

### Unergative subjects merge below VoiceP

It is widely taken for granted that the subject of an unergative clause is generated in spec-Voice, like the subject of an agentive transitive clause. However, I propose that unergatives have a derived subject, generated below VoiceP.

In a variety of respects, unergative subjects behave like the subjects of unaccusatives, and unlike the subjects of transitives. For example, in French *faire-infinitif* (FI) causatives, if the embedded clause is transitive, the causee subject is dative (1a); with embedded unaccusatives (*partir*) and unergatives (*danser*), the causee is accusative (1b) (Kayne 1975, Guasti 2016).

- (1) a. Jean a fait laver la voiture à Paul.  
 Jean has made wash.INF the car DAT Paul  
 ‘Jean made Paul wash the car.’  
 b. Jean a fait partir/danser Paul.  
 Jean has made leave.INF/dance.INF Paul  
 ‘Jean made Paul leave/dance.’

A similar contrast is found in French impersonals, which allow unaccusatives (2a), and more marginally, unergatives (2b)—but not transitives (2c) (Sportiche 1998). This follows if impersonals rule out active Voice, and the subject of an unergative is not an argument of Voice.

- (2) a. Il a cuit beaucoup de tomates.  
 there have cooked many of tomatoes  
 ‘Many tomatoes have cooked.’  
 b. ?Il a dormi plusieurs enfants.  
 there have slept several children  
 ‘Several children have slept.’  
 c. \* Il a mangé des pommes plusieurs enfants.  
 there have eaten of.the apples several children  
 ‘Several children have eaten apples.’

Such a restriction is also seen in Georgian masdar nominalizations, where direct objects (3a) bear genitive case, due to the absence of a Voice projection (McGinnis 2020). The subject of an unaccusative (3b) or unergative (3c) masdar is also genitive (Harris 1981:170-171).

- (3) a. [datvis moKvla am Tqeši] aKrzalulia.  
 bear.GEN killing.NOM this woods.in is.forbidden  
 ‘It is forbidden to kill bears in these woods.’  
 b. Kargia [Kacebis Casvla].  
 is.good men.GEN going.NOM  
 ‘It is good that the men go.’  
 c. Kargia [Kacebis mušaoba].  
 is.good men.GEN working.NOM  
 ‘It is good that the men work.’

By contrast, the subject of a transitive masdar cannot be expressed as a genitive DP, but only as a PP headed by *mier* ‘by’ (4). Some sources describe masdars with an external argument *mier*-phrase as marked or impossible (Hewitt 1970:262, Wier 2014), suggesting that for some, the *mier*-phrase is adjoined to VoiceP, while unergative subjects merge below VoiceP.

- (4) [monadiris mier datvis moKvl-a] aKrzalulia.  
 hunter.GEN by bear.GEN killing-NOM is.forbidden  
 ‘[The killing of bears by hunters] is forbidden.’ (Harris 1981:157)

New evidence from Georgian causatives of unergatives also supports the proposed analysis.

## References

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