

DSM and ergative phenomena: an introduction

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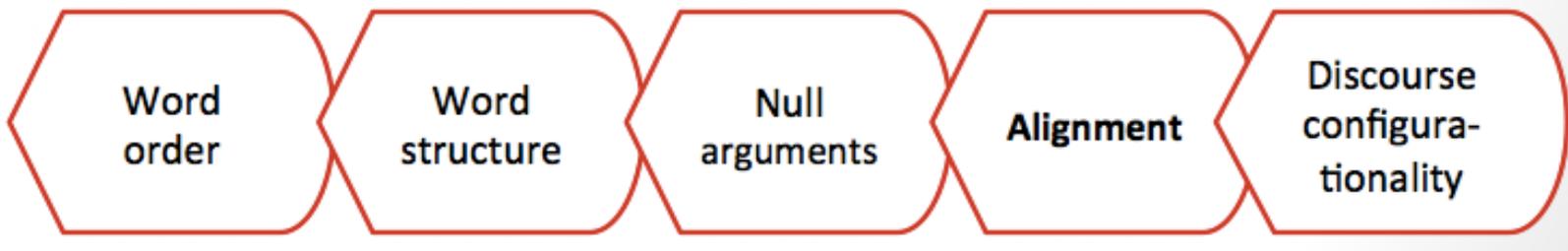


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Outline

- ① Why we're interested in DSM
- ② Definitions
- ③ Split-S and fluid-S systems
- ④ DAM and Silverstein's hierarchy
- ⑤ The connection to DOM
- ⑥ Questions for the workshop
- ⑦ Summing up

Why we're interested in DSM



Why we're interested in DSM

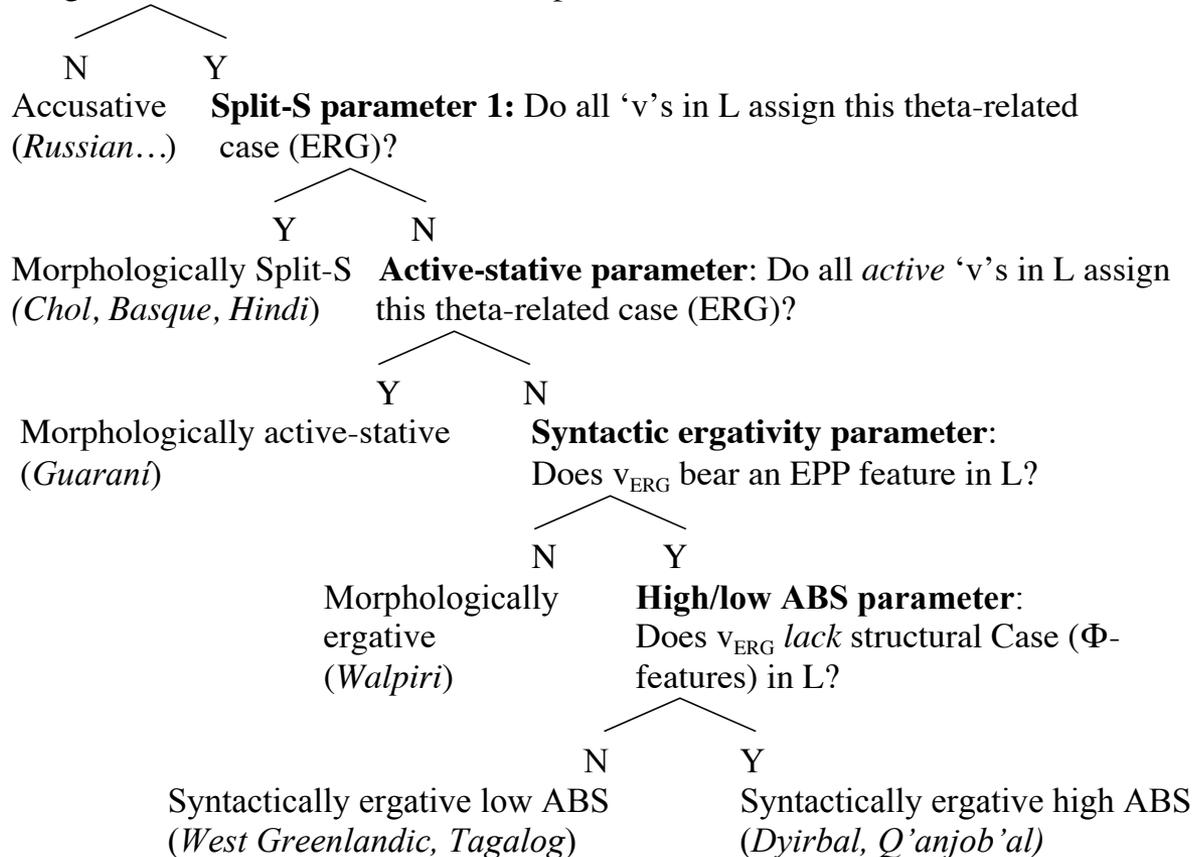
- Points of variation (parameters) can be ordered into transitive dependencies to give parameter hierarchies

(Roberts 2012, Sheehan and van der Wal in progress)

Re thinking **Co** mparative **S** yntax

An alignment parameter hierarchy

Basic alignment parameter: Does transitive ‘v’ assign theta-related case (ERG) to its specifier in L?



See Sheehan (2013, in progress) for discussion

Definitions

- Differential subject marking refers to two distinct phenomena:
 - i. Different marking of intransitive subjects (S), sensitive to properties of the verb/predicate (henceforth split-S marking)
 - ii. Differential marking of transitive subjects (A), sensitive to properties of the DP (henceforth DAM).

We put to one side sensitivity to T/Asp and clause type (see Jung, this workshop; Coon and Preminger 2012).

Related questions

- How many distinct parameter hierarchies do we need?
- What parameters determine DSM (and DOM)?
- Do DOM/DSM fall under the 'alignment hierarchy' (Sheehan 2013)?
- Do DSM/DOM fall under the same parameter hierarchy?

Split-S systems (agency)

- Intransitive subjects pattern differently in different contexts in terms of case/agreement morphology, usually sensitive to agency:

(1) man k'otama
 3SF.NOM swim
 'She swims/swam.'

(2) ma:dal mikit^{hi}
 3SF.ACC faint
 'She faints/fainted.'

[Northern Pomo, Deal and O'Connor, 2010]

Split-S systems (control)

- Predicates like ‘cough’, ‘hiccup’, ‘vomit’, ‘yawn’ are performed by an agent but are not controlled.
- In some languages their subjects pattern with agents (Lakhota) and in others they do not (Central Pomo):

(3)a. **waglépa.**

‘I vomit.’

b. **wapšá.**

‘I sneezed.’

c. **mat’é**

‘I fainted/died.’

[Lakhota, Mithun 1991: 515-516]

Split-S systems (stativity)

- Not all Split-S systems are sensitive to volitionality/agentivity (DeLancey 1981, Van Valin 1987, 1990, Mithun 1991)
- Guaraní is famously sensitive to lexical aspect/Aktionsart:

(4)a. a-xá
'I go'

b. šé-raší.
'I am sick'

[Guaraní, Mithun 1991: 511]

Split-S (other factors)

- **Affectedness** – in Central Pomo unaffected patients behave like agents (Mithun 1991).
- **Discourse function** – in Kambera (Austronesian) agreement marking on the verb depends on the discourse function of the clause as well as aspect and control (Klamer 2008).

Fluid-S systems (control)

- Dixon (1994) – at least some intransitive predicates take subjects with variable case/agreement properties sensitive to:
- control

(5) a. ʔa: p^hitik-čade b. t̥o: p^hitik-čade
 1S.NOM belch-PROSP 1S.ACC belch-PROSP
 ‘I’m going to belch’ ‘I’m going to belch’
[I’m going to belch, so there!] [Uh oh, I feel a belch coming on.]
 [Northern Pomo, Deal and O’Connor, 2010]

- Not clear this is a different kind of system, many languages display some fluidity of this kind.

Fluid-S systems (viewpoint)

- relationship to the point of view center or contextual judge

(6) a. mo:wal dit^hale
 3SM.ACC be.sick
 ‘Ohhh, he’s siiick!’

b. mo:w dit^hale
 3SM.NOM be.sick
 ‘He’s sick.’

[‘You’re telling someone that he is sick.’]

[Northern Pomo, Deal and O’Connor, 2010]

- Crucially, multiple patterns can be discerned even within a single language (Northern Pomo has a volitional/non-volitional split as well as the above more fluid distinction).

Analyses of split-S systems

- Semantic approaches – case associated with a certain semantic ‘role’ (Fillmore 1968, Van Valin 1987, Arkadiev 2008)
 - Problem: there are often outliers, whose subjects do not align as expected (Wichmann 2008: 4, Mithun 1991).
- Syntactic approaches – case associated with a certain syntactic position (unergative vs. unaccusative split, Harris 1982, Butt & King 2002, Mithun 1991, Nichols 2008)
 - Problem: variation across and within languages (Alexiadou et al. 2004), non-circular definition of unaccusative predicates

Other issues: How to model sensitivity to affectedness, viewpoint, discourse function, control etc.

Further questions

- Should split-S/semantic alignment be considered a subtype of ergative systems (Dixon 1994) or a distinct alignment system altogether (Wichmann 2008)? (cf. also Stronski, this workshop)
- Do we find split-S languages which are accusative in transitive clauses? How common are they?
- How similar are unaccusativity and split-S alignment?
- How many kinds of split-S systems are there?
- How similar are the various attested split-S/semantic alignment systems?
- How can the various kinds of split-S systems be modelled parametrically?

Differential A Marking

- i. Different marking of intransitive subjects (S), sensitive to properties of the verb/predicate (henceforth split-S marking)

- ii. **Differential marking of transitive subjects (A), sensitive properties of the DP (henceforth DAM).**
 - Silverstein's Hierarchy: Person, Noun class, Animacy...
Number?
 - Indefiniteness and Information structure

Silverstein's Hierarchy

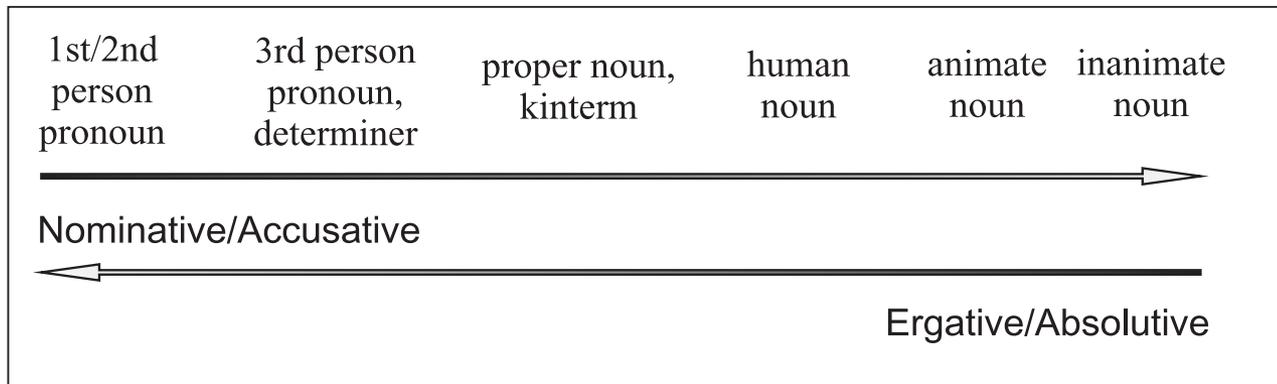


Fig. 1. The animacy hierarchy.

(Silverstein 1976: 122; Figure from McGregor 2009: 489)

- Silverstein's 'Animacy' Hierarchy references the discrete categories:
 - Person
 - Noun Class
 - Animacy
 - Number??

DAM: Person

- Canonical (and most frequently attested) DAM pattern:
 - 1PERSON and 2PERSON pronouns appear without ergative morphology
 - All other pronouns and nominals marked ergative

Punjabi (Indo-Aryan: Punjab)

(7) a. Ó *(ne) kamm kiitaa
 she ERG work.MSG do.PAST.MSG
 ‘She did the work’

b. mǎi (*ne) kamm kiitaa
 I.FSG ERG work.MSG do.PAST.MSG
 ‘I (feminine) did the work’

(Bhatia 1993: 170)

“Markedness”

- Markedness = morphological marking...
- Functional: distinguishing and identifying arguments
- “In a standard transitive scenario, **A** is **animate** and **definite** while **P** is **inanimate** and **indefinite** (or at least less animate and definite than A), so any deviation from this scenario should be marked”

(Comrie 1989)

- Differential A/O Marking relates to transitivity...
 - Animacy, Person etc. is unmarked for subjects
 - Animacy, Person etc. marked for objects
- DAM as a mirror of DOM...?

DAM: Animacy

Gooniyandi (Bunaban: Western Australia)

- (8) a. goornboo(-ngga) nganyi gard-nigin-∅-bini
 woman(-ERG) me hit-1SGACC-3SGNOM-BINI
 ‘The woman hit me’
- b. middi-ngga ngab-ngin-∅-a
 sun-ERG eat-1SGACC-3SGNOM-A
 ‘The sun burnt me’

(McGregor 1992:276)

Samoa (Polynesian: Samoa)

- (9) a. Na tapuni [e le matagi] le faitoto’a
 PAST close ERG ART wind ART door
 ‘The wind closed the door’ (‘animate’ reading)
- b. Na tapuni [i le matagi] le faitoto’a
 PAST close LOC ART wind ART door
 ‘The wind closed the door’ (non-animate reading)

(Malchukov 2008, citing Mosel & Hovdhaugen 1992: 424-5)

DAM: Noun class

- Inanimate splits...
- Split for noun class (i.e. number neutral splits)
- Hittite: ACC common class (masc.+fem.) vs. ERG neuter class (which inc. most – but not all - inanimates)

Hittite (Anatolian, Indo-European)

(10) a. [SA]G.DU-ann=a išhišn-anteš appanzi
 head.ACC=and binding-ERG.PL hold.PRES.3PL
 ‘and the bindings clasp the head’

b. mān=an pahhuen-anza arha warnuzi
 OPT=3SGACC fire-ERG.SG PV burn.PRES.3SG
 ‘I wish fire would burn it up’

(Garrett 1990:267-271)

DAM: Number

Thargari (Karnic: Western Australia)

- (11) a. ... nagada paḍiri-a ngura-ḍa-ru
 1SG.NOM return-PRES camp-ALL-now
 ‘I’m going back to camp’
- b. majir-ira ngadi-yi kupα-ḷḷa
 matches-PRIV **1DUAL-EXCL.NOM** be/sit-PRES
 ‘We’ve got no matches’
- c. ngadi-yi-Ru ngawa-ḷḷa kuḍaru-du...
 1DUAL-EXCL.ERG cover-PRES two-ERG...
 ‘We’re covering up...’

(Klokeid 1969, cited in Legate, Ms: 17)

DAM: Number

- Silverstein (1976)

- Dual > Plural > Singular
- Inclusive > exclusive
- Feminine > masculine (> neuter)

- Woolford 2008: 34

1PL > 1SG > 2PL > 2SG > 3HUM.PL > 3HUM.SG > 3ANIM.PL >
3ANIM.SG > 3INAN.PL > 3INAN.SG

- Legate (Ms.)

1DUAL > 1PL > 1SG > 2DUAL > 2PL > 2SG > 3DUAL > 3PL > 3SG > ...

DAM: Indefiniteness

- Prediction: indefinite A should yield special marking
- “Most examples directly contrast with this generalisation”
(DuBois 1987; Malchukov 2008)
- Cf. Hallman, this workshop; Spyropoulos, this workshop

The role of information...

- “the data available indicate that the relevant distinction may be between **topical/given** and **focal/new** NPs, rather than between definite and indefinite ones”

(Malchukov 2008: 215)

Newari (Tibeto-Burman; Nepal)

- Who is breaking the window?

(14) a. Wō m̄anu-n̄ā jhya tajya-n̄ā co-n̄ā
 the man-ERG window break-AUX be-AUX
 ‘**The man** is breaking the window’

b. Wō m̄anu jhya tajya-n̄ā co-n̄ā
 the man window break-AUX be-AUX
 ‘The man **is breaking the window**’

(Givón 1984:154)

DAM and DOM

- Aissen's (2003) analysis of DOM makes strong predictions for DAM as well: it should be a mirror pattern
 - indefinite subjects (marked *qua* subject) should get morphological marking, while definite subjects should not
 - there are *some* mirror patterns, e.g. Dyirbal
 - some languages only allow definite subjects, e.g. Malagasy, Tagalog (Keenan 2008); some only allow animate subjects: Japanese, Jacaltec, Lakhota (cf. de Swart 2007)
- Marking in order to *distinguish* and *identify* arguments

“Markedness”

- Problematic notion: frequency? Regularity?
- Markedness = being morphologically marked?
- Næss (2004) argues against the idea that *definiteness* and *animacy* are unmarked for subjects but marked for objects
 - the relevant properties are affectedness and control
 - Markedness relates to transitivity
 - NOM/ACC systems (morphologically) mark affected arguments
 - ERG/ABS systems mark initiators
- Functional base: distinguishing and identifying arguments

DAM and DOM

- How different are DAM and DOM?
 - Coon and Preminger (2012) argue that different features trigger DAM and DOM, e.g. person splits are irrelevant for DOM
 - DOM, on the other hand, is sensitive to animacy, definiteness (cf. Bickel et al., this workshop, on scales in DAM)
 - No attested examples of only inanimates bearing ergative marking (Blake 1987: 21; the mirror image is common for DOM)
 - Restrictions on subjects: no indefinites (Tagalog, Malagasy), no inanimates (Japanese)

DAM and DOM

- How *similar* are DAM and DOM?
 - Turkish DAM and DOM pattern *in parallel* rather than as mirror images (cf. Kornfilt 2008, this workshop)
 - Presuppositionality has been argued to underlie DOM and syntactic prominence one way of expressing this (cf. object shift)
 - Syntactic prominence correlates with interpretation for both subjects and objects
- Is a unified treatment of DAM and DOM possible?
 - Are the same or similar properties expressed differently for subjects and objects? (cf. Hallman, this workshop)

Theoretical approaches

- Functional-typological approaches
 - Distinguishing and identifying arguments through case marking
 - Is DAM another strategy to achieve the same goal?
 - Tools and assumptions: hierarchies, markedness, typological generalisations about subject-/object-properties
- Formal syntactic approaches
 - OT: formalisation of typological insights; derive DAM and DOM through different but related constraints
 - Configurational approaches: the same apply to subjects and objects and the same properties are relevant (syntactic prominence, presuppositionality)
 - The differences in expression arise from other factors?

Further questions

- To what extent are DAM and DOM mirror images of each other? (cf. Spyropoulos, this workshop; Bickel et al., this workshop)
- Does DAM depend on DOM? (cf. Stroński, this workshop)
- What's the role of distinguishing and identifying functions?
 - Is there redundancy in DOM marking?

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