1 The puzzle

- Obligatory control constructions are universally (or overwhelmingly) constrained: even in syntactically ergative languages, control is syntactically accusative [Dixon 1994; Deal 2016; Polinsky 2016].
- Most analyses of control appeal to the structural prominence of the controlled argument [Landau 2013:108-123, a.o.).
- In syntactically ergative languages the surface subject position is occupied by the absolutive theme, but control targets the lower ergative agent ⇒ challenge for existing analyses.

2 Case study

West Circassian (Adyghe): Northwest Caucasian, polysynthetic, ergative, radical pro-drop[1]

Data collected by author in Maykop and Khatazhukay, Republic of Adygea, Russia, unless otherwise indicated.

Syntactic ergativity: ABS c-commands ERG and IO.

Evidence: reciprocal binding.

3 Φ-agreement as a diagnostic for clause structure

- Position of cross-reference morphology directly reflects syntactic role of verbal argument.

**ERG-IO-ABS frame**

(1) ABS- IO- ERG-

t- q- p- f- ja- ʃ’ar
1PL.ABS- DIR- 2SG.IO- BEN- 3SG.ERG- bring.PST
‘S/he brought us to you.’

**ABS-IO frame**

(2) ABS- IO-

ʃ”o- q- d- de- ʃ”ešt
t- 2PL.ABS- DIR- 1PL.IO- COM- dance.FUT
‘You(pl) will dance with each other.’

**ERG-IO-ABS frame**

(3) ERG-IO-ABS frame: ERG binds IO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABS-</th>
<th>IO-</th>
<th>ERG-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>te wонэrexer Ø- ze- fe- t- ʃ”ʔwař</td>
<td>1PL.ABS- REV.ERG- do.PST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>te wонэrexer Ø- t- ze(ře)- ʃ”ʔwař</td>
<td>1PL.IO- REV.ERG- do.PST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ABS-IO frame**

(4) ABS-IO frame: ABS binds IO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABS-</th>
<th>IO-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>ʃ”o- q- 2PL.IO- de- ʃ”ešt</td>
<td>2PL.ABS- REV.ERG- dance.FUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>ze- q- 2PL.IO- de- ʃ”ešt</td>
<td>REV.ERG- do.PST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other evidence REC is not voice or de-transitivizing operator** (cf. Labelle 2008; Bruening 2004):

(i) possibility of overt REC pronoun

(ii) case marking of antecedent

⇒ reciprocal agreement can be used to diagnose argument asymmetries.

4 Reciprocals provide evidence for syntactic ergativity

- ABS binds both ERG and IO, regardless of theta-role [Letuchiy 2010; Ershova 2019].

**ERG-ABS frame**

(5) ERG-ABS frame: ABS binds ERG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABS-</th>
<th>ERG-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>to- zе(re)- ʃ”ʔwař</td>
<td>1PL.ABS- REV.ERG- see.PST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>ze(re)- t- ʃ”ʔwař</td>
<td>REV.ERG- do.PST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘We saw each other.’

**Notes:**

The Role of Voice in Establishing Control: Evidence from a Syntactically Ergative Language
Ksenia Ershova, Stanford University (kershova@stanford.edu)

LSA 94, New Orleans, LA

(6) ERG-IO-ABS frame: ABS binds IO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABS-</th>
<th>IO-</th>
<th>ERG-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>t-</td>
<td>ze-</td>
<td>f-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1PL.ABS-</td>
<td>REC.IO-</td>
<td>BEN-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3SG.ERG-</td>
<td>bring.PST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. *</td>
<td>ze-</td>
<td>t-</td>
<td>f-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REC.ABS-</td>
<td>1PL.IO-</td>
<td>BEN-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3SG.ERG-</td>
<td>bring.PST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘S/he brought us together (lit. to each other).’

ABS moves to Spec,TP:

5 Obligatory control is syntactically accusative

(7) ERG-ABS frame: ERG is controlled, not ABS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ERG-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. ĺ'eleje-ra-ze-mi</td>
<td>ĺ'alexe-r(ABS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[CP PRO$_2$(ERG) teacher.OBL boy.PL-ABS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø-n-ew ] rj-Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3ABS-3SG.ERG-count-MOD-ADV 3SG.ERG.begin.PST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. * ĺ'ale-xe-mi</td>
<td>[CP PRO$_2$(ABS) ĺ'alexe-r(ERG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>boy-PL-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø-Ø-n-ew ] rae-Ø-Ø-Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3ABS-3SG.ERG-count-MOD-ADV 3PL.ERG.begin.PST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘The teacher began to count the children.’

6 Embedded CP has a syntactically ergative clause structure

Reciprocal binding in control CP: ABS binds ERG

(9) [CP pro$_2$(ABS) rec$_1$(ERG) Ø-zere-w=č'az=x-n-x-ew] ĺ'afxe-mi |
|    | 3ABS-REC.ERG-kill-MOD-PL-ADV person.PL-OBL |
|    | rae-Ø |
|    | 3PL.ERG.begin.PST |

‘The children began to compete with each other.’

The puzzle: ABS (i) is not eligible for control and (ii) does not act as an intervener

7 Main claim: Control is mediated by Voice

- Following Landau (2000), control is established via Agree.
- Agree-based control involves agreement in an index (ID) feature.
- See e.g. Rezac (2004), Grosz (2015), Arregi and Hanink (2018) for ID-agreement in other domains.
- ID-agreement is an implementation of control as binding (Chomsky 1981, Borer 1989, Landau 2015).
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Control as ID-agreement via Voice

Syntax of Voice:
- selects for vP
- agrees with highest DP in vP in [ID]
- carries the feature [CTL]

Establishing control:
- C_CTL is a relativized ID-probe: [ID_CTL];
- ABS doesn’t bear [CTL] ⇒ ABS isn’t an eligible goal for C_CTL.
- C_CTL agrees with Voice in [ID].
- Controller agrees with C_CTL in [ID].

Result: feature matching with embedded ERG= control.

8 Why Voice? Parallels between control and reflexives

Ershova (2019): WC reflexives are local subject oriented, i.e. must be bound by highest DP in vP. ⇒ The choice of antecedent for reflexives is constrained by Voice.

See e.g. Labelle (2008); Ahn (2015); Bhatia and Poole (2016) on Voice and LSO reflexives.

How it works:
- Voice agrees with a DP in its c-command domain.
- Per standard locality constraints, only the highest DP is an eligible goal.
- ⇒ correctly constrains REFL antecedent to highest DP in vP.

REFL antecedent constrained by Voice:

Control is similarly constrained: Evidence from two-place unaccusative verbs

ˇs’@K w@pˇsen ‘forget’:

ABS- IO-
sg- p- ˇs’- w’oša -w
SG.ABS- 2SG.IO- LOC- forget -PST
‘You(IO) forgot about me(ABS),’

ABS may scramble over IO:

⇒ABS and IO are equidistant to Voice.
REFL: IO binds ABS or ABS binds IO

(13) ABS- IO- [§] \[z-\]
REFL-ABS- ISG.IO- LOC- forget.PST

a. [\[\]]

(14) Voice [\[\]] ... [\[\]] DP(ABS) DP(IO) ... ✓ AGREE

**Cf. REC only allow ABS antecedent.

Prediction of Voice-mediated control: both ABS and IO can be controlled → confirmed.

(15) \(\$\):w\ophen ‘forget’: both IO and ABS can be controlled

a. \(\text{pro}(\text{ERG})\) [\[\]] \(\text{pro}(\text{IO})\) [\[\]] \(\text{pro}\) [\[\]] \(\text{pro}\) [\[\]] [\[\]]
qas\$a\aro\excl[\text{ABS}]
1SG.IO.happen.PST.PL-ABS 3ABS-1SG.IO-LOC-forget.MOD-ADV
jese\$e\’e
1SG.ERG.begin.PRS

‘I am starting to forget events from my childhood.’

b. \(\text{g}w\$a\aro\excl[\text{ERG}]\) [\[\]] \(\text{pro}(\text{ABS})\) [\[\]]
word.plong.PL-OBL
Ø-s-Ø-w\aro\excl[\text{ABS}] 3ABS-1SG.IO-LOC-forget.MOD-ADV 3PL.ERG.begin.PST

‘Long words are beginning to be forgotten by me.’

9 Implications

• Importance of Voice\(^0\) in two classic subjecthood diagnostics (reflexives and control)
  ⇒ no single subject position per e.g. McCloskey (1997) and no uniform notion of subjecthood.

• Possible explanation for universal lack of syntactic ergativity in control.

Alternative account of control and syntactic ergativity (Polinsky [2016]): ERG\=PP; syntactically ergative languages lack obligatory control of ERG.

~ Applicable only to languages where ABS stays low: if ABS c-commands ERG, why is only ERG eligible for non-obligatory control?

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