Amy Rose Deal and Zachary O'Hagan. NELS 55, 2024.

Person and aspect in Taushiro split ergativity

Many ergative languages show splits in the distribution of ergative according to aspect and/or person. Taushiro (isolate; Loreto region, Peru) shows both patterns, with the person-based split notably 'global' in character (Bárány 2017, Clem & Deal t.a.): the subject is ergative when (i) Asp^0 is [PERF], and (ii) the object does not outrank the subject in person. We show that the person-split is readily explained by Clem & Deal's Agree-based approach, providing new support for this theory. The aspect split provides new evidence that vP structure selected by aspect, rather than the syntax of Asp^0 alone, determines case; it provides evidence against a theory of aspect splits according to which non-ergative aspects disallow simple transitive clause structure (Coon 2013, Coon & Preminger 2017).

Taushiro basics. Taushiro shows subject agreement in most TAM configurations. Regardless of transitivity, 1st person agreement is *w/u-*, 2nd person *j/i-* (with phonologically determined gliding, O'Hagan 2023). 3rd person subject agreement is overt only for unaccusative subjects (*i-*), (1b), otherwise null, (1c). Word order is consistently VS(O). Taushiro data comes from primary fieldwork.

(1) a. u-winoro ui
        1-wake.up 1
        I woke up.

   b. i-winoro nacc̦o
        3.UNACC-wake.up 3
        He woke up.

   c. ∅-ti?ti nacc̦o
        3.UNERG-run 3
        He ran.

Transitives show object agreement via prefixes immediately following subject prefixes. 3rd person objects are indexed with *a-* (the only form of object agr that is distinctive), provided a consonant follows, otherwise ∅-; local persons continue to use *w/u-* (1st), *j/i-* (2nd). Both S and O are unmarked for case.

(2) a. ta-u-a-ka?ka   ui awa?ta
        DECL-1-3ACC-work(.wood) 1 plank
        I'm working the plank.

   b. w-i-kwɨ ui
        1-2-cut 1
        I cut you.

   c. j-u-kwɨ ii
        2-1-cut 2
        You cut me.

We assume the locus of agreement prefixes is T. Some declaratives, e.g. (2a), feature the prefix *ta-*, which we assume expones Mood; agreement occurs inside this, but outside aspect (see below). Working in an int/sat framework (Deal 2024), we treat T as an insatiable probe that can agree with both arguments and potentially be exponed with two prefixes. T copies all features from any node bearing ϕ outside the vP phase. v agrees with the object, leading to a $[v, \phi_{obj}]$ bundle on vP, which T copies. In an unaccusative, the only goal visible to T is this $[v, \phi_{obj}]$ bundle. In an unergative, v does not agree and T copies only $[\phi_{subj}]$ from the subject. In a transitive, T copies both $[\phi_{subj}]$ from the subject and $[v, \phi_{obj}]$ from vP. VIs are given in (3), where [1], [2], [3] abbreviate the features of the respective ϕ-bundles. VI (3c) specifies that a separate ϕ-bundle precedes [3] (i.e. the subject's features) and a consonant follows.

(3) a. [1] ↔ w/u-   b. [2] ↔ j/i-   c. [3] ↔ a- / [ϕ] __ /C/   d. [v,3] ↔ i-

3rd person agreement is overt iff (3c) or (3d) obtains. We assume (3c) is more specific, given its conditioning environment (Harizanov & Gribanova 2011). Thus (3c) applies when there is a [3] transitive object, whereas (3d) applies only in 3rd person unaccusatives. Otherwise, [3] agreement is null.

Aspect split. Translations of Spanish past-tense verbs with *ya* 'already' and/or with *terminar de X* 'finish X-ing' feature an aspectual category we call PERF(ECT). In this aspect the verb takes a palatal prefix or mutation. In transitive PERF clauses, e.g. (4b): (i) the verb takes suffix *-ke*, (ii) subject agreement is lost, (iii) object agreement takes the unaccusative form, and (iv) the subject itself is marked with suffix *-ŋɨ*, which we gloss as ERG(ATIVE). Contrast PERF (4b) with non-PERF (2a).

(4) a. i-tʃ-oho   a?tuakitu
        3.UNACC-PERF-hatch chicken.egg
        The chicken egg already hatched.

   b. i-tʃ-a?ka-ke   u-ŋɨ   awa?ta
        3UNACC-PERF-work(.wood)-KE 1-ERG plank
        I've already worked the plank.

We assume that [PERF] Asp^0 is realized as the palatal prefix, occupying a position between T and the root. The *-ke* suffix realizes a v_{perf} head selected by [PERF] Asp^0 (as discussed further below). To capture the agreement pattern, we suggest case-discrimination: the features of the ERG subject are not

visible to the T probe. So, T collects a single ϕ-bundle from its domain, namely $[v, \phi_{obj}]$ from vP. This produces agreement in a transitive clause that parallels that found in unaccusatives.

Global person split. It remains to account for the assignment of ERG itself, along with the fuller distribution of *-ke*. In contrast to aspect-based patterns in Ch'ol (Coon 2013) and Hindi (Agarwal 2022), which show no person split, Taushiro subjects are ergative *only if the object does not outrank the subject in person*. Contrast (4b), with 1S/3O, with 3S/1O in (5b): ergative is lost, along with suffix *ke*.

(5) a. i-ɲ-untu-(*ke) heʔi *pro*
       2-PERF-eat-*KE jaguar 2
       The jaguar has eaten you.

    b. u-x-oʔo huʔno-(*ŋɨ) *pro*
       1-PERF-bite snake-(*ERG) 1
       The snake already bit me.

Given [PERF] aspect, ergative and the *-ke* suffix are mandatory in person combinations 1S/3O, 2S/3O, 3S/3O, and 1S/2O. Both are ungrammatical in 3S/1O and 3S/2O. We lack 2S/1O data. If 2S/1O lacks ergative, the Taushiro pattern mirrors the global person split in Shawi (Kawapanan; Clem & Deal t.a.): the object cannot outrank the ergative subject on a hierarchy $1 > 2 > 3$. This is akin to a 'strictly descending' or 'ultrastrong' PCC pattern (Nevins 2007). If 2S/1O shows ergative, the Taushiro pattern is instead akin to weak PCC: the object cannot outrank the ergative subject on a hierarchy LOCAL>3.

Analysis. Our analysis of the global split follows Clem & Deal (t.a.): **ergative case** appears when the v head successfully agrees with both arguments. Agree is transitive: a probe passes its features to its goal ("goal flagging"), and when a probe agrees with a second goal (G2), it passes to that goal the features it has previously obtained from its first goal (G1). Ergative case appears only when v agrees with both arguments because *ergative morphology is the realization of the features of the object (G1) on the subject (G2)*. To capture the Taushiro global split, the v_{perf} probe is specified [INT:ϕ,SAT:SPKR] (if the pattern is strictly descending PCC) or [INT:ϕ,SAT:-] (if the pattern is weak PCC); the feature [PART] interacts dynamically (Deal 2024), meaning that Agree with a local person G1 makes it such that G2 can only agree if it, too, is local person. In 1S/2O, e.g., v copies object features, changes to [INT:PART], and copies subject features. Here ergative appears. In 3S/1O and 3S/2O, however, once v copies object features and changes to [INT:PART], it is unable to agree further because the subject lacks [PART]. Here ergative is impossible. Turning to head marking, **the morpheme *-ke*** patterns like (ϕ-underspecified) ergative agreement: it appears iff the subject marks ergative. Following Deal & Royer's (t.a.) analysis of ergative (Set A) agreement in Mayan, we propose that *ke* realizes v_{perf} bearing two ϕ-bundles. Thus when v_{perf} successfully agrees with two arguments, we find both head marking (*-ke*, realizing v_{perf} itself) and dependent marking (ergative *-ŋɨ*, realizing the ϕ-bundle of the object on the subject).

Implications: aspect splits. Coon (2013) suggests that aspect splits reflect, in non-ergative aspects, either a (locative) auxiliary construction, or else demoted (oblique) objects. The latter is clearly inapplicable to Taushiro in view of agreement with (and zero-marking of) objects in structures such as (2a). Evidence of a locative auxiliary is also lacking; non-ergative clauses appear to possess simple, monotransitive clause structure of a familiar type (accusative-aligned agreement, no case). The appearance of object agreement in particular clarifies that non-PERF clauses can indeed be fully transitive—but that they still lack the ingredients to ergative case. **In broader terms,** our analysis speaks to the idea that aspect-split ergative involves not only Asp^0 but also the v^0 it selects (see e.g. Anand and Nevins 2006, Coon 2013, Agarwal 2022, Baker 2024, for various implementations). In the Taushiro PERF aspect we find a palatal prefix, regardless of person or transitivity; this is the most natural candidate for Asp^0. The suffix *-ke*, discontiguous from this prefix, reveals a role for a distinct head in driving the ergative split. On our analysis, this is v_{perf}. Taushiro clauses have ergative subjects when v_{perf} is present and agrees with both arguments. In non-PERF aspects, v bears a different probe, agreeing only with the object; accordingly, ergative does not appear. In the PERF aspect, ergative likewise does not appear when v_{perf} fails to Agree with two arguments, either due to the person hierarchy or due to intransitivity.

Selected refs. Baker 2024. On dep. case and the sometimes independence of ergativity and DOM. | Clem & Deal t.a. Dependent Case by Agree: Ergative in Shawi. *LI.* | Coon 2013. *Aspects of split ergativity.* | Deal 2024. Interaction, satisfaction, and the PCC. *LI.* | Deal & Royer t.a. Mayan animacy hierarchy effects and the dynamics of Agree. *NLLT.* | O'Hagan 2023. Taushiro. In *Amazonian Lgs.*