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## ON THE CORRECT FORMULATION OF SYNTACTIC RULES IN ERGATIVE LANGUAGES\*

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I started the discussion of the syntactic structure of accusative and ergative languages on the assumption that the rules Equi NP Deletion and Subject Raising proposed for ergative languages by Anderson were correct. I argued that this assumption meets grave difficulties since the NPs considered to be subjects by Anderson possess syntactic properties which are incompatible with the notion of subject. I tried to show that the notions of subject and object are not valid for ergative languages and must be replaced

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by the notions of ergative and absolutive as distinct syntactic functions. The distinction between the separate notions of the morphological and syntactic ergativity was rejected and replaced by the single uniform notion of ergativity as syntactical-morphological category. The new theory of ergativity I call the Integrated Theory of Ergativity because rather than oppose morphological ergativity and syntactic ergativity this theory integrates the two notions of ergativity in a single notion of ergativity.

The Integrated Theory of Ergativity has it that ergative vs. accusative is a fundamental typological syntactic dichotomy. This theory opposes theories which claim that from a syntactic standpoint ergative languages are organized in the same way as accusative languages. The nature and dimensions of this dichotomy can be explained and understood properly only by relating the ergative system and accusative system to a more abstract underlying system which is presented in AG.

Now, after I have proposed the Integrated Theory of Ergativity, I will show how to formulate correct syntactic rules for ergative languages based on this theory.

In order to formulate the new syntactic rules for ergative languages, consider the following examples given by Anderson (Anderson, 1976: 8):

## (25) Equi NP Deletion

- a. John wants to laugh.
- b. John wants to be tickled by Bill.

## (26) Subject Raising

- a. John seems to be laughing
- b. John seems to be getting the job.
- c. John seems to have been tattooed by a Dayak.

In these examples the syntactic rules apply the Subject NP in the lower clause regardless of whether it denotes an agent or a patient. Equi applies to an Agent NP in (25a) and to a Patient NP in (25b). By the same token, in (26a,b) an Agent NP is raised out of the NP position in the lower clause, while in (26c) it is a Patient NP. According to AG, the NPs to which the above rules apply are primary terms which must be interpreted as subjects in accusative languages. Subjects may denote either agents or patients which are not formal grammatical categories in English or any other accusative language. So, the English rules of Equi Deletion and Subject Raising are sensitive to the notion of the subject rather than to the notions of agent or patient which do not have a formal status in English.

Now let us consider the examples of Equi Deletion from Basque given by Anderson to make the point that the above syntactic rules apply to Basque, as well (Anderson, 1976: 12):

- (27) a. dantzatzerat joan da  
 dance-infin-to go he-is  
 'he has gone to dance'
- b. txakurraren hiltzera joan nintzen  
 dog-def-gen kill-infin-to go I-was  
 'I went to kill the dog'
- c. ikhusterat joan da  
 see-infin-to go he-is  
 'He<sub>i</sub> has gone to see him<sub>j</sub>'  
 \*'He<sub>i</sub> has gone for him<sub>j</sub> to see him<sub>i</sub>'

Anderson argues that these examples show that the Equi Deletion in Basque requires identity of subjects; it can never delete the coreferential object in the lower clause. Anderson claims that the rule of Equi in Basque "is sensitive to the same notion of subject as in English (Anderson, 1976: 12)." This claim is false because Anderson confounds the notion of agent with the notion of subject: Basque Equi applies to the agent while in English Equi applies to the subject. Talking of the agent in Basque, I mean the agent as a formal grammatical category rather than the agent as a semantic notion. In ergative languages the agent has a formal status because it is encoded by the ergative case or other morphological devices; in accusative languages the agent has no formal status because accusative languages do not have morphological devices for encoding the agent. In all the above ex-

amples it is the agent NP denoted by the ergative case which is deleted in the lower clause; it should be noted that Equi can apply only to agent NPs in the ergative and never to patient NPs in the absolutive.

So the two rules apply to the formal category of subject in accusative languages and to the formal category of the agent in ergative languages. In accusative languages we have Subject Raising, while in ergative languages, Agent Raising. Equi Deletion deletes subjects in accusative languages and agents in ergative languages.

Subject Raising in accusative languages and Agent Raising in ergative languages apply both to transitive and intransitive clauses. In ergative languages the agent in intransitive clauses can be denoted only by the absolutive since as was shown in Section 4 the primary term in the absolutive in intransitive clauses is the point of neutralization of the opposition ergative:absolutive and so the absolutive may be identified either with an agent or with a patient. Here are examples of Subject Raising in Tongan given by Anderson (Anderson, 1976: 13):

- (28) a. 'oku lava      ke hū      'a Mele ki hono fale  
 pres possible tns enter abs Mary to his house  
 'It is possible for Mary to enter his house'

- (28) b. 'oku lava 'a Mele 'o hū ki hono fale  
 pres possible abs Mary tns enter to his house  
 'Mary can enter his house'
- c. 'oku lava ke taa'i 'e Siale 'a e fefine  
 pres possible tns hit erg Charlie abs the woman  
 'It is possible for Charlie to hit the woman'
- d. 'oku lava 'e Siale 'o taa'i 'a e fefine  
 pres possible erg Charlie tns hit abs the woman  
 'Charlie can hit the woman'
- e. \*'oku lava 'a e fefine 'o taa'i 'e Siale  
 pres possible abs the woman tns hit erg Charlie  
 'The woman can be hit (by Charlie)'

Anderson interprets these examples as evidence that "Tongan subject raising, then, only applies to subjects in the same sense as English subject raising (Anderson, 1976: 13)." But here again Anderson ignores the existence of the formal category of the agent in Tongan and falsely identifies the Agent Raising in Tongan with the Subject Raising in English. In (28b) the agent NP in the absolutive 'Mary' has been raised into the matrix clause, and in (28d) it is the agent NP in the ergative 'Charlie' which occurs in the matrix clause. (28e) is ungrammatical because the Patient NP in the absolutive has been raised. Note that in the English example (26c) a patient NP has been raised out of the lower clause; (26c) is grammatical because its patient NP which

has been raised out of the lower clause has the formal status of a subject.

Anderson also analyzes data regarding conjunction formation and reflexivization. All of the data analyzed by Anderson involve rules which are sensitive to the formal category of the agent rather than to the formal category of subject. Since Anderson confounds these formal categories, his formulation of syntactic rules in ergative languages is false.

In most ergative languages syntactic rules are sensitive to the formal category of agent. But there are other possibilities, too. For instance, in Dyirbal syntactic rules are in many cases sensitive to the formal category of the absolutive; these rules are stated with reference to only absolutives in intransitive and in transitive clauses. In some ergative languages, like Archi, a Daghestan language, there are no constraints at the sensitivity of syntactic rules at all (Kibrik, 1977: 71).

The important thing is that none of the syntactic rules in ergative languages can be stated in terms of subject and object. Any statements of syntactic rules in ergative languages in terms of these notions are false.