The puzzle

• Obligatory control constructions are universal (or overwhelmingly) constrained even in syntactically ergative languages, control is syntactically accusative

• Most analyses of control appeal to the structural prominence of the controlled argument

• In syntactically ergative languages the subject surface position is occupied by the absolutive theme, but control targets the lower ergative agent ⇒ challenge for existing analyses.

Case study

West Caucasian (Adyghe): Northwest Caucasian, polysynthetic, ergative alignment, radical pro-drop Data collected by author in Maykop and Khakhatkhab, Republic of Adyghe, Russia, unless otherwise indicated.

Syntactic ergativity: Ar-S commands ERG and IO.

Evidence: reciprocal binding.

Reciprocals provide evidence for syntactic ergativity

• Ar-S binds both ERG and IO, regardless of theta-role

Reciprocal binding in ergative case

Main claim: Control is mediated by Voice

• Following Emonds (2003), control is established via Arg

• Agree-based control involves agreement in an index (I) feature.

• The subject of the matrix control clause participates in both control clauses

Syntactic Voice:

• Selects for IP

• agrees with highest DP in IP in [IO]

• carries the feature [CTL]

Establishment control:

- C' is a relativized IP-probe: [IO,C']

- See e.g. [CP(ID) | [s,J] in the data for [IO]

- C' is not an eligible goal for C深远

- C深远 agrees with Voice in [IO]

- Controller agrees with C深远 in [IO]

Results: feature matching with embedded ERG ⇒ control.

Obligatory control is syntactically accruative

ERG-IO frame: ERG is controlled, not ARS

(7) a. [IO(%) Proc(%) Erg(%) C'take-ERG(%)] C's-Lite-ERG-%

b. [Proc(%) Erg(%) take-ERG(%)] C's-Lite-ERG-%

3PL Erg begin

'C's-Lite-ERG-%

'The teacher began to count the children.'

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Embedded clause is a CP, cf. restructuring FRAME [79] or raising out of TP (Francis and Potts 1981);

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

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