

Ergative anaphors and high absolutive syntax¹

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1 Background: The Ergative Extraction Constraint

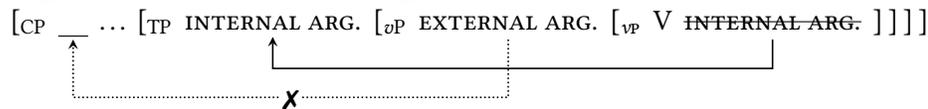
Many languages show a restriction in the A'-domain: the transitive external argument cannot extract.

- Terminology: (*narrow*) *Syntactic Ergativity* (Deal 2016; *pace* Dixon 1994; Yuan 2018)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Chuj | (2) Mandar |
| a. Ixachyil [_{EXT} ix ix].
saw.you CLF woman
'The woman saw you.' | a. Naitao [_{EXT} iting towaine]
saw.you DEM woman
'The woman saw you.' |
| b. *Mach _j ixachyila' [_{EXT} t]?
who saw.you
'Who saw you?' | b. *Innai naitao [_{EXT} t]?
who saw.you
'Who saw you?' |

- The Classical Analysis: *Locality* (Campana 1992; Bittner and Hale 1996; Aldridge 2004)
 - This pattern: the ABSOLUTIVE argument raises to a position above the ERGATIVE.
 - The *High Absolutive* configuration → the ergative argument cannot extract.

- (3) “*High Absolutes*” → *Syntactic Ergativity*



- **Prediction:** the absolutive should bind into the ergative in *High Absolutive* configurations.

- The Empirical Puzzle:

- (4) *The Ban on Ergative Anaphors:*

- Some syntactically-ergative languages **allow but restrict** ergative (reflexive) anaphors.
- Other syntactically-ergative languages **ban** ergative (reflexive) anaphors **entirely**.

- ▶ The facts in (4) have been taken as systematic counter-evidence for (3).

Our goal: Argue that the Ban on Ergative Anaphors does not provide evidence against High-Abs syntax.

- *Empirical point:* anaphor binding facts run against other diagnostics for hierarchical asymmetries between the subject and object in two unrelated High Absolutive languages.
- **Theoretical proposal:** the Ban on Ergative Anaphors arises from independent constraints.

¹We are very grateful to Mateo Pablo and Matal Torres for Chuj judgments and to Jupri Talib and Anchu Mansur for Mandar judgments. For comments on this work, we thank Jessica Coon, Judith Aissen, Pranav Anand, and Erik Zyman.

2 Syntactic Ergativity: Two Case Studies

2.1 Introduction: Chuj and Mandar

Chuj: From the Q'anjob'alan branch of Mayan languages; spoken in Guatemala and Mexico by 70,000–80,000 speakers (Piedrasanta 2009; Buenrostro 2013).

- Featural profile:
 - Ergative-absolutive, head-marking language.
 - Ergative/Possessive (Set A) / Absolutive (Set B)
 - Word Order: VOS basic, though VSO sometimes possible.

(5) *Chuj Basics*

a. Ix-ach-w-il-a'.
PFV-B2S-A1S-see-TV
'I saw you.'

b. Ix-s-jak te' pwerta winh unin.
PFV-A3-open CLF door CLF child
'The boy opened the door.'

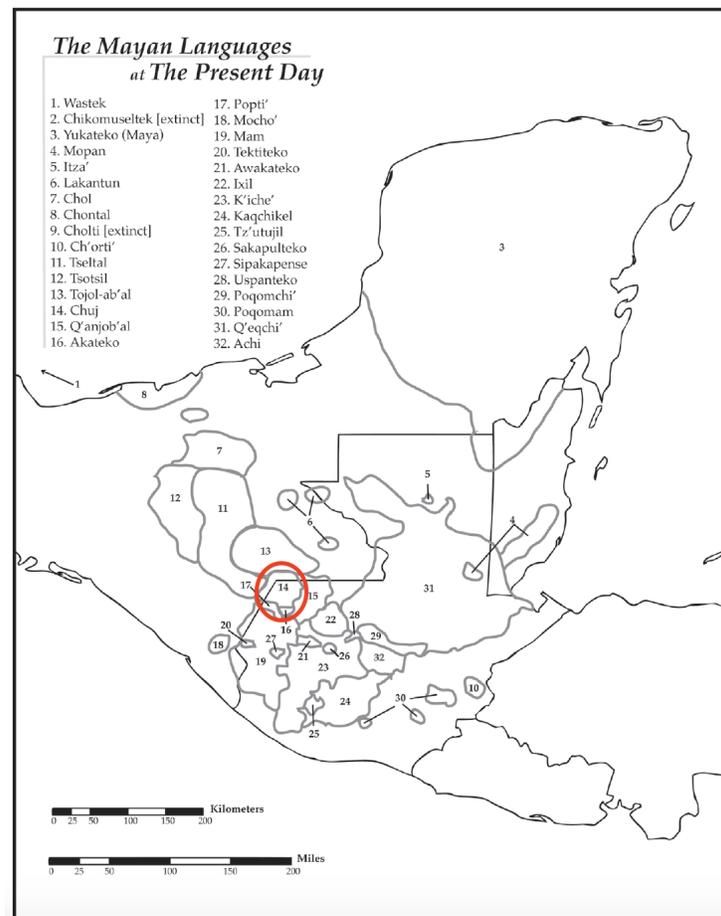


Figure 1: Current-day Mayan-speaking area (Law 2014, p. 25)

Mandar: From the South Sulawesi subfamily of Austronesian; spoken in the Indonesian province of West Sulawesi. The 2000 census reports 480,000 speakers.

- Featural profile:
 - Ergative-absolutive, head-marking language.
 - Ergative prefix (Set A) / Absolutive enclitic (Set B)
 - Word order: VOS basic; VSO possible
 - No nominal case-marking; *pro*-drop

(6) *Mandar Basics*

a. Pura=o u-ita.
 PFV=2B 1A-see
 ‘I already saw you.’

b. Na-bua=i baqba iting naqimuane.
 3A-open=3B door that boy
 ‘The boy opened the door.’

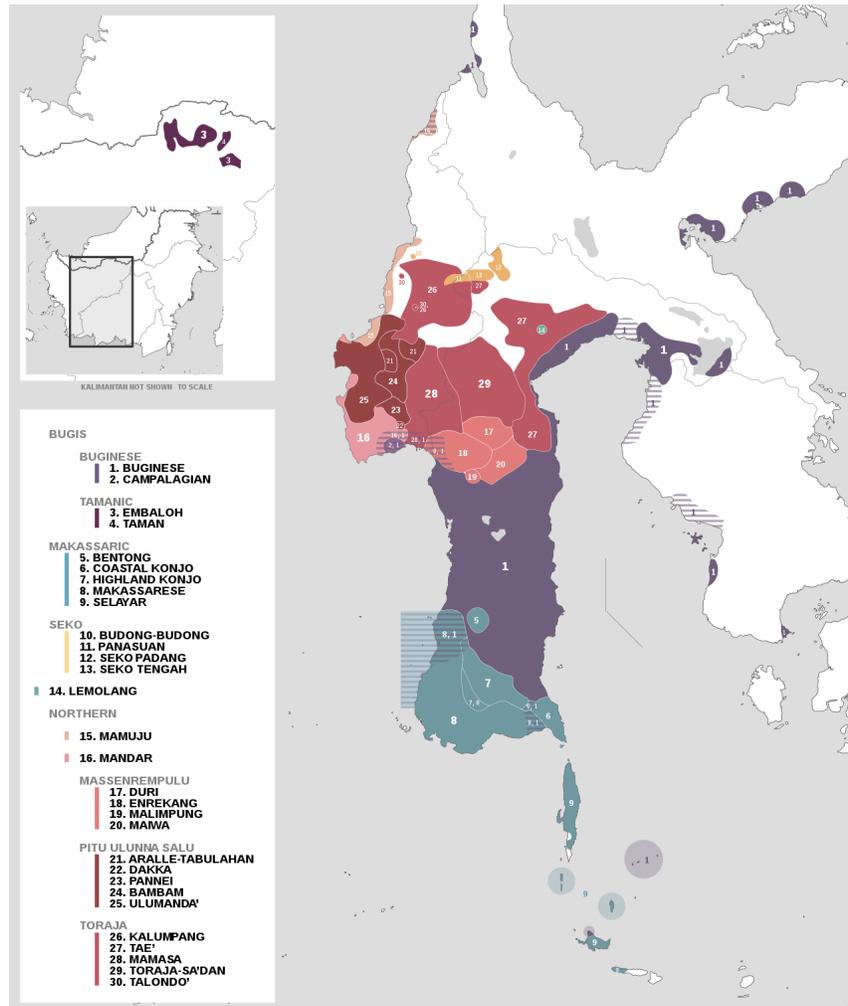


Figure 2: The South Sulawesi Family

2.2 Some Uncanny Parallels

1. **Surface Similarities:** v1 word order; no case marking; ‘Set A’ ergative/possessive; ‘Set B’ absolutive.

2. The Locus of Absolutive Agreement

- Across Mayan: the absolutive marker → split behavior.
 1. **High Absolutive** languages: SET.B → T⁰.
 - *Position:* SET.B follows preverbal ASPECT
 - *Distribution:* SET.B impossible in nonfinite embedded clauses.
 2. **Low Absolutive** languages: SET.B → v⁰
 - *Position:* SET.B follows the verb.
 - *Distribution:* SET.B possible in nonfinite embedded clauses.
- Both Chuj and Mandar are ‘High Absolutive’: SET.B → T⁰.
 - *Position:* SET.B follows preverbal aspect; cannot follow the verb.
 - *Distribution:* SET.B impossible in non-finite clauses.

(7) *Chuj Set.B: *Low; NFCs*

- a. *Ix-w-il-a’-ach.
PFV-1A-see-TV-B2S
‘I saw you.’
- b. *Ix-in-yamoch [hach=in-chel-a’]
PFV-1A-start 2B=1A-hug-TV
‘I began to hug you.’

(8) *Mandar Set.B: *Low; *NFCs*

- a. *Pura u-ita=o.
PFV 1A-see=2B
‘I saw you.’
- b. *Meloq=o [u-pappallaq=o?]
want=2B 1A-ignore=2B
‘Want that I ignore you?’

3. Syntactic Ergativity:

- Transitive clause: the external argument cannot be extracted.

(9) Chuj and Mandar: No Ergative Extraction

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. *Mach_j ix-ach-y-il-a’ [EXT t_j]?
who PFV-B2S-A3-see-TV
‘Who saw you?’ (Chuj) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. *Innai_j na-ita=o [EXT t_j]?
who 3A-see=2B
‘Who saw you?’ (Mandar) |
|--|---|

4. Agent Focus:

- If the object is a DP & (i) the agent is extracted or (ii) controls into a non-finite clause,
- The verb → intransitive morphology + ‘agent focus’ morpheme; object → SET.B

(10) Chuj and Mandar: Agent Focus

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mach_j ix-ach-il-an-i [EXT t_j]?
who PFV-B2S-see-AF-ITR
‘Who saw you?’ (Chuj) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. Innai_j m-aq-ita=o [EXT t_j]?
who ITR-AF-see=2B
‘Who saw you?’ (Mandar) |
|--|--|

5. **Claim:** these parallels → unified *High Absolutive* Syntax; *object > subject*.

2.3 Syntactic Ergativity in Chuj and Mandar: A Unified Account

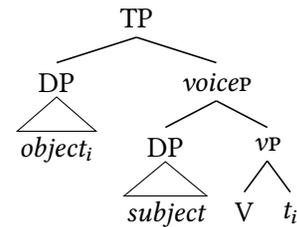
The view to defend: the *Locality* analysis (Campana 1992; Bittner and Hale 1996; Aldridge 2004)

- **Fundamental claim:** the absolutive argument moves to a position outside the thematic domain.
 - Evidence: patterns of binding; scope-taking; quantifier float (cf: linear order; extraction)
- Precedent: the literature on Austronesian (Keenan 1976, Guilfoyle et al. 1992, Rackowski 2002a, Aldridge 2004) and on Inuit (Bittner 1994, Bittner and Hale 1996, Yuan 2018).
 - More controversial: Mayan (Coon et al. 2014, Coon et al. 2020)

(11) *The Basic Transitive Clause*

- Ix-**ach-w**-il-a'
PFV-2B-1A-see-TV
'I saw you.' (Chuj)
- Pura=**o u**-ita
PFV=2B 1A-see
'I saw you' (Mandar)

(12)



N.b.: there are other ways to model syntactic ergativity. We set these aside.

1. The CASE-DISCRIMINATION approach (Otsuka 2006, Deal 2016, Drummond 2020)
 - Key Idea: A'-extraction is sensitive to morphological case; cannot target ergative marked XPs.
 - Problems: (i) no morphological case in Chuj, Mandar; (ii) no link to High-Abs Syntax.
2. The CATEGORY approach (Stepanov 2004, Polinsky 2017)
 - Key idea: syntactic ergativity arises when the ergative argument is embedded in a (covert) PP.
 - Problem: substantial empirical evidence against this analysis in Mandar; likely Chuj, Mayan.
3. Various other approaches; (Aissen 1999, 2017; Stiebels 2006; Erlewine 2016)

2.4 The Anaphor Problem

The Ban on Ergative Anaphors: the ergative argument generally cannot be an anaphor.

- **Pattern:** *Chuj, Mandar, W.Austronesian* (Pearson 2001, Aldridge 2008), *Mayan* (Larsen and Norman 1979), *Inuit* (Manning 1996), many other ergative languages (Anderson 1976).

The Previous Claim: this pattern → evidence *against* High Absolutive (object > subject) syntax (Bobaljik and Branigan 2006; Legate 2006; Massam 2006; Otsuka 2006; Aldridge 2008, Doron and Khan 2012).

2.5 The Proposal (in a nutshell)

The Ban on Ergative Anaphors: arises from a heterogenous set of sources:

- *The Anaphor Agreement Effect:* no anaphors in positions construed with agreement (Rizzi 1990)
- *The Domain Restriction:* anaphors must be bound in the thematic domain; movement of the object at a later stage (= the TP level) does not yield binding (Ahn 2015; Charnavel and Sportiche 2016)

Result: this pattern does **not** provide an argument against High Absolutive Syntax.

3 Chuj: Contradictory binding patterns

Chuj doesn't allow ergative anaphors, but shows patterns of coreference that suggest High Abs syntax.

Proposal: Anaphors are subject to their own constraint—the Anaphor Agreement Effect.

3.1 Reflexive *-b'a* in Chuj

Anaphor subject to Condition A (see Ayres 1980; Burukina 2019 on reflexives in Mayan)

- The form: relational noun *-b'a* 'self' + Set A (possessive) prefix (cf. *my/your/him-self* in English).
- No 'logophoric' or 'exempt' uses, as far as we can tell.

Very limited distribution: **transitive object**

(13) *Chuj: The Anaphor -b'a*

- Ix-y-il s-**b'a** [_{EXT} waj Xun].
PFV-A3-see A3-self CLF Xun
'Xun saw himself.'
- Tz-ey-il he-**b'a**.
PFV-A2P-see A2P-self
'Take care of yourselves.'

Requires a *local* antecedent:

(14) *-b'a: antecedent strictly local*

- Ix-y-al ix Malin [_{CP} to ix-y-il [_{INT} s-**b'a**] [_{EXT} ix Xuwan] t'a k'en ne'en].
PFV-A3-say CLF Malin C PFV-A3-see A3-self CLF Xuwan PREP CLF mirror
'Malin_i said that Xuwan_j saw herself_{j; *i} in the mirror.'

The antecedent must also *c-command* the anaphor.

(15) *-b'a: antecedent must c-command*

- Ix-y-il [_{INT} s-**b'a**] [_{EXT} s-nulej ix Xuwan] t'a k'en ne'en.
PFV-A3-see 3A-self 3A-sister CLF Xuwan PREP CLF mirror
'[Xuwan's_i sister]_j saw herself_{j; *i} in the mirror.'

3.2 No ergative anaphors

The anaphor *-b'a* cannot be ergative:

- (16) *Ix-y-il [_{INT} waj Xun] [_{EXT} s-**b'a**].
PFV-A3-see CLF Xun A3-self
Literal IM: 'Himself saw Xun.'

One possible conclusion: No High Absolutive syntax in Chuj.

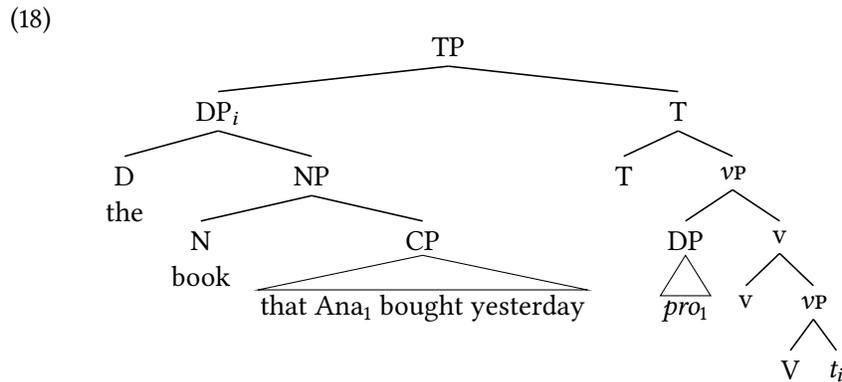
But: There are other correlates of High Abs syntax w.r.t. binding in Chuj.

3.2.1 Pattern 1: Lack of Condition C effects

Chuj allows an R-expression inside the INT to corefer with a pronominal EXT (Royer 2021):²

- (17) Ol-y-awtej [INT ch'anh libro [sman ix Ana₁ ewi]] [EXT pro₁].
 FUT-ERG3-read the book bought the Ana yesterday PRON
 'Ana₁ will read the book that she₁ bought yesterday.'
 Lit: 'She₁ will read the book that Ana₁ bought yesterday.'

- If the EXT c-commanded the INT, (17) should induce a violation of Condition C.
- But if the INT raises, and c-commands the EXT, then Condition C won't necessarily rule out (17) (if A-movement doesn't reconstruct for binding; Chomsky 1995; Lasnik 1999; Legate 2014):



In other words: High-Abs syntax can help us make sense of apparent Condition C issues like (17).

- No binding relation between *Ana* and *pro* → no violation of Condition C (cf. Royer 2021)

3.2.2 Pattern 2(?): Ineffability of certain sentences

Co-indexation between the INT and the possessor of the EXT is ineffable:

- (19) *Ix-y-il [INT pro] [EXT ix s-nun [POSS waj Xun]].
 PFV-A3-see PRON CLF A3-mother CLF Xun
 IM: Xun₁'s mother saw him₁.
 Could mean: Xun₁ saw his₁ mother or Xun₁'s mother saw it₂.

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- Ways to convey (19):

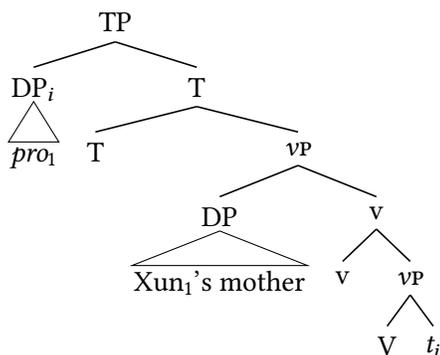
(20) Agent Focus Construction or Passive:

- a. [FOC Ha ix s-nun [POSS waj Xun_i]]_k ix-il-an-i [INT pro_i] [EXT t_k].
 FOC CLF A3-mother CLF Xun PFV-see-AF-IV PRON
 'It's Xun₁'s mother who saw him₁.'
- b. Ix-il-chaj waj Xun y-uj ix s-nun pro.
 PFV-see-PASS CLF Xun A3-by CLF A3-mother PRON
 'Xun₁ was seen by his₁ mother.'

²Royer (2021) argues, building on Craig 1977, Trechsel 1995 and Aissen 2000, that when no c-command holds between co-indexed nominals, a constraint forces the overt realization of the linearly first of two or more co-indexed expressions.

- Potential solution (assuming anaphors are banned from possessor position):

(21)



– If *pro* c-commands the R-expression *Xun*, this should result in a violation of Condition C.

– And perhaps *pro* in the possessor and *Xun* in subject position would violate Condition B.

– Woolford (1991) and Trechsel (1995) propose comparable solutions for the same data in Popti’.

- **N.b.** Sentences like (19) are also ineffable in ‘Low-Abs’ Mayan languages (e.g. Zavala 2007: Ch’ol, see also Aissen 1997 on Tsotsil).

- Aissen (1997): ineffability of sentences like (19) is related to *obviation*:

1. possessors must outrank the possessum in obviation status
2. the external argument must outrank the internal argument in obviation status.
3. coreferential expressions must bear the same “obviation” status (within an obviative span).

(22) Where prox > obv

- a. * $[\text{John}_{1(\text{obv})}]_{(\text{prox})}$ ’s mother saw $\text{him}_{1(\text{obv})}$ (violates (1.))
- b. * $[\text{John}_{1(\text{prox})}]_{(\text{obv})}$ ’s mother saw $\text{him}_{1(\text{prox})}$ (violates (2.))
- c. * $[\text{John}_{1(\text{prox})}]_{(\text{obv})}$ ’s mother saw $\text{him}_{1(\text{obv})}$ (violates (3.))

(23) Passive: ✓ $\text{John}_{1(\text{prox})}$ was seen by $[\text{his}_{1(\text{prox})}]_{(\text{obv})}$ mother]

- In other words: There might be a different explanation for the ineffability of (19).

In sum, a paradox:

- Chuj doesn’t allow ergative anaphors, which *prima facie* contradicts High Abs syntax;
- Other areas of Chuj binding are suggestive of High Abs syntax.

Proposal: The ban on ergative anaphors \approx the Anaphor Agreement Effect (Rizzi 1990; Woolford 1999).

(24) *The Anaphor Agreement Effect* (AAE) (Rizzi 1990)
 Anaphors do not occur in syntactic positions construed with agreement.
 (this is a well-attested crosslinguistic constraint)

- EXTs in Chuj trigger (Set A, ergative) agreement.
- Ergative anaphors (in Chuj) would violate the AAE.
- Therefore, sentences with reflexive objects must be derived differently.

3.3 Reflexive objects are just different

Different strategies used across languages to avoid violations of the AAE (detransitivization; special anaphoric agreement, etc; see [Woolford 1999](#)).

- In Chuj: In sentences with reflexive objects, the INT stays put (see also [Ordóñez 1995](#)).
- Reflexive objects in Chuj are syntactically-constrained in ways regular internal arguments aren't: (i) they must be verb-adjacent, (ii) they do not block EXT extraction, (iii) they cannot extract.

1. **VOS/VSO order:** *[VSO] with reflexives, exceptionally.

(25) Regular transitive	(26) Reflexive
a. Ix-s-chel [INT s-tz'i'] winh. PFV-A3-hug A3-dog PRON 'He hugged his dog.' VOS	a. Ix-s-chel [INT s-b'a] winh. PFV-A3-hug A3-self PRON 'He hugged himself.' VOS
b. Ix-s-chel winh [INT s-tz'i']. PFV-A3-hug PRON A3-dog 'He hugged his dog.' VSO	b. *Ix-s-chel winh [INT s-b'a]. PFV-A3-hug PRON A3-self 'He hugged himself.' *VSO

2. **No Agent Focus:** extraction of EXT exceptionally possible with reflexives (see [Aissen 2017](#)).

(27) <i>Reflexive</i> → No syntactic erg.	(28) <i>Regular transitive</i> → Syntactic erg.
Mach _k ix-y-il [INT s-b'a] t _k ? who PFV-A3-see A3-self 'Who saw themselves?'	*Mach _k ix-y-il [INT ix ix] t _k ? who PFV-A3-buy CLF woman Int: 'Who saw the woman?'

3. **Reflexive anaphors can't extract:**

(29) *S-b'a _k ix-y-il [INT t _k] ix Telex. A3-self PFV-A3-see CLF Telex IM: 'It's herself _i that Telex _i saw.'
--

In other words: Reflexive objects ≠ regular absolutive internal arguments.

- The ban on ergative anaphors doesn't constitute valid evidence against High-Abs syntax.

Tentative analysis:

- [Hornstein 2001,2007](#): anaphors derived via possessor raising.

(30) a. John likes himself. b. [John T ⁰ [<John> v ⁰ [like [<John> + self]]]]

(31) Chuj [T ⁰ [Xun v ⁰ [saw [<Xun> + b'a]]]]

4 Mandar: The Domain Restriction

Mandar shows a restriction: most verbs do **not** allow the external argument to be an anaphor.

Proposal: this pattern → constraint on the domain in which the reflexive is bound (Ahn 2015).

4.1 Background: High Absolutives in Austronesian

There is an old intuition in the literature on Western Austronesian which goes back to the 1970s:

- In the basic transitive construction, **the object moves to a position above the subject.**

This idea has been formalized in several ways:

- "Passive": In the transitive construction, the internal argument is a nominative subject, but the external argument is not demoted (Chung 1976, Keenan 1976, Guilfoyle et al. 1992, Rackowski 2002b).
- "Ergative": In the transitive construction, the internal argument is a High Absolute; the external argument is ergative (Gerds 1988, Aldridge 2004, Paul and Travis 2006, Huang and Lin 2012).
- "Topic": In the transitive construction, the internal argument is a topic; it either sits in a left-peripheral position (Pearson 2001, Travis 2006) or otherwise interacts with C (Chen 2017).

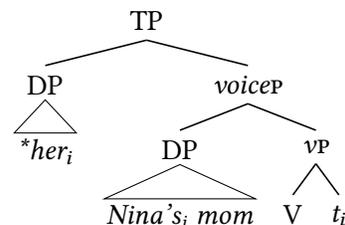
1. Condition C in Mandar: the transitive object > the subject.

- The transitive object (*i*) *cannot* be a pronoun (*ii*) *coindexed* with an R-expression (*iii*) in the subject.

(32) Mandar: The Condition-C Pattern

- a. *Na-ita=i **ia**_i [_{EXT} kindoqna **iNina**_i]
 3A-see=3B her mom NAME
 'Nina_i's mom saw her_i.' → **bad**
- b. Na-ita=i **iNina**_i [_{EXT} kindoqna_i *pro*]
 3A-see=3B NAME mom her
 'Her_i mom saw Nina_i.' → **fine**

(33)



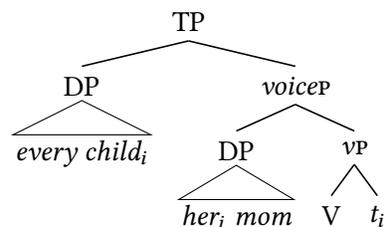
2. Variable Binding in Mandar: → same conclusion

- The absolute object → binds variables in the ergative subject when quantified.
- *Special property of the absolute*; non-absolutives cannot bind into other arguments.

(34) Mandar: The Variable Binding Pattern

- a. Na-salili=**nasang**=i [_{EXT} kindoq-**na**_i] sanaeke_i *t_n*.
 3A-miss=every=3B mom-her child
 'Her_i mother misses every child_i.' → **fine**
- b. *Mongeq=**nasang**=i [_{EXP} kottaq-na_i]
 In.love=every=3B boyfriend-her
 [_{OBL} lao.di naqibaine_i *t_n*].
 with girl
 'Her_i boyfriend is in love with every girl_i.' → **bad**

(35)



3. Conclusion: Mandar shows *High Absolute Syntax*; *object > subject*.

4.2 The Condition-A Anaphor *Alawe*

Mandar forms reflexive constructions like English. It places a complex anaphor in argument positions.

The anaphor: *alawe-X*

1. *Decomposition*: possessed NP (SELF-anaphor; cf. English ‘himself.’)
2. *Distribution*: argument positions (*transitive object*); *not* an enclitic, reflexive head, adjunct...

(36) *Mandar Reflexives: The Anaphor Alawe*

- a. Sajang=i [INT **alawe-mu**] [EXT *pro*], kambe. Da simata parokkoq.
Love!=3B self-your son. Don’t always smoke
‘Take care of yourself, son. Don’t smoke so much.’

Claim: this element behaves like a condition-A anaphor.

1. Antecedent Requirement: the anaphor *alawe* cannot be used in out-of-the-blue contexts.

(37) *Alawe: cannot be used out of the blue.*

- a. *Mane **alawe-na** miqoro di litaq. b. *Mongeq=**i/aq** *alawe-u*.
Then self-her sat on ground sick=3B/1B self-my
‘Then herself sat on the ground.’ ‘Myself is sick.’

2. Coargumenthood Requirement: the argument which antecedes *alawe* must stand in the same clause.

(38) *No Long-Distance Anaphora*

- a. Maquai iNina_i [CP muaq na-ita=i [INT **alawe-na**_{*i,j}] [EXT gurunna_j] di jaramming.]
said NAME that 3A-see=3B self-her her.teacher in mirror
‘Nina_i said that her teacher_j saw herself_{*i,j} in the mirror.’

3. C-Command Requirement: the argument which antecedes *alawe* must *c-command* it.

(39) *No Binding without Command*

- a. Na-ita=i [INT **alawe-na**_j] [EXT gurunna_j iNina_i] di jaramming.
3A-see=3B self-her teacher.of NAME in mirror
‘Nina’s_i teacher_j saw herself_{*i,j} in the mirror.’

Conclusion: *alawe* behaves like a condition-A anaphor.

- Local contrast: cognate forms → condition-B pronouns in related languages (Bugis; Mamuju)
- Regional contrast: ‘reflexive anaphors’ support long-distance anaphora, do not require c-commanding antecedents in Indonesian & relatives (Cole and Hermon 2005, Davies 2008, Nomoto 2015).

(40) *Indonesian: reflexive anaphors → no condition A*

- a. Nina_i bilang [CP bahwa [INT **diri-nya**_{i,j}] di-lihat [EXT gurunya_j] di cermin.]
NAME said that self-her 3A-see her.teacher in mirror
‘Nina_i said that her teacher_j saw herself_{i,j} in the mirror.’
- b. [INT **Diri-nya**_{i,j}] di-lihat [EXT gurunya_j Nina_i] di cermin.
Self-her 3A-see teacher.of Nina_i in mirror
‘Nina’s_i teacher_j saw herself_{i,j} in the mirror.’

4.3 The Distribution of Ergative Anaphors

Mandar shows a *partial ban*: only some verbs allow ergative anaphors.

1. Experiencer verbs: *see* → allows ergative anaphors. (cf. Cole and Hermon 2008)

(41) *ita* ‘see’: ergative anaphors ok

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. U-ita=i [EXT <i>pro</i>] [INT alawe-u]. | b. Na-ita=aq [EXT alawe-u] [INT <i>pro</i>]. |
| 1A-see=3B I self-my | 3A-see=1B self-my me |
| ‘I saw myself.’ | ‘Myself saw me.’ (JT:11.18...JT:3.7) |

2. Agentive/Causative/Perspectival verbs: no ergative anaphors.

(42) *Other verbs:* ergative anaphors bad

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. *Na-bokkoq=aq [EXT alawe-u] [INT <i>pro</i>]. | b. *Na-sosoq=aq [EXT alawe-u] [INT <i>pro</i>]. |
| 3A-bite=1B self-my me | 3A-pity=1B self-my me |
| ‘Myself bit me.’ | ‘Myself pities me.’ |

Generalization: the anaphor (typically) has to be the internal argument. *see* is the exception.

Result: Three Puzzles (if the object > the subject)

1. Why can the object be an anaphor?
2. Why can the subject generally not be an anaphor?
3. Why do experiencer verbs allow the subject to be an anaphor?

4.4 A Domain-Based Account

1. Proposal: the anaphor *alawe* must be bound in the thematic domain (e.g. *voiceP*)

- Parallels: accounts which reduce anaphor binding to phase theory (Charnavel and Sportiche 2016) or to functional structure within the extended projection of *v* (Ahn 2015).

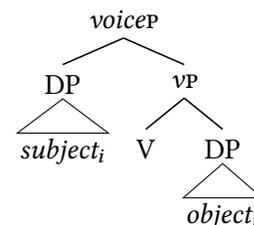
2. The Immediate Result: the anaphor ‘*alawe*’ → OK as the object.

- Base merge positions: the subject commands the object in the thematic domain (UTAH; Baker 1988)
- **Therefore:** the subject will always be able to bind an anaphor in the position of the object.
- **Stipulation:** later A-movement of the object will not undo this binding relation.

(43) *Object Anaphors: Bound in voiceP*

- | |
|---|
| a. U-pipal=i [EXT <i>pro</i> _i] [INT alawe-u _i]. |
| 1A-hit=3B I self-my |
| ‘I hit myself.’ |

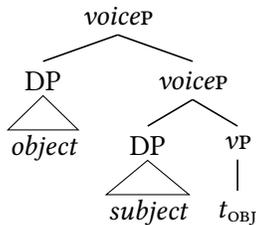
(44)



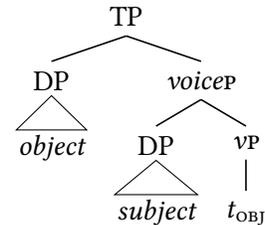
3. The Ergative Ban: *follows from a particular theory of High-Absolutive Syntax*

- There are two approaches to the process which places the object above the subject:
 1. **Low Inversion:** the object moves above the subject *within the thematic domain* (the object > the subject in *voiceP*; Rackowski 2002a, Aldridge 2004, Yuan 2018).
 2. **High Inversion:** the object moves above the subject *only at the level of TP* (the subject > the object in *voiceP*; Guilfoyle et al. 1992, Campana 1992, Bittner 1994).

(45) *Low Inversion: object > subject in voiceP*



(46) *High Inversion: object > subject in TP*

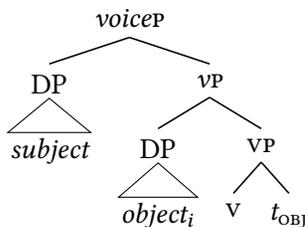


- **High Inversion + Domain Restriction** → *subject anaphors cannot be bound.*
 - High Inversion → the object never c-commands the subject within the *voiceP*.
 - Domain Restriction → an anaphor in the position of the subject cannot be bound.
- **N.b.:** independent evidence for High Inversion in Mandar (Agent Focus; Brodtkin 2021).

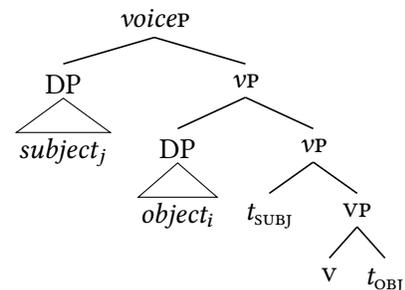
4. The Exceptional Case: *experiencer verbs* → *special syntax*

1. **Old Idea:** experiencer subjects merged low; *beneath* the merge position of agentive subjects.
2. **Independent Fact:** objects undergo a step of movement in the *voiceP* (Brodtkin 2021).
3. **Claim:** these patterns → the object can command the experiencer subject in the *voiceP*.
4. **Result:** experiencer verbs *alone* allow the subject to be an ergative anaphor.

(47) *Agentive V: Subject > Object in voiceP*



(48) *Experiencer V: Object > Low Subject*



5. Summary: Mission Accomplished.

1. *Domain Restriction* → anaphors licensed in object position.
2. *High Inversion* → anaphors generally not licensed in subject position.
3. *Experiencer Syntax* → allows ergative anaphors with experiencer verbs.

5 Conclusion: Bind carefully

Central Claim: patterns of anaphor binding *do not provide evidence against High Absolutive Syntax*.

1. The constraints which hold over the binding of Condition-A anaphors → complex and varied.
2. The Ban on Ergative Anaphors → arises from a range of heterogeneous sources.
 - *The Anaphor Agreement Effect*: no anaphors in positions construed with agreement (Rizzi 1990)
 - Domain Restrictions: anaphors bound in *voice_{EP}* (Charnavel and Sportiche 2016, Ahn 2015)

Chuj & Mandar: The Typical Situation

1. **High Absolutive Syntax**: Absolutive Agreement in τ^0 , Condition c, Syntactic Ergativity (both)
2. **No Ergative Anaphors**: complete ban (Chuj); tightly constrained distribution (Mandar)
3. **This is Typical**: parallel behavior of anaphors across Western Austronesian (Pearson 2001, Aldridge 2008) & Inuit (Manning 1996) (and also Mayan: Anderson 1976, Larsen and Norman 1979)

Outstanding Questions: Self Anaphors, Agreement, and Binding

1. Internal differences among SELF-anaphors: Chuj *b'a* vs. Mandar *alawe*?
 - Morphological parallel: body-part noun + possessor agreement (+ possessor)
 - Syntactic difference: *b'a* remains low; shows special syntax; *alawe* largely does not.
2. The relationship between morphological complexity and the Anaphor Agreement Effect?
 - **Generalization**: the morphological complexity of a reflexive anaphor *does not predict* whether it can appear in positions linked to default agreement (Rizzi 1990, Preminger 2019).
 - **E.g.** Icelandic & Albanian both have ‘monomorphemic’ reflexive anaphors; Albanian allows the anaphor to be nominative and trigger agreement; Icelandic does not (Woolford 1999).
 - Mandar & Chuj: parallel situation with morphologically complex anaphors.
3. The relationship between morphological complexity and the size of the binding domain?
 - Old generalization: morphologically complex anaphors show more restricted binding possibilities than morphologically simplex ones (Pica 1987, Cole and Sung 1994, Middleton 2020).
4. Lastly: there may be independent (non-syntactic?) constraints against agentive anaphors.
 - *Long-distance anaphors/logophors* → resist being ergative arguments bound by the object in many languages of Western Indonesia (Wechsler & Arka 1998, Gil 2000, Davies 2008)

These puzzles → future work.

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