

## ECCENTRIC AGREEMENT

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### 0. Introduction.

In languages that show explicit agreement for both arguments of a transitive clause, the morphology expressing this agreement system is typically located in distinct nuclear elements (heads) in the configurational superstructure defining the extended projection of the lexical category V (cf., Grimshaw, 1991). Of these two heads, one is relatively high in the functional structure, while the other is relatively low.

The precise identification of the agreement-bearing heads depends to some extent upon certain typological properties of individual languages. This is the empirical side of the question. There is also a theoretical side, of course, according to which the answer is framed in terms of particular linguistic models. For present purposes, I will refer to the heads in question as U for "upper" and L for "lower." The upper head, in certain actual cases is C, the complementizer—and in some frameworks, the upper head is *necessarily* identified with C. Empirically, however, U is not always associated with morphological material normally associated with the complementizer, as that is normally understood. In K'ichee', for example, U is associated with aspectual elements, observationally, at least. In the majority of instances, the lower head L corresponds to the nuclear element traditionally identified as I(nfl), representing various inflectional elements, including tense, commonly labeled T and, in some languages, L reflects voice or transitivity. In languages with overt agreement, U and L may also be the loci of agreement morphology, as in the languages examined here.

In this brief paper, a number of examples are cited in which the "normal" association of arguments to agreement is disturbed, as a result of specific grammatical processes. In the majority of such cases, the processes at issue involve the extinction of agreement morphology in one of the heads, resulting in the circumstance in which the two arguments of a transitive clause, subject and object, are in competition, so to speak, for the single agreement remaining.

An example of what I have termed "eccentric agreement" is the situation in which an argument normally associated with the lower agreement-bearing head comes to be associated with the higher head, beating out a competing argument, so to speak. The point of the paper is very simple: eccentric agreement is perfectly natural, and regular, within any linguistic framework that takes case and agreement to be determined by structural relations projected in

syntax, and not necessarily in terms of case or agreement features. In the present discussion, I will assume the Case Binding theory of Bittner (1994).

### 1. K'ichee' (Mayan family).

I begin with the example of the Mayan language K'ichee', a language which exhibits overtly and clearly the ergative pattern of agreement, exemplified in the sentences of (1):

- (1) (a) x-at-u-kuna-j                    lee achi  
          ASP-2SG-3SG-heal-TR        the man  
          'The man healed you.'
- (b) x-at-chaku-nik  
          ASP-2SG-work-INTR  
          'You worked.'

K'ichee' does not employ overt case morphology for the direct arguments of a clause (subject and object). I assume, however, that direct arguments are licensed within the Case Binding system (see below). The ergativity of the language is reflected overtly in the agreement morphology, in two ways: (i) ergative agreement (controlled by the subject of a transitive verb) is distinguished from the nominative (associated with the subject of an intransitive and the object of a transitive); and (ii) the ergative is relatively close to the verb, while the nominative is relatively far from it—this is a common ergative phenomenon, visible where ergative and nominative cooccur and appear on the same side of the verb, as in (1a), where *-u-* is ergative, and *-at-* is nominative.<sup>1</sup>

Like many other ergative languages, K'ichee' possesses an antipassive construction:

- (2) x-Ø-kuna-n    lee achi        ch-aaw-ee  
          ASP-3SG-cure-AP    the man        to-2SG-RN  
          'The man cured you.'

Here, the verb carries the the intransitive suffixal morphology *-n(ik)* associated with the antipassive (and glossed AP accordingly). In addition it has lost its ability to assign ergative case to its subject. This is ultimately a consequence of

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<sup>1</sup> Transitive and intransitive verbs are further distinguished by their suffixal inflections glossed -NTR, -TR, represented here by the endings *-j* and *-n* respectively. These have corresponding pausal forms *-Vj* and *-nik*, the latter exemplified in (1b) where the subject is *pro*, as is usual for (unmoved) pronominal direct arguments, placing the verb in clause-final position.

the antipassive morphology which forces the object to appear in an oblique case (represented in (2) by *ch-aaw-ee*)<sup>2</sup>, rather than in the nominative characteristic of the basic ergative construction (see, e.g., Bittner, 1994).

Crucially, for our purposes, the verbal agreement morphology is regularly altered in the antipassive, in the following manner: (i) the logical object is no longer represented there, being an oblique expression; (ii) the ergative agreement morphology is suppressed; (iii) and the nominative agreement is now construed with the subject, itself nominative, in accordance with the principles of Case Binding. In (2) above, the zero element  $-\emptyset$  is the normal realization of 3SG nominative agreement (in contrast to *-u* in the ergative of (1a)).

The K'ichee' antipassive represented by (2) is a true antipassive in every sense of the word. It involves the complete "detransitivization" of the transitive clause—the subject is nominative, not ergative; the object is in an oblique form; and the consequences (i-iii) for agreement follow straightforwardly.

There is, however, another K'ichee' construction to which the term "antipassive" has been applied (cf., Mondloch, 1981; Davies and Sam-Colop, 1990; Larsen, 1987, 1988; Pye, 1988; Trechsel, 1993):

- (3) (a)    laa    aree    lee achi    x-at-kuna-nik  
           Q    FOC    the man    ASP-2SG-cure-AF  
           'Was it the man who cured you?'
- (b)    laa    at                    x-at-kuna-n    lee achi  
               Q    you.SG            ASP-2SG-cure-AF    the man  
               'Was it you who cured the man?'

It is not surprising that this construction has been called an antipassive. It employs a formally intransitive morphology, and it suppresses ergative agreement.<sup>3</sup> But this is where the similarity ends. First, as has been pointed out by a number of scholars (e.g., those cited above), the two kinds of "antipassive" differ in relation to transitivity. The "true" antipassive of (2) is clearly a derived

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<sup>2</sup>The oblique case construction in (2) consists of the preposition *ch(i)*- 'to' and its complement, the "genitive" relational noun *-ee*, whose complement in turn corresponds to the logical object of the verb—appearing here as the possessive agreement prefix *-aaw* 2SG, identical in form to the ergative (cf., Davies and Sam-Colop, 1990:525, and elsewhere in the relevant literature). The nominative, if overt, would have been *at*.

<sup>3</sup> The formally intransitive verbal morphology in (3) is identical to that in (2). There is, however, another class of verbs in which the two so-called "antipassives" differ in their suffixal morphology; the difference is not relevant here.

intransitive. All are in agreement on that score. But the “focus antipassive” of (3) quite evidently does not “demote” the direct object. Moreover, the construction implicates a particular grammatical process—its use is possible only when the agent (transitive subject) is extracted (fronted) in the derivation of one or another of the following constructions: (i) the relative clause; (ii) the content question; (iii) the focus construction (hence the name). It is not properly speaking a “voice”, despite its morphology. For these reasons we will refer to it henceforth as the Agent Focus Construction (AFC), the corresponding suffixal morphology will accordingly be glossed AF (despite its near homomorphy with the antipassive).<sup>4</sup>

There is a further distinguishing characteristic of the K'ichee' Agent Focus Construction, and it is this which is of primary interest to us here. In contrast to the single association possible in the true antipassive, where agreement morphology must necessarily be construed with the subject (the only remaining argument bearing a direct structural case), in the Agent Focus Construction, the nominative agreement can (under appropriate conditions) be construed either with the subject or with the object. This is, in a sense, not altogether surprising, since these two arguments share the property of bearing a direct structural case (ergative and nominative respectively). In a sense, however, it *is* surprising, since the two arguments are not equidistant from the structural locus of agreement, certainly not at d-structure and arguably not at s-structure. And, given accepted assumptions, the two arguments are associated with different case categories—while case is not *overt* in the nominal system of K'ichee', we must assume that, abstractly, the transitive subject is in the ergative, while the object is in the nominative (cf. Bittner and Hale, 1996a,b). Thus, for one of the two arguments, at least, agreement is “eccentric” in the Agent Focus Construction of K'ichee'.

The sentences of (3) are sufficient to show this. In (3a), the extracted agent (i.e., the extracted transitive subject) is the third person expression *lee achi* ‘the man’, and the argument left behind, i.e., the object, is the second person expression *at* ‘you (singular)’, normally dropped in postverbal position, as here. It is the latter which shows overt agreement, being represented in the verb word by *-at-*, the 2SG nominative agreement morphology. *Ceteris paribus*, this is what is expected, since it is normal for an object to be construed with the nominative (also called “absolute”) agreement morphology. But now consider (3b). Again, it is the subject which is extracted (as usual in the Agent Focus Construction). But in this case, the extracted argument is the second person *at*. And it is this latter which agrees, being represented again by the nominative agreement

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<sup>4</sup> The “true” antipassive construction is sometimes called the Absolute Antipassive (cf., Larsen, 1987), in honor of the fact that its sole direct argument is in the absolute (i.e., nominative in our terminology).

morphology *-at-*. Thus, in (3a), agreement is with the object, while in (3b), it is with the subject.

In general, the second person “wins” over the third person—in showing agreement, that is—regardless of the grammatical function involved. The first person also wins over the third person in this respect:

- (4) (a) aree lee achi x-in-kuna-nik  
FOC the man ASP-1SG-cure-AF  
'It was the man who cured me.'
- (b) in x-in-kuna-n lee achi  
I ASP-1SG-cure-AF the man  
'It was I who cured the man.'

Of course, to say that the first and second persons “win” over the third, is to say simply that an argument which necessarily shows *overt* nominative agreement wins over an argument that permits *non-overt* nominative agreement (whether this latter involves a zero morpheme or no morpheme at all). This seems to be a correct generalization, making certain predictions.<sup>5</sup>

If both the subject and the object require *overt* agreement (e.g., if both are non-third person and non-second formal), then the AFC is not possible, since it suppresses the ergative agreement morphology, leaving one of the arguments unassociated. Thus, with first singular subject and object, while extraction for focus is indeed possible, it must employ the ordinary transitive (active) form, with both nominative (object) and ergative (subject) agreement, as in (5):

- (5) in x-at-in-kunaaj  
I ASP-2SG-1SG-cure  
'It is I who cured you.'

But neither of the following forms, using the AFC and hence only one overt agreement, is permitted:

- (6) (a) \*in x-in-kuna-n at  
(b) \*in x-at-kuna-n at

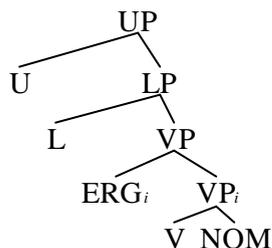
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<sup>5</sup>The formal (or polite) second person (both singular and plural), like the third person singular, shows non-overt (or zero) agreement. Consequently, when formal second person appears in the Agent Focus Construction with a first person subject or object as co-argument, it is the latter which will show overt agreement in the AFC.

There is more to be said about these matters, to be sure, but this is sufficient for our purposes. Further relevant details of these aspects of K'ichee' grammar are to be found in the recent, and quite excellent, literature on the language (a portion of which is listed in the references). I will attempt now to provide a partially formal account of the observations which have been made, using the Case Binding Theory (see Bittner, 1994, for details).

The pre-verbal string in the surface verb word of K'ichee' is clearly divided into two parts, the division being between the nominative (absolutive) and the ergative agreement. Although the division is not obvious in the forms cited here, apart from the generally quite "visible" morpheme boundary, we know that it is structurally real because non-agreement morphology can intervene there (namely, the historically verbal "incorporated movement" markers, cf. Kaufman, 1990). We will assume that this substring corresponds to the projections of two functional heads, U and L, the first selecting the second, and the second selecting the syntactic projection headed by V (the verb), as depicted in (7), the d-structure of a transitive clause:

(7)



To some extent, this underrepresents K'ichee' clause structure. Among other things, the implied linear order of the ergative subject in relation to the nominative object is not the preferred one, though it is both possible and frequent; and the full system of supravocal functional categories is highly abbreviated in (7). Nevertheless, that diagram embodies the elements which are essential to an account of Case and Agreement in accordance with the framework assumed.

The upper functional head, U, is the locus of nominative agreement (as well as the elements glossed ASP, e.g., the perfective *x-* seen in the examples cited). The identification of this upper head with the category C is possibly controversial, especially given the fact that there is an even higher head, the preposition *chi* (not shown in (7)), which sometimes fulfills the traditional

“complementizer” function. I will assume that U includes the category C and that if U governs a phrase  $\delta$ , then C governs  $\delta$ .<sup>6</sup>

What is important for present purposes is that C, a part of U, is a genuine component in the extended projection of V (in the sense of Grimshaw, 1991) and that it plays a particular role in the grammar of Case and Agreement. Its role in the latter, as already mentioned, is to function as the locus of nominative agreement morphology. Its role in Case theory derives from the fact that it belongs to a category which is “Case-like” and therefore capable of licensing a nominative argument, in the manner to be described below. The Case-like character of complementizers is well known and amply reflected in case-complementizer syncretism in many languages of the world.

The lower functional head, L, is the site of ergative agreement, reflected in part by the fact, quite general for ergative languages, that subject (ergative) agreement is closer to the verb than is object (nominative) agreement (cf., Bittner and Hale, 1996b). In an ordinary ergative clause, L is also responsible for “assigning Case” to the subject. The latter is an adjunct to VP, a “distinguished adjunct”, as indicated by coindexation, the notation employed to represent the predication relation holding between the subject and the verb phrase (cf., Williams, 1980; Bittner and Hale, 1996a). Case assignment, in the framework assumed here, is a binding relation, to be defined presently. And it is the Case-Binding relation between L and the subject that is responsible for the fact that the latter bears ergative Case (non-overt in K’ichee’ nominals, but ergative nonetheless, by hypothesis).

The basic ingredients of the Case theory assumed here are given in (8), and the theory of Agreement is given informally in (9):

- (8) (a) Case Filter: A DP must be governed by a Case-like head.  
(b) Case-Binding: Structural K (Case, and the phrasal projection KP which it heads) must be antecedent governed by an appropriate head.
- (9) Agreement is a relation between an argument A and a head which governs A.

Case (overt or tacit) is a functional head, K, projecting the phrasal type KP in the usual manner. The “structural K” of (8b) corresponds in part to the

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<sup>6</sup>The exact nature of this arrangement is a matter for research. For K’ichee’, the claim is that C and ASP jointly govern the same elements, and they jointly define the upper boundary, U, of the Phase (cf., Chomsky, 1999) comprising the extended projection of V.

traditional notion “structural Case”, as opposed to “inherent” and “semantic” Case. The argument represented as  $ERG_i$  in (7) is in reality a KP realized at s-structure by the ergative Case. As a structural Case, i.e., structural K(P), it must be Case-bound by an appropriate head—in this case, L.<sup>7</sup>

KP is the maximal extended projection of a nominal expression, just as CP (UP) is the extended projection of a verb. A DP appearing within KP is, of course, governed by K and therefore satisfies the Case Filter (8a) trivially. By contrast, NOM in (7), like nominatives in general, is a bare DP, not a KP. It is therefore not Case-bound and must be licensed in another way. It is licensed through government from C, a Case-like head. This is how a nominative satisfies the Case Filter.

We can make use of (1a) and its structural description (7) to illustrate more precisely the manner in which these arguments are Case-licensed. The Case-binding relation must first be defined. Case-binding holds between a head  $H$  (the binder) and an argument  $A$  (the bindee) only if the following conditions are met:

- (10) (a)  $H$  either projects or governs a “small-clause” containing  $A$ .
- (b)  $H$  locally c-commands  $A$ .
- (c)  $H$  governs a Case Competitor of  $A$ .

Looking at (7), we ask whether there are any heads which either project or govern a small clause. A small clause is a phrase to which a distinguished adjunct (a subject) is attached—thus, VP is a small clause in (7). There are two heads which stand in the relevant relation to this small clause, namely, V (which projects the small clause) and I(nfl) which governs it. This takes care of (10a). Now let us consider (10b). Does V locally c-command an argument  $A$ ? The answer is yes; clearly V c-commands its object (NOM), and the relation is *local*, inasmuch as no other argument or head  $X$  “intervenes” (structurally) between V and NOM in such a way that  $X$  c-commands NOM and not V (see Bittner and Hale, 1996a, for a more precise characterization of local c-command). So V satisfies both (10a) and (10b). What about I(nfl), i.e., L? Here again, local c-command evidently holds, in this instance between L and  $ERG_i$ . The higher head, U, fails in this regard, because L intervenes between U and  $ERG_i$ .

In summary, we have two candidates for the office of Case-binder. But we know that in (1a), only one of the two arguments is Case-bound. This follows

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<sup>7</sup>Strictly speaking (b) is an instance of the Empty Category Principle (ECP), which structural Case must satisfy, being “empty” at d-structure (see Bittner, 1994, and Bittner and Hale, 1996a,b for details).

from the third requirement, that there be an appropriately situated Case Competitor. A Case Competitor is first of all a Case-less nominal element—i.e., a NP, a N, a DP, or a D, bereft of K. The nominative fits perfectly within this characterization, of course, given the “bare DP” hypothesis of that Case category. But there are two additional requirements, the Case Competitor must be distinct from *A*, the Case-bindee, and it must be governed (m-commanded) by the Case-binder (*H* of (10)).

It cannot be, therefore, that both *V* and *L* function as Case-binders. The verb, to be sure, stands in the proper structural relation to the object, but it cannot Case-bind that argument because it does not also govern a Case Competitor—the subject is the closest argument, but as an adjunct of *VP*, it is beyond the reach of the *V*, which is of course included in *VP*, being its head.

This leaves *L* as the remaining candidate for Case-binder. And that head does in fact Case-bind an argument—namely, the subject, identified by the label *ERG* in (7), in recognition of the general fact that the Case realized on *L*-bound subjects is that which has been termed “ergative” in the traditional terminology of Case nomenclature.<sup>8</sup> We have not shown yet how the Case-binding relation comes about, however.

The linguistic literature on ergativity recognizes two major classes within the ergative type, traditionally termed the syntactic and the morphological. Bittner's account of this distinction (cf., Bittner, 1994; Bittner and Hale, 1996b) maintains that syntactically ergative languages involve raising of the nominative argument, the object, to Spec of *IP* (Spec of *L*). This syntactic process accounts, of course, for the renowned property of “syntactic ergativity” that the nominative is “high” in the syntactic structure and therefore has the characteristic of subject-like prominence in the clause. Raising the nominative achieves two aims: (i) it situates the nominative (a bare *DP*) in the governing domain of *U* (and *C*, by hypothesis), thereby satisfying the Case Filter; and (ii) it also places the nominative in the governing domain of *L*, since the latter m-commands the nominative in its raised position. This second circumstance supplies the needed Case Competitor, permitting, in fact requiring, that *L* Case-bind the subject.

But this is not the only way in which the subject can be Case-bound by *L*. The relation is effected in another way in so-called “morphologically ergative” languages. In these, the nominative is licensed *in situ*, through “transparency”, i.e., elimination of the barrier status of intervening phrasal categories. This latter can be achieved in at least two ways (see Bittner and Hale, 1996b). One of these is rather well-known in the linguistic literature. If *V* raises to *L* in the syntax, then

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<sup>8</sup>This Case is also called “relative”, particularly in the rich tradition of Eskimo-Ateut linguistics.

the VP dominating V and its object ceases to be a barrier to government. Under transparency effected by V-to-L movement, the object is, in the relevant sense, “visible” to L. And if, as is true in canonically ergative languages, the object is a nominative (i.e., bare DP), it will function as a Case Competitor permitting L to Case-bind the subject.

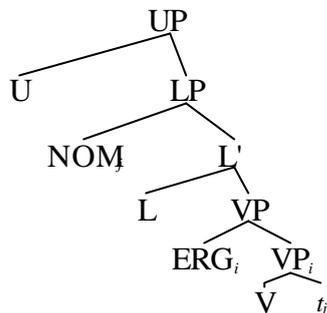
Is K’ichee’ syntactically ergative or morphologically ergative? As a V-initial language, it is clearly transparent to an extent, assuming its verb raising is a syntactic (as opposed to phonological) process—and it gives all appearances of being syntactic. At least, it is transparent with respect to the VP boundary. But a fully transparent language must also remove the barrierhood of L itself, permitting the bare DP object to satisfy the Case Filter (through government from U (specifically, from its Case-like component C).

Although L, with raised V attached, combines with U to form a single word in K’ichee’, it is in this instance not so obvious that L actually raises to U in syntax. As noted, directionals (Kaufman’s “incorporated movement markers”) can appear between those two heads. While this does not preclude syntactic raising of raising of L to U, more evidence one way or another would be desirable.

There is a slight preference for the linear order VOS, in K’ichee’, and this is the order normally attributed to the language and to the proto-language. However, England (1989) points out that VSO is preferred in K’ichee’ when both the subject and object are definite. While the relevance of surface word order is not altogether clear, it is worth considering the implications of the VOS theory of K’ichee’, and of its ancestor.

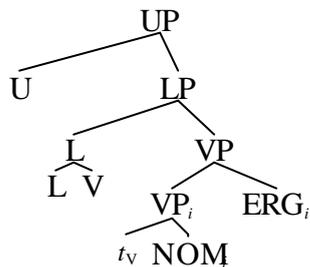
There are at least two possibilities. If the basic structure of the K’ichee’ clause is the relatively standard one given in (7), then some displacement is involved in defining the surface ordering of elements. We have already suggested that the verb moves to L, and the surface position of V indicates that. One possibility is that the object also moves—leftward, to some position preceding the subject. And this might be expected if L is “opaque”—object movement to Spec of L would place it within the government domain of U, assuming, as is usually done, that a head governs Spec of XP if it governs XP itself. This first possibility is represented diagrammatically in (11), abstracting away from V-movement (V-to-L):

(11)



The second possibility takes seriously the idea that VOS is the *d-structure* order, or an alternative d-structure order. Departing minimally from (7), this would position the subject ( $ERG_i$ ) after, rather than before, the VP (conforming, essentially, with Aissen's ordering principle for Tzotzil; see Aissen, 1996).<sup>9</sup> This is an attractive possibility, as it would permit an account of the variation noted by England (1989) as a somewhat trivial linearization alternative, positioning the subject ( $ERG$ ) before VP, as in (7), or after, as in (12), with V-raising indicated as well:

(12)



This effects VOS ordering through V-raising alone, without object raising. The structure depicted in (12), and that in (7) as well, is possible only if LP, like VP, is transparent, permitting U to govern NOM, a bare DP which must satisfy the Case Filter (i.e., be governed by a Case-like head).

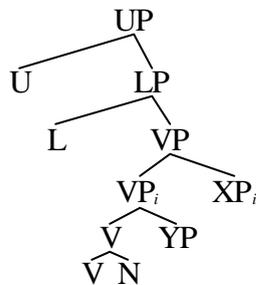
<sup>9</sup>Aissen's principle (Aissen, 1996:451) has to do with the position of Spec (to the left if Spec of a functional category, to the right if of a lexical category). If this can be understood to include the distinguished adjunct (subject) of a small clause, as well as specifiers, then Aissen's principle applies rather well to K'ichee', and possibly other VOS languages of the family. This implies, however, that the subject follows the VP in its entirety, not just the object but all VP-internal constituents. This is a matter which has not been thoroughly investigated, so far as I know, though the literature includes examples of the implied ordering in transitive clauses, as in (i), for example (from Nik'te' and Saqijix, 1993:131):

- (i) X-u-jux ri tzimaa chi u-wach ri ab'aj ri achi.  
 ASP-3SG-scrape the gourd to 3SG-surface the stone the man  
 'The man scraped the gourd bowl against the stone.'

Although L-to-U movement is suggested by the morphophonological inclusion of C in the verb word, we have as yet no direct evidence that this fusion takes place in syntax, i.e., that it is not an intirely superficial matter of phonological form. The surface facts do, however, cast some doubt on the object raising hypothesis. If the object raises in order to satisfy the Case Filter, the LP must be opaque. And the expectation would be, then, that the object would appear between L and U. Instead, it appears beneath (to the right of) the U-L-V complex, suggesting that *both* head raising operations have taken place in syntax (assuming adjacency to be necessary for the *phonological* merger of heads). If L-to-U indeed takes place in syntax, then object raising is not motivated by the need to satisfy the Case Filter, and, within the framework we are assuming, it is not otherwise motivated either. While this favors the L-to-U raising alternative, further evidence for LP-transparency would strengthen the case. Arguably, the eccentric agreement associated with the Agent Focus Construction (AFC), as in (3b), provides further evidence.

Historically, the AFC is quite possibly the result of grammaticalization of the “true antipassive,” which, we assume, can be understood (following Baker, 1988; cf. also Bittner, 1994) as involving the presence of a nominal element (N) incorporated in the verb. The presence of this element has consequences for Case-binding and Agreement. The d-structure of the antipassive, under these assumptions, is approximately as follows:

(13)



The incorporated N is realized as the antipassive morphology  $-(V)n$ . Theoretically, however, it is an incorporated noun. Being a “bare nominal”, it can qualify as a case competitor, under appropriate conditions. And it is this that determines the Case-binding properties of the structure. XP and YP are nominal projections—their status as KP or DP depends on Case-binding, of course. Since V projects a small clause, locally c-commands YP, and governs a Case Competitor (i.e., the incorporated N), it necessarily Case-binds YP, which is therefore a KP. The principles of Case Realization determine quite generally (across languages) that an argument Case-bound by a head of the form  $[_V^{\wedge}N]$ ,

i.e, with lexical as opposed to functional-level adjunct, surface in an “oblique” Case, as in (2) above (see Bittner and Hale, 1996a,b for discussion).

Since the object is in an oblique Case, it cannot itself serve as a Case Competitor in relation to L. The subject, XP, must therefore be a bare DP, since it has no Case-binder. It is nominative and is construed with nominative agreement. In the antipassive, L is not “active” in relation to Case-binding; it also fails to function as a governor for Agreement, losing its (ergative) agreement morphology.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the antipassive is an intransitive construction, as has been noted generally.

The true antipassive of K’ichee’ is heavily restricted in its occurrence, many transitive verbs cannot appear in the antipassive, and for those that can, it is quite generally limited to clauses with a “volitional” agentive subject (cf. discussion in Mondloch, 1981). By contrast, the Agent Focus Construction involves, no such constraint. It is associated with a productive syntactic process (extraction) and is, accordingly, not itself sensitive to semantic types. Constraints on the AFC are purely morphosyntactic; any transitive verb at all may appear in the AFC. While it involves a certain morphology in the verb word, it is used only in association with the syntactic process of extraction, in particular, extraction of the subject of a transitive clause (to Spec of UP, an A-bar position). There are, thus, two components, extraction and the morphology. Let us refer to the morphological component as AFC-formation; for present purposes, the use of the latter can be formulated informally as follows:

- (14) The Agent Focus Construction:  
If the subject (ergative) argument of a transitive clause is moved to an A-bar position (e.g., Spec of UP), then AFC-formation applies (optionally).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>There may be a problem here for the way in which we think of agreement, i.e., as primarily a relation between an argument and a head which governs it. While “detransitivization” quite generally eliminates one set of agreement (subject or object), why is it generally the lower agreement (i.e., that closest to the verb, object in nominative-accusative languages, subject in ergative-nominative languages)? There is a clear connection with Case-binding. If a head “loses” its ability to Case-bind an argument in a particular construction, it also fails to agree with an argument. The problem makes some sense if Case is *linked* with agreement, as has often been suggested, but as we shall see in eccentric agreement, the issue is not straightforward.

<sup>11</sup>If the process *can* apply, it generally *does* apply, giving the impression that the rule is obligatory, not optional. Our notes have a number of instances of non-application in root clauses and somewhat more instances of non-application in association with extraction from embedded clauses (cf., Mondloch, 1981, for discussion of this matter).

The morphology implicated by the AFC, in the examples cited, is cognate with that of the antipassive, inviting the suspicion that the two are the same in origin. There is some reason to question this, however, because the two large verb classes of K'ichee' do not agree entirely in the distribution of this morphology. The verb class termed "derived transitive" show  $-(V)n$  for both uses, while the class called "root transitive" show this ending for the antipassive and another, i.e.,  $-(V)w$ , for the AFC (see, e.g., Larsen, 1987, fn. 8, as well as Mondloch, 1981, and many other sources). This observation reinforces the notion that the two constructions are to be distinguished, of course, but while the morphology is synchronically distinct, we need more information to rule out the possibility that the historical source of the two is utterly distinct, particularly given the fact that there is both partial overlap in form and partial overlap in the morphosyntactic effect of suppressing ergative agreement. We will assume here that there is some *historical* connection between the morphologies of the two constructions and that the AFC results, in part, at least, from reanalysis of the morphology.

Grammaticalization, in the original sense of Meillet (1912), is the process according to which a lexical element loses its lexical character and assumes that of a "grammatical" element—an auxiliary, article, tense marker, case marker, i.e., a functional category. And assuming that the antipassive and the AFC are indeed historically related, the evolution of the latter must have involved at least the grammaticalization of the incorporated N, say to D (an undifferentiated pronominal, appropriate since it is an element from the class of functional categories associated with the nominal extended projection). This is not enough, however, since grammaticalization to this point alone results, by hypothesis and demonstrably, in a nominative-accusative language (as in the case of the Wellesley Island languages of North Queensland; cf., McConvell, 1981). This follows, since grammaticalization resulting in  $[\sqrt{V}^D]$  does not affect the *Case-binding* capability of V, only the *realization* of the Case it "assigns"—this is accusative (a direct Case) in this instance, the V-adjoined D being the defining property of nominative-accusative languages (in the framework assumed here).

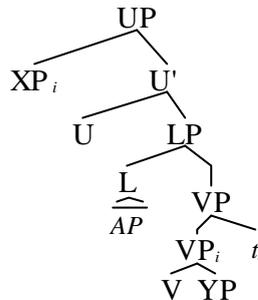
Something additional must have happened in the history of K'ichee'. We suspect that the primary change was structural. The surface form of the verb in K'ichee' leaves utterly ambiguous the basic structural association of the Agent Focus morphology. It could be in the verb, as it must be in the antipassive, by hypothesis. Or it could be in L; and this is what we propose—the original antipassive morphology, no longer lexical, is located in L at d-structure, not in V as before.<sup>12</sup> And, moreover, the Agent Focus morphology *replaces* the agreement

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<sup>12</sup>Another outcome would be that in which the antipassive morphology stays in place, giving an AFC in which focus extraction is simply identical to the antipassive in terms of agreement and

morphology, so that while L continues to be a Case-binder, it is not a locus of agreement. The syntactic structure of an AF construction is as follows (abstracting away from head-movement, which does not change the basic configuration, only the barrierhood of LP, and VP):

(15)



Since focus extraction is A-bar movement, it has no effect on Case. That is to say, the Case-binding relations in (15) are the same as in (7), the canonical transitive clause. As in (7), the verb cannot Case-bind its object (YP), because it fails to govern a Case Competitor. L does Case-bind the trace of  $XP_i$ , however. The chain headed by  $XP_i$  is therefore assigned ergative Case, by the standard Case realization principles. The object, YP, must be a bare DP, i.e., nominative. Assuming that K'ichee' is transparent (i.e., that LP and VP are not barriers, as a result of V-to-L-to-U movement, not shown in (15)), the object is Case-licensed *in situ*, through government from U (and thus by C, a component of U).

The essential grammar of the Agent Focus Construction is identical to that of an ordinary transitive, in so far as Case and government relations are concerned. However, only one agreement-bearing functional head is present, namely U. A transitive clause has two direct arguments, and some arguments *must* agree—as mentioned earlier, these are the arguments whose corresponding agreement is phonologically overt (i.e., first person, second person informal, and third person plural).<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the actual use of the Agent Focus structure portrayed in (15) is limited, for essentially morphological reasons of no relevance to basic grammatical processes.

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Case. This seems to be true of the focus construction exemplified in Nik'te' and Saqijix (1993:136-138), in which the object is regularly in the oblique Case.

<sup>13</sup>The details of third person plural agreement require some adjustment of the simple statement just given (cf., Davies and Sam-Colop, 1990; Trechsel, 1993; Mondloch, 1981). Third plural agreement may be suppressed in combination with first or second, a hierarchical arrangement which may be related to well-known person hierarchies elsewhere. Alternatively, this apparent hierarchy may simply reflect the fact that third person plural nominative agreement is sometimes optional in transitives, depending on the nature of the object.

If  $XP_i$  is first person singular, and YP is, say, second person plural informal, the “option” of using the AFC is unavailable. This is because both arguments must agree—i.e., must be construed with overt agreement morphology. Subject-extraction can occur, but the AFC cannot, because only one overt agreement morpheme is available, that associated with the highest functional head, U, the other being replaced by AF morphology. But if one or the other (or both) of the two direct arguments is, say, third person singular, and therefore capable of occurring in the absence of overt agreement, then the AFC is not only possible but preferred, to an extent which has led many to say it is obligatory.

Consider first the situation in which  $XP_i$  of (15) is third person singular and YP is first person singular, as in (4a). In this situation, YP, must agree and evidently does agree with U, in the normal manner. Of course, we do not know definitively that YP is *in situ* or raised. That is what we are attempting to determine. If YP is raised, then it is “close” to U and governed in that way; if YP is not raised, then the structure must be transparent.

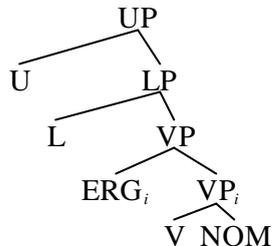
Now consider the situation in which the person categories are reversed, as in (4b), so that the extracted subject,  $XP_i$ , is first singular and the object, YP, is third singular. In this case, the subject must agree, which it does—this is “eccentric” agreement, inasmuch as the subject is construed with agreement morphology which is normally associated with the object in a fully transitive clause, which the AFC construction surely is. And since agreement is in U, LP must be transparent. The subject must “skip” the closer head, L, since it lacks agreement morphology and is therefore irrelevant. It cannot skip that head in the ordinary transitive, of course, since that would violate (relativized) minimality (cf., Rizzi, 1990), L being the closest relevant head in relation to the subject.

We conclude that K’ichee’ is a language in which Case and Agreement relations are satisfied through transparency. It is not a “raising ergative language” in the typology of Case systems (cf., Bittner and Hale, 1996b) and it belongs therefore to the observationally predominant morphologically ergative type. Its “eccentric” agreement follows straightforwardly from general principles and just two assumptions about K’ichee’ itself: (i) that AF morphology replaces agreement morphology in L; and (ii) an argument associated with overt agreement cannot occur without actually being construed with overt morphology.

## 2. An abstract characterization of eccentric agreement.

Consider again the essential structure of a transitive clause, as depicted in (7), repeated here as (16):

(16)



In ergative languages of the type represented by K'ichee', each of the two functional heads (U and L) in a standard transitive clause bears agreement morphology. The manner in which the arguments of the clause enter into the required agreement relations is straightforward. The basic engine is the "principle of proximity" as determined by Merge (Chomsky, 1995), the operation which determines the fundamental binary structural relations in syntax:

(17) The Principle of Proximity:

An argument *A* agrees with the nearest relevant c-commanding head *H* which governs *A*.

Let us look first at the pair {V, NOM}, the structural and proximity relations are right for agreement; however, the verb is not an agreement-bearing head in this ergative language—thus V is not a relevant c-commanding head and, accordingly, agreement cannot be effected here.<sup>14</sup> At the next application of Merge, we have the adjunction {ERG<sub>*i*</sub>, VP<sub>*j*</sub>}, and no agreement configuration appears. At the next, however, we have {L, VP}; L is a relevant head, since it bears agreement, and it governs the subject (adjoined to VP). The subject therefor enters into the agreement relation with L, fixing that relation and taking it out of play.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>This is in contrast to the situation of an accusative language, where object agreement is in fact effected at this early Merge.

<sup>15</sup>I take Bittner's Case Binding Theory to belong conceptually to the "minimalist program." While it differs in obvious ways from the program developed in Chomsky (1995 and subsequent work), it is nonetheless constrained by the same theoretical principles and underpinnings. In the variant represented here, it assumes bare phrase structure (and Merge), and the locution "enter into an agreement relation with X" (or, more simply, "agree with X") is assumed to correspond to the

It is only at the uppermost Merge, {U, LP}, that the object (NOM) can enter into an agreement relation; it is permitted to do so, and indeed must do so, if U, the only relevant agreement-bearing head, governs NOM. This circumstance obtains in K'ichee' by virtue of its transparency—consequently, the object agrees with U. This explains the observation, often made, that ergative agreement morphology is closer to V than nominative agreement is, an automatic consequence of the Principle of Proximity and the cyclical organization of syntactic structure, the latter a consequence of the Merge relation.

Eccentric agreement arises in the Agent Focus Construction, as we have seen. The precipitating factor is the AF morphology, which extinguishes the agreement morphology normally associated with L. The Principle of Proximity forces the subject, not the object, to enter into the agreement relation with U, since the subject is the argument closest to U at the point where the latter is, so to speak, in view as a result of the Merge operation.

This is the situation represented in (3b), repeated here as (18):

- (18) laa at x-at-kuna-n lee achi  
 Q you.SG ASP-2SG-cure-AF the man  
 'Was it you who cured the man?'

This is eccentric agreement, in the terminology of this essay. By contrast, in the standard transitive clause, the second person subject would agree with L and, accordingly, would be realized as *-aa-*, not *-at-*, as in (19), which represents the standard case:

- (19) x-Ø-aa-kuna-j lee achi.  
 ASP-3SG-2SG-cure-TR the man  
 'You cured the man.'

K'ichee' illustrates another principle which must be brought into the discussion of agreement. The object cannot enter into an agreement relation in (18) above, because the subject wins, so to speak, in the competition for the only agreement morphology present in the Agent Focus Construction. This is permitted, apparently, because a third person argument need not agree, and a second person argument must. If the object were second person, however, it would have to agree, as in (3a), repeated here as (20):

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erasure of uninterpretable features, as required at LF, taking certain elements "out of play" for the purposes of Full Interpretation.

- (20) laa aree lee achi x-at-kuna-nik  
 Q FOC the man ASP-2SG-cure-AF  
 'Was it the man who cured you?'

This is standard object agreement, which triumphs here over subject agreement, even though the subject is closer to the relevant agreement-bearing head. In K'ichee', the object can enter into an agreement relation in defiance of the Principle of Proximity, because of a principle which is evidently of greater strength:

- (21) The Principle of Necessity:  
 A direct argument *A* (e.g., subject, object) must enter into an agreement relation with a head *H*.

This principle is parametric, with *A* and *H*, being identified in specific languages and for specific categories—in K'ichee', *A* will agree with *H* if it belongs to a category for which agreement morphology in *H* is overt, as in the examples cited. In (20), the second person object must agree, while the third person subject need not (and cannot, in this instance).

The principles (17) and (20) are, of course, familiar in the study of grammar. The first is an instance of standard locality requirements defining permissible dependency relations between distinct points in syntactic structure. And the second is an instance of standard "visibility" and "checking" relations holding between a head and a phrase within its domain. They are not autonomous principles. They are correlates of more fundamental principles of grammar and are accorded informal definition here for expository reasons only. They will figure again in what follows.

### 3. Chukchi (Chukotko-Kamchatkan family).

Ordinary transitive sentences in Chukchi exhibit a straightforwardly ergative pattern of case marking, as exemplified in (22), from Skorik (1977:44):

- (22) (a) g\m-nan g\t t\÷u-gt  
 I-ERG you.SG 1SG-see-2SG  
 'I saw you (singular).'
- (b) g\m-nan turi t\÷u-t\k  
 I-ERG you.PL 1SG-see-2PL  
 'I saw you (plural).'

- (c) \-nan            g\t            ne-l÷u-g\t  
 he-ERG        you.SG        3-see-2SG  
 ‘He saw you (singular).’
- (d) \-nan            turi            ne-l÷u-t\k  
 he-ERG        you.PL        3-see-2PL  
 ‘He saw you (plural).’
- (e) \-nan            muri            ne-l÷u-m\k  
 he-ERG        us            3-see-1PL  
 ‘He saw us.’

While the subject is overtly marked for ergative case, the object is in the nominative—and it is, in theory, a “bare DP.” The nominative case is that which is also found in association with the subject of an intransitive verb, as expected in an ergative language. This use of the nominative is exemplified in the following (from Skorik, 1977:20):

- (23) (a) g\m    t\k\tg\ntat-g÷ek  
 I        1SG-run-1SG  
 ‘I ran.’
- (b) g\t            ^-k\tg\ntat-g÷e  
 you.SG        2-run-2SG  
 ‘You (singular) ran.’
- (c) muri    m\t-k\tg\ntat-m\k  
 we        1PL-run-1PL  
 ‘We ran.’
- (d) turi            ^-k\tg\ntat-t\k  
 you.PL        2-run-2PL  
 ‘You (plural) ran.’

In standard transitive clauses, the ergative subject is construed with prefixal agreement, while the object is construed with suffixal agreement. Chukchi has the interesting property (shared by Algonquian, as we shall see), that the subject of a standard intransitive clause is construed discontinuously with both prefixal and suffixal morphology (cf., Bobaljik, 1999, for discussion of the Chukchi agreement morphology).

Like K'ichee' and many other ergative languages, Chukchi possesses an antipassive, exemplified in (24), from Skorik (477:115, 118-9):

- (24) (a) g\m t-ine-wiri~ -g÷ek  
 I 1SG-AP-defend-1SG  
 'I defended (someone).'
- (b) g\t ^-ine-wiri~ -g÷i  
 you.SG 2SG-AP-defend-2SG  
 'You defended (someone).'
- (c) g\m t\ -wiri~ -\tku-g÷ek  
 I 1SG-defend-AP-1SG  
 'I defended (in relation to someone).'
- (d) g\t ^-wiri~ -\tku-g÷i  
 you.SG 2SG-defend-AP-2SG  
 'You defended (in relation to someone).'

The Chukchi antipassive, consistent with its type, is an intransitive construction and, like Chukchi intransitives generally, it shows discontinuous prefixal and suffixal agreement in the first person.

The “defining morphology” of the antipassive is prefixal (*ine-*, glossed AP) in what, for a better term, we will call the “straight antipassive”, and it is suffixal (*-tku*) in what we will call the “circuitous antipassive” (the terms being chosen in an attempt to reflect Skorik’s glosses). Where the object is overtly expressed in the antipassive, it appears in an oblique case, in conformity with the usual pattern, as in (25b) from Skorik (477:283):

- (25) (a) g\m-nan tumg-\t t\ -pelya-nat  
 I-ERG comrade-PL 1SG-abandon-3PL  
 'I abandoned the comrades.'
- (b) g\m t-ena-pelya-k tumg-e  
 I 1SG-AP-abandon-1SG comrade-INST  
 'I abandoned the comrade.'

The subject in (25b) is nominative, as expected, and the object is in the instrumental. The verb shows agreement for the subject only— discontinuous prefixal and suffixal here, as expected. And the antipassive morphology (AP) also appears, as expected (with lowered vowels, by harmony). In respect to these

features, the antipassive of (25b) contrasts with the transitive clause (25a), whose verb shows prefixal agreement for (ergative) subject and suffixal agreement for (nominative) object.

Chukchi also uses noun incorporation. Like the antipassive, the incorporation construction is intransitive (Skorik, 1977:284):

- (26) g|m t\ -tomg-\ -peya-k  
I 1SG-comrade-V-abandon-1SG  
'I abandoned comrade(s).'

This is not surprising, of course, in light of the incorporation analysis of the antipassive itself.<sup>16</sup> The morphosyntax of (26) is in effect that of the antipassive.

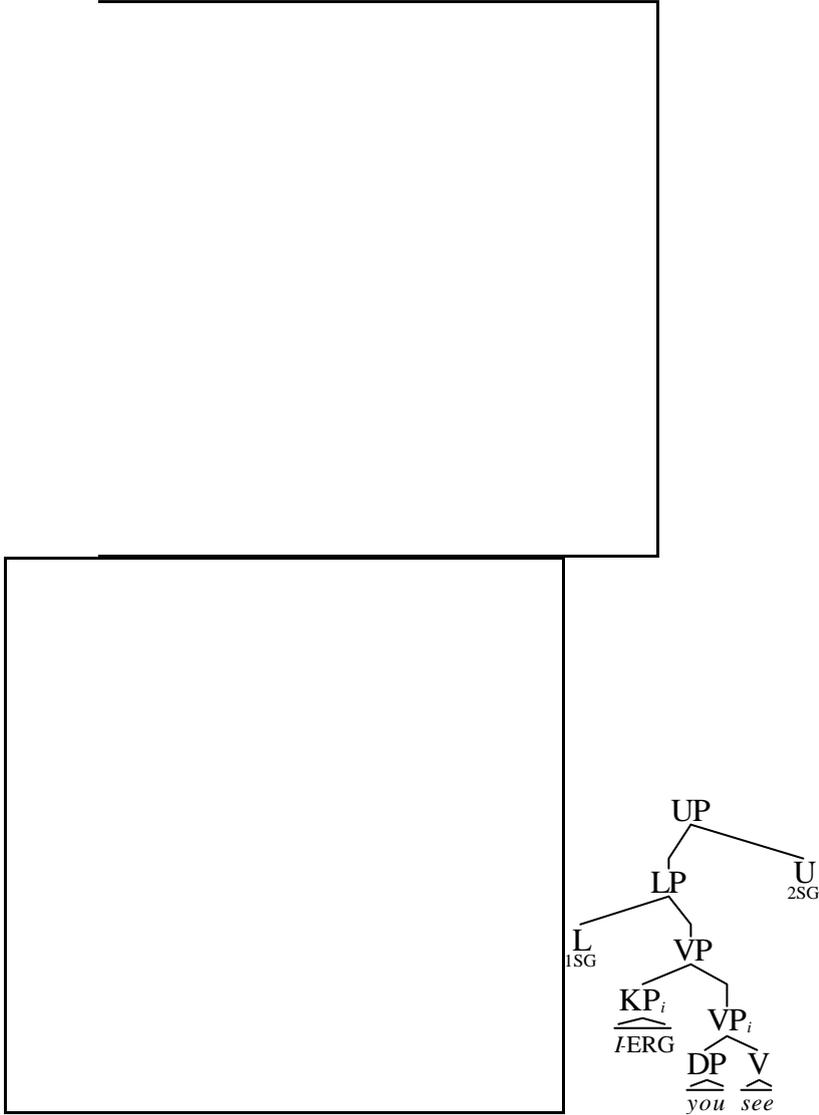
I propose that the abstract syntactic representation of a Chukchi transitive clause is the same as in K'ichee', the differing linear order of the elements being a matter of the PF representation. In Chukchi, U is suffixal, while L is prefixal; and the lexical head V is presumably final. The head-final ordering in representing the Chukchi VP and its extended projections in projections—these ordering arrangements are reflected in (28) for expository reasons only; what is relevant, of course, is not ordering but rather the system of c-command and government relations:

- (27) g|m-nan g|t t\ -l ÷ u- g|t  
I-ERG you.SG 1SG-see-2SG  
'I saw you (singular).'

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<sup>16</sup>Like Chukchi, number of Mayan languages also associate the use of AP morphology with object incorporation. This is said to be true in K'ichee' as well, but it is not clear there (i) that the construction (associated with the focusing of adverbials) is truly "incorporation", in the sense that it clearly *is* in Chukchi, or (ii) that it is a true antipassive, given the fact that the object (bereft of its determiner) can, as in the Agent Focus Construction, be construed with agreement (cf., Mondloch, 1981:248-255).

(28)



As in K'ichee' transitive clauses, so also here, the upper functional head, U, is the locus of nominative agreement (as well as the complementizer itself, when that is overt). And the lower head L is the locus of ergative agreement. The agreement relations in Chukchi standard transitive clauses are established exactly as in K'ichee'. Since, at this level of abstraction, the lexical head V does not bear agreement morphology in Chukchi, it is only at Merge {L, VP} that an agreement relation is defined, between the agreement-bearing head L and the ergative subject. At the uppermost Merge, {U, LP}, the object enters into the agreement relation with U, this being permitted by the transparency condition resulting from head movement (V-to-L-to-U).

Let us return now to the (telic past tense) paradigm partially represented in (22) above. All of the entries cited there are in what can be properly termed the “direct” agreement form, with prefixal subject and suffixal object, as represented in (27), where the transitivity of the clause is fully reflected in agreement. But now consider the corresponding clauses with second person subject and first person object (Skorik, 1977:44-45):

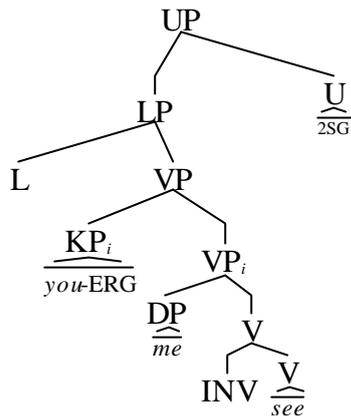
- (29) (a) g\~nan g\~m ine-l÷u-g÷i  
 you.SG-ERG me INV-see-2SG  
 ‘You saw me.’
- (b) g\~nan muri l÷u-tku-g÷i  
 you.SG-ERG us see-INV-2SG  
 ‘You (plural) saw us.’
- (c) torg\~nan g\~m ine-l÷u-t\k  
 you.PL-ERG me INV-see-2PL  
 ‘You (plural) saw me.’
- (d) torg\~nan muri l÷u-tku-t\k  
 you.PL-ERG us see-INV-2PL  
 ‘You (plural) saw us.’

Two things are evident here: (i) the forms involve the adjunct elements (*ine* ~ *-tku*) otherwise associated with the antipassive construction in Chukchi; (ii) subject agreement is by suffix. However, despite appearances, these cannot be antipassives, since the essential property of that construction is lacking, i.e., detransitivization in the syntax. Case-binding here is just as it is in the ordinary Chukchi transitive—ergative subject and nominative object. Thus, while there is a special morphological quirk in the telic past paradigm (which is not alone among Chukchi paradigms in this respect, in fact), there is no anomaly in the syntax it represents. It is transitive throughout. Notice that the agreement pattern seen in (29) is eccentric.

In parallel with what we find in K'ichee', it is possible that the pattern seen in (29) has arisen as the result of grammaticalization of the “true antipassive,” which, by hypothesis, involves the presence of a nominal element (N) incorporated in the verb. If so, in (26) the ancestral antipassive morphology is seen in its modern grammaticalized form, where it no longer functions as a Case Competitor, as it does in the true antipassive of (24). The construction exemplified in (26) has been termed “inverse” (Spencer, 1996), rather than “antipassive,” and I will follow that usage.

The essential effect of this putative historical development in Chukchi is the observable change in the agreement relations—i.e., the development of an eccentric agreement pattern. The agreement normally associated with the L node is suppressed in this inverse construction, permitting only suffixal agreement. The structure of (26a), representing some of these features, is given in (27):

(27)



It is not why the inverse morphology suppresses agreement in L. I will assume that inverse morphology (glossed INV) simply replaces, or absorbs, in some manner, the agreement morphology normally appearing in L. Whatever the details of the matter, the essential fact is that the prevailing effect of the presence of INV is to suppress agreement in L. The eccentric agreement patterns follows straightforwardly. At Merge {L, VP} no agreement relation is established; at {LP, U} the subject, being closest to an agreement bearing head, enters into the agreement relation with U. The object is left out of this, being "licensed" solely by government from U, permitted by transparency.

In Chukchi, the Principle of Proximity determines that the subject, not the object, agrees with U. In the standard transitive clause, the same principle has the subject agreeing with L and the object agreeing with U. The Principle of Necessity does not figure in the Chukchi inverse construction, thus, for example, the first person object is utterly absent in the agreement morphology in (29). In the following section, necessity is the primary factor.

#### 4. Navajo (Athabaskan).

The Navajo verb word has a structure which can be seen as being derived by head movement, raising and right adjoining V to L, and raising and right adjoining the complex thus formed to U. Object agreement is prefixed to U, and subject agreement is suffixed to L. This results in the standard "template" abbreviated in (28):

(28) OBJ-U-L-SUBJ-V

Fundamentally, the syntactic relations underlying this are identical to those of K'ichee' and Chukchi. As in K'ichee, subject agreement is observably closer to the verb than object agreement. Navajo agreement is only partially "ergative," however, since intransitive subject agreement is in L, not U. This is not unusual for so-called "morphologically ergative" languages—as pointed out by Jelinek (1984), for example, Warlpiri has an ergative case system, but it has accusative agreement morphology (see also, Woolford, 1999). The Navajo verb words presented in (29) illustrate the relevant aspects of the agreement system of the language.<sup>17</sup>

- (29) (a) nideeshhosh  
n-d-gh-sh-[lh-ghosh]  
2SG-U-L-1SG-[CL-tickle]  
'I will tickle you.'
- (b) 'adeeshháamlh  
'-d-gh-sh-[lh-gháamlh]  
3i-U-L-1SG-[CL-snore]  
'I will snore.'
- (c) deeshdlóólh  
d-gh-sh-[d-dlóólh]  
U-L-1SG-[CL-freeze]  
'I will freeze to death.'

The first of these examples represents the standard transitive agreement pattern; the subject enters into the agreement relation with L, and the object enters into that relation with U, as expected under the Principle of Proximity. The verb does not function as an agreement bearing head in Navajo; the object therefore agrees with U at Merge {U, LP}, as in an ergative language. The second example, (29b), exemplifies the Navajo unergative construction. This is essentially a transitive, with subject agreement in L, as expected. The object is represented by the prefix '-', an impersonal (glossed 3i by the Navajo language scholars Young and

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<sup>17</sup>The verb itself is a composite consisting of a voice marker and a stem, set off in brackets in the examples. The voice marker (e.g., -lh- in (29a,b)) is traditionally called the "classifier" (CL) in the Athabaskanist literature.

For typographical reasons, I depart from the conventional writing system of Navajo. Vowel nasalization is represented by {m} following the vowel concerned, and {lh} is used to represent the voiceless lateral fricative.

Morgan, 1987) and essentially a "filler" for object agreement. Finally, (29c) represents the unaccusative type. Unlike the previous two constructions, the unaccusative structure is monadic. The single argument of the unaccusative is its subject, and it is construed with subject agreement morphology in L.

It is reasonable to ask why Navajo and K'ichee' differ in this last feature. Why does the intransitive subject agree with U in K'ichee' and with L in Navajo? The answer lies in the morphology of the intransitive in K'ichee. In that language, but not in Navajo, the intransitive L is characterized by morphology which supplants agreement, as in the antipassive and in the AFC. With this parametric contrast, the difference in agreement patterns follows. The intransitive subject can only agree with U in K'ichee'; in Navajo, the subject can agree with L, the closer head—and perhaps it must, under some version of the Principle of Proximity. None of this has to do with eccentric agreement; it is rather a matter of standard agreement relations.

Navajo does, however, exemplify the phenomenon of eccentric agreement. The relevant construction in this case is the inceptive aspectual form called "inchoative" in the literature on the language (examples from Young and Morgan, 1987):

- (30) (a) ni'niishhóósh  
 n-'nii-Ø-sh-[lh-hóósh]  
 2SG-U-L-1SG-[CL-tickle]  
 'I start to tickle you.'
- (b) 'i'niishháámh  
 '-nii-Ø-sh-[lh-háámh]  
 3i-U-Ø-1SG-[CL-snore]  
 'I start to snore.'
- (c) shi'niidlóóh  
 sh-'nii-Ø-[d-dlóóh]  
 1SG-U-L-[CL-freeze]  
 'I start to freeze to death.'

In the Navajo inchoative, the upper functional head position (U) is occupied by the aspectual element *-nii-*, which has the property that it obligatorily hosts object agreement morphology. It is this feature which gives rise to eccentric agreement in this language.

In the transitive and unergative inchoatives, agreement is unsurprising. The subject agrees with the closest head, L, and the object agrees with the more

distant head U. In the monadic unaccusative, however, the subject is linked with U, eccentrically in this language. This is forced by the Principle of Necessity—the object agreement morphology in U is obligatory and must enter into an agreement relation, a requirement which is satisfied through construal with the subject. By contrast, the closer head L does not invoke the necessity principle; L can be empty of agreement morphology, and it is regularly empty, throughout the verbal system, where the subject is non-local (i.e., other than first or second person). In the Navajo inchoative, L can and must be bypassed, permitting the subject to satisfy the agreement requirement associated with the more distant inchoative head - *nii*-.

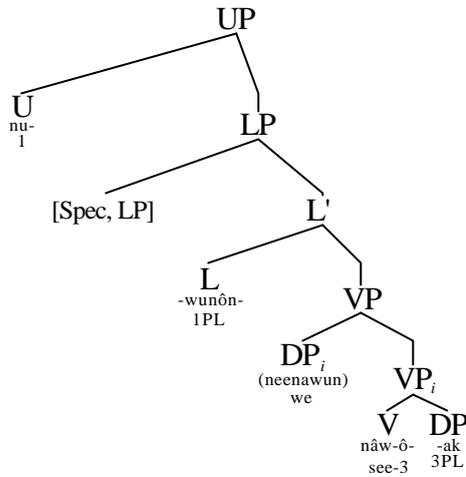
##### 5. Wampanoag (Algonquian).

It seems clear that eccentric agreement is not really eccentric; it is rather the natural expression of agreement relations in the presence of certain morphosyntactic factors, like extinction of agreement morphology in L, obligatory agreement in U, and so on. It is these factors which are eccentric; agreement itself is quite ordinary. My final example, from the Eastern Algonquian language Wampanoag, represents a well known grammatical system in which, as in the languages cited above, agreement morphology is stable in its association with nuclear elements (U, L, and V, in this instance) while being variable in its construal with the direct arguments of a transitive clause. The following verb words exemplify the "direct" form of a TA (transitive animate) clause; the direct form is appropriate here, since the subject is "local" (1, 2) and the object is "non-local" (3) object—the arguments are plural, to maximize phonologically overt morphology:

- (31) (a) nu-nâw-ô-wunôn-ak  
 1-see-3-1PL-3PL  
 'We (excl) see them.'
- (c) ku-nâw-ô-wôw-ak  
 2-see-3-2PL-3PL  
 'You (pl) see them.'

To understand the basic organization of the Wampanoag verb word, it is helpful to set out the full assumed structure of the clause, as in (32), corresponding to (31a):

(32)



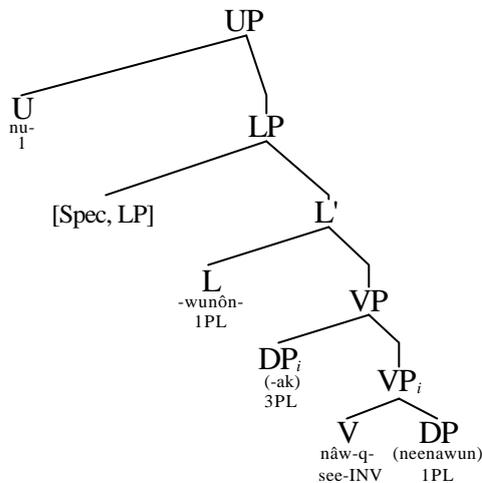
The basic elements are the same as in the other languages considered here. The parametric features of the Wampanoag direct transitive clause include (i) the discontinuous realization of subject agreement in U and L, with person alone in U and both person and number in L (a feature shared by Chukchi intransitives); and (ii) the accusative case system. The latter is reflected overtly in the verb, which bears object agreement, in the form of the so-called "direct theme sign" *-ô-*. This element is presumably nominal in character and is therefore capable of functioning as a case competitor for the object, which is consequently case bound by the verb. The subject agrees with L, the head closest to it, and with U as well, by virtue of the discontinuous distribution of agreement over U and L. We can assume also that the subject raises to Spec of LP to satisfy the EPP.

The subjects in (31) are local persons (1, 2), and the objects are non-local (3). Consider now the reverse of this, with non-local subject and local object, as in (33):

- (33) (a) nu-nâ-q-unôn-ak  
1-see-INV-1PL-3PL  
'They see us.'
- (b) ku-nâ-q-uwôw-ak  
2-see-INV-2PL-3PL  
'They see you (pl).'

This is the inverse construction, required when the object outranks the subject in relation to the person hierarchy (local > non-local). The abstract structure of (33a) is given in (34):

(34)



The key element here is the inverse (INV) theme sign *-q-*, which is evidently completer inert in syntax; effectively, it extinguishes object agreement and fails to function as a case competitor for the object, forcing the latter to raise to Spec of LP where it is appropriately situated in relation to U (C), thereby satisfying the Case Filter and entering into the agreement relation with U and L, as required.<sup>18</sup>

## 6. On the nature of eccentric agreement.

The Algonquian agreement system exemplified by Wampanoag epitomizes rather dramatically the fundamental nature of what I have called "eccentric agreement"—namely, the fact that agreement itself is stable, in terms of its association with nuclear elements in syntactic structure. It is not agreement morphology that is responsible for the appearance of exceptional agreement relations. Rather, these relations are entirely regular and ordinary within a framework which does not tie agreement to Case or grammatical function, but rather sees agreement as being defined in purely structural terms, as relations between arguments and nuclear elements (heads) standing in specific structural relations to them.

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<sup>18</sup>My understanding of Wampanoag transitive clauses owes much to discussions with Benjamin Bruening, Jessie Fermino, Andrea Rackowski, and Norvin Richards. Although I have bent them to my own purposes and to the Case Binding framework, the basic ideas come from these people and from Ives Goddard's excellent Grammatical Sketch (in Goddard and Bragdon, 1988:473-594).

I have not yet mentioned the 3PL suffix *-ak*, which would appear to be a kind of object agreement in (31) and a kind of subject agreement in (33). In the view adopted here, this is not agreement morphology but rather an enclitic representing the arguments themselves. This idea is supported to some extent by the observation that the enclitic does not appear when the corresponding argument is represented by a full DP expression, as in *nunâw waskeetôpâak* 'I see the men', the so-called "absolute" construction (compare the "objective" *nunâwôwak* 'I see them', in which the 3PL clitic alone represents the object argument).

In Wampanoag, the agreement morphology associated with the nuclear elements U and L is stable across the direct and reverse themes. The difference in argument construal, which might be seen as lending the inverse the appearance of eccentricity, is the effect not of agreement itself but of the inverse morphology, whose syntactic inertness triggers a response not unfamiliar in syntactic theory—namely, the movement (of a DP) to satisfy the Case Filter and agreement requirements.

The situation in K'ichee' and Chukchi is fundamentally the same as this. Agent Focus morphology in the former and Inverse morphology in the latter block agreement between the subject and L. Under this condition, the subject naturally agrees with U.

In Navajo, the situation is a little different, though in that language as well, agreement itself is entirely regular. It is the inchoative morphology, not agreement, which introduces an exceptional feature—namely, obligatory "object" agreement, which can quite naturally be satisfied by the single argument of an unaccusative.

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