

1: High/Low Absolutes. The literature typically assumes that individual ergative languages invariably link absolutive licensing to one head: τ^0 or ν^0 (Legate 2008). This split correlates with the distribution of agreement and the subject-like behavior of the absolutive argument (Coon et al. 2014). I refer to these two types of language as High-Absolutive and Low-Absolutive, respectively.

2: Split Absolutive Syntax. This parametric divide cannot be maintained. The South Sulawesi languages show a split pattern: under typical circumstances, they link absolutive licensing to τ^0 , but two cases, they link it to ν^0 instead. This pattern recurs in many Philippine-type languages.

3: South Sulawesi = High Absolutive. The languages of the South Sulawesi subfamily (SSul) show typical Philippine-type syntax. In the patient voice, they index the external argument (EXT) with an ergative prefix. They mark the internal argument (INT) with an absolutive enclitic.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(1) U-baca=i bo=é.
 1ERG-read=3ABS book=DEF
 ‘I read the book.’ Bugis; Laskowske 2016</p> | <p>(2) Ku-kanre=i unti=a.
 1ERG-eat=3ABS banana=DEF
 ‘I ate the bananas.’ Makassar; Jukes 2006</p> |
|--|--|

These languages show *High Absolutive* syntax: absolutive agreement sits in τ^0 and the absolutive argument moves to a subject position. Several facts make this clear. First, absolutive agreement sits in second-position (3) and disappears in non-finite clauses. Second, the absolutive argument binds into other arguments. For instance, it can license an anaphor in the position of the EXT (4).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(3) Tae=opa=kan lao map-pasa.
 not=yet=1ABS go AV-market
 ‘We won’t shop yet.’ Mamasa; Matti 1994</p> | <p>(4) Na-ita=aq [_{INT} <i>pro</i>] [_{EXT} alawe-u].
 3ERG-see=1ABS self-my
 ‘Myself saw me.’ Mandar</p> |
|--|--|

4: The Agent Voice. The SSul languages contrast the patient voice with an agent voice. In this construction, the EXT triggers absolutive agreement and moves to the subject position. The agent voice is required in two contexts: clauses where the EXT (*i*) is A'-extracted or (*ii*) controls a gap.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(5) Amir ang-nganre loka.
 Amir AV-eat banana
 ‘Amir’s eating bananas.’Konjo; Friberg 1996</p> | <p>(6) Lo=kaq mak-kutana.
 want=1ABS AV-ask
 ‘I want to ask.’ Bugis: Laskowske 2016</p> |
|---|--|

5: The Tension. The agent voice forces its INT to receive an indefinite interpretation. It cannot be used if the INT is definite. This reflects a constraint on position: a definite INT cannot sit in the VP, but the agent voice ν^0 does not allow the INT to move (Aldridge 2004). This creates a problem in the contexts above: a definite INT should be banned in any case where the agent voice is forced.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(7) *M-ita=kaq ula=é
 AV-see=1ABS snake=DEF
 ‘I saw the snake.’ Bugis; Laskowske 2016</p> | <p>(8) *Ng-kita=naq iko.
 AV-see=1ABS 2SG
 ‘I saw you.’ Duri; Kaufman 2008</p> |
|--|--|

6: The Solution. The SSul languages employ a common construction in contexts where the INT is definite but the agent voice is forced. This construction shows the agent voice *voice⁰ -um-* but shows absolutive agreement with the INT. This pattern can be linked to a distinct ν^0 with several forms across the subfamily: the quirky intransitive ν^0 . This construction recurs across multiple subgroups on the island of Sulawesi (Kaili-Pamona: Martens 1988; Bungku-Tolaki: Mead 1998).

- (9) Iaq **m-anre=i** otti-mmu. (10) Ero=jaq **an-ruppa=i** kana-ngku.
 1SG QI-eat=3ABS banana-your want=1ABS QI-follow=3ABS word-my
 ‘I ate your banana.’ Bugis; Laskowske 2016 ‘I’ll keep my word.’ Makassar; Jukes 2006

7: Low Absolutive Syntax. The quirky intransitive construction shows Low Absolutive syntax. Its absolutive agreement is verb-adjacent: it cannot move to second position. It originates in v^0 .

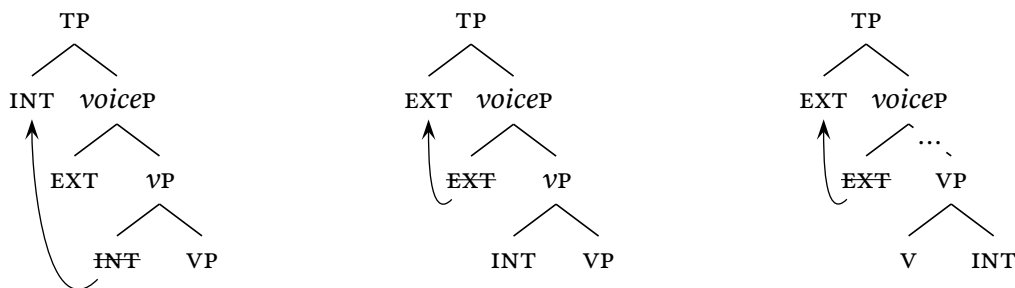
- (11) Indang=**i** pura meloq s-um-obal. (12) Innai indang pura **mam-baca=i**?
 not=3ABS ever want AV-sail who not ever QI-kiss=3ABS
 ‘He never wanted to go sail’ Mandar ‘Who never kissed him?’ Mandar

Moreover, the INT remains within the VP in this construction. In the SSul languages, the patient voice INT can float a quantifier into the middle field. The quirky intransitive INT cannot.

- (13) **Sangnging na**-ita=o a? (14) *Innai **sangnging maq**-ita=o?
 all 3ERG-see=2ABS PRT who all QI-see=2ABS
 ‘Did he see all of you?’ Mandar IM: ‘Who saw all of you?’ Mandar

8: Proposal: Last-Resort Licensing. The SSul languages require a definite INT to be licensed by T^0 (patient voice) under normal circumstances (15). When this cannot occur, they employ the v^0_{QI} . This v^0 (i) shifts the INT out of the VP and (ii) licenses it in $SPEC,VP$ (16). This process allows the EXT to move to $SPEC,TP$ and be extracted or controlled in the presence of a definite INT. The agent voice v^0 cannot be used in this context: it does not allow its INT to leave the VP (17).

- (15) $PV: INT \rightarrow SPEC,TP$ (16) $QI: EXT \rightarrow SPEC,TP$ (17) $AV: INT \rightarrow VP$



9: Parallel Splits. Many Philippine-type languages show an identical pattern of Low Absolutive case marking. For instance, Squaliq Atayal allows the ‘agent voice’ INT to bear the absolutive case-marker *qu* in the contexts above. This pattern suggests that this split is widespread. This raises a challenge for non-ergative analyses of Philippine-type alignment (Rackowski 2002, Chen 2017).

- (18) Cyux **m-aniq** sehuy qasa **qu** Yuraw. (19) **Ima** wal **m-aniq qu** sehuy qasa?
 AUX AV-eat taro that ABS NAME who AUX QI-eat ABS taro that
 ‘Yuraw is eating that taro.’ ‘Who ate that taro?’
 Squaliq Atayal; Erlewine 2016:8 Squaliq Atayal; Erlewine 2016:3

10: Citations. ◇ Aldridge, E.C. (2004). Ergativity and word order in AN languages. ◇ Chen, Y. H. (2017). A Reexamination of the Philippine-Type Voice System and its Implications for AN Primary Level Subgrouping. ◇ Erlewine, M. (2016). Subject marking on non-subjects in Squaliq Atayal. ◇ Mead, D. E. (1998). Proto-Bungku-Tolaki. ◇ Legate, J. A. (2008). Morphological and abstract case. ◇ Rackowski, A. (2002). The structure of Tagalog.