book Taipei PRO ABS Ape
 ‘Ape went to buy books in Taipei.
- b. *M-n-osa [burig-un **PRO** T. **ka** patis] ka Ape.
AV-PRF-go buy-**PV** PRO T. ABS book ABS Ape
 ‘Ape went to buy books in Taipei.

- PRO can be Agent in AV, but not Agent in PV
- i.e., PRO = subject (pivot)

Austronesian exceptionality

Southern Sinama

- (48) a. ka-bilahi-an-ku [tuli PRO]
 INV-want-CL-1SG sleep PRO
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to sleep.’
- b. ka-bilahi-an-ku [ni-lengan-an PRO leh si Ben]
 INV-want-CL-1SG PV-call-CL PRO GEN PM Ben
 ‘I_i want Ben to call PRO_i.’
- c. *ka-bilahi-an si Ben [ni-lengan-an akú PRO]
 INV-want-CL PM Ben PV-call-CL 1SG PRO
 ‘Ben_i wants PRO_i to call me.’
- In PV, it is patient, not Agent, that is controlled = subject/pivot

Austronesian exceptionality

Southern Sinama (Trick 1997)

- (49) a. ka-bilahi-an-ku [tuli PRO]
 INV-want-CL-1SG sleep PRO
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to sleep.’
- b. ka-bilahi-an-ku [ng-ottob PRO lubid]
 INV-want-CL-1SG AV-cut PRO rope
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to cut the rope.’
- c. ka-bilahi-an-ku [ngan-dugsu-an PRO sowa]
 INV-want-CL-1SG AV-stab-CL PRO snake
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to stab the snake.’

- In AV, it is subject (Agent) that is controlled
- (In Sinama, SUBJECT/PIVOT is post-verbal, not clause-final)

Austronesian exceptionality

- Under the conventional analysis of Austronesian voice
- These languages show if anything, control of pivot/subject (PRO= subject)
- No issue for Dixon's universal
- Complications in Tagalog (Kroeger 1993; Stiebels 2007; Wurmbrand 2013)
- Descriptions of Seediq and Sinama Control are brief

Austronesian voice as “Ergative”

- (50) Cyux m-'abi' qu Tali' m- = Actor Vc
PROG AV-sleep QU Tali
'Tali is sleeping. (m- Voice)
- (51) a. M-anìq qulìh qu Tali' m- = Actor Vc
AV-eat fish QU Tali
'Tali eats fish. (m- Voice)
- b. Nìq-un na' Tali' qu qulìh qasa -un = Pat Vc
eat-PV GEN Tali QU fish that
'Tali ate the fish. (-un Voice)

Austronesian voice as “Ergative”

- (52) Cyux m-'abi' **qu** Tali' m- = Intransitive
 PROG **INTR**-sleep ABS Tali
 'Tali eats fish. (*m*- Voice)
- (53) a. M-aniq qulih **qu** Tali' m- = Intransitive
INTR-eat fish ABS Tali (Antipassive)
 'Tali eats fish. (*m*- Voice)
- b. Niq-un na' Tali' **qu** qulih qasa -un = Transitive
 eat-**TR** ERG Tali ABS fish that
 'Tali ate the fish. (*-un* Voice)

(Payne 1982; Aldridge 2004)

Austronesian voice as “Ergative”

Motivation?: “Austronesian voice” not a special alignment

- (54) Cyux m-'abi' **qu** Tali' m- = Intransitive
 PROG **INTR**-sleep ABS Tali
 'Tali eats fish. (*m*- Voice)
- (55) a. M-aniq qulih **qu** Tali' m- = Intransitive
 INTR-eat fish ABS Tali (Antipassive)
 'Tali eats fish. (*m*- Voice)
- b. Niq-un na' Tali' **qu** qulih qasa -un = Transitive
 eat-**TR** ERG Tali ABS fish that
 'Tali ate the fish. (*-un* Voice)

Austronesian exceptionality

Seediq (Ergative analysis):

- (56) a. M-n-osa [PRO m-ari patis taihoku] ka Ape.
 INTR-PRF-go PRO INTR-buy book Taipei ABS Ape
 ‘Ape went to buy books in Taipei.
- b. *M-n-osa [PRO burig-un T. ka patis] ka Ape.
 INTR-PRF-go PRO buy-TR T. ABS book ABS Ape
 ‘Ape went to buy books in Taipei.

Claim: Only ABS S (intransitive subject) can be PRO

Austronesian exceptionality

Southern Sinama (Trick 1997)

- (57) a. ka-bilahi-an-ku [tuli PRO]
 INV-want-CL-1SG sleep PRO
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to sleep.’
- b. ka-bilahi-an-ku [ngan-dugsu-an PRO sowa]
 INV-want-CL-1SG AV-stab-CL PRO snake
 ‘I_i want PRO_i to stab the snake.’
- c. ka-bilahi-an-ku [ni-lengan-an PRO leh si Ben]
 INV-want-CL-1SG PV-call-CL PRO GEN PM Ben
 ‘I_i want Ben to call PRO_i.’

Austronesian exceptionality

- Under the ergative analysis of Austronesian voice
- Control follows an ABS alignment
- Contra Dixon's universal
- But this pattern is **only** attested in Austronesian Voice systems
- The ergative analysis makes Austronesian exceptional!
Violates otherwise robust universal
- (Erlewine et al. 2017: similar voice systems in Dinka, not ergative)

Austronesian exceptionalism

Split in Austronesian Control: (Stiebels 2007)

- PRO is subject/pivot (Seediq, Sinama, Balinese*)
- PRO is Actor, regardless of Voice

Tagalog shows both properties: (Kroeger 1993; Stiebels 2007;
Wurmbrand 2013) also Madurese (some speakers) (Davies 2005)

*Wechsler & Arka (1998)

Austronesian exceptionality

Control of Actor, regardless of voice:

cf. also imperative, pronominal binding

(58) Binalak niya=ng ...
PERF-plan-PV 3SG.GEN=C

‘He planned ...’

- a. [mag-bigay **PRO** ng=pera sa=Nanay.].
 AV-give GEN=money DAT=mother
- b. [i-bigay **PRO.GEN** sa=Nanay ang=pera].
 IV-give DAT=mother ANG=money
- c. [bigy-an **PRO.GEN** ng=pera ang=Nanay].
 give-**DV** GEN=money ANG=mother

‘...to give (the) money to mother.’ (Kroeger 1993: 39)

Austronesian exceptionality

non-volitive *ma-*; Control of pivot, even if not Actor:

- (59) in-utus-an ko si=Maria=ng ...
 PERF-order-DV 1SG.GEN PM=MARIA=C

‘I ordered Maria ...’

- a. * [ma-halik-an PRO.GEN si=Pedro].
 NONVOL-kiss-DV PM=Pedro

‘...to kiss Pedro.’

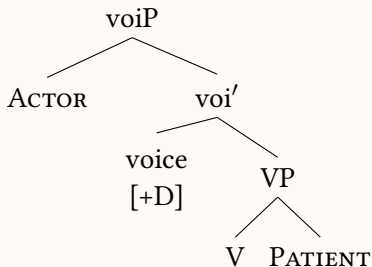
- b. [ma-halik-an ni=Pedro PRO].
 NONVOL-kiss-DV GEN=Pedro

‘...(to allow herself) to be kissed by Pedro.’ (Kroeger 1993: 95)

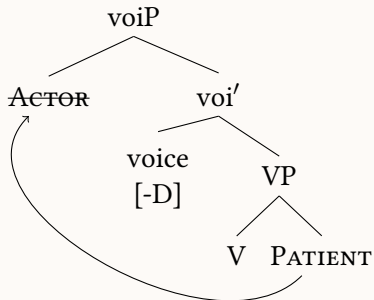
Universal: Subject > Object

Active:

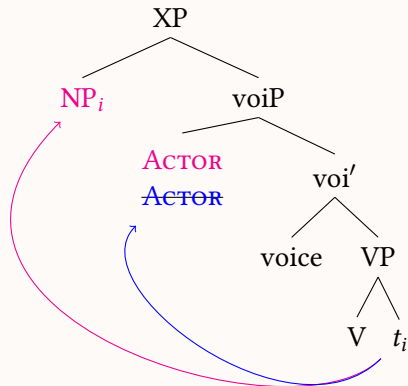
(60)



Passive:



Universal: Subject > Object



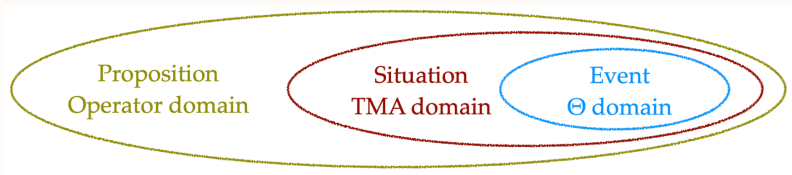
- Passive: NP_i is highest
- Object Shift = no effect (A>P)
- Scrambling = no effect (A>P)
- A'-mvt = no effect (A>P)
- Austronesian voice: variable
- Seediq, Sinima, Balinese: yes
- Tagalog *ma-* yes
- Tagalog, Madurese: no

For case, agreement, Control (and Imperatives?)

Only “voice-related” movement may yield Patient > Actor

Tripartite Clauses (Wurmbrand & Lohninger 2023)

- Ramchand & Svenonius (2014): Three sortal domains which are in a containment configuration
 - Events: argument structure, subevents, Aktionsart
 - Situations: include and elaborate Events (combine time/world parameters with existentially closed Event)
 - Propositions: include and elaborate Situations (combine speaker-oriented/discourse-linking parameters with existentially closed Situation).



Aside: Alignment mismatches

(61)

| Agreement \Rightarrow Case \Downarrow | ERG-ABS | NOM-ACC |
|--|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ERG-ABS | Basque, Inuit, Tsez | Warlpiri, Chukchi Nepali |
| NOM-ACC | ** unattested ** | Russian, German Icelandic |
| NO CASE | Chol, ... | Itelmen, Bantu... |

(62) No language has a nominative-accusative case pattern, but an ergative-absolutive agreement pattern.

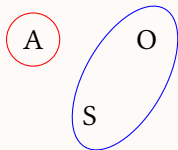
(Bobaljik 2008; Baker 2008, 2015; Legate 2008b)

Aside: Alignment mismatches

(63) a. **yəm-nan** yət tə-ɬʔu-yət
 1SG-ERG 2SG.ABS 1SG-see-2SG.O
 ‘I saw you.’

b. yə-nan **yəm** ine-ɬʔu-yʔi
 2SG-ERG 1SG.ABS AGR-see-2SG.S
 ‘You saw me.’

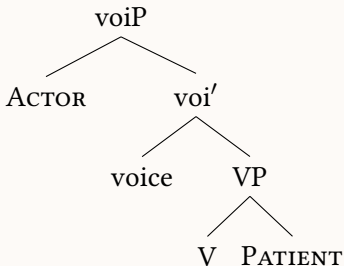
c. **yəm** tə-kətʔəntat-yʔak
 1SG.ABS 1SG-run-1SG
 ‘I ran.’



Chukchi; Skorik 1977

Universal: Subject > Object

(64)

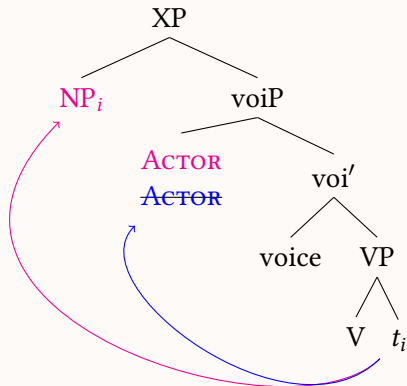


- a. Mark high NP = ERGATIVE
 - b. Mark low NP = ACCUSATIVE
 - c. Else NP is unmarked
(=NOMINATIVE/ABSOLUTE)
- Comrie 1978, Kibrik 1985,
Dryer 1986; Yip et al. 1987,
Marantz 1991, Baker 2015.

Agreement may track case

or may track hierarchy (subject vs. object = NOM vs. ACC)

Universal: Subject > Object



- a. Passive: NP_i is highest
- b. Object Shift = no effect (A>P)
- c. Scrambling = no effect (A>P)
- d. A'-mvmnt = no effect (A>P)

For case, agreement, Control (and Imperatives?)

Only “voice-related” movement may yield Patient > Actor

Accessibility Hierarchy for Agreement

Moravcsik (1978, 1974), Bobaljik (2008) (cf. Baker 2008; Legate 2008b)

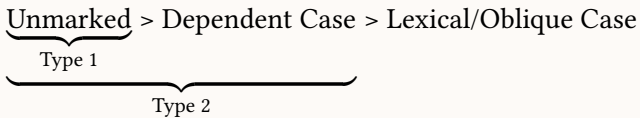
(65) Unmarked > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case

Type 1

Type 2

Gilligan's Survey (100 languages, Gilligan 1987)

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|--------------|-----|----------|
| No Agreement: | 23 | IO only | 0 | None |
| S only: | 20 | DO only | 0 | Abs only |
| S – DO: | 31 | IO, DO only | 0 | Abs, Erg |
| S – IO – DO: | 25 | S-IO, not DO | (1) | All |



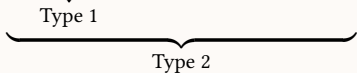
- a. Transitive: Subject-ERG ... Object-**ABS** ... V
- b. Intransitive: Subject-**ABS** V

1 case accessible = must be **ABS** → Tsez, Hindi

2 cases accessible = ERG and ABS

→ “highest accessible” = “subject” (Chukchi, Nepali)

Unmarked > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case



- a. Transitive: Subject-**ERG** ... Object-ABS ... V
- b. Intransitive: Subject-**ABS** V

1 case accessible = must be ABS → Tsez, Hindi
 2 cases accessible = **ABS, ERG**
 → “highest accessible” = “subject” (Chukchi, Nepali)

Unmarked > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case

Type 1

Type 2

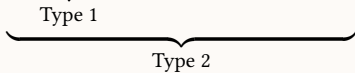
- a. Transitive: Subject-NOM ... Object-ACC ... V
- b. Intransitive: Subject-NOM V

1 case accessible = must be NOM → English etc.

2 cases accessible = NOM, ACC

→ “highest accessible” = “subject” (English, etc.)

Unmarked > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case



- a. Transitive: Subject-NOM ... Object-ACC ... V
- b. Intransitive: Subject-NOM V

1 case accessible = must be NOM → English etc.

2 cases accessible = NOM, ACC

→ “highest accessible” = “subject” (English, etc.)

- Because there is a universal “highest” argument (subject)
- *Highest* + accessibility hierarchy
= only the attested case v. agreement “split” is possible.

(66)

| Access case ⇒ Case alignment ↓ | Unmarked | Unmarked & Dependent |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| ERG-ABS | ABS | subject |
| NOM-ACC | NOM = subj→ | subject |

(Challenges: Deal 2015, response Bobaljik 2017)

Agreement: Siewierska WALS (380) x NP Case: Comrie WALS (190)
= 181.

| Agreement ⇒ Case ↓ | ERG-ABS (19) | ACTIVE (26) | SBJ-OBJ (212) | OTHER SPLIT (39) | NONE (84) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| ERG-ABS (32) | 3 | 2 | 12 | 6 | 9 |
| ACTIVE (4) | 1 | | 1 | | 2 |
| NOM-ACC (52) | | 2 | 34 | | 14 |
| TRIPARTITE (4) | | | 1 | 2 | |
| NO CASE (98) | 5 | 9 | 52 | 5 | 21 |

Conclusions

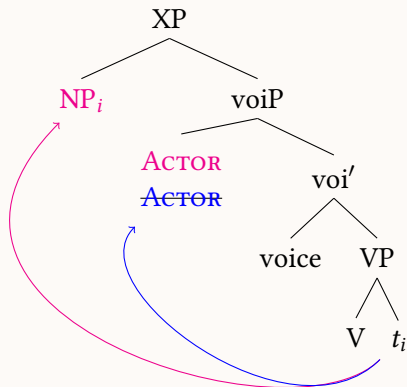
I: Syntactic Universals are alive and well

(67)

| | SUBJ-OBJ | ERG-ABS | |
|-------------|----------|---------|--|
| Morphology: | | | |
| Case: | Y | Y | * but only if case is not NOM-ACC |
| Agreement: | Y | Y* | |
| Syntax: | | | |
| Extraction: | Y | Y* | Control is never ERG-ABS (<i>pace</i> Levin, Deal, Malchukov) |
| Control: | Y | No | |

Conclusions

II: Universal Subject > Object



- Passive: NP_i is highest
- Object Shift = no effect (A>P)
- Scrambling = no effect (A>P)
- A'-mvt = no effect (A>P)
- Austronesian voice: variable
- Seediq, Sinima, Balinese: yes
- Tagalog *ma-* yes
- Tagalog, Madurese: no

- Aldridge, Edith (2004) *Ergativity and word order in Austronesian languages*. Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University.
- Baker, Mark C. (2008) *The syntax of agreement and concord*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, Mark C. (2015) *Case: Its principles and parameters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bickel, Balthasar (2004) Hidden syntax in Belhare. In *Himalayan languages: past and present*, Anju Saxena, ed., Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 141–190.
- Bickel, Balthasar & Johanna Nichols (2001) Syntactic ergativity in light verb complements. In *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, vol. 27, Berkeley Linguistics Society, 39–52.
- Bittner, Maria (1994) *Case, scope and binding*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan David (2008) Where's phi? Agreement as a postsyntactic operation. In *Phi theory*, Daniel Harbour, David Adger, & Susana Béjar, eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 295–328.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan David (2017) In defense of a universal: A brief note on case, agreement, and differential object marking, ms. University of Connecticut.
- Chomsky, Noam (1981) *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris.

- Davies, William (2005) Madurese Control. *k@ta* 7(1): 1–12.
- Deal, Amy Rose (2015) Ergativity. In *Syntax – theory and analysis. An international handbook*, vol. 1, Artemis Alexiadou & Tibor Kiss, eds., Mouton, 654–707.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (1972) *The Dyirbal Language of North Queensland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (1994) *Ergativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (2011) Serial verb constructions in Dyirbal. *Anthropological Linguistics* 53(3): 185–214.
- Dixon, R.M.W (2022) *A new grammar of Dyirbal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Erlewine, Michael Yoshitaka, Theodore Levin, & Coppe van Urk (2017) Ergativity and Austronesian-Type Voice Systems. In *The Oxford Handbook of Ergativity*, Jessica Coon, Diane Massam, & Lisa deMena Travis, eds., Ocford, 373–396.
- Ershova, Ksenia (2020) The Role of Voice in Establishing Control: Evidence from a Syntactically Ergative Language. In *LSA Annual Meeting*.
- Gilligan, Gary (1987) *A cross-linguistic approach to the pro-drop parameter*. Master's thesis, University of Southern California.
- Grohmann, Kleanthes K. (2003) *Prolific Domains: On the anti-locality of*

- movement dependencies*. Linguistik Aktuell, John Benjamins.
- Guillaume, Antoine (2010) How ergative is Cavineña. In *Ergativity in Amazonia*, S. Gildea & F. Queixalós, eds., Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 97–120.
- Hale, Ken (1999) Ergativity, handout MIT.
- Hualde, Jose I. (1986) Case Assignment in Basque. *ASJU XXII*(1): 313–330.
- Kroeger, Paul (1993) *Phrase Structure and Grammatical Relations in Tagalog*. Stanford: CSLI.
- Legate, Julie Anne (2008a) Dyirbal ergativity, handout from LSA Annual Meeting.
- Legate, Julie Anne (2008b) Morphological and abstract case. *Linguistic Inquiry* 39(1): 55–101.
- Levin, Beth (1983) *On the Nature of Ergativity*. Ph.d. dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, MA.
- Malchukov, Andrej (2014) Resolving alignment conflicts: A competing motivations approach. In *Competing Motivations in Grammar and Usage*, Brian MacWhinney, Andrej Malchukov, & Edith Moravcsik, eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 17–41.
- Moravcsik, Edith A (1974) Object-verb agreement.
- Moravcsik, Edith A (1978) Agreement. In *Universals of Human Language*:

IV: *Syntax*, Joseph H. Greenberg, ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 331–374.

Payne, Thomas E. (1982) Role and Reference Related Subject Properties and Ergativity in Yup'ik Eskimo and Tagalog. *Studies in Language* 6(1): 75–106.

Polinsky, Maria (2016) *Deconstructing Ergativity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Polinsky, Maria & Eric Potsdam (2001) Long distance agreement and topic in Tsez. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 19(3): 583–646.

Rackowski, Andrea & Norvin Richards (2005) Phase edge and extraction: a Tagalog case study. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36(4): 565–599.

Ramchand, Gillian & Peter Svenonius (2014) Deriving the functional hierarchy. *Language Sciences* 46: 152–174.

Stiebels, Barbara (2007) Towards a typology of complement control. In *Studies in Complement Control*, vol. 47, Barbara Stiebels, ed., Berlin: ZAS Papers in Linguistics, 1–80.

Trick, Douglas (1997) Equi-NP deletion in Sama Southern. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics* 28(1-2): 125–144.

Trick, Douglas (2008) Ergative control of syntactic processes in Southern Sinama. *Studies in Philippine Languages and Cultures* 19: 184–201, URL

- <http://www.sil.org/asia/philippines/ical/papers.html>.
- Vergnaud, Jean Roger (1977) Letter to Noam Chomsky and Howard Lasnik on “Filters and Control”. In *Foundational Issues in Linguistic Theory*, Robert Freidin, Carlos P. Otero, & Maria Luisa Zubizarreta, eds., MIT Press, 2008 ed., 3–15.
- Wechsler, Stephen & I. Wayan Arka (1998) Syntactic ergativity in Balinese: an argument structure based theory. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 16: 387–441.
- Wurmbrand, Susanne & Magdalena Lohninger (2023) . An implicational universal in complementation—Theoretical insights and empirical progress. In *Propositional Arguments in Cross-Linguistic Research: Theoretical and Empirical Issues*, Jutta M. Hartmann & Angelika Wöllstein, eds., Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 183–229.
- Wurmbrand, Susi (2004) West Germanic verb clusters: The empirical domain. In *Verb clusters: A study of Hungarian, German and Dutch*, Katalin É. Kiss & Henk van Riemsdijk, eds., Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 43–85.
- Wurmbrand, Susi (2013) Tagalog infinitives: Consequences for the theory of phases, voice marking and extraction, URL ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/001898/current.pdf, ms. University of

Connecticut.

Zaenen, Annie, Joan Maling, & Höskuldur Thráinsson (1985) Case and grammatical functions: The Icelandic passive. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 3: 441–483.