Workshop *Referential Hierarchies in Alignment Typology*
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THE ROLE OF THE REFERENTIAL HIERARCHIES
IN ERGATIVE ALLOMORPHY

1. Preliminaries

<u>Ergativity</u> is understood here as a pattern of alignment of core relations S, A and P (in the sense of Comrie 1978) whereby S is treated similarly to P and differently from A.

<u>Ergative case</u> is a grammatical marker (bound affix or free-standing adposition) appearing on As in ergative alignment.

BASQUE (isolate, Europe; Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina (eds.) 2003: 180, 181)

(1) a. *Zakurr-a etorri da.*
         dog-DEF come AUX.ITR.3SG.ABS
         'The dog has come.'

     b. ***Gizon-a-k*** *zakurr-a ikusi du.*
         man-DEF-ERG dog-DEF see AUX.TR.3SG > 3SG
         'The man has seen the dog.'

NB This definition does not imply that A-marking should be the only or even the primary function of the ergative case.

<u>Allomorphy</u> is understood as the co-existence of a number of distinct <u>overt</u> realizations of a gram (here, of the ergative case) not reducible to automatic phonological alternations (cf. Spencer's (2006, 2009) distinction between syntactic and morphological case).

2. The scope of the study

In this paper I deal with ergative allomorphy determined by the semantic and referential properties of the lexeme/word/noun phrase to which the case marker attaches.

I <u>will not</u> deal with the following kinds of phenomena:

➲ allomorphy determined by phonological properties of the stem;
➲ allomorphy determined by arbitrary lexical features of the base (declension class);
➲ distinct realizations of the agentive participant which in fact involve alternations between a canonical transitive construction and an intransitive two-place construction, and thus an alternation between an ergative case and some other case (e.g. 'involuntary agent constructions', see Kittilä 2005; Ganenkov et al. 2008).

AGUL (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Lezgic, Russia; Ganenkov et al. 2008: 177)

(2) a. ***baw-a*** *nek̄* *ātuzu-ne.*
         mother-ERG milk pour.out-PST
         'Mother (A) poured out the milk (P).'

b. **baw-afas** nek̄ aᵘzu-ne.
    mother-ADELAT milk pour.out-PST
    'Mother (Obl) accidentally spilled the milk (S).'

➲ choice of ergative marker determined by NP-external features, such as perfective vs. imperfective TAM (3) or referential properties (SAP vs. 3rd person) of the P (4).

SHINA KOHISTANI (Indo-European > Indo-Iranian > Dardic, Pakistan; Schmidt & Kohistani 2008: 53, 57)

(3) a. *judráa-s paár xod-ée núum-i wy-áa-n-i.*
    snake-ERG1 over.there god-GEN name-PL drop-IPF-PRS-3SG
    'The snake over there is reciting God's names.'

b. *dij-ó salám d-éeg-i.*
    daughter-ERG2 greeting give-PFV-3SG
    '(His) daughter greeted (him).'

YAKIMA (Penutian > Sahaptin, Washington, USA; Jansen 2010: 134, 136)

(4) a. *tamánwit-**nim**=**nash** i-nápayun-ta.*
    law-ERG1 = 1SG.P 3SG.SBJ-defend-FUT
    'The law will support me.'

b. *pá-k'inu-sha Máali-**yin** Sám-nan.*
    INV-see-IPF Mary-ERG2 Sam-ACC
    'Mary sees Sam.'

The phenomenon of non-phonologically determined ergative allomorphy does not seem to be widespread: Palancar (2002: 262) reports less than 8 % of the ergative languages of his sample to have more than one ergative marker. My "sample" includes the following languages from Eurasia, Oceania and Australia:

    Caucasian: Adyghe, Kabardian, Tsakhur, Avar, Khwarshi, Tsova-Tush, Chechen
    Chukotko-Kamchatkan: Chukchi, Koryak
    Austronesian: Nêlêmwa, Niuean
    Pama-Nyungan: Kuku-Yalanji
    West-Barkly: Jingulu

3. Typology

Cross-linguistically, the distribution of different allomorphs of the ergative case tends to follow the classes defined by the well-known referential hierarchy (Silverstein 1976):

(5) local pronouns > non-local pronouns/demonstratives > proper names and/or kinship terms > humans > non-human animates > inanimates

3.1. Pronouns vs. others

KHWARSHI (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Tsezic; Khalilova 2009: 68, 143–145): with nouns, the Ergative case is formed by the suffix *-(y)i* or is identical to one of the set of oblique stem markers, cf. 'rabbit' Abs *qˤe* ~ Erg *qˤe-**yi***; personal pronouns and demonstratives form the Ergative with the suffix *-e*, cf. 'I' Abs *do* ~ Erg *d**e***, 'these' Abs *izzu* ~ Erg *izz**e***.

ADYGHE, standard variety (North-Caucasian > Abkhaz-Adyghe; own fieldwork): common nouns vs. demonstratives (local pronouns and most proper names do not distinguish Abs and Erg)

(6) a. *č'ale-**m** pŝaŝe-r j-e-λeʁʷə.*
    boy-ERG1 girl-ABS 3SG.A-PRS-see
    'The boy sees the girl.'

    b.   *a-š'*   *pŝaŝe-r*   *j-e-λeʁʷə.*
          that-ERG2 girl-ABS   3SG.A-PRS-see
          'He sees the girl.'

KABARDIAN, standard variety (North-Caucasian > Abkhaz-Adyghe; Kumakhov & Vamling 2006: 19, 20): the same situation, but the Erg marker for demonstratives is different from the Adyghe one, namely *-bə.*

3.2. Proper names vs. others

NIUEAN (Austronesian > Oceanic > Polynesian, Niue; Massam 1996): different sets of case prepositions, including Ergative, for pronouns and proper names vs. common nouns.

(7) a.   *Koe* *tele*   ***e***   *Sione*   *a*   *Sefa.*
         PRS   kick   ERG1 PN   ABS1   PN
         'Sione is kicking Sefa.' (Massam 1996: 93)

    b.   *Kua* *hahala*   ***he***   *tagata*   *e*   *akau.*
         PRF   chop   ERG2 man   ABS2 tree
         'The man is chopping the tree.' (ibid.: 84)

CHUKCHI (Chukotko-Kamchatkan, Russian Far East; Dunn 1999: 100): personal names vs. common nouns; kinship terms may be used as proper names (8c):

(8) a.   *Nutekew-**ne*** *Majkələ-na* *rə-jp-annen*   *cinitkin*   *witəcγ-ən.*
         PN-erg1   PN-ALL   CAUS-wear-3SG>3SG REFL.POSS   overtunic-3SG.ABS
         'Nutekew put his overtunic on Michael.' (Dunn 1999: 135)

    b.   *taŋqonpə*   *ənqen*   *ʔeqe-njiw-**e***   *n-in-iw-qin...*
         always   that(ABS) bad-uncle-ERG2   HAB-TR-say-3SG
         'The bad uncle always said to him...' (speech of non-relative) (ibid.: 103)

    c.   *qərəm*   *ʔetki*   *qejwe* *ənjiw-qejə-**ne*** *r-ena-ccəpcewə-γʔa.*
         NEG.FUT badly   truly   uncle-DIM-ERG1   FUT-TR-beat-PFV
         'No, uncle will badly beat me.' (nephew's speech) (ibid.)

3.3. Kinship terms vs. others

CHECHEN (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Nakh, Russia; Nichols 1994: 24): a special ergative allomorph *-s* reserved for personal names and kin terms vs. the regular allomorph *-uo*, cf. *da:-s* 'father-ERG1' (ibid. 72) vs. *a:xarxuo-č-uo* 'peasant-OBL-ERG2'.

3.4. Humans vs. non-humans

TSAKHUR (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Lezgic; Kibrik & Testelets (eds.) 1999: 350)

(9) a.   *za-s* *ham-ni* *anna*   *wasilewn-ē* *dars*   *hiwo.*
         I-DAT   that-OBL PN   PN-ERG1   lesson give:PFV
         'This Anna Vasiljevna has taught me.'

    b.   *balkan-i-**n***   *balkan-na* *iš=ī*   *hāʔ-a.*
         horse-OBL-ERG2   horse-ATR   work=EVD   do-IPF
         'The horse was doing horse's work.'

NÊLÊMWA (Austronesian > Oceanic; New Caledonia; Bril 2002)

(10) a.   *hla* *odaxa-hla*   ***a***   *kââma-hla.*
         they   go.to.meet-3PL ERG1   father-3PL
         'Their father is going to meet them.' (Bril 2002: 135)

b. *i khua-na* **ru** *mabo hleny.*
he eat-1SG ERG2 wasp that
'A wasp bit me.' (ibid.: 136)

c. *i thege ve khayoot* **ru** *loto ena*
he run APL fence ERG2 car this
'The car drew the fence.' (ibid.: 128)

Nouns denoting children and groups belong to the non-human class:

(11) a. *hla kaage habwali-n* **ru** *âbeen.*
they steal clothes-3SG ERG2 stranger
'Some strangers stole his clothes.' (ibid.: 136)

b. *i fhe me pwâ-ciic hleny* **ru** *âlô.*
he bring here fruit-tree this ERG2 child
'The child brings here this fruit.' (ibid.)

3.5. Animates vs. inanimates

KUKU-YALANJI (Pama-Nyungan > Yalandyic, Queensland; Patz 2002: 129)

(12) a. *yinya-**ngka** kubarr-**angka** yalbay-**ngka** maral bayka-ny.*
that-ERG1 eel-ERG1 big-ERG1 girl bite-PST
'That big eel bit the girl.'

b. *nganya bambaybunga-ny kubarr-**da**.*
I:ACC sick-PST eel-ERG2
'The eel [meat] made me sick.'

3.6. A different parameter: gender

AVAR (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Avar-Andic; Alekseev & Ataev 42–43, 50–52): productive markers of the oblique stem coincide with the Ergative and distinguish gender: *-aš* masculine vs. *-aƛ̄* feminine + inanimate, thus *durc-**aš*** 'son-in-law-ERG.SG' vs. *ebel-**aƛ̄*** 'mother-ERG.SG', *kalam-**aƛ̄*** 'word-ERG.SG'.
See also Jingulu below.

3.7. More than two-way systems

TSOVA-TUSH a.k.a. Batsbi (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Nakh, Georgia; Holisky & Gagua 1994: 165, 173–175): local pronouns form Erg by metathesis; demonstratives and singular human nouns attach *-s*; other nominals attach *-v*.

(13)

	Abs	**Erg**
'we(excl)'	*txo*	**atx**
'that'	*o*	*oqu-**s***
'father'	*dad*	*dada-**s***
'fox'	*cok'al*	*cok'le-**v***
'knife'	*nek'*	*nek'e-**v***

CHUKCHI (Dunn 1999: 101): in addition to the proper nouns vs. common nouns distinction shown above, there is a special Erg marker *-(n)an* for personal pronouns.

(14) γəm-**nan** *tə-n-walom-at-ənat* *ənpənacγ-ət.*
I-ERG3 1SG.A-CAUS-understand-CAUS-3PL.P old.man-3PL.ABS
'I informed the old men.' (Dunn 1999: 212)

ADYGHE, Bdzhedug dialect (Zekox 1969: 93–94): a special Erg marker *-ə* for proper names, in addition to the markers for common names *-m* and for demonstratives *-š'*.

(15) a. *č'ale-**m***   *bzəw*   *q-ə-wəbətə-ʁ.*
       boy-ERG1   bird   DIR-3SG.A-catch-PST
       'The boy caught a bird.'

    b. *č'elemet-**ə***   *bzəw*   *q-ə-wəbətə-ʁ.*
       PN-ERG2   bird   DIR-3SG.A-catch-PST
       'Chelemet caught a bird.'

    c. *č'elemet*   *me-š'xə.*
       PN(ABS)   PRS-laugh
       'Chelemet is laughing.'

JINGULU (West-Barkly, Northern Australia; Pensalfini 1997: 244, 273): a system with four Erg markers!

(16)

female kinship terms (17a)	*-ka*
other female nominals (including personal pronouns and certain inanimates) (17a)	*-nga*
other animate nominals (including personal pronouns) (17b)	*-rni*
inanimate nouns (17c)	*-(C)arndi* = Ins

(17) a. *kunyangulanama*   *ya-miki*   *ngaja-nga-nu*   *lala-**ka***   *ngarri-**ninga**.*
       other.day   3SG-came   see-1SG-PST   aunt-ERG:FKIN   my-ERG:F
       'The other day my father's sister came to visit me.' (Pensalfini 1997: 273)

    b. *babi-**rni***   *ikiya-rnarna-nu*   *ibilkini.*
       older.brother-ERG:M   wet-3SG > 1SG-PST   water
       'My brother wet me.' (ibid.)

    c. *darrangku-**wardni***   *maya-ngarna-nu.*
       tree-ERG:INAN/INS   hit-3SG > 1SG-PST
       'I ran into a tree.' (lit. 'a tree hit me', ibid.: 284)

3.8. Generalization

(18)

Language	local pronouns	3rd pers. pronouns	proper names	kinship terms	human	animate	inanimate
Tsova-Tush	erg1	erg2				erg3	
Khwarshi	erg1		erg2				
Chukchi	erg1		erg2	erg3			
Adyghe (standard)	—	erg1	—	erg2			
Adyghe, Bdzhedug dial.	—	erg1	erg2	erg3			
Chechen	erg1		erg2		erg3		
Niuean	erg1			erg2			
Nêlêmwa	erg1				erg2		
Tsakhur	—	erg1			erg2		
Kuku-Yalanji	erg1						erg2
Jingulu	erg1 ~ erg2(f)		erg1 ~ erg3 (f)	erg1 ~ erg2(f)			erg4

The following generalization emerges:

(19) If a language possesses several ergative markers distributed according to the lexical-semantic class of nominals, different markers cover contiguous areas on the hierarchy (5) (=20).

(20) local pronouns > non-local pronouns/demonstratives > proper names and/or kinship terms > humans > non-human animates > inanimates

The only language contradicting (19) is Jingulu. Note that the system of Jingulu is bi-dimensional, with gender being a parameter independent of the hierarchy in (20).

In other languages, too, including other dimensions such as number may change the picture, e.g. in Adyghe plural demonstratives use the general Erg suffix and not the special one (cf. 'that-ERG' *a-š'* vs. 'that-PL-ERG' *a-xe-m* / **a-xe-š'*).

4. Extensions

Not surprisingly, in systems where the distribution of Erg markers is determined by human-ness or animacy, this kind of allomorphy can be sometimes employed to mark contextual features of NPs, e.g. definiteness. The following natural correlation between animacy and definiteness (cf. Comrie 1979, Bossong 1985, Aissen 1999, 2003) is observed.

(21) If a language possesses several ergative markers distributed according to the animacy/humanness, and such markers can be employed to mark definiteness/referentiality, then the marker associated with greater resp. lesser animacy will be used for definiteness resp. indefiniteness.

KORYAK (Chukotko-Kamchatkan, Russian Far East, Žukova 1972: 95–103): two declension types differing *inter alia* in the expression of the Ergative; non-human nouns take affixes from declension 1 only, proper names take affixes from declension 2 only, cf. minimal pair in (22), whereas human nouns may take either depending on definiteness, cf. (23).

(22) a. *kajŋ-a*
bear-ERG2
'a/the bear'

    b. *kajŋə-**na-k***
bear-DEF-ERG1
'Kajnyn (a proper name)' (ibid.: 101)

(23) a. *an'a-**ta***
grandmother-ERG2
'some grandmother'

    b. *an'a-**na**-k*
grandmother-DEF-ERG1
'the grandmother' (ibid.: 99)

NÊLÊMWA (Bril 2002: 95, 136): as has been shown above (11), nouns denoting groups nor-mally co-occur with the non-human Erg *ru*; however, the human Erg *a* may be used for marking definite groups:

(24) a. *hla   khiibo-e   **ru**   agu.*
they   hit-3SG   ERG2   people
'Some people hit him.' (ibid.: 136)

    b. *hla   fhe   **a**   hleena   agu.*
they   take   ERG1   these   people
'These people took it away.' (ibid.)

Besides that, "animate/human" Erg markers may be employed for personification of non-human or inanimate referents (25), and, accordingly, "inanimate/non-human" Erg markers may attach to human nouns in pejorative or derogatory contexts.

CHUKCHI (Dunn 1999: 103)

(25) *epeepeqejə-**ne**   iw-nin...*
spider-ERG1   say-3SG>3SG
'The spider said...' (from a folktale with a spider as a protagonist)

NÊLÊMWA (Bril 2002: 134): "L'emploi de *ru* en référence à des humains est péjoratif; il connote l'indifférence ou l'ironie" ('the use of *ru* with reference to humans is pejorative; it has connotations of indifference or irony') – but no examples are provided ☹

5. Discussion
Whether the cross-linguistic effects of the referential hierarchy on ergative allomorphy can be regarded as supporting the validity of this hierarchy as an explanatory device in the typology of case marking and grammatical relations is not obvious (cf. recent critique of the hierarchy-based explanations in Filimonova 2005, Bickel & Witzlack-Makarevich 2008, Bickel 2008).

Since ergative allomorphy always results from diachronic changes in individual languages and language families, it might well be the case that observed hierarchical patterns are merely epiphenomenal to a more general tendency to group together cognitively salient lexical-semantic distinctions such as animate vs. inanimate, human vs. non-human etc., reflected in the referential hierarchy.

Abbreviations
1 – 1ˢᵗ person, 3 – 3ʳᵈ person, A – agent, ABS – absolutive, ACC – accusative, ADELAT – adelative, ALL – allative, APL – applicative, ATR – attributive, AUX – auxiliary, CAUS – causative, DAT – dative, DEF – definite, DIM – diminutive, DIR – directional, ERG – ergative, EVD – evidential, F – feminine, FKIN – feminine kin, FUT – future tense, GEN – genitive, HAB – habitual, INAN – inanimate, INS – instrumental, INV – inverse, IPF – imperfective, ITR – intransitive, M – masculine, NEG – negation, OBL – oblique (case/stem), P – patient, PFV – perfective, PL – plural, PN – proper name, POSS – possessive, PRS – present tense, PST – past tense, REFL – reflexive, SBJ – subject, SG – singular, TR – transitive

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