

## MULTIPLE ERGATIVES: FROM ALLOMORPHY TO DIFFERENTIAL AGENT MARKING

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### 1. Preliminaries

Ergativity is understood 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.

Ergative case 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(ABS) come AUX.ITR.3SG  
'The dog has come.'
- b. *Gizon-a-k zakurr-a ikusi du.*  
man-DEF-ERG dog-DEF(ABS) 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.

Allomorphy is understood here rather broadly as the co-existence of a number of distinct overt realizations of a gram (here, of the ergative case) not reducible to automatic phonological alternations (Booij 1997; cf. Spencer's (2006, 2009) distinction between syntactic and morphological case).

That different realizations of the same morphosyntactic feature or feature bundle can actually differ in their "meaning", has been argued e.g. by Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy (1994, 1998, 2001, 2010), who claimed that such purely morphological information as inflection-class specification may be a part of the "lexical" representation of grammatical markers. A somewhat similar approach, despite all technical and conceptual divergences, is assumed in Distributed Morphology (e.g. Halle & Marantz 1993, Bobaljik 2000).

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### 2. The scope of the study

In this paper I deal with the allomorphy of the ergative case conditioned solely by features which can be considered "meaningful" on theory-neutral grounds, i.e. lexical-

semantic content of the base the marker attaches to, or grammatical meanings such as definiteness, number, tense etc.

I will not deal with the following kinds of phenomena:

➤ allomorphy determined by phonological properties of the stem (see Paster 2006).

WARRONGO (Pama-Nyungan > Maric, Australia; Tsunoda 2011: 165)

- (2) a. *-nggo* vowel-final stems  
 b. *-C<sub>[aplace]</sub>o* nasal-final stems  
 c. *-do* liquid-final stems + deletion of the final liquid  
 d. *-jo* y-final stems

➤ allomorphy determined by arbitrary lexical features of the base (declension class).

KUUK THAAYORRE (Pama-Nyungan > Paman, Australia; Gaby 2006: 158–164; Anderson et al. 2006: 7–9)

- (3) a. phonologically conditioned allomorphy with I declension nouns:  
*-thurr* after nasals and coronals  
*-nthurr* elsewhere  
 b. lexically determined allomorphy in II and III declensions; class membership is unpredictable

Table 1. Ergative allomorphy in Kuuk Thaayorre

	I declension		II & III declensions		
	Nom	Erg		Nom	Erg
‘one’	<i>thono</i>	<i>thono-nthurr</i>	‘woman’	<i>paanth</i>	<i>paanth-u</i>
‘saw’	<i>so:</i>	<i>so:-nthurr</i>	‘man’	<i>pam</i>	<i>pam-al</i>
‘large’	<i>ngamal</i>	<i>ngamal-thurr</i>	‘dog’	<i>kuta</i>	<i>kuta-n</i>
‘sun’	<i>pung</i>	<i>pung-thurr</i>	‘bad’	<i>waarr</i>	<i>waarr-an</i>

➤ 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; Fauconnier 2011).

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

- (4) a. *baw-a nek atuzu-ne.*  
 mother-ERG milk(ABS) pour.out-PST  
 ‘Mother (A) poured out the milk (P).’  
 b. *baw-afas nek atuzu-ne.*  
 mother-ADELAT milk(ABS) pour.out-PST  
 ‘Mother (Obl) accidentally spilled the milk (S).’

☞ For borderline cases between ergative allomorphy proper and intricate pragmatically conditioned differential agent marking see section 7.

The phenomenon of non-phonologically determined ergative allomorphy does not at first glance 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 convenience sample however includes more than forty languages from all over the world, see Appendix and map 1.

➤ It appears that wherever ergative case marking is widespread, “multiple ergatives” occur as well, though different language families seem to show different preponderance to-

wards this phenomenon: widespread in North Caucasian, much less so in Tibetan (usually no allomorphy at all) or Pama-Nyungan (phonologically conditioned allomorphy prevails).

☞ Does not seem to depend on the degree of boundedness of the ergative marker: “multiple ergatives” are attested both with affixal, clitic and admittedly free word markers.

#### Why ergative? Just because it turned out to be fun ☺

It is of course equally interesting to survey the allomorphy of any other case. However, with accusatives the prevailing pattern seems to be null vs. overt (the well-known DOM phenomena); investigating datives and genitives would be very instructive. In fact, in some languages of the sample (e. g. Una, Pitjantjatjara, Diyari, Meryam Mir, Kuku-Yalanji, Niuean) the ergative allomorphy is part of a more general pattern involving other cases as well, but this is by no means so in the majority of the languages surveyed.

### 3. The overview of the typology

3.1. How many ergative markers? See map 2.

Table 2. Number of ergative markers in the languages of the sample

2	3	4	> 4
29	7	4	3
		Jingulu, Wambaya Bzhedug Adyghe, Shina Kohistani	Avar, Ingush, Lezgian

Systems with “exuberant” allomorphy are found almost exclusively in the North Caucasus.

3.2. Conditioning factors.

In the languages of the sample, the following types of conditioning of ergative allomorphy are attested:

- 1) semantic and referential properties of the lexeme/word/noun phrase to which the case marker attaches, e.g. such distinctions as pronoun vs. noun, animate vs. inanimate, proper noun vs. common noun — section 4;
- 2) morphosyntactic features of the nominal, e. g. number — section 5;
- 3) clause-level features such as tense-aspect or properties of co-arguments — section 6.
- 4) “online” semantic/pragmatic factors — section 7.

Combinations of 1) and 2) are also attested.

Note that phenomena under 3) and 4) are usually not treated as “allomorphy” proper.

Of the four types, only type (1) is systematically attested cross-linguistically, while other types are instantiated by sporadic individual cases, see map 3. This, however, does not make them less interesting from a typological and theoretical point of view.

### 4. Ergative allomorphy conditioned by lexical-semantic class of the nominal

Arkadiev 2011: 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
- (6) If a language possesses several ergative markers distributed according to the lexical-semantic class of nominals, different markers cover contiguous areas on the hierarchy.

Table 3. Cross-linguistic distribution of lexico-semantically determined ergative allomorphy

Language	1Sg	local pro- nouns	3 <sup>rd</sup> pers. pronouns	proper names	kinship terms	human	animate	inani- mate
Trumai, Tamang	Erg1	Erg2						
Zoque, Sanuma	Erg1		Erg2					
Tsova-Tush	Erg1		Erg2				Erg3	
Gaahmg, Khwarshi	Erg1			Erg2				
Georgian	—		Erg1	Erg2				
Kabardian	—		Erg1	(—)	Erg2			
Chukchi	Erg1			Erg2	Erg3			
Pitjantjatjara	—			Erg1	Erg2			
Una	Erg1			Erg2		Erg3		
Chechen	(irregular)			Erg1		Erg2		
Niuean	Erg1				Erg2			
Kalkatungu	Erg1			Erg2	Erg1	Erg2		
Ingush	(irregular)			Erg1~Erg2	Erg2~Erg3 & Erg4		Erg3~Erg4	
Nêlêmwa	Erg1						Erg2	
Tsakhur	—		Erg1				Erg2	
Jingulu	Erg1 ~ Erg2(f)				Erg1 ~ Erg3 (f)	Erg1 ~ Erg2(f)		Erg4
Diyari	(irregular)		Erg1 ~ Erg2(f)		Erg1			

## 4.1. 1SG vs. others (Trumai, Tamang)

TRUMAI (isolate, Brazil; Guirardello 1999: 27)

- (7) a. *ine-k atlat mapa*  
3-ERG2 pan break  
'He broke the pan.' (Guirardello 1999: 259)
- b. *hi-k de taf naha-n?*  
2-ERG2 already navel cut-3ABS  
'Will you cut its navel?' (ibid.: 446)
- c. *hai-ts atlat mapa*  
1SG-ERG1 pan break  
'I broke the pan.' (ibid.: 260)

## 4.2. Local pronouns vs. others (Chiapas Zoque, Sanuma)

CHIAPAS ZOQUE (Mixe-Zoquean &gt; Zoquean, Mexico, Faarlund 2012)

- (8) a. *te' yomo = 'is ñü-jay-u te' jyaya*  
DEM woman = ERG2 3 + say-APL-CMP DET 3 + husband  
'The wife said to her husband.' (Faarlund 2012: 30)
- b. *te' = is ñü-jay-u*  
DEM = ERG2 3 + say-APL-CMP  
'He said to them.' (ibid.: 44)
- c. *mij-t maka m-nü-maw-e*  
2SG-ERG1 FUT-ICP 2-CAUS-go-DEP  
'You will take it.' (ibid.: 56)

SANUMA (Yanomaman, Venezuela; Borgman 1990: 119): "short form" local pronouns show special ergative marking (suffix loss), all other nominals, including "long form" emphatic pronouns (9d), form the ergative with *-nö*.

- (9) a. *ipa hao-nö hama te niha masulu kökö toto-ki kite*  
my father-ERG2 visitor 3SG to beads 3DU give-FOC FUT  
'My father will give beads to the visitor.' (Borgman 1990: 121)

- b. **samakö** *hu pia kule*  
 1PL.EXCL.ABS go intend PRS  
 ‘We are about to go.’ (ibid.: 119)
- c. **sama** *töpö wapa kupili*  
 1PL.EXCL:ERG1 3PL test DIST.PST  
 ‘We tested them.’ (ibid.: 120)
- d. **kamakö-nö** *ma te mö hāto asa-ö*  
 2PL[LONG]-ERG2 2PL[SHORT]:ERG1 3SG look.at secretly exclusively-TAM  
 ‘Only you secretly look at it.’ (ibid.: 151)

#### 4.3. Pronouns vs. others (Araona, Gaahmg, Khwarshi, Chirag Dargwa + Dumi, Epena Pedee)

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 *q<sup>ʕ</sup>e* ~ Erg *q<sup>ʕ</sup>e-yi*; personal pronouns and demonstratives form the Ergative with the suffix *-e*, cf. ‘I’ Abs *do* ~ Erg *de*, ‘these’ Abs *izzu* ~ Erg *izze*.

☞ In some languages number comes into play, see also Section 5.

DUMI (Sino-Tibetan > Tibeto-Burman > Himalayan, Nepal; van Driem 1993: 62): *-a* with singular pronouns, *-ʔa* with all other nominals.

- (10) a. **antsi-ʔa** *im-bi phi:s-t-i*  
 2DU.EXCL-ERG2 he-LOC ask.for-NPST-EXCL  
 ‘We shall ask him for it.’ (van Driem 1993: 69)
- b. **aŋ-a** *ani-bi phi:t-n-t-ini*  
 1SG-ERG1 2PL-LOC request-1SG > 2-NPST-23.P  
 ‘I shall ask you guys for it.’ (ibid.)

EPENA PEDEE (Chocoan, Colombia; Harms 1994: 9–10): *-a* with singular pronouns and emphatic (“marked”) plural pronouns, *-pa* elsewhere.

Table 4. Epena Pedee ergative of pronouns (Harms 1994: 58)

	“unmarked”	“marked”
1SG	<i>mi-a</i>	<i>mi-čĭ-a</i>
2SG	<i>pi-a</i>	<i>pi-čĭ-a</i>
3SG	<i>iru-a</i>	<i>i-čĭ-a</i>
1PL	<i>tai-pa</i>	<i>ta-čĭ-a</i>
2PL	<i>pāra-pa</i>	<i>pā-čĭ-a</i>
3PL	<i>āra-pa</i>	<i>ā-čĭ-a</i>

- (11) a. **usá-pa** *et<sup>h</sup>érre pee-hí*  
 dog-ERG2 chicken kill-PST  
 ‘The dog killed a chicken.’ (Harms 1994: 10)
- b. **mí-a** *p<sup>h</sup>áta k<sup>h</sup>o-hí*  
 1SG-ERG1 plantain eat-PST  
 ‘I ate the plantain.’ (ibid.: 9)

☞ Note that in the two languages where the distinction between emphatic vs. non-emphatic pronouns is relevant, i. e. Epena and Sanuma (both in the northern part of South America), emphatic pronouns pattern in the opposite ways: together with nouns in Sanuma, distinctly from them in Epena.

#### 4.4. Demonstratives vs. other nominals (Adyghe, Kabardian, Georgian)

KABARDIAN, standard variety (North-Caucasian > Abkhaz-Adyghe; Kumakhov & Vamling 2009: 19, 20): common nouns vs. demonstratives (local pronouns and most proper names do not distinguish Abs and Erg)

- (12) a. *šak<sup>w</sup>e-m*     *dəβ<sup>w</sup>ežə-r*     *jə-wəč-a-ṧ.*  
 hunter-ERG2     wolf-ABS     3SG.A-kill-PST-DCL  
 ‘The hunter killed the wolf.’ (Kumakhov & Vamling 2006: 70)<sup>1</sup>
- b. *a-bə*     *wəne-r*     *j-e-ṧ.*  
 DEM-ERG1     house-ABS     3SG.A-PRS-do  
 ‘He builds the house.’ (ibid.: 70)

#### 4.5. Proper names vs. others (Niuean, Pitjantjatjara + Diyari)

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

- (13) 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)

PITJANTJATJARA (Pama-Nyungan > South-West, Australia; Bowe 1990: 10): proper names *-lu* vs. common nouns *-ngku*; pronouns do not have an ergative case.

#### 4.6. Kinship terms vs. others (Chechen, Kalkatungu)

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’.

#### 4.7. Humans vs. non-humans (Tsakhur, Nêlêmwa)

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

- (14) 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 hā?-a.*  
 horse-OBL-ERG2 horse-ATR work=EVD do-IPF  
 ‘The horse was doing horse’s work.’

NÊLÊMWA (Austronesian > Malayo-Polynesian > Oceanic, New Caledonia; Bril 2002)

- (15) 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)

<sup>1</sup> Transcription and glosses adapted to the standards used by the “Moscow Circassian Research Group”.

- 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:

- (16) 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.)

4.8. Animates vs. inanimates: so far non-attested, but Kuku-Yalanji is close (see below).

4.9. A different parameter: gender (Avar, Kati, Yawa + Diyari + Shina Kohistani)

AVAR (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Avar-Andic; Alekseev & Ataev 1997: 42–43, 50–52): productive markers of the oblique stem coincide with the Ergative and distinguish gender: *-ās* masculine vs. *-āl̄* feminine + inanimate, thus *durc-ās* ‘son-in-law-ERG.SG’ vs. *ebel-āl̄* ‘mother-ERG.SG’, *kalam-āl̄* ‘word-ERG.SG’. See also Jingulu below.

DIYARI (Pama-Nyungan > Karnic, Australia; Austin 2013: 55): female 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns and proper names *-ndru* (= ablative) vs. *-(ya)li* elsewhere (+ 1sg,2sg irregular).

- (17) a. *wangapula-li wima wangka-yi kunarra-ndru*  
 Wangapula-ERG1 song.ACC sing-PRS Cooper.Creek-ABL  
 ‘Wangapula is singing a song about Cooper Creek.’ (Austin 2013: 139)
- b. *Dora-ndru nhinha ngari-lka-yi nganthi-nganthi-ya*  
 Dora-ERG2 he.ACC go.down-TR-PRS RDP-meat-ALLAT  
 ‘Dora takes him down to the animals.’ (ibid.: 140)
- c. *mankarra-li nganha nhayi-rna wara-yi parlpa-li*  
 girl-ERG1 1SG.ACC see-PRT AUX-PRS some-ERG1  
 ‘Some girls saw me.’ (ibid.: 99)

4.10. 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*.

Table 5. Ergative markers in Tsova-Tush

	<b>Abs</b>	<b>Erg</b>
‘we(excl)’	<i>txo</i>	<i>atx</i>
‘that’	<i>o</i>	<i>oqu-s</i>
‘father’	<i>dad</i>	<i>dada-s</i>
‘fox’	<i>cok’al</i>	<i>cok’le-v</i>
‘knife’	<i>nek’</i>	<i>nek’e-v</i>

CHUKCHI (Dunn 1999: 100–101): personal pronouns *-(n)an* vs. proper nouns *-ne* vs. common nouns *-e*.

- (18) a. *γəm-nan tə-n-walom-at-ənat ənpənacγ-ət.*  
 I-ERG1 1SG.A-CAUS-understand-CAUS-3PL.P old.man-3PL.ABS  
 ‘I informed the old men.’ (Dunn 1999: 212)
- b. *Nutekew-ne Majkəla-na rə-jp-annen cinitkin witacγ-ən.*  
 PN-erg2 PN-ALLAT CAUS-wear-3SG > 3SG REFL.POSS overtunic-3SG.ABS  
 ‘Nutekew put his overtunic on Michael.’ (ibid.: 135)

- c. *tanqonpə ənqen ʔeqe-njiw-e n-in-iw-qin...*  
 always that(ABS) bad-uncle-ERG3 HAB-TR-say-3SG  
 ‘The bad uncle always said to him...’ (speech of non-relative) (ibid.: 103)

UNA (Mek, Western New Guinea; Louwse 1988: 107–109): ergative with personal pronouns *-ci*, with proper names, inalienably possessed kin terms and nominalizations denoting males *beji*, with other nouns *aji*

- (19) a. *er-ci kaling tentok kareb-kwan-si-r*  
 he-ERG1 necklace one give-FUT-1PL-3SG  
 ‘He will give a necklace to us.’ (Louwse 1988: 109)
- b. *ni-nay beji nyi-siy siyenyi kib-reyb-ma-n-ow*  
 1SG-father ERG2 me-DAT headman be-CAUS-ICP-1SG.P-PST.3SG  
 ‘My father installed me as a headman.’ (ibid.: 108)
- c. *ton nang aji ato eb-ma-y*  
 some persons ERG3 like say-ICP-PST.3PL  
 ‘Some persons say so.’ (ibid.)

ADYGHE, Bzhedug dialect (Zekox 1969: 93–94): distinct Ergative markers for demonstratives *-š*, for proper names *-ə*, and for common names *-m* + cumulation with plural, see below.

JINGULU (West-Barkly, Northern Australia; Pensalfini 1997: 244, 273): a system with four Erg markers distributed according to gender and the animacy hierarchy.

Table 6. Ergative markers in Jingulu

female kinship terms (20a)	<i>-ka</i>
other female nominals (including personal pronouns and certain inanimates) (20a)	<i>-nga</i>
other animate nominals (including personal pronouns) (20b)	<i>-rni</i>
inanimate nouns (20c)	<i>-(C)arndi = Ins</i>

- (20) 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)

INGUSH (North-Caucasian > Nakh-Daghestanian > Nakh, Russia; Nichols 2011: 127): irregular Erg with pronouns, *-z* for proper names and certain kinship and human nouns, *-a* for consonant-final proper names, *-uo* for consonant-final stems and *-aa* a “conservative” marker restricted to certain noun types.

LEZGIAN (North Caucasian > Nakh-Dagestanian > Lezgian, Russia, Azerbaijan; Haspelmath 1993: 74–77): ten (!) Ergative suffixes (= the oblique stem) distributed roughly according to semantic parameters, but with a fair amount of unpredictability.

Table 7. Ergative markers in Lezgian

condition	marker	Abs	Erg
C-final proper names	-a	<i>Farid</i>	<i>Farid-a</i>
abstract nouns and masdars, most plurals	-i	<i>jaruwal</i> ‘redness’	<i>jaruwili-i</i>
plurals in <i>-bur</i>	-u	<i>jarubur</i> ‘red ones’	<i>jarubur-u</i>
non-discreet mass	- <i>Adi</i>	<i>nek</i> ‘milk’	<i>nek’-edi</i>
monosyllabic nouns denoting animals	-rA	<i>lam</i> ‘donkey’	<i>lam-ra</i>
lexically determined	-Uni	<i>kam</i> ‘trap’	<i>kam-uni</i>
	-A	<i>q’el</i> ‘salt’	<i>q’el-e</i>
	-U	<i>siw</i> ‘mouth’	<i>siw-i</i>
	-Ci	<i>žin</i> ‘ghost’	<i>žin-ži</i>
default	- <i>di</i>	<i>fil</i> ‘elephant’	<i>fil-di</i>

Common nouns take a different Ergative marker when used as proper names, *čükwer* ‘flowers’: Erg *čükwer-i* vs. *Čükwer-a* (ibid.: 75).

#### 4.11. Summary (cf. Table 3 above)

➤ 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).

➤ Multidimensional systems, where ergative allomorphy depends not only on the position of the nominal on the referential hierarchy (5), but also on such independent parameters as gender (Jingulu) or number (standard Adyghe or Meryam Mir, see below), may actually violate the generalization in (6).

➤ 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, masculine vs. feminine, some of which are reflected in the referential hierarchy.

➤ A further case for language-particular hierarchies, cf. Haspelmath (to appear)?

### 5. Ergative allomorphy conditioned by nominal morphosyntactic features

Situations when the choice of the marker of one morphosyntactic feature/value is dependent on the value of another feature in the representation of the same wordform have been widely discussed in the literature (e.g. Plank 1986; Carstairs 1987, Carstairs-McCarthy 1998, 2001; Bobaljik 2000; Adger et al. 2003), but have not been subject to large-scale typological investigations.

☞ Grammatically conditioned allomorphy (GCA) should be distinguished from cumulative exponence:

Table 8. Cumulative exponence (Spanish) vs. GCA (Latin)

	SPANISH ‘speak’		LATIN ‘decorate’	
	Presente	Preterito	Praesens	Perfectum
1Sg	<i>habl-o</i>	<i>habl-é</i>	<i>orn-o</i>	<i>orn-ā-v-i</i>
2Sg	<i>habl-as</i>	<i>habl-aste</i>	<i>orn-ā-s</i>	<i>orn-ā-v-isti</i>
3Sg	<i>habl-a</i>	<i>habl-ó</i>	<i>orn-a-t</i>	<i>orn-ā-v-it</i>

In the expression of case, including the ergative, cumulation is fairly widespread.

CHUKCHI (Dunn 1999: 101; Skorik 1961: 180): cumulation with number for higher animates.

- (21) *Rintəŋe-ne* vs. *Rintəŋe-rək*  
 PN-ERG.SG PN-ERG.PL  
 ‘Rintyna’ (a person) ‘the Rintynas’ (a family)

### 5.1. Number

KATHMANDU NEWAR (Sino-Tibetan > Tibeto-Burman > Himalayan, Nepal; Hargreaves 2003: 373): ErgPl *-sā* vs. ErgSg *-nə* or nasalization of the preceding vowel.

Table 9. Singular vs. plural ergative markers in Kathmandu Newar

	Sg	Pl
Abs	<i>pasa</i> ‘friend’	<i>pasa-pĩ:</i>
Erg	<i>pasā:</i>	<i>pasa-pi-sā:</i>

STANDARD ADYGHE has a special ErgPl marker *-me* used on a par with the default allomorph *-m* (see Arkadiev 2014a, 2014b for a discussion).

- (22) a. *č’ale-m*                      *č’ale-xe-m*                      no allomorphy  
 boy-ERG                              boy-PL-ERG
- b. *č’ale-me* ~ *č’ale-xe-me*                      cumulation vs. allomorphy  
 boy-ERG.PL                              boy-PL-ERG.PL

For demonstratives, there is a dedicated ErgSg allomorph *-š’*, cf. ‘that-ERG’ *a-š’* vs. ‘that-PL-ERG’ *a-xe-m* ~ *a-xe-me* / \**a-xe-š’*.

⇒ Combinations of grammatical and lexical conditioning occur in fact more frequently.

MERYAM MIR (Eastern Trans-Fly, Australia; Piper 1989: 31–33): some singular animate common nouns *-et* (23a) vs. non-singular common nouns *-gize* (23b) vs. all other nouns (including, “counter-hierarchically”, inanimates and proper names) *-(i)de* (23c,d).

- (23) a. *kári*                      *berbet-et*                      *dorge*                      *ike-li*                      *idim-lam...*  
 1SG.GEN                      sibling-SG.ERG                      work                      make-PRS.IPF                      morning-ABL  
 ‘My brother has been working since this morning.’ (Piper 1989: 32)
- b. *koskir-gize*                      *yábi*                      *na-wer-da*  
 married.female-PL.ERG                      them                      3NSG.P-weave-PFV.PL  
 ‘The women wove them (the mats).’ (ibid.)
- c. *able*                      *wag-ide*                      *no*                      *ad-em*                      *yába*                      *nar*                      *etkamrik-i*  
 DEM                      wind-ERG                      only                      out-ALLAT                      their                      boat                      make.drift-PFV  
 ‘The wind only drifted their boat further out.’ (ibid.)
- d. *Gílam-ide*                      *abab-ise*                      *dikepwar-er*                      *lamar*                      *koskir*  
 Gilam-ERG                      former-like                      think-NPRS.IPF                      spirit                      married.female  
 ‘Gilam thought as he had the last time that she was a ghost.’ (ibid.: 50)

WAMBAYA (West Barkly, Australia, Nordlinger 1998: 83–84): a dedicated Ergative marker occurring after the Dual suffix (24a) vs. three other mostly lexically/phonologically conditioned allomorphs (24b–d).

- (24) a. *bungmaj-buli-ji*      *wurl-aji*      *daguma*      *juwarramba*  
 old.person-DU-DU.ERG      3DU.A-HAB.PST      hit      men  
 ‘The (two) old women had been killing all the men.’ (Nordlinger 1998: 83)
- b. *ngabulu-nu*      *ngiyi-ng-agba*      *dawu*      *murlu*  
 milk-ERG2      3SG.NM.A-1.P-HYP      bite      eye  
 ‘The sap might sting my eyes.’ (ibid.)
- c. *gugu.ga-yi*      *ngiy-a*      *wugbardi*      *ngarra*  
 grandmother-ERG3      3SG.NM.A-PST      cook      1SG.OBL  
 ‘Grandmother cooked (dinner) for me.’ (ibid.: 84)
- d. *bungmanyi-ni*      *gini-ng-a*      *jiwayu*  
 old.man-ERG4      3SG.M.A-1.OBJ-NFUT      give  
 ‘The old man gave it to me.’ (ibid.)

See also Shina Kohistani below.

## 5.2. Definiteness

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

- (25) 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): choice of the ergative marker with kinship terms depends on the presence of the definiteness affix.

- (26) *an’a-ta*      vs.      *an’a-na-k*  
 grandmother-ERG2      grandmother-DEF-ERG1  
 ‘some grandmother’      ‘the grandmother’ (Žukova 1972: 99)

NÊLÊMWA (Bril 2002: 95, 136): as has been shown above (16), nouns denoting groups normally co-occur with the non-human Erg *ru*; however, the human Erg *a* may be used for marking definite groups:

- (27) 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.)

## 6. “Multiple ergatives” conditioned by clause-level features

6.1. Tense-aspect (cf. much more widespread instances of the so-called TAM-split ergativity, see Malchukov & de Hoop 2011 for a recent overview).

SHINA KOHISTANI (Indo-European > Indo-Iranian > Dardic, Pakistan; Schmidt & Kohistani 2008: 51–57): a set of lexically distributed inherited Indo-Aryan Ergative markers used in perfective clauses (28a) vs. an innovated Ergative marker for imperfective clauses, appar-

ently borrowed from the neighbouring Sino-Tibetan languages (28b) (Bailey 1924: 211–212; Hook & Koul 2004: 214).

Table 10. Ergative allomorphy in Shina Kohistani

	M ‘cloud, rain’		F ‘night’	
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
<b>Nom</b>	<i>ázo</i>	<i>áza</i>	<i>ráati</i>	<i>ráati</i>
<b>ErgPfv</b>	<i>ázo-e</i>	<i>ázo-ji</i>	<i>ráaty-oo</i>	<i>ráatyo-ji</i>
<b>ErgIpf</b>	<i>ázo-s</i>	<i>áza-s</i>	<i>ráatyi-s</i>	<i>ráaty-e-s</i>

- (28) a. *dadii gaa maamad sher aly-o wake dye*  
 grandmother and Muhammad Sher Ali-ERG.PFV.SG.M fight give.PFV  
 ‘Grandmother and Muhammad Sher Ali fought.’ (Hook & Koul 2004: 214)
- b. *mehefil-ijaa maamad sher ali-se noṭe dyũũ asilo*  
 party-LOC Muhammad Sher Ali-ERG.IPF dance give.IPF AUX.PST  
 ‘Muhammad Sher Ali was dancing in the party.’ (ibid.)

Cf. “regular” aspect-based alignment split in other Indo-Iranian languages:

HINDI (Indo-European > Indo-Iranian > Indo-Aryan, India)

- (29) a. *Ravi kelā khā rahā thā.*  
 Ravi(NOM) banana(NOM) eat DUR AUX.PST  
 ‘Ravi was eating a banana’. (Mohanani 1994: 59)
- b. *bacce-ne kitāb paḍhī.*  
 child.OBL-ERG book read.PFV  
 ‘The child read a book’. (ibid.)

Or not-so-regular splits not involving change in alignment, similarly to Shina:

MINGRELIAN (Kartvelian, Georgia; Harris 1991: 365–366): alternation between two kinds of nominative markers

- (30) a. *baḡana ṽude-s skid-u.*  
 child(NOM) house-DAT stay-3SG.SBJ.PRS  
 ‘The child is staying in the house.’
- b. *muma arzen-s cxen-s skua-s.*  
 father(NOM) give-3SG.SBJ.PRS horse-DAT child-DAT  
 ‘The father is giving a horse to his child.’
- (31) a. *koč-k doḡor-u.*  
 man-NAR die-3SG.SBJ.AOR  
 ‘The man died.’
- b. *muma-k cxen-i ki-me-č-u skua-s.*  
 father-NAR horse-NOM PVB-PVB-give-3SG.SBJ.AOR child-DAT  
 ‘The father gave a horse to his son.’

GEORGIAN (Kartvelian): alternation between two types of ergative/active marking triggered by perfective (“aorist”) vs. inferential (“perfect”) — should probably be included into the main sample, if the “perfect” is considered a regular transitive construction.

- (32) a. *glex-ma datesa simind-i*  
 peasant-ERG sew:AOR.3SG corn-NOM  
 ‘The peasant sowed corn.’ (Harris 1981: 1)



- b. *ga*     *ŋo*     *kam*     *a-rere*     *ket*  
 2.NOM     river     LOC     2.ABS-SWIM.NFIN     NEG  
 ‘You don’t swim in the river.’ (ibid.)
- (38) a. *ba*     *i-kra*     *mɣ*  
 1.NOM     1.POSS-son     hold  
 ‘I held my son.’ (ibid.)
- b. *ije*     *i-kra*     *mɣj*     *ket*  
 1.ERG     1.POSS-son     hold.NFIN     NEG  
 ‘I didn’t hold my son.’ (ibid.)

In the closely related APINAJÉ, “the ergative marker does not ever occur in the negation of transitive predicates” (de Oliveira 2005: 251).

Cf. a negation-triggered split in object case-marking not involving alignment change:

LITHUANIAN (Indo-European > Baltic, personal knowledge): “genitive of negation”

- (39) a. *Jon-as*     *perskait-ė*     *laišk-q.*  
 Jonas-NOM.SG     read-PST(3)     letter-ACC.SG  
 ‘Jonas read the letter.’
- b. *Jon-as*     *ne-perskait-ė*     *laišk-o.*  
 Jonas-NOM.SG     NEG-read-PST(3)     letter-GEN.SG  
 ‘Jonas did not read the letter.’

☞ Though rare, such instances of case-marker allomorphy (if the term is still appropriate) nicely supplement the more general picture of case variation and in particular suggest that case alternations need not necessarily entail splits in alignment.

## 7. “Fluid” “multiple ergative” marking: genuine DAM

In those cases where the choice of the ergative marker is not fixed by lexical or grammatical rules, but is determined “online” according to the semantic and/or pragmatic motivations of the speaker, we are no longer dealing with allomorphy but rather with differential agent marking (DAM) *sensu stricto*.

KUKU-YALANJI (Pama-Nyungan > Yalandyic, Queensland; Patz 2002: 124–129): “potent” (X) and “neutral” (Y) sets of case markers including Ergative, with “[a] wide range of nouns around the mid-section of the animacy hierarchy [accepting] case markers from either set” (ibid.: 124), see Table 11; “where a choice is possible, a speaker may exercise this choice according to their own interpretation” (ibid.: 126).

Table 11. Animacy hierarchy and case inflection in Kuku-Yalanji

humans, personified mythical beings, ghosts and spirits, dogs	set X
generic terms with animate reference, animals, natural forces	set X or set Y
plants, food, geographical features, body parts, language, illness, ceremonies, some kinship terms	set Y

– “real referent” vs. “abstract concept” (ibid.):

- (40) a. *dingkar-angka*     *karrkay*     *kuni-ny*  
 male-ERG1     child     hit-PST  
 ‘That was a man who hit the child. (not a woman; I saw him)’ (Patz 2002: 126)

- b. *dingkar-abu* *karrkay* *kuni-ny*  
 male-ERG2 child hit-PST  
 ‘Some man hit the child. (I think it was a man; but it could’ve been another child)’ (ibid.)

– animate vs. inanimate (ibid.: 129):

- (41) 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.’ (ibid.: 129)  
 b. *nganya* *bambaybunga-ny* *kubarr-da*.  
 I:ACC sick-PST eel-ERG2  
 ‘The eel [meat] made me sick.’ (ibid.)

– voluntary action vs. “unpremeditated reflex action on provocation” (ibid.: 126):

- (42) a. *malal-angka* *kamu* *karrba-ny*  
 spider-ERG1 mosquito grab-PST  
 ‘The spider grabbed the mosquito.’ (ibid.: 129)  
 b. *nganya* *murrajamun-du* *baka-ny*  
 1SG.ACC stonefish-ERG2 poke-PST  
 ‘A stonefish poked me.’ (ibid.)

“Animate/human” Erg markers may be employed for personification of non-human or inanimate referents, and, accordingly, “inanimate/non-human” Erg markers may attach to human nouns in pejorative or derogatory contexts.

CHUKCHI (Dunn 1999: 103)

- (43) *epeepeqeja-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 ☹

Similar phenomena with the nominative marking:

POLISH (Indo-European > Slavic; Wierzbicka 1988: 455–459): for masculine human hard-stem nouns, NomPl *-i* is neutral, *-owie* implies ‘importance’ or ‘dignity’, and *-y*, “which is otherwise characteristic of non-human masculine nouns, implies contempt” (ibid.: 455).

Some other cases from Australia.

WARRWA (Nyulnyulan; McGregor 2006): three ergative markers, *-na*, *-ma* and *-nma*, of which the use of *-ma* appears to be (quite intricately) phonologically determined, while *-na* and *-nma* are distributed according to pragmatics: *-nma* marks agents that are “unexpected, unpredictable or surprising in terms of their identity and agentivity” (McGregor 2006: 399), while *-na* is neutral.

“In [44b] the big woman is both unexpected as Agent ... and potent ... By contrast, the Agent in the second sentence of [44a] is both expected and low in potency ... Sentence [44c] summarises what we have already been told, and thus represents background information.” (ibid.: 402)

(44) a. *nyinka jurrb ji-na-yina kinya wanyji kwiina iri,*  
 this jump say-PST-3SG.OBL this later big woman  
*ka-na-ngka-ndi ji-na, kinya-na wuba.*  
 1SG.A-TR-FUT-get say-PST this-ERG1 small  
 ‘The little one jumped at her then, at the big woman, and tried to get her.’  
 (McGregor 2006: 402)

b. *kinya kwiina-nma iri marlu laj ji-na*  
 this big-ERG2 woman not throw say-PST  
*kinya wuba, laj, marlu laj ji-na.*  
 this small throw not throw say-PST  
 ‘But no, the big woman threw the little man away.’ (ibid.)

c. *kaliya kujarrangal ngi-nda-na kinya-ngana,*  
 finish twice NFUT-go-PST this-ALLAT  
*laj ji-na kinya-na iri kujarrangal.*  
 throw say-PST this-ERG1 woman twice  
 ‘He went to her twice, but she threw him away both times.’

WARAY (Gunwingguan; Harvey 1986): the function of the ergative is (optionally) performed by the Instrumental *-yi*, used for disambiguation (45a) and “presentation of important information in a text” (ibid.: 201) (45b), and by the Ablative *-yang*, when the A participant “may potentially be viewed as a source or origin” (ibid.: 208), cf. (45c).

(45) a. *pu-m kuruwak-yi kaking antjalmi akala-yi pu-m kuruwak*  
 hit-REAL PN-ERG yesterday in.turn he-ERG hit-REAL PN  
 ‘David [sic!] hit him yesterday and in return he hit David.’ (Harvey 1986: 200)

b. *tjatpula-yi kuntiyi-n-inj anwak mamam a-kala-wu*  
 old.man-ERG play-IRR-IPF little daughter he-DAT  
 ‘The old man used to play around with his young daughter.’ (ibid.: 202)

c. *tjukung-yang nat-putj-pu-m alkala-wu*  
 aunt-ABL OBJ-send-AUX-REAL she-DAT  
 ‘Her aunt sent her [the clothes].’ (ibid.: 210)

MARRITHIYEL (Daly; Green 1989): three cases can fulfil the role of the Ergative: Instrumental *-gin*, Ablative *-nganan*, and Perlative *-wurri*. The Instrumental is used with “transitive subjects which are semantically or pragmatically marked (i.e. have a low predisposition to occupy this role)” (Green 1989: 49), cf. (46a), the Perlative “seems to be associated with a sense of the action being in some way transferred or moved from the A to the undergoer” (ibid.: 52), cf. (46b), and the Ablative “appears to have the semantic effect of marking the A as acting under his/her initiative or motivation, ... suggesting the A as providing his/her internal source or cause for performing the action, rather than being externally motivated” (ibid.: 53), cf. (46c).

(46) a. *ngiya-gin ganbi gani-fifi-ya*  
 she-INS bamboo 3SG.A-REAL-go.blow;RDP-PST  
 ‘She was blowing the bamboo (i.e. playing the didgeridoo).’ — “the verb depicts an activity not normally engaged in by females” (Green 1989: 50)

b. *wadi finthfinthi-wurri marri gimi-iwinj-ya*  
 male older:RDP-PERL words 3SG.A-REAL + do-3NSG.OBL-PST  
 ‘The old man spoke to them.’ (ibid.: 53)

- c. *nanj-nganan* *ginil-dut-a*  
 2SG-ABL 2SG.A.REAL-find-PST  
 ‘You found it (i.e. went out and did it yourself)’

⇒ In languages where the ergative construction has not yet fully grammaticalized, several “semantic” cases can compete for the A-marking function, and this may potentially give rise to systems with allomorphy. Cf. e.g. case syncretism in Chukchi and Koryak, where the “animate” Ergative is formally identical to the Locative, while the “inanimate” Ergative coincides with the Instrumental (Spencer 2006: 6–7; Žukova 1972: 99).

⇒ Relative rarity (pending further research) of such systems can be explained by the tendency for analogical leveling of paradigms and the avoidance of (quasi-)synonymy of markers with primarily syntactic rather than semantic functions. However, section 4 suggests that languages perfectly tolerate lexically motivated inflectional synonymy.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

Non-phonologically conditioned allomorphy of case-markers is fairly widespread, however, it has not been really studied from a typological point of view, and the distinction between allomorphy based on arbitrary lexical features such as declension class and allomorphy conditioned by morphosyntactic or lexical-semantic features is rarely made.

The phenomena I discussed appear to be rare from a typological perspective, but are they “marginal”? Cf. a strong point for the relevance of typological *rara* made by Cysouw & Wohlgemuth 2010.

⇒ Ergative allomorphy conditioned by noun-external features such as tense-aspect, negation, or person features of the object are instructive for the typology of case-marking alternations and “alignment splits”. In addition, they pose non-trivial problems for the theories of syntax-morphology interface, representing clearly non-canonical behaviour, cf. Corbett (2008: 12): “Canonical use of morphosyntactic features and their values does not admit syntactic conditions”.

⇒ Ergative allomorphy conditioned by the lexical-semantic class of the nominal adds an unexpected perspective to the study of the well-known and not undisputed (cf. Bickel & Witzlack-Makarevich 2008) effects of the referential hierarchies on case-marking and grammatical relations, cf. also Aristar 1997.

## Abbreviations

1 — 1<sup>st</sup> person; 2 — 2<sup>nd</sup> person; 3 — 3<sup>rd</sup> person; A — agent; ABL — ablative; ABS — absolutive; ACC — accusative; ADELAT — adelative; AFF — affirmative; ALLAT — allative; AOR — aorist; APL — applicative; ATR — attributive; AUX — auxiliary; CAUS — causative; CMP — completive; DAT — dative; DCL — declarative; DEF — definite; DEM — demonstrative; DEP — dependent; DIST.PST — distant past; DU — dual; DUR — durative; ERG — ergative; EVD — evidential; EXCL — exclusive; F — feminine; FKIN — feminine kinship term; FOC — focus; FUT — future; GEN — genitive; HAB — habitual; HYP — hypothetical; ICP — incomplete; INS — instrumental; INV — inverse; IPF — imperfective; IRR — irrealis; ITR — intransitive; LOC — locative; M — masculine; NAR — “narrative case”; NEG — negation; NFIN — non-finite form; NFUT — non-future; NM — non-masculine; NOM — nominative; NPRS — non-present; NPST — non-past; NSG — non-singular; OBJ — object; OBL — oblique; P — patient; PERL — perlativ; PFV — perfective; PL — plural; PN — proper name; POSS — possessive; PRF — perfect; PRS — present; PRT — participle; PST — past; PVB — preverb; RDP — reduplication; REAL — realis; REFL — reflexive; SBJ — subject; SG — singular; TAM — tense-aspect-mood marker; TR — transitive.

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