

Extraction morphosyntax and *wh*-agreement in Gitksan

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This paper presents data from A-bar extraction contexts in Gitksan (Tsimshianic, BC), including novel data from long-distance extraction and possessor extraction. Discussion of this data has two aims: first, to provide a complete description of a tripartite system of extraction morphology, particularly with regard to long-distance movement. Second, to provide an account of how each type of marking is triggered syntactically. I do this with reference to abstract Case and ECM.

DATA: Gitksan exhibits a tripartite system of ‘extraction morphology’ (Rigsby 1986; Davis and Brown 2011) – morphosyntax in the clause that differs depending on whether an A-bar-moved argument originated in intransitive subject (S), transitive object (O), or transitive subject (A) position, shown in (1-3). This marking also triggers differences in phi-agreement patterns.

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| (1) | Naa=hl limx- it ? | (2) | Gwi=hl gup- i =s Joe? | (3) | Naa an =t gup=hl susiit? |
| | who=CN sing- SX | | what=CN eat- TR =DN Joe | | who AX =3 eat=CN potato |
| | ‘Who sang?’ (S) | | ‘What did Joe eat?’ (O) | | ‘Who ate the potato?’ (A) |

Brown (2016) builds on this further with an examination of morphosyntactic marking in long-distance extraction under two types of intermediate predicate, noting that extraction marking on these predicates resembles O- and A-style extraction, respectively (5-6). The present study contributes data from a third type of intermediate predicate which triggers S-style marking when extracted through (4). Thus, Gitksan’s tripartite extraction marking system is exhibited in both base and intermediate clauses, in parallel.

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| (4) | Gu=hl aam- it ... | (5) | Naa=hl anoog- a -n ... | (6) | Naa an bisxw-in ... |
| | what=CN good- SX ... | | who=CN eat- TR -2SG ... | | who AX expect-2SG ... |
| | ‘What is it good (to) ...?’ | | ‘Who did you allow ...?’ | | ‘Who do you hope ...?’ |

ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS: Although in base clauses the type of extraction marking used is dependent on the base position of the extracted element, in intermediate clauses the conditioning factor is instead the position of the lower CP within the intermediate clause. This is indicative that even in cases of long-distance movement, extraction marking is sensitive to a strictly local domain, indexing only the path of movement within a single CP at a time. In an intermediate clause, this results in sensitivity to the intermediate *wh* landing position: whether this is at the top of a complement vs. adjunct clause of a transitive vs. intransitive predicate.

The parallels between extraction marking in base and intermediate clauses further demand explanation: what formal properties condition each type of marking? Focusing on the distinction between S-style and O-style marking, which are differentiated based on the transitivity of the clause, I pursue an ECM-style analysis whereby *wh*-agreement is sensitive to Case. Under this analysis, a *wh*-element in spec-CP of a complement clause may receive the abstract Case which the upstairs clause would assign to the complement clause. This Case conditions the form of *wh*-agreement.

Under this view, long-distance *wh*-agreement in Gitksan serves as a head-marking counterpart to “multiple-Case” constructions (Béjar and Massam 1999); the *wh*-element receives different agreement as it passes through each clause. Additionally, the different Case assigned to arguments of intransitives vs. transitives (cf. S- vs. O-style marking) is indicative that absolutive arguments are underlyingly heterogeneous. This has consequences for a language-internal analysis of ergativity.

References

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