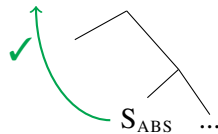


## 1 What is syntactic ergativity

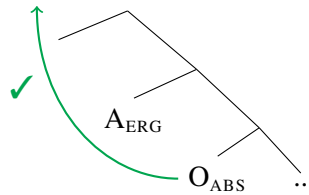
- **Broadly defined:** Syntactic rules which distinguish S and O vs. A (=ABS vs. ERG)
- **Most common effect:** ERG cannot  $\bar{A}$ -move = Ergative Extraction Constraint (**EEC**)

(Dixon 1994; Kazenin 1994; Bittner and Hale 1996; Manning 1996; Aldridge 2004, 2008; Coon, Mateo, and Preminger 2014; Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021; Deal 2016; Polinsky 2016, 2017; Tollan 2021; Tollan and Clemens 2022; Yuan 2022; Drummond 2023; Branan and Erlewine 2024; Brodtkin and Royer 2024, a.o.)

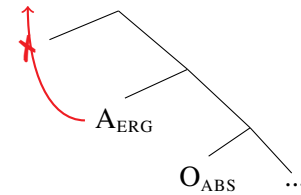
Intransitive:



Transitive:



Transitive:



- (1) a. Aree le al Mari'y x-tze'n-ik \_\_<sub>i</sub>.  
 FOC DET HON Maria CPL-laugh-SS  
 '[Maria]<sub>FOC</sub> laughed.'
- b. Aree le ichaj<sub>i</sub> k-Ø-u-tij \_\_<sub>i</sub> le al Mari'y.  
 FOC DET vegetables INCL-3SG.ABS-3SG.ERG-eat:TV DET HON Maria  
 'Maria will eat [the vegetables]<sub>FOC</sub>.'
- c. \* Aree le al Mari'y<sub>i</sub> k-Ø-u-tij le ichaj \_\_<sub>i</sub>.  
 FOC DET HON Maria INCL-3SG.ABS-3SG.ERG-eat:TV DET vegetables  
 Intended: '[Maria]<sub>FOC</sub> will eat the vegetables.' (K'iche'; Tollan and Clemens 2022:466)

- other syntactic ergativity effects: pro-drop in coordinate structures; ability to be controlled PRO

(Dixon 1994; Aldridge 2004, 2008; Deal 2016)

- claimed to only appear alongside the EEC

### Implicational hierarchy:

If a language is to display any syntactic ergativity effect, it will display the EEC.

⇒ *All syntactically ergative languages display the EEC.* (Kazenin 1994; Aldridge 2008; Deal 2016)

## 2 Theory says: EEC ≠ syntactic ergativity

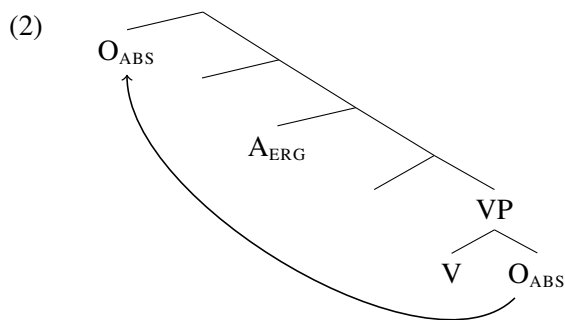
- (Broad) syntactic ergativity is typically explained with **high absolutive** syntax.

(Levin 1983; Marantz 1984; Bittner 1994; Bittner and Hale 1996; Aldridge 2004, 2008, 2012; Coon, Mateo, and Preminger 2014; Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021; Tollan 2021; Tollan and Clemens 2022; Yuan 2022; Brodtkin and Royer 2024; comprehensive overview in Deal 2016; Polinsky 2017)

[\*\**Alternative approach to EEC: morphosyntactic properties of ERG*

(Otsuka 2006; Legate 2012; Deal 2016; Polinsky 2016) ]

- **High absolutive:** ABS moves to a position above ERG



### Other effects of high ABS syntax:

- definiteness restrictions and obligatory wide scope for ABS

(Bittner 1994; Bittner and Hale 1996; Yuan 2022 on Inuit and Aldridge 2004, 2008, 2012 on Tagalog and Seediq)

- Mayan languages: high ABS agreement (Coon, Mateo, and Preminger 2014; Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021) and obviation of Condition C effects (Royer 2023)

High ABS analyses do not predict a universal correlation between EEC and syntactic ergativity.

For example, ABS **intervenes** for ERG movement (Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021; see also Aldridge 2004, 2008, 2012; Coon, Mateo, and Preminger 2014; Branam and Erlewine 2024)

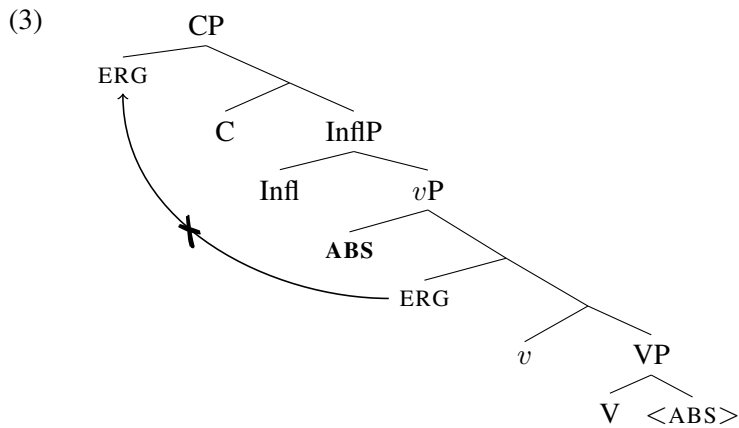
Requires high ABS + an **additional parameter**

[\*\*Other high ABS-based approaches also require additional parameters

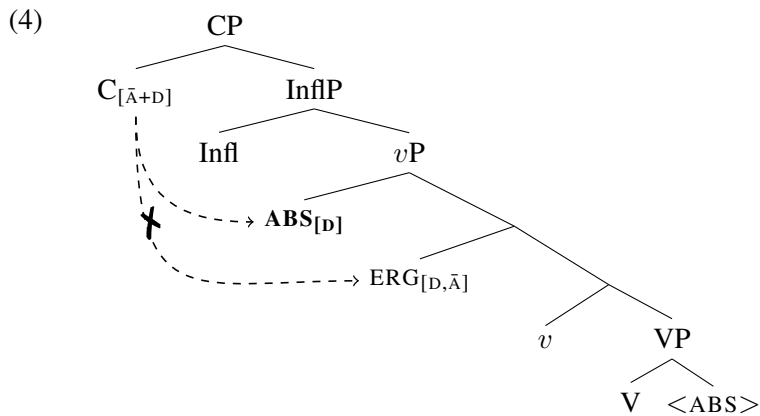
Assman et al. (2015); Tollan and Clemens (2022)]

**Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021:**

- The high position of ABS intervenes for ERG movement:



- ABS intervenes because of **relativized probe on C<sup>0</sup>**: [ $\bar{A}+D$ ]



⇒ EEC = high ABS + relativized probe

- High ABS alone does not derive EEC.

**3 Data confirm: Syntactic ergativity  $\nRightarrow$  EEC**

West Circassian (=Adyghe; Northwest Caucasian) displays syntactic ergativity in:

- anaphor binding (Ershova 2023)
- parasitic gap licensing (Ershova 2021)
- possessor extraction (Ershova 2024)

But does not display the EEC.

## 4 Reciprocal binding in West Circassian

### Reciprocal binding

- is expressed morphologically as **agreement**
- is subject to Condition A

(5) **tə-** qə- **ze-** d- e- š<sup>w</sup>e  
**1PL.ABS-** DIR- **RECP.IO-** COM- PRS- dance

‘We are dancing with **each other**.’

**ABS(S) binds IO(COM)**

(Ershova 2023:206)

(6) senəhatxer Ø- **zer-** a- ʁe- ʁ<sup>w</sup>etəʁex  
 professions.ABS 3ABS- **RECP.IO-** **3PL.ERG-** CAUS- obtain.PST

‘They let/helped **each other** obtain professions.’

**ERG(A) binds IO(Causee)**

(Ershova 2023:204)

- does not affect case, agreement, or transitivity

ERG case and agreement are retained:

(7) axe-**me** zanč’ew zewəže Ø- **ze-** r- a- ʔ<sup>w</sup>etež’əš’təʁe  
 they-**PL.OBL** directly all 3ABS- **RECP.IO-** DAT- **3PL.ERG-** tell.IPF.PST

‘They certainly told the whole truth to **each other**.’

**ERG binds IO(DAT)**

(Rogava and Keraševa 1966:274 via Ershova 2023:209)

- Reciprocal binding is **syntactically ergative**: **ABS(O)** binds **ERG** and **IO**

(8) a. **te-** **zere-** λeʁ<sup>w</sup>əʁ  
**1PL.ABS-** **RECP.ERG-** see.PST

**ABS(O) binds ERG(A)**

b. \***ze(re)-** **t-** λeʁ<sup>w</sup>əʁ  
**RECP.ABS-** **1PL.ERG-** see.PST

**ERG(A) cannot bind ABS(O)**

lit. ‘**Each other** saw **us**’

(9) a. **tə-** **ze-** f- jə- š’a -ʁ  
**1PL.ABS-** **RECP.IO-** BEN- 3SG.ERG- bring -PST

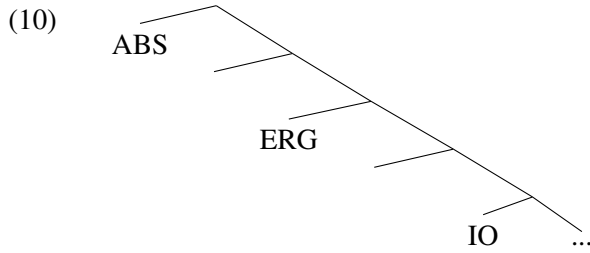
**ABS(S) binds IO(BEN)**

b. \***ze-** **t-** f- jə- š’a -ʁ  
**RECP.ABS-** **1PL.IO-** BEN- 3SG.ERG- bring -PST

**IO(BEN) cannot bind ABS(S)**

‘S/he brought us together (lit. **to each other**).’ (*ibid.*:215)

Explained by **high ABS** syntax: ABS > ERG > IO



### 5 No EEC: Ergative can $\bar{A}$ -move

All core arguments can be relativized: for example, **IO**

- (11) mə sabəjə-m qeɓaɓexɛ-r [ jə-šəpχ<sup>w</sup>ə-me ] Ø- a- r- jə- təɓɛx  
 this child-ERG flowers-ABS 3PL.PR-sister-PL.OBL 3ABS- **3PL.IO**- DAT- 3SG.ERG- give.PST.PL  
 ‘This child gave flowers to his sisters.’

- (12)
- 
- [ **Op** txələ-r \_\_\_<sub>IO</sub> Ø- **ze-** r- jə- tə-ɓɛ ] çəfə-r  
 book-ABS 3ABS- **WH.IO-** DAT- 3SG.ERG- give-PST person-ABS  
 ‘the person to whom s/he gave the book’ (Lander 2012:276)

**ERG** is relativized in the same way:

- (13)
- 
- ç'alew [ **Op** apč'ə-r \_\_\_<sub>ERG</sub> Ø- **zə-** q<sup>w</sup>ətəɓɛ-m ]  
 boy glass-ABS 3ABS- **WH.ERG-** brea.-PST-OBL  
 ‘the boy that broke the glass’ (Lander 2012:274-276)

Relativization displays **movement properties**:

- Island sensitivity: \*relativization from factive clausal complement

(14) [CP **mə ʧ'ale-m** de<sup>B</sup>-ew wered Ø-qə-zer-jə-ʔ<sup>w</sup>e-re-r ]  
 this boy-ERG good-ADV song 3ABS-DIR-FACT-**3SG.ERG**-say-PRS-ABS  
 Ø-s-e-ʃe  
 3ABS-1SG.ERG-PRS-know  
 'I know that this boy sings (lit. says songs) well.' (**baseline**)

(15) \* mə ʧ'ale-r arə [RC **Op** se Ø-s-ʃe-re-r [CP t<sub>i</sub>(ERG)  
 this boy-ABS PRED I 3ABS-1SG.ERG-know-PRS-ABS  
 de<sup>B</sup>-ew wered Ø- qə- zere- zə- ʔ<sup>w</sup>ere-r ] ]  
 good-ADV song 3ABS- DIR- FACT- **WH.ERG**- say.PRS-ABS  
 ↑ **wh-agreement**  
 lit. 'This boy is the one I know [ that \_ sings well ].' (**relative clause**)

- Crossover effects: e.g. weak crossover

(16) mə pšaše-r arə [RC Op<sub>i</sub> [ \_pg / \*pro<sub>i</sub> z-/\*Ø-jane ]  
 this girl-ABS PRED **WH.PR-/\*3SG.PR**-mother  
 Ø-Ø-fa.je-r [CP t<sub>i</sub>(ERG) kwercertə-m wered  
 3ABS-3SG.IO-want-ABS concert-OBL song  
 Ø-qə-Ø-š'ə-zə-ʔ<sup>w</sup>e-n-ew ] ]  
 3ABS-DIR-3SG.IO-LOC-**WH.ERG**-say-MOD-ADV  
 'This girl is the one who<sub>i</sub> [ the mother of \_pg/\*her<sub>i</sub> ] wants [ \_i to sing (lit. say songs) at the concert ].'

Cf. in English:

(17) \* The pudding<sub>i</sub> which [ the man who ordered it<sub>i</sub> ] said \_i would be tasty was a horror show.  
 (Ross 1967:131 *via* Postal 1971:87)

- Parasitic gaps (Ershova 2021)

(18) marə [RC ʧetəw-ew<sub>i</sub> [DP pro<sub>i</sub> / \_PG(PR) Ø / z-jə-šxəŋ](ABS) t<sub>i</sub>(ERG)  
 here cat-ADV 3SG/**WH.PR**-POSS-food  
 Ø- zə- mə- šxə-re] -r  
 3ABS- **WH.ERG**- NEG- eat -PRS -ABS  
 lit. 'Here is the cat that doesn't eat [the food of \_pg.]' (Ershova 2021:28)

\*\*The English translation is bad because of the **anti-c-command condition** (Engdahl 1983) → grammatical in WC because of high ABS.

## 6 Implicational hierarchy: EEC $\nleftrightarrow$ syntactic ergativity

The correlation between EEC and syntactic ergativity is:

- theoretically unexpected
- empirically incorrect

Confirmed by EEC without high ABS syntax

(Otsuka 2006; Legate 2012; Polinsky 2016; Deal 2016; Deal et al. 2024)

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