THE SPLIT-S SYSTEM AND THE SOURCE OF THE ABSOLUTIVE CASE IN TENETEHÁRA[1]

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ABSTRACT:

The main goal of this paper is to investigate the split-S system in Tenetehára. I propose that the A and S_a subjects are cross-referenced by means of the same set of prefixes in root eventive clauses, whereas O and S_o are encoded by the absolutive clitics. The analysis demonstrates that this language exhibits an internal parametric variation in the sense that the S_a, S_o and A subjects may receive either the nominative or accusative Case, whereas objects systematically receive the accusative Case. This opens a parametric option in the sense that a higher functional projection must be activated in order to make possible the Case evaluation of the S_a, S_o, A and O arguments.

Key-words: ergativity, absolutive Case, accusative Case, Tupi-Guarani, Tupi Stock.

RESUMO:

Este artigo examina o sistema cindido de marcação de argumentos nucleares na língua Tenetehára. Propõe-se que há uma série de prefixos que codifica os argumentos A e S_a de predicados eventivos, enquanto outra série codifica os argumentos O e S_o por meio de clíticos absolutivos. A análise propõe ainda que essa língua exibe uma variação paramétrica, visto que os sujeitos S_a, S_o, e A ora recebem Caso nominativo ora Caso acusativo, enquanto objetos recebem apenas Caso acusativo. Esta proposta abre uma opção paramétrica no sentido de que precisamos acionar uma projeção funcional acima do domínio de v-VP para possibilitar a valoração de Caso dos argumentos S_a, S_o, A e O.

Palavras-chave: ergatividade, Caso absolutivo, Caso acusativo, Tupi-Guarani, Tupi Stock.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tenetehára belongs to the Tupí-Guaraní family, Tupí Branch and is spoken by two indigenous groups: the Tembé and the Guajajara. The Tembé group lives on the border of the States of Maranhão and Pará, and the Guajajara group lives in the State of Maranhão, in the northern region of Brazil. According to Rodrigues (1986:39), Tenetehára is spoken by approximately 7,100 people.

In this paper, I will be using the terminology first proposed by Dixon (1979, 1994), according to which the argument corresponding to the Agent of a canonically transitive Agent-Patient verb will be referred to as the A-argument (or simply, the A); the Patient argument will be referred to as the O. On the other hand, the sole argument of unergative and unaccusative verbs will be labeled as the (S_a)-argument, while the sole argument of stative verbs will be described as the (S_o)-argument. Note that this system slightly differs from the one that Dixon (1994:71) originally proposes. He states that "S_a (intransitive 'active') verbs refer to an activity that is likely to be controlled, while S_o ('neutral') verbs refer to a non-controlled activity or state." Tenetehára, however, "pursues a middle course", in the sense that some non-controlling activity subjects (S) are marked like A, instead of being marked like O. This system is basically operative in the root clauses of the most conservative dialects of Tenetehára, that is, the ones that are spoken in the Arariboia and Bacurizinho territories.

According to Dixon (1994), split ergative grammar may include semantically contrastive marking for A and O. In such a system, this contrast is quite often extended to S so that "those S which are semantically similar to A (exerting control over the activity) will be S_a, and those S which are semantically similar to O (being affected by the activity) will be S_o, marked like O."

In Tenetehára, this semantic contrast depends on whether the predicate is eventive or stative.

Thus, the A and S_a subjects are cross-referenced by means of the prefixes of set A in root eventive clauses, whereas O and S_o are encoded by the person markers of set B (=absolutive clitics and absolutive prefix). Nevertheless, when O and S_o arguments are realized by nonpronominal DPs, they are cross-referenced on the verb stem by the absolutive clitics {i- ~ h-}.

This system is neutralized in transitive and intransitive stative clauses, contexts in which the A, S_a and S_o subjects are all encoded by means of the absolutive[3] markers, regardless of whether these are root or subordinate clauses. In addition, there is an (ergative)-absolutive pattern in the eventive and stative embedded clauses, insofar as S_a and S_o subjects and transitive objects O are uniformly cross-referenced by means of the absolutive person markers, whereas the A subjects of eventive predicates remain unmarked in such clauses. In order to give a more theoretical explanation for the Tenetehára cross-referencing system of the core arguments, the purpose of the next sections is to demonstrate that this language exhibits an internal parametric variation in the sense that the S_a, S_o and A subjects may receive either the

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3   Following the tradition in literature on Case theory, I will keep the descriptive label "absolutive" in this article to emphasize the fact that intransitive subjects and objects are cross-referenced by the same set of clitics, particularly in embedded clauses. As it will be shown in this article, this label corresponds to the structural accusative Case that is assigned by the head Abs°.

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nominative or accusative Case, whereas objects systematically receive the accusative Case. As we will see in the next sections, either choice depends on whether the clause is root or embedded or whether the predicate is stative or eventive. In line with this, the proposal that the analysis will be exploring in this paper is that the abstract Case of the S_a, S_o and A subjects may equate with the Case of the direct objects. In this sense, I will hypothesize that the absolutive Case of all these arguments are valued in the same structural position. This opens a parametric option in the sense that a higher functional projection, located above the vP, must be activated in order to make possible the Case evaluation of the S_a, S_o, A and O arguments. Another theoretical problem that this paper discusses is that, as opposed to what Burzio's generalization predicts, unaccusative subjects can in fact pick up accusative Case. Under these assumptions, I will assume, henceforth, that the inability of a verb to value accusative Case must be dissociated with its property of assigning theta role to its external argument.

Before proceeding, it is important to point out that this paper is in compliance with theoretical assumptions that have been investigated since the publishing of *Syntactic Structures*, according to which the linguistic analysis must achieve a certain level of both descriptive and explanatory adequacy. For this reason, the typological analysis presented in this paper is an attempt to present a description of the Tenetehára Case system in order to shed some light on how knowledge of these facts arises in the mind of the speaker-hearer. The aim is to understand the role of Case systems within the Principle and Parameter theory in order to achieve some level of explanatory adequacy.

The paper is organized as follows: section 2 aims to present a detailed account of the distribution of the two sets of person markers that cross-reference the core arguments A, O, S_a and S_o within sentences; section 3 explores some generative assumptions regarding the grammatical status of absolutive Case in ergative languages; in section 4, it is proposed that the occurrence of either the prefixes of set A or the absolutive prefixes is directly connected to the extent that the verb moves to the functional domain of the VO and OV clauses; in section 5, the aim is to provide the reader with a structural analysis of how the active-stative system is derived in the syntactic component of the Tenetehára grammar. Finally, section 6 concludes the article.

2. THE RELEVANT DATA

In Tenetehára, nominal phrases in the syntactic function of subjects and objects do not exhibit morphological Case marking. Additionally, two sets of person markers are used to encode these syntactic functions: the prefixes of Set A and the absolutive clitics, which I will refer to, hereafter, as Set B. Both of the sets are shown in the tables below.

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Set A: Subject prefixes		
	Singular	Plural
1st person	*a-*	*xi³-/za-*_inclusive_ *uru-*_exclusive_
2nd person	*(e)re*	*pe-*
Table 1		

Set B: Absolutive clitics of first and second persons		
	Singular	Plural
1st person	*he*	*zane*_inclusive_ *ure*_exclusive_
2nd person	*ne*	*pe*
Table 2		

Table 3 below shows the allomorphic inventory of the third person prefixes of Set A and Set B. Notice that, in contrast to the Set B clitics of table 2, the third person markers of Set B are not clitics, but agreement prefixes, as follows.

Third person prefixes		
	Set A: Subject prefix	Set B: Absolutive prefix
3rd person	*u- ~ o- ~ w-*	*i- ~ h-*
Table 3		

Moreover, it is important to point out that there is no third person plural prefix, as the third person prefix of Sets A and B is always unspecified for number, as can be seen in the following examples:

(1) w_i-*etyk*   *teko*$_i$ *mani'ok*   *a'e*$_i$ *kury*[5]
        A3$_{SG}$[6]-throw   people   manioc   3   now
        "The people threw the manioc (by the river)."

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(2) *awa   i-kane'o   a'e   wà*
     man   B3-tired   he   PL
     "(They) the men are tired."

The morphemes of Set A have the following distribution: {*o-*} attaches only to stems that have the vowel /*o*/, while the allomorph {*w-*} appears before stems beginning with vowels. The prefix {*u-*} is triggered elsewhere. The relevant data follows below:

(3)   *o-ho*   'he goes.'
(4)   *w-exak*   'he sees (something).'
(5)   *u-pyhyk*   'he takes (something).'

The alternate forms of Set B have the following distribution: the prefix {*i-*} is used in verb stem of Class I, whereas the prefix {*h-*} is attached to verb stem of Class II. There is no syntactic or semantic basis for this grammatical subdivision owing to the fact that these are just arbitrary morphological classes into which the verb stems may be grouped.

Stems of Class I

(6)   *i-kane'o*
      B3-be tired
      "He is tired."

(7)   *mani'ok   i-pywkatu*
       manioc   B3-be soft
      "The manioc is soft."

Stems of Class II

(8)   *h-urywete*
      B3-be happy
      "He is happy."

(9)   *h-upyhyz*
      B3-be sleepy
      "He is sleepy."

2.1. On the grammatical status of the absolutive clitics

The main piece of evidence that the person markers of Set B in Table 2 are truly clitic relates to the fact that they must co-occur with the relational prefix {r-}[7]. Interestingly, this prefix must occur whenever the pronominal clitics of either first or second person occupies an argument position preadjacent to the verb, as follows:

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7   I refer the reader to subsection 4.2, in which I present a more detailed discussion of the theoretical status of the relational prefix {ø- ∞ r-}.

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$O > A$[8]

(10a) *he.r-àro-ràm*   *awa*   *a'e*
      B1SG.REL-wait-FUT   man   3
      "The man will wait for me."

$O > A$

(10b) *ne.r-àro-ràm*   *awa*   *a'e*
      B2SG.REL-wait-FUT   man   3
      "The man will wait for you."

Furthermore, there cannot occur a situation in which the relational prefix appears on the verb stem, whereas the pronominal clitic is placed in a postadjacent position in relation to the lexical verb. Thus, one can propose that the correct generalization is that the main role of this prefix is to signal that the pronominal clitic must only be positioned in a preadjacent verbal position, never in a postadjacent position. This explains why the sentence below is ungrammatical.

(11) **r-àro-ràm*   *awa*   *he*
      REL-wait-FUT   man   B1SG
      "The man will wait for me."

Another piece of evidence comes from the fact that the absolutive clitics should not co-occur with free pronouns that are usually placed in final sentence position, as follows:

$O > A$

(12a) **he$_i$.r- àro-ràm*   *awa*   *ihe$_i$*
      B1SG.REL-wait-FUT   man   I
      "The man will wait for me."

(13a) ***ne**-r-exak*   *rakwez*   *kwarer*   *ka'a*   *r-upi* **ne** $\boxed{ri'i}$
      2SG- REL-see   UDPAST   boy   forest   OBL-in 2SG   EM
      "The boy certainly saw you in the forest."

                                                  (Camargos, 2017:12)

It is important to point out that there cannot occur a situation in which the clitic is absent and the free pronoun is present at final clause position. This constraint becomes clear by considering the ungrammaticality of the sentences below:

$O > A$

(12b) **r- àro-ràm*   *awa*   *ihe$_i$*
      B1SG.REL-wait-FUT   man   I
      "The man will wait for me."

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8   These examples illustrate the referential/person hierarchy in Tenetehára. In this hierarchy, arguments that are higher in the referential scale have preference to be cross-referenced on the verb stem.

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(13b) *r-exak   rakwez   kwarer   ka'a   r-upi **ne** |ɾɨ'ɨ|
      2SG-INV-see   UDPAST   boy   forest OBL-in 2SG   EM

   "The boy certainly saw you in the forest."

Therefore, due to the fact that the pronominal clitics are in complementary distribution with the free pronouns, I will assume, henceforth, that the former is indeed clitic in nature. Based on this, I will contend that the absolutive clitics are thematic arguments that cliticize to the lexical verb, thereby giving rise to the surface word order [[OV]S] in the inverse clauses, in which the pronominal object and the verb precedes the subject. Notice that, in these sentences, the object outranks[9] the subject in the person hierarchy and, therefore, the absolutive clitics occupy the slot that is reserved to the person markers that cross-reference the core arguments A and O in the verb phrase. In the inverse system, only the object is morphologically encoded on the verb stem, whereas the subject remains unmarked. In such contexts, the subject is generated as external arguments, while the object is introduced as an internal argument. Section 4.2 is devoted to giving a generative explanation to the way this system is syntactically derived.

In sharp contrast to the pattern shown above, the subject prefixes of Set A differ in that they may co-occur with a subject, signaling that they are really agreement prefixes, as indicated below:

(14a) o_i-mo-no   Pedro_i miar   Siba   pe
      3SG-CAUS-go   Pedro   animal Siba   to

   "Pedro gave the animal to Siba."

(14b) o_i-mo-no   pro_i   miar   Siba   pe
      3SG-CAUS-go   ___   animal   Siba   to

   "(Pedro) gave the animal to Siba."

The same distribution also holds true for the third person absolutive prefix of Table 3, insofar as it can agree with a DP occupying an argument position, as is evidenced by the examples below:

(15a) Hikar   i-puru-àro-wer   Pet   r-ehe
      Ricardo   B3-ANT-wait-DESID   Pedro REL-PSP

   "Ricardo wants to wait for Pedro."

(15b) _____   i-puru-àro-wer   Pet   r-ehe
                      B3-ANT-wait-DESID   Pedro REL-PSP

   "(Ricardo) wants to wait for Pedro."

(16a) Joao   i-ma'enukwaw   awa   r-ehe
      John   B3-think   man   REL-to

   "John thinks of the man."

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9   See details on the person hierarchy system in section 2.4.

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(16b) _____ *i-ma'enukwaw* *awa* *r-ehe*
(John) B3-think man REL-to
"(John) thinks of the man."

In sum, due to the fact that DPs (and pronouns) are not in complementary distribution neither with the subject prefixes nor with the absolutive prefix, I will claim, henceforth, that the status of the prefix of sets A and B is not ambiguous, but agreement in nature, whereas the weak pronouns of the Table 2 behave as clitics, always appearing proclitic to the lexical verb.

A final piece of evidence in favor of this proposal has to do with the fact that the absolutive clitics cannot be interpreted as incorporated pronouns. It is important to keep in mind that incorporated nouns in Tenetehára never trigger the relational prefix {r-}, as the example below indicates.

(17) *u-pina-etyk*
A3SG-hook-throw
"(He) is fishing." [lit.: "He is throwing the hook."]

Here, the incorporated object *pina* "hook" does not trigger the prefix {r-} on the verb stem. This empirical fact allows us to conclude that the absolutive clitics of Table 2 are not part of the verb stem. If they were part of the stem morphology, the relational prefix should not appear between the absolutive clitic and the verb stem. This is, of course, not the case, as illustrated below:

(18) *he$_i$.r$_i$-etyk* *Purutu*
B1SG-take Purutu
"Purutu took me."

Therefore, based on the empirical data shown thus far, I will propose that the person markers of Table 2 are not affixes, but thematic pronominal arguments that occur as (pro)clitics to the verb. Additionally, I will be referring to them as absolutive clitics owing to the fact that, although they can cross-reference the S$_o$ and O arguments, they can never refer to the A and Sa arguments in root eventive clauses, as the ungrammaticality of the sentence below indicates:

(19) **he.r-àro- ràm* *awa*
B1SG-REL-wait-FUT man
"I will wait for the man."

However, this sentence is grammatical if one assumes that the subject is the DP *awa 'the man,'* a context in which the object is encoded by means of the absolutive clitics *he* "me" and the word order is [[OV]S], as follows:

(20) *he.r-àro- ràm* *awa* *a'e*
B1SG -REL-wait-FUT man 3
"The man will wait for me."

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The next subsection aims to present the syntactic contexts in which the two sets of person markers occur both in independent clauses and in embedded clauses.

2.2. The grammatical distribution of the person makers

If one focuses first on eventive predicates, it is possible to observe that an active system is prevalent, since the person markers of Set A mark both the A and S_a arguments in root clauses. During the analysis I will be referring to the active system as the direct system. The relevant data is presented below:

<u>Transitive predicates</u>

(21)　*a-'u-paw*　　*pira*　*ra'a*
　　　 A1SG-eat-all　fish　　PART
　　　 "I have eaten the fish completely."

(22)　*re-'u-paw*　　*pira*　*ra'a*
　　　 A2SG-eat-all　fish　　PART
　　　 "You have eaten the fish completely."

(23)　*u-'u-paw*　　*pira*　*ra'a*
　　　 A3SG-eat-all　fish　　PART
　　　 "He has eaten the fish completely."

<u>Eventive intransitive predicates</u>

(24)　*a-ker*　　　*kwej*
　　　 A1SG-sleep　IPASS
　　　 "(I) have already slept."

(25)　*re-ker*　　　*kwej*
　　　 A2SG-sleep　IPASS
　　　 "(You) have already slept."

(26)　*i-ker*　　　*kwej*
　　　 A3SG-sleep　IPASS
　　　 "(He) has already slept."

Nonetheless, a stative pattern emerges due to the fact that the Set B person markers systematically encode the A, S_a and S_o subjects in stative predicates, as follows:

<u>Stative transitive predicates</u>

(27)　*he.ø-puru-àro-wer*　　　　*Pet*　*r-ehe*
　　　 B1SG-REL-ANT-wait-DESID　Pedro　REL-PSP
　　　 "I want to wait for Pedro."

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(28)　　*he.ø-ma'enukwaw*　　　　　　*awa*　　*r-ehe*
　　　　ʙ1sɢ-ʀᴇʟ-think　　　　　　man　　ʀᴇʟ-to
　　　　"I think of the man."

Stative intransitive predicates

(29)　　*he.ø-ho-wer*
　　　　ʙ1sɢ-ʀᴇʟ-go-ᴅᴇsɪᴅ
　　　　"I want to go."

(30)　　*ne.ø-ho-wer*
　　　　ʙ2sɢ-ʀᴇʟ-go-ᴅᴇsɪᴅ
　　　　"You want to go."

(31)　　*i-ho-wer*
　　　　ʙ3sɢ-ʀᴇʟ-go-ᴅᴇsɪᴅ
　　　　"He wants to go."

(32)　　*he-ø-hyz-wer*　　　　　　*'y*　　*pe*
　　　　ʙ1sɢ-ʀᴇʟ-run-ᴅᴇsɪᴅ　　water　to
　　　　"(I) want to run to the river."

Stative descriptive predicates

(33)　　*he.r-ahy*
　　　　ʙ1sɢ.ʀᴇʟ-be.in.pain
　　　　"I am in pain."

(34)　　*ne.r-ahy*
　　　　ʙ2sɢ.ʀᴇʟ-be.in.pain
　　　　"You are in pain."

(35)　　*h-ahy*
　　　　ʙ3sɢ.ʀᴇʟ-be.in.pain
　　　　"He is in pain."

(36)　　*he.r-upewyk*
　　　　ʙ1sɢ. ʀᴇʟ-close.the.eyes
　　　　"I have dozed."

(37)　　*he.ø-kàn*
　　　　ʙ1sɢ-ʀᴇʟ-strong
　　　　"I am strong."

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(38) *he.ø-kyrakatu*
B1SG-REL-fat
"I am fat."[10]

Interestingly, the use of the person markers of Set B is extended from only S_o subjects in matrix/ independent eventive predicates to all intransitive subjects in embedded clauses. Hence, S_a and S_o subjects are cross-referenced by means of the person markers of Set B in the subordinate sentences, regardless of whether the predicate is stative or eventive, as follows:

(39) *he.r-upyhyz*   *mehe*
B1SG.REL-sleepy   COMP
"When I am sleepy (…)."

(40) *w-exak*   *he.r-eixe*   *mehe*   *tapuz me*   *a'e*
A3-see   B1SG-REL.enter   COMP   house into   he
"He saw that I entered the house.'

(41) *ne.ø-apyk*   *mehe*
B2SG.REL-sit down   COMP
"(…) when you sit down."

(42) *he.ø-'ar*   *mehe*
B1SG-REL-fall COMP
"(...) when I fall."

As opposed to what happens to the S_a and S_o subjects of intransitive clauses shown above, the A transitive subjects of eventive predicates do not trigger any person markers in embedded clauses. Instead, only the O arguments may be cross-referenced on the verb stem by means of either the absolutive pronominal clitics or the absolutive prefixes. This pattern allows us to conclude that the person markers of Set B are not extended for encoding the A transitive subjects of eventive verbs in embedded clauses. Consequently, in the embedded sentence below, the absolutive prefix {h-} can only refer to the object *tapi'ir*.

(43) *Joao*   *i-ma'enukwaw*   *awa*   *r-ehe*
Joao   B3-think   man   REL-to

Quesler   *tapi'ir_i*   *h_i-ekar*   *mehe iko*   *ka'a*   *pe*
Quesler   tapir   B3-hunt   COMP be   forest   in
"John thinks of the man while Quesler is hunting for tapir in the forest."

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10   Other examples of stative intransitive verbs collected during our field work research are: *-azu* "be ripe/yellow"; *apuŋa* "be rotten"; *-azahy* "be sour"; *-aiha* "be tall"; *-puràg* "be beautiful"; *-amyw* "have flu"; *-ahy* "be painful"; *-agaiw* "be skinny"; *-aku* "be hot"; *-ezun* "be swollen"; *-ànàgatu* "be thick"; *-àkwen* "be fast"; *-ehaite* "be agressive/unfriendly."

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(44) *Joao i-ma'enukwaw   awa   r-ehe
     Joao ʙ3-think   man   ʀᴇʟ-to

     Quesler$_i$ tapi'ir   w$_i$-ekar   mehe iko   ka'a   pe
     Quesler   tapir   ᴀ3-hunt   ᴄᴏᴍᴘ be   forest in
     "Joao thinks of the man while Quesler is hunting for tapir in the forest."

In conclusion, the cross-referencing system shown thus far indicates that there is a stative/active pattern in the Tenetehára grammar. In such a system, the A arguments align to S_a subjects in root eventive predicates, whereas the A subjects align to the S_a and S_o subjects in stative predicates. Moreover, O aligns to S_a and S_o subjects both in the embedded clauses and when O is higher than A in the person hierarchy, thereby causing an (ergative)-absolutive alignment. The grammatical properties of the inverse system will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

2.3. The inverse system

Tenetehára is like other Tupí-Guaraní languages in that a person hierarchy determines the occurrence of the person markers when the sentence has a transitive verb. In this hierarchy, the first person is higher than the second person. The second person is, in turn, higher than the nonfocal third person argument. When both the subject and the object are realized as third person, the higher referential and topic argument outranks the lower referential and non-topic one. This hierarchy can be informally stated as follows:

(45) **1>2>3$^{\text{+topic, +high referential}}>3^{\text{+non-topic, -referential}}$**

Since there is just one verbal slot for the person markers to occur in the verb phrase, the person markers of Set A are triggered on the verb stem whenever the A subject is higher than the O object in this hierarchy. Nevertheless, when it is the O object that is higher than the A subject in the person hierarchy, the object is always morphologically realized by the person markers of Set B, thereby giving rise to an inverse system. The relevant data are shown below:

Transitive predicates
        A > O
(46a) a-(à)ro-ràm   awa
       ᴀ1sɢ-wait-ꜰᴜᴛ   man
       "I will wait for the man."

        O > A
(46b) he.r- àro-ràm   awa
       ʙ1sɢ.ʀᴇʟ-wait-ꜰᴜᴛ   man
       "The man will wait for me."

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A > O

(47a) *(e)re- àro-ràm*   *awa*
   A2SG-wait-FUT   man
   "You will wait for the man."

O > A

(47b) *ne.r- àro-ràm*   *awa*
   B2SG.REL-wait-FUT man
   "The man will wait for you."

Tupian literature treats this phenomenon as an "inverted sentence" [see Bendor Samuel (1972)]. Harrison (1986:417), for example, notes that this grammatical device "*is not a true promotion, in the sense where passive promotes a direct object to subject*". Payne (1994:395) presents arguments that this pattern really corresponds to an inverse system. She argues that "*the notion of inverse is crucially dependent on its occurrence in transitive clauses.*"

It is important to note that, in the inverse system, the relational prefix {ø- ∞ r-} must obligatorily appear between the pronominal clitics (Set B) and the verb stem. Taking into consideration the allomorphic alternation exhibited by this prefix, linguists working with Tupí-Guaraní languages usually divide the lexical roots into Class I and Class II[11]. The roots of Class I receive the allomorph /ø-/, while those of Class II take the allomorph /r-/, as follows:

Relational prefixes	
	Adjacent argument
Class I	ø-
Class II	r-
Table 4	

In clear contrast to the person markers of Set A and Set B, the relational prefix does not vary according to the phi-features of either the A and S_a/S_o subjects or the O objects. Essentially, its main role is to signal the existence of an inverted system and to indicate that, when the A, S_a and S_o subjects and O objects are morphologically realized as pronominal clitics, these arguments obligatorily appear preadjacent to the verb in the linear order. Compare the data below, in which the distribution of the relational prefixes is exemplified in more detail.

S_o encoding in intransitive root predicate

(48) *he.r-upyhyz*
   B1SG-REL-be sleepy
   "I am sleepy."

---

11 For a more detailed analysis on the grammatical function of these affixes, I would direct the reader to Rodrigues (1996) and Seki (2000).

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(49) *he.r-ahy*
B1SG-REL-be.in.pain
"I am in pain."

(50) *he.r-upewyk*
B1SG-REL-close the eyes
"I have dozed."

S_a encoding in embedded intransitive predicate

(51) *he.ø-ker*   *mehe*
B1SG.REL-sleep   COMP
"When I was sleeping (....)."

A enconding in stative transitive predicate

(52) *he.ø-puru-'u-wer*   *pira*   *r-ehe*
B1SG-REL-ANT-eat-DESID   fish   REL-PSP
"I want to eat fish."

O encoding in eventive transitive predicate

(53a) *a-exak*   *ka'i*   *kury*
A1SG -see   monkey   then
"(I) saw the monkey."

(53b) *he.r-exak*   *ka'i*
B1SG.REL-see   monkey
"The monkey saw me."

Furthermore, when the A and O arguments are both morphologically realized as third person and the object is more prominent than the subject, the third person prefix {i- ~ h-} of Set B must occur on the verb stem in order for the object to be cross-referenced. Then, in such a context, the O object outranks the A subject and is usually dislocated to an A'-position. That the O argument really outranks the A argument is evidenced by the fact that the A argument (that is, the transitive subject) cannot be cross-referenced on the verb, as examples (b) below illustrate. On the other hand, the dislocated object must be indicated on the verb by means of the prefix {h- ~ i-}. Moreover, notice that the word order changes from VSO to OSV, as follows:

A > O

(54a) *w_i-exak*   *Fábio_i*   *Márcia*
A3-see   Fábio   Márcia
"Fábio saw Márcia."

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O > A

(54b) *upaw Márcia* $_i$ *Fábio* *h$_i$-exak-ø*
all   Márcia   Fábio   B3-see-DISLOC
"ALL MÁRCIA, Fábio saw."
[lit.: It means that Fábio saw Márcia in every detail, and not partially.]

A > O

(55a) *u$_i$-'u*   *teko$_i$*   *pira*
A3-eat   people   fish
"The people ate (some) fish."

O > A

(55b) *upaw pira$_i$*   *teko*   *i$_i$-'u-n*
all   fish   people   B3-eat- DISLOC
"All the fish, the people ate (some)."

Here the object receives a contrastive focus reading so that the interpretation in (54b) and (55b) implies that the event of seeing Márcia and of eating fish was made in its totality and not partially. Notice that in such circumstances the objects must be preceded by the quantifier *upaw* whose role is to encode that the event has a telic perfective reading.

2.4. The lack of the split-S system in the embedded clauses

In sharp contrast to the Split-S system that prevails in the root sentences, one can conclude that there is no split-S in the intransitive subject coding device in the embedded clauses, insofar as the S$_a$ and S$_o$ subjects are all encoded by means of the person markers of Set B, regardless of whether these arguments are subjects of eventive or stative predicates. In conclusion, the split S-system only occurs in the root clauses in the sense that the S$_a$ subjects are marked on the verb stem by means of the prefixes of Set A, whereas the S$_o$ subjects are encoded by means of the person markers of Set B. This asymmetry is evident when one compares the data below.

Eventive predicates

(56) *a-zàn*   *kwez*
A1$_{SG}$-run   IPASS
"(I) have already run."

(57) *he.ø-zàn*   *mehe*
B1SG.REL-run   COMP
"(....) when I run (....)."

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Stative predicates

(58)　*he.r-ahy*
　　　B1SG.REL-be.in.pain
　　　"I am in pain."

(59)　*he.r-ahy*　　　　　　*mehe*
　　　B1SG.REL-be.in.pain　COMP
　　　"….when I am in pain."

2.5. Summary of the section

Based on the syntactic distribution of the two sets of person markers outlined thus far, one may conclude that Tenetehára exhibits, at least, three subsystems of encoding the core arguments across the sentences.

In one of these subsystems, which basically occurs in root clauses, the A and S_a subjects are both marked on the eventive verbs by means of the Set A subject prefixes, while the O and S_o arguments are encoded by means of the person markers of Set B. The diagram in (60) summarizes this cross-referencing subsystem.

(60)

**Nominative and absolutive agreement subsystems
in the root eventive predicates**

Nominative subsystem $\Big\{$ A
　　　　　　　　　　　　　S_a

O
$\Big\}$ Absolutive subsystem
S_o
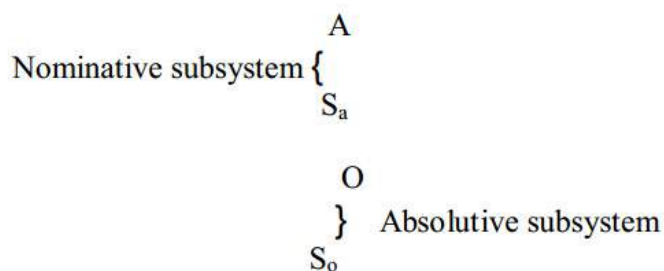
The split-S marking of the intransitive subjects shown above resembles what happens in many split-ergativity languages in the sense that the S_o arguments are marked identically to the O arguments, whereas the S_a arguments are cross-referenced by means of the same person marking as the A arguments.

In addition, there is another cross-referencing system that basically occurs in the stative predicates. In such a system, the A, S_a and S_o arguments are all encoded by means of the person markers of Set B. The diagram below illustrates this system:

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(61)

**Cross-referencing system in the stative predicates
of both root and embedded clauses**

$$\text{Absolutive System} \begin{cases} A \\ \\ S_a/S_o \end{cases}$$

Finally, there is a fourth subsystem, in which the O, S_a and S_o arguments are all encoded on the embedded verb by means of the person markers of Set B. In this subsystem, the A arguments are not cross-referenced on the embedded verb. The diagram below shows this absolutive alignment:

(62)

Absolutive system in the embedded predicates

$$\text{Absolutive System} \begin{cases} O \\ \\ S_a/S_o \end{cases}$$

In line with the proposals above, I will claim that the Tenetehára cross-referencing system exhibits a mixture of ergative/absolutive and nominative/accusative characteristics. Based on this split, the hypothesis that I will be evaluating in the next sections is that the activation of the person markers of Sets A and B reflects, respectively, the fact that both the nominative and absolutive (=accusative) Case may be assigned to the A, S_a and S_o subjects, while the object systematically receives the absolutive (=accusative) Case. Based on this assumption, the main goal of the following sections is to investigate which functional head assigns the structural Case to the A, S_a and S_o subjects both in the eventive and stative predicates. Before presenting the details of the theoretical proposal, the objective of the next section is to provide the reader with a general overview of the theories regarding the grammatical status of the absolutive Case within the generative approaches. As it will be shown, absolutive is just a descriptive label used to cover the fact that accusative is the structural Case assigned to A, O, S_a and S_o arguments by a higher functional head located above the v-VP domain.

3. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Theoretical proposals within generative grammar concerning ergative languages diverge in the way that they account for absolutive Case assignment in ergative languages. In this regard, approaches to absolutive Case marking can be roughly divided into three groups. One approach assumes that absolutive Case is assigned in the C/TP domain, thereby being equivalent to nominative Case (Bok-Bennema 1991, Murasugi 1992, Campana 1992, Bittner and Hale 1996a,b, Ura 2001, 2006). A second proposal advocates that absolutive Case must be regarded as a default structural Case which may

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be assigned either by T or by *v,* so that there is no such thing as structural absolute Case. Under this hypothesis, the label absolutive masks two different structural Cases: the nominative and the accusative. Authors that defend this hypothesis are, for example, Woolford (2007), Legate (2002, 2008), and Aldridge (2008). Finally, there is a third approach according to which absolutive is checked in Spec-AgrOP/*v*P. According to this view, the label absolutive corresponds only to the accusative Case that is assigned to the S and O arguments in the ergative languages (Levin and Massam, 1985; Bobaljik, 1993; Laka, 1993, 2000).

Theorists that consider absolutive Case as being the equivalent of structural nominative Case assume that absolutive is the Case that is assigned by T to the closest argument that is positioned in its closest c-command domain, a situation that can either force or not force the movement of this argument to the Spec-TP. In contrast to this view, Legate (2008:55) assumes a theory according to which morphological case realizes abstract Case features in a postsyntactic morphology, according to the Elsewhere Condition. Under this approach, absolutive Case is a morphological default that may cover either the nominative or the accusative. She then proposes that, since both of these Cases may be realized through a morphological default Case, they are often mislabeled as absolutive in the literature. In this sense, she posits that "the absolutive[12] is a spurious generalization that has been obscuring a variety of interesting case-marking patterns." Based on this view, she identifies at least two types of ergative languages: one in which the absolutive is uniformly assigned by the head T^{o} to both S and O, as in Georgian, and another in which the source of absolutive Case is not uniform in the sense that it can correspond either to accusative or to nominative, as seems to be the situation in Dyirbal. In sum, what is common in the analyses outlined thus far is that intransitive subjects uniformly receive absolutive (=nominative) Case. However, in contrast to the approaches above, Bobaljik (1993, 2006) and Laka (1993, 2000) develop a theory according to which the absolutive arguments uniformly receive Case in a lower position in the clausal functional domain. Moreover, Bobaljik (1993) postulates that cross-linguistic variation is regulated by the way the Obligatory Case Parameter is set across languages, as follows:

(63) *Obligatory Case Parameter (OCP)*

a.   In Nominative/Accusative languages, CASE X is NOMINATIVE (=ERG)
b.   In Ergative/Accusative languages, CASE X is ABSOLUTIVE (=ACC)

Under this approach, OCP does not apply to transitive predicates, but only to intransitive constructions, insofar as the parametric variation only occurs when the predicate selects just one argument. In nominative languages, for example, the sole argument of intransitive verbs receives the nominative Case in Spec-AgrSP, regardless of whether the verb is unaccusative or unergative. In ergative languages, on the other hand, the intransitive subject gets absolutive Case, which is checked in Spec-AgrOP. Adapting this proposal to a Case theory in which φ-features are not functional projections

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12   Woolford (2007:1595) argues that *"The descriptive label 'absolutive' came into common use to gloss the morphologically unmarked Case on intransitive subjects and transitive objects in ergative languages in the mid- 1970s, e.g. Anderson 1976, Chung 1978, Dixon 1980; in earlier work, it was standard to identify this Case as nominative, e.g. Hockett 1958, Hohepa 1969, Dixon 1972 (Joseph Foster, personal communication). (…) Although 'absolutive' might be useful as a descriptively neutral label to use as a placeholder until the identity of the Case or Cases involved can be determined, there is no evidence that 'absolutive' is an actual Case (Goddard 1982, Legate 2006).*

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projected in the functional domain of sentences, but formal features inherited by functional categories, one can dispense with the AgrP projections as potential Case assigners. This theory entails that the head v^o assigns accusative/absolutive, whereas the head T^o licenses nominative. In order to facilitate the understanding of this proposal, I will label the Case assigned by T^o as C1 and the case assigned by v^o as C2. The configuration below summarizes the Case evaluation mechanism in a transitive clause.

(64)

TP

C1$_{NOM/ERG}$ T'

vP

v'

C2$_{ACC/ABS}$ v'

v^o VP

V'
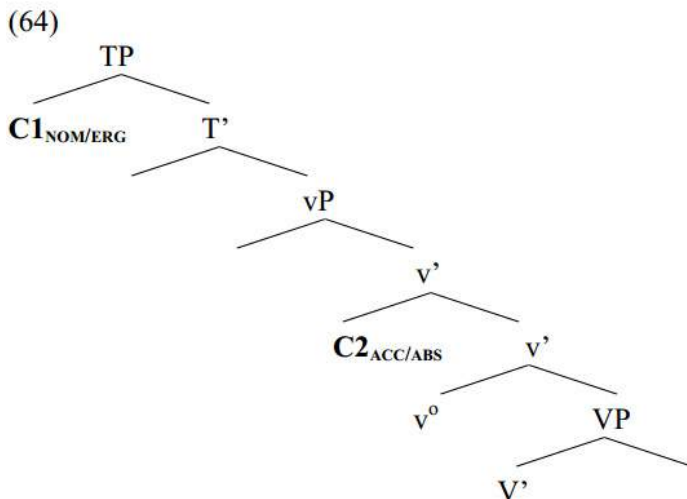
Assuming that a parameter is always binary and that it can activate either C1$_{nominative}$ or C2$_{absolutive}$ in intransitive clauses, Bobaljik (1993) and Laka (1993, 2000) posit that the possibility of activating either of the two Cases might result in the following parametric possibilities among languages:

NOMINATIVE SYSTEM

(65)   If C1$_{nominative}$ is active.

(a) V$_{transitive}$ (C1$_{nom}$, C2$_{acc}$)
(b) V$_{intransitive}$ (C1$_{nom}$)

ERGATIVE SYSTEM

(66)   If C2$_{absolutive}$ is active

(a) V$_{transitive}$ (C1$_{erg}$, C2$_{abs}$)
(b) V$_{intransitive}$ (C2$_{abs}$)

Languages of the first type are, for example, English and Latin where nominative Case can be assigned either to intransitive subjects or to transitive subjects. Evidence in favor of this view comes from Latin, in which the DP bearing nominative Case always controls the agreement on the verb stem, as follows below:

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(67)   Mulier$_{C1}$ puer-um$_{C2}$ vide-t.
       woman -NOM   boy-ACC   see-3SG
       "The woman sees the boy."

(68)   Mulier$_{C1}$ cade-t.
       woman -NOM   fall-3SG
       "The woman falls."

(69)   Mulier$_{C1}$ ride-t.
       Woman-NOM   laugh-3SG
       "The woman laughs."

On the other hand, in ergative languages like Inuit (Bobaljik, 1993), the transitive subject is marked with the ergative Case, while the intransitive subject and the object come with the absolutive Case, as follows:

(70)   *Jaani-up*$_{C1}$ *natsiq*$_{C2}$ *kapi-jaNa*
       Jaani-ERG   seal-ABS   stab-TRANS
       "Jaani stabbed a seal."

(71)   *inuk*$_{C2}$ *tikit-tuq*
       person-ABS   arrived
       "The person arrived."

(72)   *ilinniaqtitsiji*$_{C2}$ *uqaq-tuq*
       teacher-ABS   spoke
       "The teacher spoke."

Notice that this Case marking contrasts with the one that occurs in the nominative system due to the fact that the Case of the intransitive subject is identical to the Case of the object. This fact leads Laka (1993:151) to consider that absolutive does not differ from accusative. Under this approach, one can immediately come to the conclusion that there is no difference between accusative Case and absolutive Case. An immediate consequence of this approach is that, at least, in ergative languages, Burzio's Generalization, hereafter BG, does not hold, reinforcing what Levin (1983) had already pointed out for Basque. The reason is that, in such languages, unaccusative subjects can receive structural accusative (=absolutive), as opposed to the nominative system, wherein unaccusative subjects can only receive nominative Case. Aiming to derive BG from Case theory only, Laka (2000) postulates that thematic relations do not play any role in Case assignment.[13] Thus, Laka (2000) advocates the idea that assignment of accusative (=absolutive) Case is blind to the fact whether the predicate licenses an

___

13   Burzio (1986) claims that a verb may assign object Case to its complement only if it assigns a theta role to its agent. Expressed in terms of structural relations, this implies that a verb can assign Case to its complement only if it assigns a theta-role to its specifier.   13   Laka (2000:105) argues that *"it is not clear what principle or principles could derive BG, because there is no explicit connection between external q-role assignment and Accusative Case assignment besides the very one stated by the generalization itself. (….)."*

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external argument with an agent θ-role or not.[13] Based on this proposal, two immediate conclusions emerge: (i) the only parameter of variation in Case Theory is the one predicted by the OCP and (ii) BG does not exist as a universal principle, but only as a subpart of a possible human grammar. In sum, the reader might have already come to the conclusion that all of the approaches outlined thus far predict the existence of only one active Case feature in intransitive clauses. The choice of either nominative or accusative will depend on which active Case is available in a particular language.

Nevertheless, the split-S[14] Case system of Tenetehára poses a problem for such a view, insofar as this language allows an internal parametric variation owing to the fact that the source of the intransitive subject Case is not uniform. For this reason, the central hypothesis I will be evaluating in this paper is that the choice of either the absolutive (=accusative) Case or the nominative Case must be directly correlated to which functional head is active in the intransitive clauses. Furthermore, I will assume that the grammatical alignment between Sa, So and O reflects the fact that both of these core arguments receive structural accusative Case. As a side effect of this analysis, one may conclude that both settings of the OCP are triggered in Tenetehára, a situation that explains why the intransitive subjects (S_a) of eventive verbs can trigger either the nominative or accusative Case, a pattern that clearly contrasts with the one postulated by Bobalijk (1993, 2006) and Laka (1993, 2000). Either option depends on which functional projection is available in the intransitive clauses. I will also posit that this Case is not assigned by AgrO° or by Asp°, but by the head Abs°. Pursing these lines of reasoning, I follow Massam (2000) in labeling this functional position as Abs(olutive)P. Furthermore, I will assume that the grammatical alignment between S_a, S_o and O reflects the fact that all of these core arguments receive structural accusative Case in a Spec-Head configuration within the domain of AbsP. Notice that this analysis differs from the proposal outlined in the structure in (64), since accusative Case is valued not in Spec-vP, but in Spec-AbsP, a functional projection that is positioned between TP and v-VP. This theory becomes clearer in the tree diagram depicted below.

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14   I refer the reader to the Coon's (2010a,b) and Coon and Preminger's (2012) recent article, where they offer a detailed proposal on other split-S systems.

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(73)

```
                    CP
                 /      \
               C°        IP
                       /    \
                            I'
                         /     \
                       I°       AbsP
                              /     \
                            Abs'
                         /      \
                       Abs°       vP
                              /     \
                         Subject    v'
                                  /    \
                                v°      VP
                                      /    \
                                    V°      Object
```
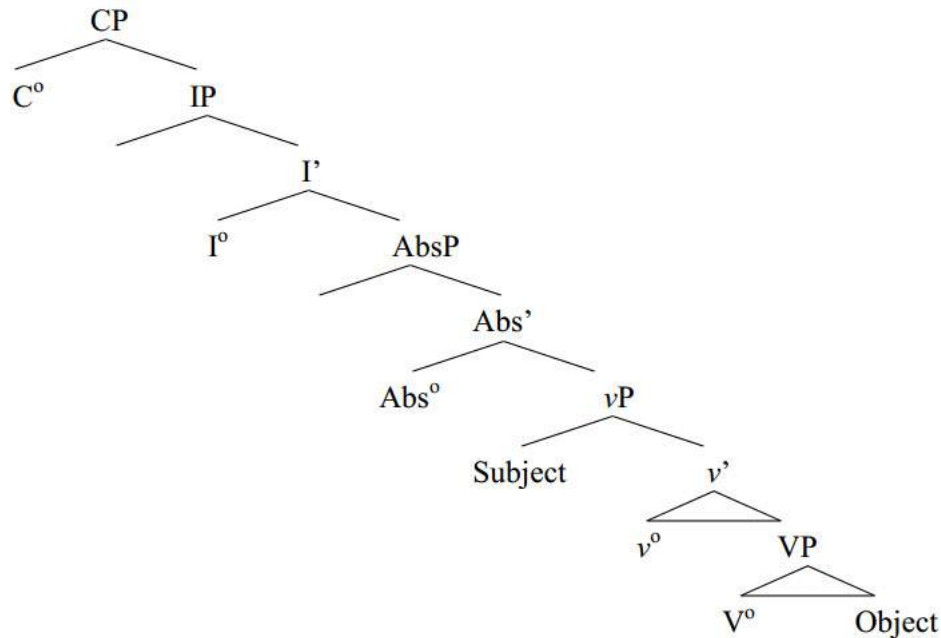
In sum, following the essentials of Laka's (2000) and Legate's (2008) theory, I will assume, henceforth, that the label absolutive corresponds to the structural accusative Case that is uniformly assigned to the A, S$_a$ and S$_o$ arguments in the Tenetehára stative predicates. The objective of the following sections is to explore this proposal in more detail so as to derive the Tenetehára split-S system in contexts of both independent and subordinate clauses. Let us then start with a discussion of Case assignment mechanism and the choice of the person markers of Set A within the transitive clauses.

4. CASE ASSIGNMENT MECHANISM WITHIN THE TRANSITIVE CLAUSES.

In order to give a more theoretical explanation for the distribution of the person markers described in Section 2, I will propose that the choice of the person markers of Sets A and B in root eventive transitive clauses is sensitive to (i) the person hierarchy and (ii) the linear order of the core arguments. More precisely, the prefixes of Set A occur only when the subject outranks the object in the person hierarchy and in contexts where the object follows the transitive verb. In such contexts, there is predicate movement to Spec-CP, after both the subject and the object have evacuated the *v*P for Case reasons. This explains why sentences with the V(S)O order never trigger Set B, since this set is only activated when both the object and the verb occur in a Spec-Head relationship in the AbsP domain. It becomes evident that the absolutive prefix is banned from these clauses after considering the ungrammaticality of the sentence below.

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(74) *w-àro*   *Hikar*   *Pet*
     A3-wait   Ricardo   Pedro
     "Ricardo waits for Pedro."

(75) **h-àro*   *Hikar*   *Pet*
     B3-wait   Ricardo   Pedro
     "Ricardo waits for Pedro."

On the other hand, the absolutive clitics and the absolutive prefixes appear only when the object and the verb are in the domain of the AbsP. In such syntactic contexts, the object is always higher than the subject in the person hierarchy and, coincidently, the object systematically precedes the transitive verb, thereby emerging the O(S)V, in object focus construction, and SOV-C word orders, in the embedded clauses. Notice that, in theses contexts, the absolutive prefix {h- ∞ i-} is obligatorily used to signal that the verb overtly agrees with the object. This, in turn, indicates that the object and the verb must come in a Spec-Head relation, whenever the absolutive person markers occurs in the AbsP domain. Compare the examples below:

OSV in object focus construction

(76) *upaw* *Márcia* $_i$ *Fábio* h_i*-exak-ø*
     all   Márcia   Fábio   B3-see-DISLOC
     "ALL MÁRCIA, Fábio saw."
     [i.e.: Fábio saw Márcia in every detail, and not partially.]

SOV clauses in embedded clause

(77) *w-esak*   *awa*   [*zawar-uhu* *ka'i* $_i$ h_i*-àro*   *mehe*]
     A3-see   man   jaguar big   monkey   B3-wait   COMP
     "The man saw that the big jaguar was waiting for the monkey."

In addition, the absolutive clitics are used when the object is realized as either a first or second person pronoun. In such clauses, the linear order can be either OVS or SOV. The latter word order basically occurs in embedded clause, while the former appears in the root clauses. Based on these empirical facts, I will contend that the pronominal clitics are thematic arguments that come from the numeration with uninterpretable accusative Case features, which must be valued by the head Abs° during the syntactic derivation. The following examples illustrate these two word order possibilities both in root clauses and in embedded clauses.

OVS in the inverse pattern

(78) *he.r-àro-ràm*   *awa*
     B1SG -REL-wait-FUT   man
     "The man will wait for me."

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<u>SOV in the embedded clauses</u>

(79)   *w-exak*   *awa*$_i$ [*kwarer*   *he.r-àro*   *mehe* *a'e*$_i$]
       A3-see   man   child   B1SG.REL-wait COMP he
       "He, the man, saw that the child was waiting for me."

The following subsections aim to demonstrate that the choice of either set of person markers is directly related to the kinds of syntactic operations that occur within the functional layer of the clauses. I will propose that the subject must move out of the vP phase in order for its structural Case to be valued in Spec-IP, whereas the object systematically moves out of the v-VP to the specifier position of AbsP for Case reasons. Additionally, I will postulate that the absolutive prefixes and the relational prefixes must appear on the verb as a result of the verb and object movement to the domain of AbsP. Let us then start the analysis on the Case assignment mechanism in the root VSO clauses.

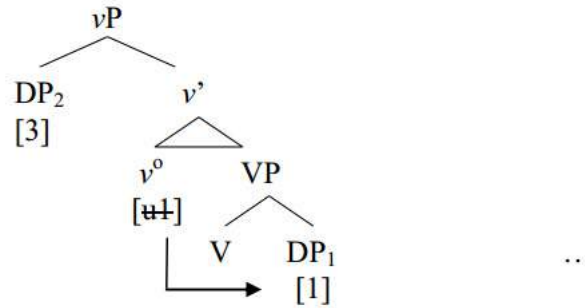## 4.1. The choice of the person markers of set A

In order for one to understand how the choice of Set A is made in the root clauses, this subsection aims to examine the syntactic derivation that regulates the occurrence of the person markers of Set A. As it was shown in Section 2, theses prefixes usually encode the φ-feature of the external arguments in transitive verb constructions. Then, following recent proposals on argument structure theory, [see, for example, Kratzer (1996), Hale and Keyser (2002), and Pylkkänen (2008)], according to which subjects are not base-generated as a specifier of VP, I will argue that the A subjects of eventive transitive verbs are uniformly introduced by the head v°, as follows:

(80)
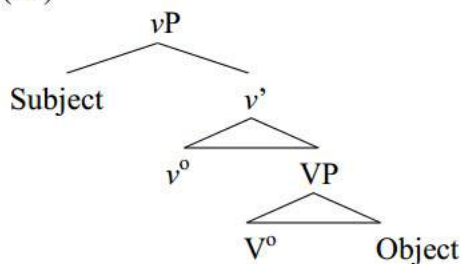
Languages like Tenetehára that exhibit patterns of agreement displacement usually give preference for the internal argument to control the φ-feature realization on the head of *v*P, as follows:

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(81)

vP
DP$_2$ [3] v'
        v° [u1]   VP
            V   DP$_1$ [1]
                        ...

However, external arguments will have preference over internal arguments, when the latter do not present the φ-feature necessary to trigger agreement with little v°. More to the point, I will argue that verb agreement with the subject will take place whenever the little v° carries a φ-feature that is higher than the φ-feature of the object in the person/referential hierarchy[15]. This system is shown in the tree diagram below:

(82)

vP
DP$_2$ v'
[2] v°   VP
([1])   [u2]
        [u1]   DP$_1$ ...
                    [3]
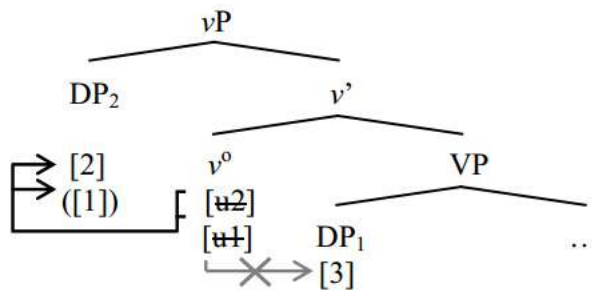
The agreement system outlined above is particularly instantiated in contexts where the external argument is higher than the internal argument in the person hierarchy, as the sentences below illustrate.

(83a) _a-exak_   _ka'i_   _ka'a_   _r-upi_   _ihe_
       1SG-see   monkey   forest   OBL-in   1SG
       "I saw a monkey in the forest."

(83b) _uru-exak_   _ka'i_   _ka'a_   _r-upi_   _ure_
       1EXCL-see   monkey   forest   OBL-in   1EXCL
       "We saw a monkey in the forest."

(83c) _xi-exak_   _ka'i_   _ka'a_   _r-upi_   _zane_
       1INCL-see   monkey   forest   OBL-in   1INCL
       "We saw a monkey in the forest."

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15   I refer the reader to Camargos (2017), where a detailed analysis on this topic is developed based on the concept of cyclic agreement.

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(83d) _ere-exak_   _ka'i_   _ka'a_   _r-upi_   _ne_
       2SG-see   monkey   forest   OBL-in   2SG
       "You saw a monkey in the forest."

(83e) _pe-exak_   _ka'i_   _ka'a_   _r-upi_   _pe_
       2PL-see   monkey   forest   OBL-in   2PL
       "You saw a monkey in the forest."

(83f) _w-exak_   _ka'i_   _ka'a_   _r-upi_   _a'e_   _(wà)_
       3-see   monkey   forest   OBL-in   3   PL
       "He saw a monkey in the forest."
       "They saw a monkey in the forest."

[Camargos, (2017:3)]

Thus, whenever the subject is higher than the object in the referencial/topic scale[16], it will obligatorily control the verb agreement. Therefore, in the sentence below, it is the higher referential argument that is cross-referenced by the free pronoun _a'e_ 'he' that occurs in sentence final position.

       VSO clauses
(84) w_i-_àro_   _Hikar_$_i$ _amo_   _a'e_$_i$
       A3-wait   Ricardo   somebody   3
       "Ricardo waits for somebody."

Additionally, I will assume that Tenetehára sets "yes" to Baker's Directionality of Agreement Parameter, as shown in the generalization below. Notice that "F" can be read as the little v^o that heads the _v_P projection.

(85)   The Directionality of Agreement Parameters
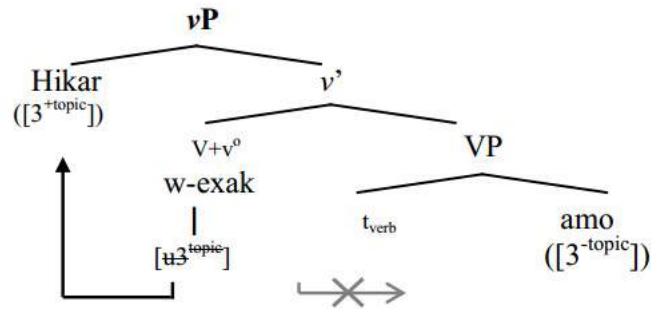   _F agrees with D/NP only if D/NP asymmetrically c-commands F._

(Baker 2008: 155)

Based on this theory, one may assume that the head v^o searches upward for the subject to agree with, not downward. Strong evidence in favor of this proposal comes from the agreement pattern in contexts where the subject outranks the object in the person/referential hierarchy. In line with this, I argue that, in the structure below, the person φ-feature on the head v^o is valued by the external subject, since it is higher than the object in the person/referential hierarchy. Note that the derivation below presupposes that the head V^o moves into the head v^o.

---

16   I follow Comrie's (1981) and Croft's (1988; 1990) assumptions that specificity, animacy and person-number features play a major role regarding the activation of agreement across languages. Within the typological literature (Givón 1976; Comrie 1981; Croft 1988; 1990; Bentley 1994), it has been assumed that the relevant semantic features that trigger subject or object agreement on the verb stem are the ones that occupy a higher position in the hierarchies stated below:

       (i) Relevant hierarchies for licensing object agreement

       (a) Definiteness Hierarchy: definite > specific > indefinite > non-specific
       (b) Animacy Hierarchy: human > animate > inanimate

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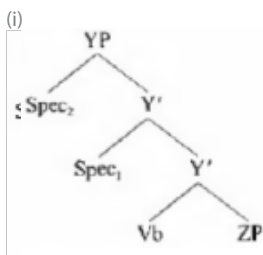
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(86)

In the next step of the derivation, the object must move first to the outer specifier of vP, before targeting a higher syntactic position beyond vP. The movement of the object to this position is necessary to avoid violation to the minimal link condition (hereafter MLC)[17]. Taking into account the restrictions imposed by the MLC, the structure (86) can be expanded if we assume that objects in Tenetehára undergo overt movement to an intermediate functional position above the v-VP projections. Following the essential of Massam (2000) and Coon's (2010) proposal, I will then argue that AbsP is the functional projection that hosts the shifted object in the VO and OV clauses. This analysis entails that objects must move out of the vP to Spec-AbsP due to Case reasons. Let us then assume that what motivates this movement is the fact that the object has an uninterpretable accusative feature that needs to be checked by the head Abs^o. It is important to call the reader's attention to the fact that, even though the object moves to Spec-AbsP in the direct system, the absolutive agreement cannot be triggered. As will be shown in more detail in the next subsection, the person markers of Set B can only be licensed under two conditions: (i) if the verb performs overt head movement from v^o to Abs^o and (ii) if the object is more referential than the subject in the person/referential hierarchy. Since the object sits in the same minimal domain as the subject and the verb, it can continue its movement up to the specifier of AbsP, a position at which accusative (=absolutive) Case of the object is checked. Thus, the reason why the object does not trigger the absolutive agreement in the direct system has to do with the fact that the verb does not move to Abs^o. Furthermore, one may posit that, since the object has its structural Case valued by Abs^o, it does not count as a barrier, since it does not exhibit any formal feature that can be probed by the head I^o. For this reason, the subject can be raised to Spec-IP, thereby

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17   Chomsky (1995:356-357) states this condition as follows:

'We now define "close" for Attract/Move in the obvious way: if β c-commands α and τ is the target of raising, then β is closer to K than α unless β is in the same minimal domain as (a) τ or (b) α.'

Based on the abstract structure in (i) below, Chomsky (1995:357) assumes that β (=Spec$_2$) does not block movement of α (=ZP) to t (Spec$_2$), insofar as β and τ are in the minimal domain of the head K (=Vb). He then claims that 'overt object raising to Spec$_2$ does not prevent subject raising from Spec$_1$, because Spec$_2$ and Spec$_1$ are equidistant from any higher target; both are in the minimal domain of v.'

(i)

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crossing the object without violating MLC. I will also propose that the activation of the Set A person markers does not contribute to the nominative Case assignment, insofar as the φ-feature realization occurs in the domain of the vP. In the realm of the minimalist program, the C-IP domain is the locus of nominative Case assignment, not the vVP region. This analysis then presupposes that the subject and the object must evacuate the *v*P for receiving Case, whereas the verb remains inside the predicate. It also entails that the subject prefixes do not contribute to the nominative Case assignment. This step of the derivation is depicted in the structure below:

(87)
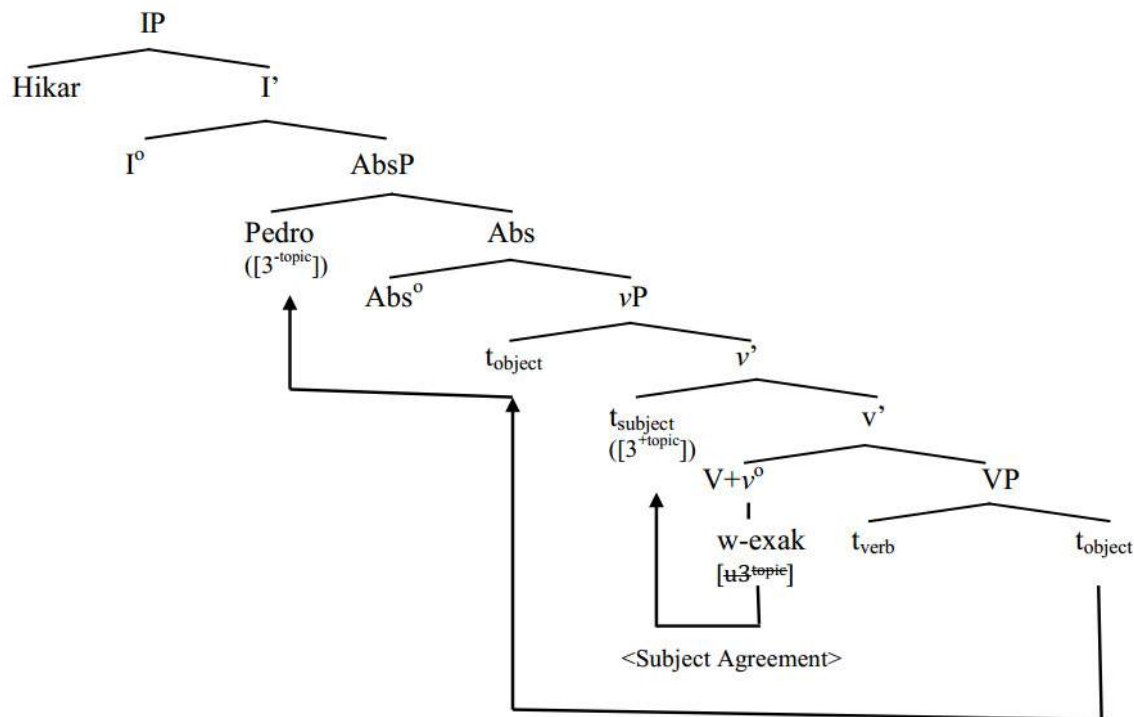
Based on the proposal above, one may argue that Tenetehára exhibits a grammatical constraint, regarding the way that the overt morphological agreement between the verb and the object occurs. As will be demonstrated in the next subsection, the verb performs head-movement up to Abs° only if it is inflected either by the relational prefix or by the absolutive prefix. This restriction can be stated as follows:

(88) *Absolutive agreement is possible iff the object and the verb are in a Spec-Head relation within the domain of the AbsP projection. In such cases, the verb may exhibit either the relational prefix or the absolutive prefix.*

Evidence that subjects and objects really move out of the *v*P to the Infl domain comes from the syntactic distribution of adverbs. In general, these items tend to occur either after the object or before the verb, thereby emerging two possible linear word orders: (i) [VSO [<u>ADV</u>]] and (ii) [<u>ADV</u> [VSO]]. Compare the examples below.

(89a)
tuweharupi	*u-zapo*	*Sérgio*	*tyràm*	*a'e*	*pa*
always	3-make	Sérgio	manioc	3	AP

"Sérgio always makes manioc."

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(89b)　*uzapo*　　　*Sérgio*　　　*tyràm*　　　*tuweharupi*　　*a'e*　　*pa*
　　　　3-make　　　Sérgio　　　manioc　　　always　　　3　　AP
　　　　"Sérgio always makes manioc."

(89c)　?? uzapo <u>tuweharupi</u> Sérgio tyràm a'e pa

(89d)　?? uzapo Sérgio <u>tuweharupi</u>　tyràm a'e pa

(90a)　*karu mehe*　　*u-'u*　*Fábio*　*màg*　　　*a'e*　　　　*ri'i*
　　　　yesterday　　3-eat　Fábio　mango　　　he　　　　MPAST
　　　　"Fábio ate mango yesterday."

(90b)　*u'u*　　*Fábio*　*màg*　　　*karu mehe*　　*a'e*　　　*ri'i*
　　　　3-eat　Fábio　mango　　　yesterday　　he　　　MPAST
　　　　"Fábio ate mango yesterday."

(90c)　?? u'u Fábio <u>karu mehe</u> màg a'e ri'i

(90d)　?? u'u <u>karu mehe</u> Fábio màg a'e ri'i

Taking into account the syntactic distribution of the adverbs shown above, I will then posit that they are generated at the vP level. Thus, in order to derive the occurrence of the verb in sentence initial position, let us postulate that the phase head C° has an uninterpretable edge feature, a situation that forces the internal merge of the remnant *v*P in Spec-CP. Assuming the vP movement approach, I contend that sentence (91a) has the abstract structure depicted in (91b).

(91a)　*w-àro*　　　*Hikar*　　*Pet*
　　　　3-wait　　　Ricardo　　Pedro
　　　　"Ricardo waits for Pedro."

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(91b)

CP
- vP
  - t_object
  - v'
    - t_subject
    - v'
      - V°+v°
      - VP
        - t_verb t_object
- C'
  - C°
  - IP
    - Subject
    - I'
      - I°
      - AbsP
        - Object
        - Abs'
          - Abs°
          - t_vP
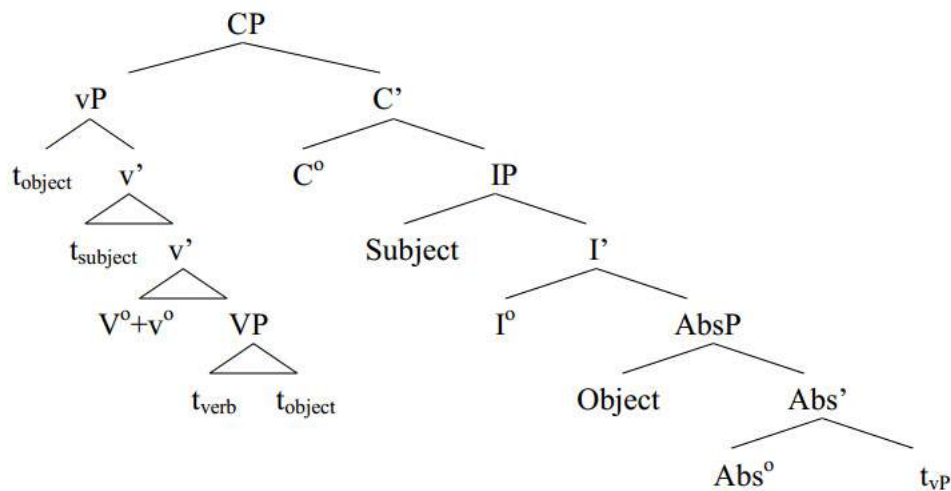
I will then propose that, in the [VSO Adv] clauses, the adverb is left behind, at the point in the derivation in which the vP moves to Spec-CP, whereas the adverb together with the vP is raised to Spec-CP in the [Adv VSO] sentences. Both of these syntactic derivations are shown in the representations below:

(92) [$_{CP}$ [$_{vP}$ Adv [[$_{vP}$ ...V+v...] [$_{C}$ [$_{Infl}$ S [$_{AbsP}$ O [.... t$_{vP}$ ......]]]]]]]

(93) [$_{CP}$ [$_{vP}$ ... V+v...] [$_{C}$ [$_{Infl}$ S ...[$_{AbsP}$ O .... [$_{vP}$ Adv [... t$_{vP}$ ......]]]]]]]

One piece of evidence in favor of the vP remnant proposed in the derivations above comes from the distribution of a set of second-position particles such as *zekaipo, zekwehe, and kakwez*. In general, these particles appear between the verb and the subject. In Tenetehára, speakers usually distinguish between attested and unattested past. For this reason, *zekwehe* and *zekaipo* are inferred as the unattested distant past, while *kakwez* indicates that a past event is attested by the speaker. Compare the examples below:

unattested distant past

(94) *w-exak* *ze-kwehe* *zawar-uhu* *tapixi memyr* *a'e* *pe* *no*
A3-see EVID-UDPAST jaguar-big rabbit son there at also
"(They say that) the big jaguar also saw the rabbit's son there."

(95) *u$_i$-m-ur* *ze-kaipo* *i$_j$-hy$_i$* *i$_i$-zupe*
A3$_i$-CAUS-come EVID-UDPAST his$_j$-mother$_i$ him$_j$-to
"His mother apparently gave (it) to him."

attested distant past

(96) *a-exak* *kakwez* *ka'i* *ihe*
A1SG-see DPAST.ATTESTED monkey I
"I saw the monkey."

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However, when an XP occurs in immediate initial position or is focalized to the left, the verb tends to appear after the temporal particles. In such contexts, the verb usually follows the subject, resulting in the [XP [**zekwehe** SVO] order. Hence, when it is the object that is focalized, the verb cannot occur in the initial position, so that the word order changes from VSO to OSV, as follows:

(97) *u$_i$-'u*   *tenetehára$_i$*   *pira*
      A3-eat   tenetehára   fish
      "The Tenetehára people ate (some) fish (a specific one)."

(98) *upaw pira$_i$ tenetehára   i$_i$-'u-n*
      all   fish   tenetehára   B3-eat-DESLOC
      "The Tenetehára people ate all the fish."
      [i.e.: Everything was eaten. There are no leftovers]

It is important to point out that, if the verb and the object co-occur in the initial position, the result is an ungrammatical sentence, as follows:

(99) **upaw pira$_i$*   *u$_i$-'u-n*   *tenetehára*
      all   fish   3-eat-DESLOC   tenetehára
      "The Tenetehára people ate all the fish."

(100) **upaw pira$_i$*   *i$_i$-'u-n*   *tenetehára*
      all   fish   3-eat-DESLOC   tenetehára
      "The Tenetehára people ate all the fish."
      [i.e.: Everything was eaten. There are no leftovers]

Additionally, if we add one of the temporal particles in the OSV sentence above, they must occur immediately after the focalized object, as follows:
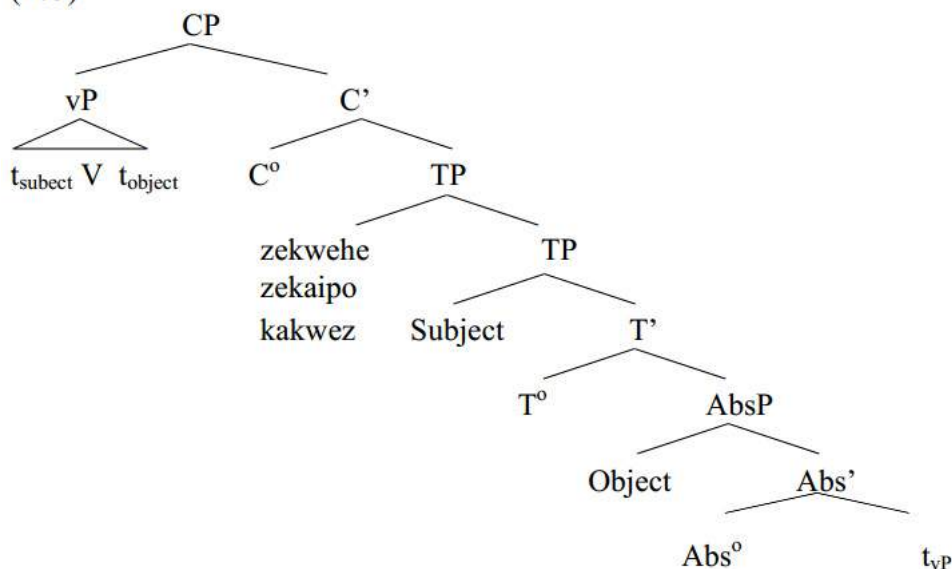
(101) *upaw pira$_i$ ze-kwehe   tenetehára   i$_i$-'u-n*
      all   fish   EVID-UDPAST   tenetehára   B3-eat-DESLOC
      "(They say that) the Tenetehára people ate all the fish a long time ago."
      [i.e.: Everything was eaten. There are no leftovers]

Based on the distribution of the temporal particles above, I will assume hereafter that the temporal particles are sentential adverbials, which are merged in adjunction to the TP projection, as follows.

(102) $[_{CP} \ldots [_{TP}$ zekwehe/zekaipo $[_{TP} \ldots [_{AbsP} \ldots \ldots [_{v\text{-}VP} \ldots]]]]$

For this reason, these adverbs will serve as a diagnostic for setting the limit between the CP and TP layer in the matrix sentences. Notice that, according to this proposal, constituents that occur above the adverbials *zekwehe/zekaipo/kakwez* will be located in the CP area, whereas XPs located in a low position are placed in the vP domain. Based on these assumptions, I contend that the V(zekwehe/zekaipo)SO clauses are derived by remnant movement of the VP to Spec-CP, as shown by the derivation proposed below:

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(103)

CP
vP   C'
t_subject V t_object   C°   TP
zekwehe
zekaipo   TP
kakwez   Subject   T'
T°   AbsP
Object   Abs'
Abs°   t_vP

Another piece of evidence comes from the fact that the VSO order is never possible when the sentence is interrogative. In such contexts, the only possible word order is the one in which the wh-pronoun is positioned above the subject, giving rise to the OSV order. Nonetheless, if the wh-pronoun and the verb co-occur, the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

Compare the data below:

(104) *ma'e te*   *awa*   *u-zuka?*
       what C°   man   A3-kill
       "What did the man kill?"

(105) **ma'e te*   *u-zuka*   *awa?*
       what C°   A3-kill   man
       "What did the man kill?"

Thus, the ungrammaticality of sentence (105) can be accounted for if one assumes that the fronted XP and the fronted vP are competing for the same specifier position. Pursuing this line of reasoning, the syntactic derivation of the sentence (104) must proceed as follows: when the subject is merged in the vP, it triggers the subject agreement on the little *v*, before it is moved to Spec-IP to receive the nominative Case; next, the wh-object moves first to the Spec-AbsP for Case reasons, then is raised to Spec-CP in order to check the edge feature of the head C. At the final stage of the derivation, the verb remains in the vP domain, since it cannot be moved to Spec-CP, as this position is occupied by the shifted object, as the derivation bellow demonstrates.

(106)   [CP ma'e te [C [IP awa [I [AbsP tobject [Abs [vP tsubject uzuka [v [VP tverb tobject]]]]]]]]

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Hence, the constraint one can propose is that the VP-remnant movement never occurs if there is a XP occupying a Spec position of CP. In other words, the verb precedes the subject only if nothing else is moved to the CP domain. Under this assumption, a way to give a more theoretical account of this restriction is to postulate that the VSO clauses necessarily involve movement of the v-VP to some position above TP, while the subject and the object are left behind. This proposal indicates that verbs do not undergo head movement to the functional layer of the sentences due to the fact that they pattern with maximal projections (DP and PPs) in their ability to undergo phrasal movement to Spec-CP.

In conclusion, the appearance of the person markers of Set A in the VSO clauses indicate that the lexical verb must first agree with the subject within the vP, before the predicate fronts to Spec-CP. Additionally, one may conclude that what blocks the complex (v+V) to move to the head Abs° in the root VSO clauses is the fact that the lexical verb remains within the vP that is raised to Spec-CP. The reader might be wondering why the object shift to Spec-vP does not trigger the person markers of Set B. The purpose of the next sections is to address this issue in detail.

4.2. The choice of the Set B and the assignment of the accusative case

As was demonstrated in section 2, the person markers of Set B systematically encode the object both in the root and embedded clauses. As such, when the object is more prominent than the subject, it must control the agreement on the verb stem, as follows:

(107)
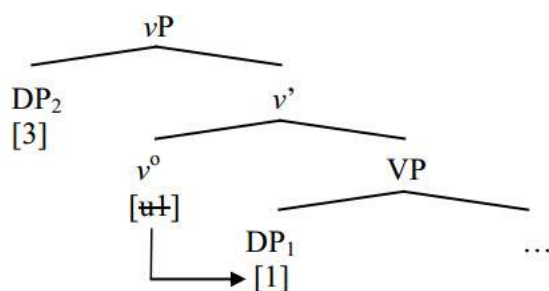
I will then posit that the derivation of the object agreement in the inverse system follows the generalization in (88), repeated here as (108):

(108) *Absolutive agreement is possible iff the object and the verb are in a Spec-Head relation within the domain of the AbsP projection. In such cases, the verb may exhibit either the relational prefix or the absolutive prefix.*

Under the generalization above, the DP$_1$ needs to be overtly raised to Spec-AbsP, followed by the verb movement to the head Abs°. This theory requires that, in the inverse system, the morphological agreement between the verb and the object occur locally in a SpecHead configuration. In these contexts, the verb must be inflected either by the relational morphemes or by the absolutive prefixes; either option will be context-dependent. Additionally, I will assume that this agreement directly contributes

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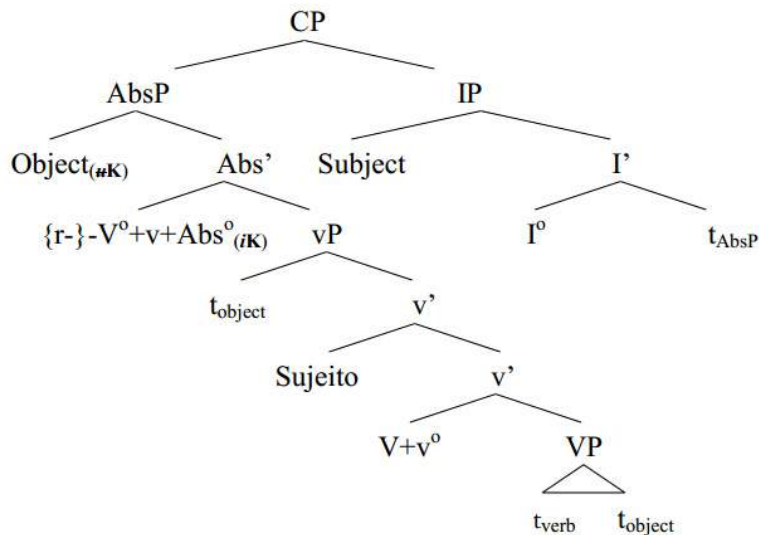
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to the accusative Case assignment mechanism to the object, as opposed to what happens in the direct context, in which the person markers of Set A are not related to the nominative Case assignment. Recall that the person markers of Set A occur systematically lower in the v-VP domain, and not in the C-TP domain. Based on these assumptions, the derivation of the inverse system, indicated in the structure above, must proceed as follows: first, the internal argument (=DP$_1$) must obligatorily be raised from within the lexical projection VP to the outer specifier position of the vP and then to the specifier position of Abs°. Additionally, the object shift must be followed by the verb movement first to v°, and then to Abs°. Therefore, in compliance with the generalization in (108), the absolutive agreement must be obligatory whenever the verb moves to the head of AbsP, as shown in the syntactic representation below.

(109)
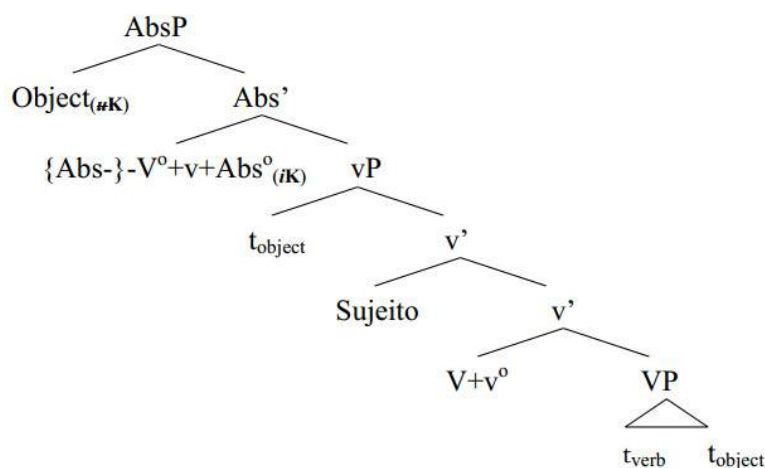
   The derivation concludes with the subject raising to Spec-IP for checking nominative Case, followed by the predicate fronting to Spec-CP. No locality violation emerges when the subject skips the object owing to the fact that the object checks accusative Case in Spec-AbsP and, as a consequence, it has no remaining formal feature that can be probed by the head I°. Following Duarte (2012), I will argue that the head C° has an uninterpretable [PRED] feature that must be checked by raising the XP that contains the verb. As the verb sits in the head of AbsP, this projection is then moved to Spec-CP, as follows.

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(110)

```
                              CP
                   ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                 AbsP                    IP
            ┌─────┴─────┐         ┌───────┴───────┐
      Object(#K)      Abs'     Subject           I'
                   ┌────┴────┐              ┌─────┴──────┐
          {r-}-V°+v+Abs°(iK)  vP           I°          t_AbsP
                          ┌────┴────┐
                      t_object      v'
                              ┌─────┴─────┐
                          Sujeito         v'
                                    ┌──────┴──────┐
                                 V+v°            VP
                                              ◁
                                       t_verb   t_object
```

An important piece of evidence in favor of this analysis comes from contexts in which the object is systematically realized by means of the absolutive clitics. Note that in these constructions the verb obligatory has to carry the relational prefix {r-}, as follows:

Inverse context

(111a) *he=r-exak*   *ka'a*   *r-upi*   *a'e*
     1SG-REL-see   forest   OBL-in   3
     "He/she saw me in the forest."

(111b) *he=r-exak*   *ka'a*   *r-upi*   *ne*
     1SG-REL-see   forest   OBL-in   2SG
     "You saw me in the forest."

(111c) *ne=r-exak*   *ka'a*   *r-upi*   *a'e*
     2SG-REL-see   forest   OBL-in   3
     "He/she saw you in the forest."

[Camargos, (2017:6)]

The appearance of the relational prefix {r-} may be interpreted as being directly connected to the fact that objects, when realized by means of the pronominal clitics, must be phonological adjacent to the verb within the AbsP domain. Then, one way to give a more theoretical status to the appearance of the relational prefix {r-} in the inverse system is to posit that its occurrence reflects the morphological spell-out of the abstract Case assignment mechanism, established whenever the O argument moves to the Spec-AbsP. In line with this analysis, I will claim that the absolutive clitics always enter the derivation with an uninterpretable accusative Case feature to be valued by the head Abs°. The most important aspect of this theory is that the relational prefix {r-} must obligatorily appear on the verb stem to signal that the pronominal object and the verb are locally adjacent to each other. In other words, this prefix is triggered whenever there is overt phrasal movement of the pronominal object to

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Spec-AbsP, followed by the head movement of the lexical verb to Absº, so that the Case assignment mechanism occurs with the object and the lexical verb sitting in a Spec-Head relation. Moreover, I will assume that this syntactic operation is connected with the way that the structural accusative Case assignment takes place in the AbsP domain. Notice that, in such contexts, the occurrence of the person markers of Set A on the verb stem is systematically blocked. Taking into account this analysis, I will thus contend that the occurrence of the relational prefix {r-} on the verbal stem together with the syntactic distribution of person markers of Set B can be used as a diagnostic to confirm the following proposals:

(112)

(a) that transitive objects do raise to Spec-AbsP to receive accusative Case, followed by the verb movement up to the head of AbsP;

(c) that absolutive agreement is possible if the object and the verb are in a Spec-Head configuration within the domain of the AbsP projection.
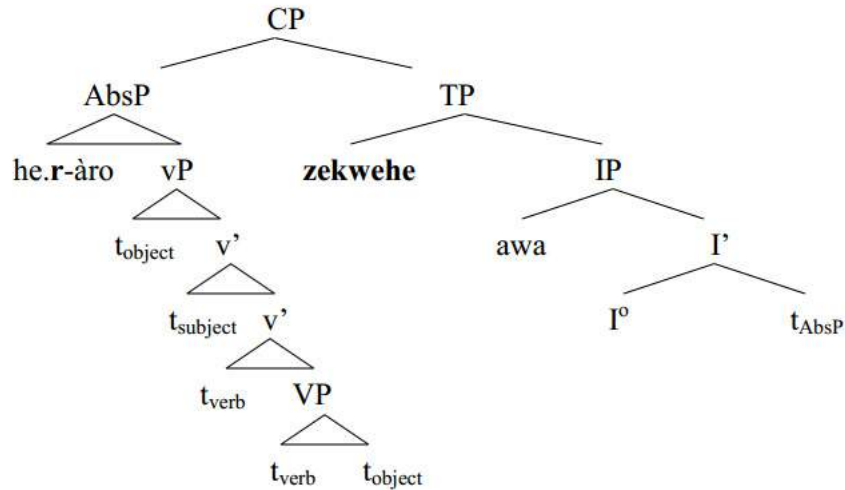
A second piece of evidence in favor of this analysis stems from the fact that nothing can intervene between the pronominal object and the verb. This prediction is borne out by the ungrammaticality of the sentence below:

(113) *he   awa   r-aro-ràm
        B1SG   man   REL-wait-FUT
        "The man will wait for me."

In order to account for the derivation of the word order in [O$_{clitic}$VS] clauses, I will propose that it is the whole predicate that is raised to Spec-CP, not only the VP. Notice that the subject must be raised to Spec-IP for receiving nominative Case before the AbsP/vP complex is moved to Spec-CP. Evidence that this analysis is really correct has to do with the fact that the evidential particles may occur after the [OV] complex, as the derivation depicted below illustrates:

(114a) he.r-àro   ze-kwehe   awa
         B1SG.REL-wait   EVID-UDPAST   man
         "(They said that) the man waited for me a long time ago."

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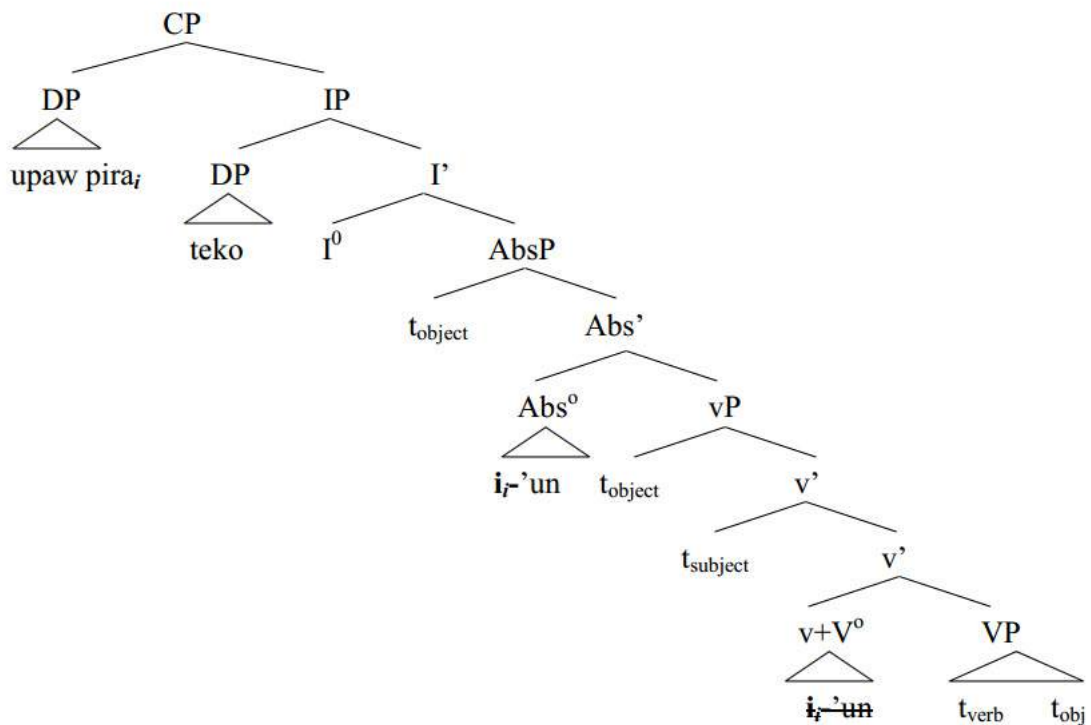
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(114b)

This type of absolutive agreement is particularly instantiated in the object focus construction. In such constructions, the derivation proceeds with the object moving from the *v*P domain to Spec-AbsP and then to Spec-CP for focalization reasons. The subject is then raised to Spec-IP in order to receive the nominative Case. Based on these assumptions, the derivation of sentence (115a) occurs as shown in (115b):

(115a) *upaw   pira*$_i$ *teko* i_i-*'u-n*
      all   fish   people   B3-eat- DISLOC
      "All the fish, the people ate (some)."

(115b)

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Notice that, since Spec-CP is already filled by the object, the verb cannot be dislocated to that position. This is confirmed by the fact that, if one tries to place the verb in initial syntactic position, the result is an ungrammatical sentence, as follows:

(116) *$i'u$-n   *Fábio$_i$ upaw pira*   *a'e$_i$* *ra'a*
   B3-eat-DESLOC Fábio all fish   he PART
   "The whole fish, he, Fábio ate."

The occurrence of the absolutive prefixes above confirms that the generalization stated in (108) is correct. In sum, the activation of the absolutive prefix {i-} in the object focus construction above might be viewed as a reflex of the syntactic agreement that takes place between the verb and the object within the AbsP domain. This assumption, then, serves as further empirical evidence in favor of the following proposals:

(117)

  (a) the absolutive prefix of Set B {h- ~ i-} is triggered as a morphological reflex of the agreement between the object and the verb in object focus construction and in the embedded clauses;

  (b) predicate fronting is banned in contexts where the word order is OSV due to the MLC.

A final piece of evidence in favor of this theory comes from the agreement pattern in the embedded clauses. In such contexts, the object always controls the agreement and the linear word order is systematically SOV-C, as follows:

(118) *w-esak*   *awa* [*zawar-uhu ka'i$_i$*   *h$_i$-àro*   *mehe*]
   A3-see   man jaguar big monkey B3-wait   COMP
   "The man saw that the big jaguar was waiting for the monkey."

(119) *Joao* *i-ma'enukwaw awa* *r-ehe*
   Joao B3-think   man REL-to

   [*Quesler* *tapi'ir$_i$* *h$_i$-ekar*   *mehe iko* *ka'a pe*]
   Quesler tapir   B3-hunt COMP be forest in
   "John thinks of the man while Quesler is hunting for tapir in the forest."

Therefore, the reader might observe that the embedded clauses above present the same agreement pattern as the one examined in the inverse system and in the object focus construction, since the verb receives the absolutive prefix {h-} to encode the φ-features of the object. Owing to this agreement pattern, my proposal is that the embedded sentences must have the same derivation steps as the one presented for deriving the object focus construction outlined above. However, the difference resides in the extent of the predicate fronting. Then, the syntactic derivation of the embedded sentence in (118) involves the predicate fronting of the IP to SpecCP in order to value the [uPRED] feature of

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the head Cº. In conclusion, what moves to Spec-CP is not only the vP, but the whole IP-AbsP-vP projection, as the derivation proposed below indicates.

(120)
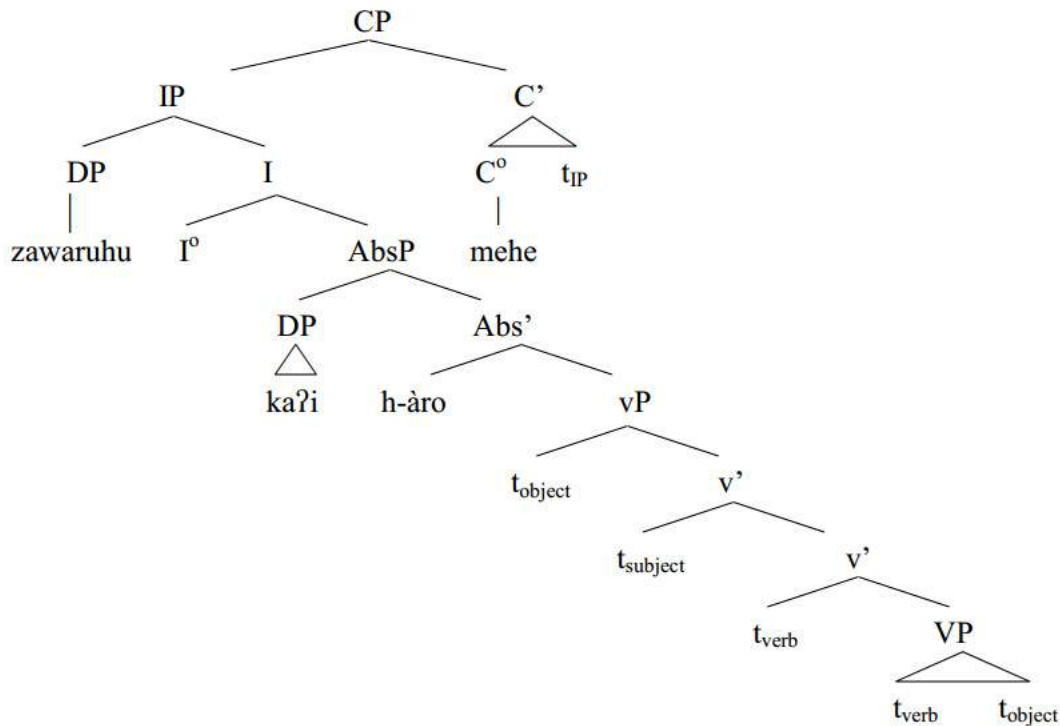
Based on the analysis developed thus far, I conclude that the head Iº uniformly assigns the nominative Case to the A subject. As to the objects, my proposal is that the head Absº uniformly assigns accusative Case to them, even though the absolutive agreement is triggered only when the verb is raised to the head Absº. In this sense, the complementary distribution of person markers of Sets A and B is directly related the extent of verb movement. The theory developed thus far can be summarized as follows:

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(121) Correlation between word order, agreement and Case assignment

Word Order	VSO	OSV	OVS	SOV
Case assigned	NOM/ACC	NOM/ACC	NOM/ACC	NOM/ACC
Prefixes of Set A	√	-	-	-
Absolutive prefix	-	√	-	√
Pronominal clitics	-	-	√	√
Relational prefix	-	-	√	√
Predicate movement	√	-	√	√

Notice that the distribution of Set B in the table above seems to correlate with the following generalization: the absolutive agreement systematically appears when the object precedes the verb. This is not pure coincidence, but is directly linked to the way the object receives accusative Case from the verb in the AbsP domain.

Couched in the Case and agreement theory developed in this section, the next section aims to discuss the source of the active/stative distinction in order to understand how the structural Case of the A, S_a, S_o arguments is checked in the intransitive predicates.

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5. THE STATIVE/ACTIVE DISTINCTION AND THE CASE ASSIGNMENT TO S_A AND S_O SUBJECTS

Based on the proposal outlined in the previous sections, we are now in a position to derive the stative/active distinction and the Split-S system that is pervasive in the agreement and Case pattern of the intransitive clauses. I will then assume that the structural Case of the intransitive subjects (=the S_a and S_o arguments) is split in the sense that it can be either the nominative or the accusative. Either option will of course be context-sensitive. Based on this, I will propose that the split-S system is the result of the fact that the S_a argument receives nominative Case within the C/TP phase in the root eventive intransitive predicates, whereas the S_o subjects get accusative Case within the AbsP domain. This accusative Case assignment mechanism can also be extended to A, S_a and S_o subjects in the stative predicates. Let us then start the analysis with the derivation of the active system in the eventive intransitive predicates.

5.1. The derivation of the active system in the eventive intransitive predicates

My proposal is that the activation of the active system in the root eventive intransitive clauses follows the same pattern as the one exhibited by the VSO clauses in the sense that the S_a subjects as well as the A subjects systematically receive nominative Case from the head I^o. This proposal derives from the fact that the head Abs^o cannot assign accusative Case to A and S_a arguments in the root eventive predicates. Owing to this, one must admit that the derivation of these clauses implies that there is a C-IP phase level in that the head I^o must be present in the structure in order to assign the nominative Case to the S_a subjects, as depicted by the structure below.

(122) Nominative Case assignment to S_a subjects in the root eventive intransitive clauses:
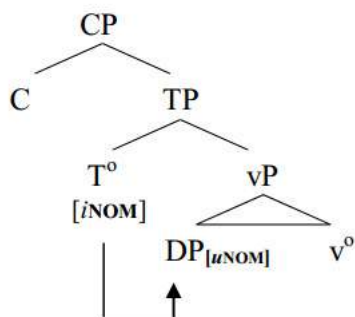
The accuracy of this analysis is evidenced by the fact that S_a subjects cannot be encoded by the person markers of set B. This constraint explains why the sentence in (b) below is ungrammatical:

(123a) *a-ker*   *kwej*
     A1$_{SG}$-sleep   IPASS
     "(I) have already slept."

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(123b) *he-ø-ker   *kwej*
      B1$_{SG}$-sleep   IPASS
      "(I) have already slept."

A second piece of evidence comes from the possibility of placing the verb in the initial position, thereby emerging the VS order in the intransitive constructions, as is exemplified below:

(124) *o-ho*   *ze-kewhe*   *Pedro ko*   *r-upi*
      A3-go   EVID-UDPAST   Peter farm   REL-to
      "(They say that) Peter went to the farm a long time ago."

Given that the temporal adverb indicates the limit between the CP and IP projection, a natural conclusion is to assume that the derivation of the sentence above involves only the vP movement to Spec-CP. In this sense, the reader might wonder why it is the vP that is raising to CP, and not, for example, the IP phrase. An answer to this question might be found if we examine the way the syntactic derivation occurs. Thus, one may assume that the subject first establishes an agreement relation with the verb in Spec-vP and then is raised to Spec-IP for checking its nominative Case. Next, the vP projection moves to the Spec-CP in order to check the [uPRED] feature of C. The derivation of the sentence (124) is shown below:
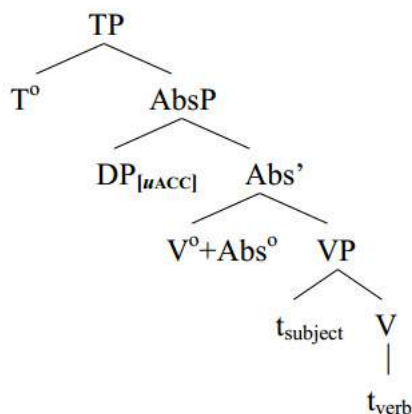
(125)
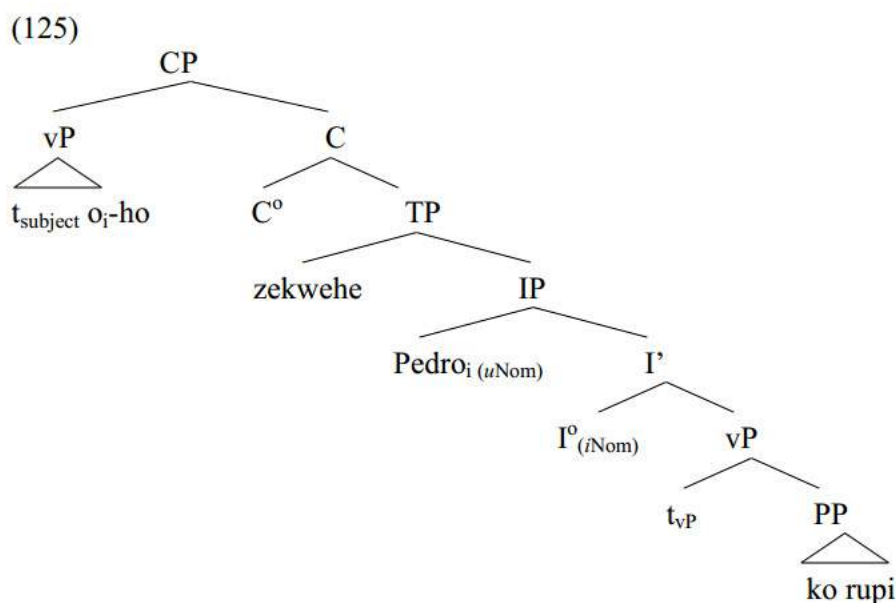
Hence the fact that the subject moves to Spec-IP lends further support to the proposal that the S$_a$ and A subjects uniformly pick up the nominative Case from I°. Notice that the presence of the subject prefixes on the verb stem is obligatory in such contexts, which can be taken as prima facie evidence that there is indeed a close relationship between the activation of the person markers of Set A and the active system (=the direct system). This also indicates that this agreement does not contribute to the nominative Case assignment, since Set A of person markers occurs lower in the structure, i.e., in the vP domain. In sum, the proposal outlined above demonstrates that the emergence of the active

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system is not directly connected to the way the nominative Case assignment mechanism occurs in the syntactic derivation of the root eventive predicates. As a consequence, the S_a subjects receive the nominative Case in the C/TP domain. Therefore, one can conclude that A and S_a subjects align together in the sense that their structural Cases have the same source during the syntactic derivation.
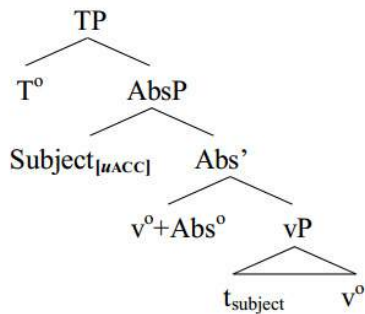
5.2. The derivation of the stative system

The emergence of the stative system becomes clear due to the fact that only the person markers of Set B are used to encode the A, S_a and S_o arguments. This pattern clearly contrasts to the active system. Based on the theoretical analysis developed thus far, a way to give a more principled approach to this pattern is then to posit that the functional projection AbsP is always able to assign accusative Case to A, S_a and S_o subjects in the stative predicates. This analysis then entails that the head I^o is not able to assign Case to these arguments. Applying the essentials of Chomsky's (2001, 2008) approach, let us then admit that the head Abs^o enters into the derivation with an edge feature and a structural Case to value. However, the exact derivation of the stative predicate will depend on whether it is headed either by an unaccusative, an unergative or a transitive verb. In line with this view, the derivation of a stative unaccusative predicate presupposes that the S_o subject is merged in the VP and then is moved to Spec-AbsP to receive the accusative Case. In regard to the stative unergative and transitive predicates, my proposal is that the S_a and A subjects are merged in the Specifier of the vP and then are moved to Spec-AbsP. In this sense, the proposal I will advocate, henceforth, is that the Case assignment mechanism is essentially the same for the S_o, S_a and A arguments in the stative predicates, since they receive the structural accusative Case from the head Abs^o. The abstract syntactic derivations depicted below demonstrate the details of the syntactic derivation of the unaccusative, unergative and transitive verbs in the stative predicates.

(126) Accusative Case assignment to S_o in the stative unaccusative predicates

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(127) Accusative Case assignment to S$_a$ subject in the stative unergative predicates ites

(128) Accusative Case assignment to A subjects in the stative transitive predicates
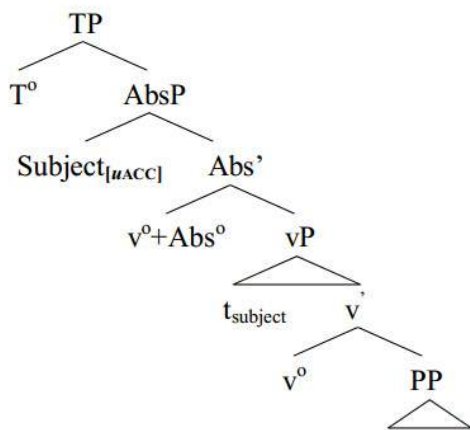
The derivations proposed above entail that the head Abs° uniformly checks accusative Case of the S$_o$, S$_a$ and A subjects, so that it blocks the head T° to assign nominative Case to these arguments. Thus, T cannot access the A, S$_a$ and S$_o$ arguments that sit in the Specifier of AbsP, since the abstract Case of these arguments have already been checked. Hence, the result is that the nominative Case will not be assigned to these arguments. This analysis is reinforced by the fact that the person markers of set A (=subject prefixes) cannot occur on the stative predicates, as the ungrammaticality of the sentences (b) below indicate:

(129a) *ne.r[18]-ahy*

       B2SG-REL-be.in.pain

       "You are in pain."

---

18   It is important to point out that the prefix {r-} can also appear in inalienably possessed nouns and in postpositions. In such contexts, the prefix {r-} signals that the possessor and the complement of the postposition are immediately adjacent to the head of the phrases, as follows:

(i)   *karaiw*   *r-àpyz*
           non-Indian   GEN-house
           "The non-Indian's house."

(ii)   *kwarahy*   *r-upi*
           sun   OBLIQ-in
           "In the sun."

The appearance of this prefix on nouns and on postpositions can also be interpreted as the reflex of the abstract Case assignment. In such configurations, the abstract Cases will correspond to the labels genitive and oblique, assigned by a functional projection FP, which is located in the functional domain of the NP and the PP. Let us then assume that FP corresponds to an AgrP projection, which is responsible for assigning the genitive or oblique Case, respectively, as follows:

(iii)   [$_{AgrP}$ · · · [$_{Agr}$ · · · [$_{PP/NP}$ · · .]]]
       Because of limitations of time and space, I will leave details of this analysis open for a future investigation.

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(129b) *re-ahy
A2SG-be.in.pain
"You are in pain."

(130a) awa   i-hyz-wer   'y   pe
man   B1SG-REL-run-DESID   water   to
"The man wants to run to the river."

(130b) *awa   u-hyz-wer   'y   pe
man   B1SG-REL-run-DESID   water   to
"The man wants to run to the river."

(131a) Joao   i-ma'enukwaw   awa   r-ehe
John   B3-think   man   REL-to
"John thinks of the man."

(131b) *Joao   u-ma'enukwaw   awa   r-ehe
John   B3-think   man   REL-to
"John thinks of the man."

Therefore, the structural analysis outlined thus far provides us with a principle way of accounting
for the active/stative agreement. In line with this, the Tenetehára active/stative system is directly
connected to the point in the derivation where the two sets of person markers are activated: Set A
occurs in the vP domain, whereas Set B occurs in the AbsP domain.

The proposal above can also be extended to derive the (ergative)-absolutive pattern that occurs in
the embedded clauses. Recall that in these clauses the use of the person markers of Set B is extended
from only S_o subjects in matrix/independent eventive predicates to all intransitive subjects and the
object in the embedded clauses. For this reason, my proposal is that the head Abs° must be present
in the functional domain of these clauses, so that it can assign accusative Case to the O, S_a and S_o
arguments. Clear evidence in favor of this is that these arguments cannot be encoded by means of the
person markers of Set B, as the ungrammaticality of the sentences below indicates.

(132a) ne-ø-apyk   mehe
B2SG-REL-sit down   COMP
"(…) when you sit down."

(132b) *re-apyk   mehe
A2SG-sit down   COMP
"(…) when you sit down."

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(133a) *he.r-upyhyz*   *mehe*
          B1SG.REL-sleepy   COMP
          "When I am sleepy (…)."

(133b) **a-upyhyz*   *mehe*
          A1SG-sleepy   COMP
          "When I am sleepy (…)."

5.3. Summary of the section

In sum, the assignment of either the accusative or the nominative Case to the A, S_a and S_o subjects will vary depending on which head is active in each clause. If it is the head I^o, then the nominative Case is assigned, whereas if it is the head Abs^o, then the accusative Case is assigned. The table below summarizes the close correlation between agreement and Case in the different clausal types discussed in this section:

(134) CORRELATION BETWEEN AGREEMENT AND CASE ASSIGNMENT IN INTRANSITIVE CLAUSES

	S_a arguments in eventive predicates	S_o, S_a and A subjects in Stative predicates	S_a and S_o subjects in embedded clauses
Case assigned	NOM	ACC	ACC
Subject prefix	√	-	-
Absolutive prefix and pronominal clitics	-	√	√
Relational prefix	-	√	√
Head Assigner	I^o	Abs^o	Abs^o

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the empirical evidence presented thus far, I propose that the syntactic parameter that distinguishes Tenetehára from accusative and ergative languages has to do with the fact that the heads I^o and Abs^o can be potential Case assigners to A, S_a and S_o arguments. This in turn indicates that that the structural Case of the intransitive subjects is not uniformly assigned. In this sense, Tenetehára

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allows an internal parametric variation not predicted by Laka's (1993, 2000) and Bobalijk's (1993) system in the sense that the split-S system of Tenetehára implies a hybrid setting of the OCP. This then implies that the structural Case of the intransitive subject can be, in principle, either the nominative or the accusative, as follows:

(135)

(a) $V_{transitive}$ ($C1_{nom}$, $C2_{abs}$)
(b) $V_{intransitive}$ ($C1_{nom}$)
(c) $V_{intransitive}$ ($C1_{abs}$)

Recall that such a Case pattern does not emerge in nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive languages. In sharp contrast to these Case systems, my claim is that both settings of the OCP are triggered in Tenetehára. This then leads to the fact that A and S_a subjects receive either nominative or accusative. Another conclusion is that Burzio's Generalization does not hold in Tenetehára, insofar as unaccusative subjects can receive accusative Case. This brings further evidence to Laka's (2000) proposal, according to which the assignment of accusative Case is blind to whether the predicate licenses an external argument with an agent θ-role or not. To summarize, the Tenetehára active/stative system exhibits the following syntactic characteristics:

(i)   A, S_a, S_o subjects will be assigned to either nominative Case or accusative Case;
(ii)   Burzio's generalization is violated;
(iii)   transitive objects are uniformly assigned accusative Case by the head Abs^o;
(iv)   the A transitive subject is uniformly assigned nominative case by T both in root and embedded Clauses;

Based on these properties, the Tenetehára Case system can be summarized in the following way:

TENETEHÁRA CASE SYSTEM				
Status of constructions	S_o subjects	S_a subjects	O Transitive objects	A subject
Root eventive predicate	-	NOM	ACC	NOM
Inverse system	-	-	ACC	NOM

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Stative predicates	ACC	ACC	ACC	ACC
Subordinate clauses	ACC	ACC	ACC	NOM/ACC

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