

Case, Agreement and Derivation of Pashto Clause

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ABSTRACT

The focus of my paper is to outline the general assumption of Minimalism programme and apply it to clause structure in Pashto. Following the assumptions of minimalism, the clause structure of Pashto has been analyzed in term of agreement, case, features checking, move etc. As a result, a model of case, agreement and derivation of Pashto clause is developed. According to the model, Nominative NP values the phi-features of T, regardless of its grammatical function in the clause. T values the features of the highest available Nominative NP subject. Otherwise if subject is not nominative it establishes agree relation with object which is next to the highest NP. Accusative case is assigned to an object by V. If the little v assigns agent role to its external argument and the Asp (aspect) head carries [-IMP (imperfect) features then the subject NP is valued for ergative case. However, if the T head is marked with [+PST] (past tense) features then the case of subject is valued as ergative regardless of the features of Asp head when subject is agent.

KEYWORDS: case, agreement, movement, features checking, minimalism, head, specifier, merge, move

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Pashto is spoken largely in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is spoken by almost half of the population of Afghanistan. In Pakistan, it is spoken primarily in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Balochistan and FATA. It is spoken by almost fifty thousand people as a native language in Iran as well [31]. Pashto is divided into three dialects: Eastern dialect, Southwestern dialect and Central dialect [31]. Pashto has approximately twenty million speakers in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The eastern dialect of the language which is spoken in KPK is the focus in this study. It is the national language of Afghanistan. It is second in social prestige to Dari in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, Pashto does not have any official status. Pashtuns receive their education in English and Urdu. In 2012, the provincial government made it the language instruction in all public schools but very soon after it the English and Urdu were restored as languages of instructions in Public schools (see [31]; [28]; [35] and [36] for details).

Clause structure in Pashto, though analyzed to a great extent by [28] and [31], still needs to be investigated so that further research on the syntax of the mentioned language is made possible. [31] discusses the clause structure of Pashto while employing the conventional descriptive approach. Roberts analyzed the clause structure of Pashto in brief just to provide background for his extensive study of clitics [28]. The focus of the latter was on second position clitics in Pashto; so he did not discuss case system, agreement and derivation of the clause in detail in the Minimalist Framework. Roberts argues that Pashto is a split ergative language, having split on tense rather than on aspect. According to him ergative case is only assigned in past tense. According to him, in present and future tense, ergative case is not assigned. What I have observed is that in Pashto ergative case is assigned in present and future perfect too, in addition to past tense. The study has been organized as:

1.2. METHODOLOGY

1.2.1. Data

The researcher is the native speaker of the subject language. He used his personal native speaker intuition to distinguish ungrammatical constructions from those which are ungrammatical. However, the researcher conducted a focused group discussion to verify the grammatical construction and also reconsider those which are ungrammatical. The group consisted of five members (excluding the researcher). All the members of the group were master in English linguistics and were also the native speakers of Pashto. All the data cited in this work has been verified by the focus group. Then the data were analyzed within the framework of Minimalism [12][13][14][15] [16]

1.3. Theoretical Framework

Minimalism has been adopted as a theoretical framework for this study. In the following sub sections the facets of Minimalism are outlined.

1.4. Case theory

The case of the NPs and its agreement with the verb determine the type of clause in which an NP is found.

1.5. Structural versus Inherent Case

Chomsky distinguishes between two types of cases; namely structural and inherent. Structural case is assigned by a case assigner which c-commands the assignee. Nominative and accusative are the examples of structural case. Nominative is assigned to subject in the specifier/T position; accusative is assigned to object in the specifier/v position. These two cases are related to the agreement pattern inside the clause. Inherent case, on the other hand, is related to the theta role and thematic relation between case assigner and case assignee [14].

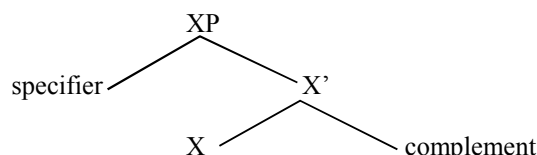
1.6. Case assignment in Minimalist Programme

Case is checked in the specifier position of certain functional heads [12] [13]. However, recently [14] assumes the case to be a part of agreement and that it is valued by matching its features with the corresponding functional heads that bears the same unvalued uninterpretable features. Once the features of functional heads are valued and as a result the uninterpretable features are erased the derivation converges at LF.

1.7. Case under Government and Binding theory

GB model imposes some restrictions on case assignment. In this model, the head is assumed to assign case to an NP either in head-specifier or head-complement configuration. The structure in (01) illustrates the configuration.

1.



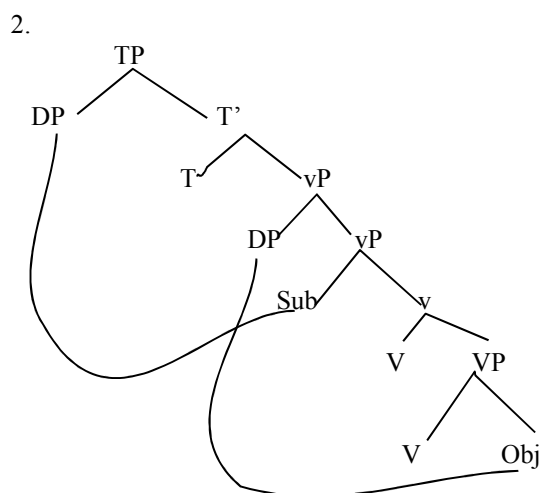
In (01) X assigns case to specifier and complement. To S, it assigns nominative case to its specifier in head-specifier configuration; and to its complement it assigns accusative case, in head-complement configuration. X is a variable which can represent any head of a phrase.

1.8. Case Checking Model

The later stage of GB [17] and the early stage of Minimalist Programme mark a considerable change in approach towards case. During this time, it was assumed that case is checked, not assigned. It was argued that case is predetermined which needs checking during the course of derivation [12].

Following Pollock's split inflection Hypothesis¹, Chomsky [12] argues that there exist two functional projections; namely, AgrOP and AgrSP. AgrSP, which is dominated by TP. AgrS dominates AgrO which in turn dominates VP. The case of subject is checked in specifier AgrS position while the case of object is checked in specifier-AgrO configuration [12] and [34].

Chomsky [12] eliminates Agr projections. However, case is still checked in head-specifier configuration. He further assumes that vP is immediately dominated by a light verb which projects two specifier projections, namely inner specifier positions where the external argument, subject, originates and outer specifier position where the object checks its accusative case [03]. The case of subject is checked in specifier position, as structure in (02) illustrates:



(Radford. 2009)

V merges with Obj to form VP which subsequently merges with V to v. Then v merges with its external argument, subject, to form vP. Next, vP merges with its specifier thus forming another vP. Obj moves to the outer specifier position of v to check its accusative case. vP merges with I to form I bar. Finally I bar merges with its specifier DP forming TP. The subject DP is moved to specifier T position to check its nominative case.

2.1. Features Matching Model

Chomsky [12][13][14][15] [16] assumes that case is an uninterpretable feature which needs to be valued and checked in order to be eliminated. Its valued and uninterpretable features are eliminated prior to LP through agree operation. Accusative case is valued through agree operation between v and the object whereas nominative case is valued through agree operation between subject and T in accusative languages.

Structural cases like nominative and accusative are also available in Pashto. In addition to ergative-nominative construction, nominative-accusative is the other available construction in Pashto. Let us have a look at ergative-nominative construction.

Structures like (03) are very common in Pashto. In this kind of construction, the subject NP marked for ergative case while the object is nominative.

- a. *Aslam badran waxwarhal*
 Aslam (ERG) cucumber (NOM) eat. PL.F.PST
 Aslam ate the cucumbers.
- b. *subedara, ma té da rotai dapara legale wi*
 Subedar, I (erg) you (nom) for meal send PF be.2.M.S.PST
 Subedar, I had sent you for meal.
- c. *haghé mata kitab rakare de.*
 He (ERG) to me book give PF be.S.M.Pres
 He has given the book.

In Pashto, as it is the case with Gojri [08] non-nominative DP cannot enter into agreement with verb. Davison [19] argues the same about Urdu. In case of ergative subject, verb agrees with the object. In Pashto, default case does not exist. It is, therefore, impossible to have all the arguments of the verb in non-nominative case, oblique case. One of the two, subject or object, must be in nominative case so that agreement with verb could be established and thus the uninterpretable and unvalued features on T head be valued before LF. At LF the presence of uninterpretable features crashes the derivation. Besides, more than two nominative arguments are also not allowed in Pashto.

Before starting the analysis of the clause structure in Pashto, the discussion of ergativity in Pashto is discussed in section 1.1.1.

1.1.1. ERGATIVITY

There are three potential obligatory arguments of the verb, i.e. subject of the intransitive verb (S), subject with agent role (A) and object of the transitive verb (O). One way to differentiate these arguments would be to obligate different cases for each of them. The obligation of having different cases for the S, A and O is not shared cross linguistically. A more common case system is the one in which two cases offered, namely, case of subject of both transitive and intransitive verbs and case of the object of transitive verb. This type of case system is called Nominative/Accusative which is typical found in the European languages [30].

The same is true for English, being one of the language of European Family. Examples in (1) illustrates nominative/accusative pattern in English.

1.

- a. He (S) smiles.
 b. You (A) call him (O).
 c. He (S) dances..
 d. He (A) is hit by you (O).

In (1a) the subject of an intransitive verb is *He*, while in (1b) *you* is the subject of a transitive verb *call* however, the case of both the subjects' viz., the subject of the transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive is isomorphic. On the other hand, the object of the transitive verb *him* in (1b)

¹ The possibility to represent Inflection as a number of separate projections, each headed by one/some of the features which carry tense, mood, aspect, and agreement information

bears a case which is contrasting with the case of the subject of an intransitive verb in (1c) and that of the case born by the subject of transitive verb in (1d).

The other type of system of case marking is the one which marks A differently from (S) and (O). This type of system is known as ergative/ absolutive system of case marking. The case of subject with agent theta role assigned, the subject of the transitive verb is ergative while the case of unagentive subject is called absolutive case. The subject, in (2) illustrates the aforementioned two types of systems of case marking.

2.

Accusative System		Ergative System	
A.S	O	A	S.O
Nominative	Accusative	Ergative	Absolutive

Accusative system of case marking is more common in European languages like English, Latin, German etc, while ergative system of case marking is generally in use in Australian languages like Basque and Izo'ga. Ergative system is not found in European languages (Germanic, Roman, Greek, Celtic etc). It is very uncommon in African languages. However, in Australian languages, ergativity is a shared feature in most of the languages. As for as South Asian (SA) languages are concerned, split ergativity is in vogue here. Indo-Aryan family of languages is famous for split ergativity. Further, Indo-Iranian family of languages also exhibits split ergative system of case marking. Pashto also belongs to Indo-Iranian family of languages which is the focus of this chapter. The following section will discuss split ergativity in detail.

1.1.1. Split System.

All the languages do not follow either accusative or ergative exclusively. There also exists a system of case marking which share features of both accusative and ergative languages. Such types of languages are classified as split ergative languages. There are a number of factors that determine the split on ergativity; first of all, the semantic property of DPs; then, the tense or aspect of the verb; and, finally the type of clause; main or embedded etc.

In Dyirbal, an Australian language, split is determined by the property of DPs. Only full DPs and third person pronouns take ergative case while other subjects carry nominative case. Pitta-Pitta, another Australian language, exhibits split on tense of the verb. In non-future tense, the subject bears ergative case while in future tense it bears nominative case [30].

In Gojri, on the other hand, the ergativity marker *-ne* is affixed to an A subject carries in simple past tense and perfective aspects. Moreover, in the aforementioned language, the ergative marker *-ne* cannot co-occur with clause that contains a verb in habitual and progressive aspect [09]. Other Indo-Aryan languages such as Punjabi [02], Urdu [11] and Hindi [24] exhibit the same pattern. Examples in (3) demonstrate split on ergativity in Dyirbal and some Indo-Aryan languages.

3.

- a. *Nguma* *yabu-nggu* *buran*
 Father-Abs mother-Erg saw
 Mother (A) saw father (O).
 (Dyirbal. Tallerman 2005)
- b. *Kajal-ne* *Xat* *likhyo* *e*
 Kajal-ERG letter-NOM write PF be PRES-3.s
 Kajal has read the book.
 (Gojri. Akhtar & Bukhari 2007)
- c. *DaakTar-ne* *mariiz-nuŋ* *vekhi-aa*
 Doctor-ERG patient-ACC see-PST
 The doctor examined the patient.
 (Punjabi. Akhtar 2000)
- d. *Ram-ne* *rotti* *khaayii* *thii*
 Ram-ERG bread eat-PERF-F be-past-f
 Ram had eaten bread.
 (Hindi. Mahajan 1989)

In every example given in (3), one of the arguments of the verb carries ergative case. In (3a) the Dyirbal subject *yabu* carries *nggu* as an ergative case marker. In Gojri as in (3b) the subject Kajal is marked by *-ne* as an ergativity marker. In Punjabi and Hindi the same *-ne* is used to mark the subject of the verb as ergative as *-ne* marks DaakTar and Ram ergative in (3c) and (3d) respectively.

4.

- a. *yabu* *banaga-n^y u*
 mother.Abs return-Nonfut
 Mother returned.
- b. *Numa* *yabu-Ngu* *bura-n*
 father.Abs mother-Erg see-Nonfut
 Mother saw father.
 (Dixon 1994:161)

Illustrations in (4) show ergative-absolutive pattern since the syntactic requirement of ergativity, 3rd person pronoun, is met. However, in (5) nominative- accusative pattern is demonstrated as implicated by the fulfillment of the syntactic requirement, 3rd person pronoun.

5.

- a. *Nana* *banaga-n^y u*
 We nom return-Nonfut
 We returned.
- b. *n^y urra* *banaga-n^y u*
 you. Pl. Nom return-Nonfut
 You all returned.

The morphological ergativity is different from that of syntactic. In the said, the syntactic relationship of S, O and A is morphologically realized (Dixon 1994). Pashto also exhibits morphological ergativity (For details see section 2.4.1).

1.2. ERGATIVITY IN PASHTO

Pashto also displays a split ergativity like some other Indo-Iranian languages. The same phenomenon of split ergativity can be found in Indo-Aryan languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Gojri, Urdu etc. In Indo-Aryan languages the split is conditioned on the semantic properties of the subject DP₁; and the aspect, tense and mood of the clause. Ergative case marker *-né* marks an A subject in past tense and perfective aspects in Gojri and the same is true of Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi etc as well.

Similarly in Pashto, the same ergative case is assigned to A subject in both perfect aspect (all the tenses) and past tense regardless of the aspect. In Pashto, there are only two aspects i.e. perfect and imperfect while in Indo-Aryan languages there exist three aspects such as Habitual, Progressive and Prefect. Imperfect aspect in Pashto comprises both habitual and progressive which have been treated separately in Indo-Aryan languages. Thus, in Pashto ergative case is assigned in past progressive aspect too in addition to those conditions in which ergative case is assigned the subject of the sentence is past simple and perfect. In Indo-Aryan languages, however, ergative case is not assigned to A subject in progressive aspect even though the other requirements such as agentive role and volitionality of action are satisfied.

The Pashto examples in (06) demonstrate that ergative case gets assigned to subject in past progressive in addition to past simple and perfect tense.

6.

- a. *ma* *halak* *waniso*
I (ERG) boy (NOM) catch PST S.M
I caught the boy.
- b. *ma* *margh* *wakho*
I (ERG) crow (NOM) beat PST S.M
I was beating the crow.
- c. *ma* *halwa* *kharsawala*
I (ERG) pudding (NOM) sell. PST S.M
I was selling the pudding.
- d. *ma* *chicken* *pokh-karhe* *de*
I (ERG) meal (NOM) cook PF be. S.F.Pres
I have cooked the meal.
- e. *ma* *ba* *dukan* *aghaste* *wi.*
I (ERG) FUT dukan buy be PST
I will have bought the shop.
- f. *ma* *ba* *zmaka* *aghasta*
I (ERG) FUT property buy PST
I would have been buying the property.
- g. *ma* *gade* *aghaste* *wo*
I (ERG) car buy PF be.PST
I had bought the car.

Examples in (06) illustrate that in Pashto A subject bears ergative case in past tense while in non-past tense in only perfect aspect the subject gets the case assigned. Another conspicuous feature of ergativity in Pashto is that all the subjects bearing ergative case are obligated to be having agent theta role. This entails that the action performed by subject is volitional. The same is true about Indo-Aryan languages as well [08][09][11]. Illustrations in (07) exemplify a circumstance in which the subject does not get ergative case assigned because the subject does not carry agent theta role.

7.

- zama* *pekhawar* *khwax* *de*
I (DAT) Salma (NOM) like PF be (Pres)
I like Peshawar.

Otherwise, if ergative case on the subject result in the ungrammaticality of the sentence as in (8). Consider the following examples:

8.

- **ma* *pekhawar* *khwakh* *de*
I (DAT) peshawar (NOM) like PF be (Pres)
I like Peshawar.

In Pashto, ergativity has been witnessed in past tense in addition to perfect aspects in non-past tense sentences. In past tense in both perfect and imperfect aspect exhibit ergativity while in non-past tenses the latter is restricted to perfect aspects. Examples in (09) demonstrate that ergative case assignment to subject in present imperfect does not obtain. However, nominative subject is fine in that situation. Contrastively, in present perfect ergative case seems fine whereas nominative case on subject renders the sentence in ill-form. Consider the following examples:

9.

- a. *Za* *khabar* *goram*
I (NOM) newspaper (ACC) read 1.s Pres
I read a newspaper.
- b. **ma* *jos* *axlam*
I (NOM) juice (ACC) buy 1.s Pres
I buy a juice.
- c. *ma* *kat* *aghaste* *de*
I (ERG) bed (NOM) buy PF be 3.s Pres.
I have bought a bed.

- d. *za nowal katale de
I (ERG) novel (NOM) read PF be 3.s Pres.
I have read the novel.

The action performed by ergative subject is volitional in most of the Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu [11] [10], Punjabi [02] and Gojri [08]. Wali contends that ergativity in Maharati is conditioned by subjunctive mood. He further assumes that in Maharati ergative case is assigned to the subject of those sentences which indicate obligation and necessity. In Pashto too, where ergative case is assigned to the subject, volitionality is implicated in the action performed by subject as shown in (10):

10.

- a. ma jag mat kare de
I (ERG) jug (NOM) break do PF be s.m Pres
I have broken the jug.

(Volitional act)

- b. zama na jag mat sho
I (GEN) jug (NOM) break PFbe s.m PST
I have broken the glass

(Non volitional action)

- c. ma mekha kharsa krha.
I (ERG) buffalo (NOM) sell do s.f PST
I sold the buffalo.

(Volitional action)

- d. zama na ghwa wraka shwa.
I (GEN) cow (NOM) lose PF be s.f Pres
I have lost a cow.

(Non Volitional Action)

- e. ma meez mat krhe de
I (ERG) table (NOM) break do PF be.s.f.Pres
I have broken the table.

(Volitional Action)

- f. da hagma na palat mat sho
He (GEN) plate (NOM) break be.s.f.Pres
He broke the plate.

(Non Volitional Action)

The action performed by the subjects in (10f as in 10b and 10d) is non-volitional owing to the fact that the subject is not A in those constructions. The action is not intentional thus the non-ergative is implicated on the said subject. The case of the subject is not assigned ergative case despite the fact that the structural requirements for the case assignment have fulfilled. Thus it is proved that the action performed by an ergative subject is always volitional. Non-volitional action on the part of the subject requires the latter to be genitive case, as it happens in (10b, 10d and 10f). Consequently, a very close relation between volitionality and ergativity is obtained. However, there are some constructions which behave quite uniquely with respect to ergativity and transitivity of verb. Consider the following:

11.

Unergative

- a. ma wakhandal
I (ERG) laugh. PL. PST
I laughed.

- b. ma wajaral
I (ERG) weep.PL. PST
I wept.

Unaccusatives

- c. za woda shom
I (NOM) sleep become. 1.s.Pres
I slept.

- d. za woda shawe wom
I (NOM) sleep become 1.s.Pres.PF
I have slept.

- e. za nojorha shawe wom.
I (NOM) ill become 1.s.Pres.PF
I have become ill.

The action performed by subject in (11a-c) is volitional, though the verb looks like intransitive one. So, ergative case is assigned to the subject owing to the fact the subject DP carries agent theta role and the action is volitional. However, the examples in (11c-e) are fine with the nominative case because these verbs are unaccusative whose subject does not carry agent theta role thus no volitional action. So, if we assign nominative case to the subject the A subjects in (11a-c) make the sentences ungrammaticality as it is represented in (12a-b).

12.

- a. *za wakhandal
I (NOM) laugh. PL. PST
I laughed.

- b. *za wajaral
I (NOM) weep.PL. PST
I wept.

In the subsequent sections, ergativity in Pashto is deliberated only, with special focus on the condition under which subject in a clause is assigned ergative case. The conditions consist of tense, aspect, the thematic properties of Subject DP and the thematic properties of verb.

1.3. Morphological Ergativity in Pashto

Pashto is a split ergative language where ergativity is both structural and morphological. Data in (4) show that subject of intransitive verb (S) and subject of transitive verb (A), regardless of having different forms, behave similarly under identical syntactic conditions.

1.3.1. Control

Data in (13) show that both nominative and ergative subject can control in an embedded subject. The typical example of such kind of control is non-finite subject PRO_I which is controlled by subject of the matrix clause.

13.

- a. ma da-nawi kor PRO da aghasto irada
I (ERG) new house-DATto buy decide (f.s)
kari da
do (f.s) be (f.s Pres)
I have decided to buy a new house.
- b. za da nawi kor da aghast irada kom.
I (NOM) new house-DAT to buy decide do (1.s.Pres)
I decide to buy a new house/ I am making my mind to buy a new house.

In both (13a) and (13b) the infinite subject of the embedded clause is controlled by the subject of the matrix clause regardless of the fact that in (13a) the subject is ergative case while in (13b) it is in nominative case.

On the other hand, the ergative and nominative subjects cannot control an embedded subject in a finite clause. Data in (14) show that verb *wai* 'say' in the main clause demands an overt subject in the embedded clause in some situations.

14.

- a. *haghé wai chi PRO ghwakha
He (ERG) say (PST) CP HE meat (f.s)
ba raorhi.
fut bring
He said that he will bring the meat.
- b. haghé wi chi hagma ba ghwakha
He (ERG) say (PST) CP he Fut meat
raorhi.
bring.
He said that he will bring the meat.
- c. taa wi chi tē ba ghwaxa raorhi
You said that you fut meat bring
You said that you will bring the meat.

Thus, it is concluded that ergativity in Pashto is both morphological and structural. Morphological in the sense that an ergative subject is morphologically marked in case the subject is a pronoun, not a noun (proper or common). Structural in the sense that ergative case is assigned to subject in some specific syntactic configuration. In Pashto the structural requirements for ergative is perfect aspect and past tense.

1.3.2. Type of Clause and Ergativity

Type of clause makes no difference to the ergative pattern of a clause. The same ergative pattern is followed both in matrix and embedded clause. As the subject of the transitive clause is assigned ergative case in past tense (both perfect and imperfect past) and perfect aspect in non-past tenses in the main clause, so does happen in the embedded clause. Regardless of the semantic properties of the verb in the matrix clause, the A subject of the embedded clause is assigned ergative case in past and perfect aspects in non-past tenses. Data in (15) show that the type of clause makes no difference to the ergative pattern inside the clause. Once the conditions for ergative case are met, no matter what type of clause it is, ergative case is assigned to its subject.

15.

- a. hagma wai chi hagma ba kitab
He (nom) say cp he (nom) fut book (NOM)
wakhli
buy (3.s)
He says that he will buy a book.
- b. ma wi chi za ba cherg
I (ERG) said CP I (NOM)fut chicken (NOM)
pokh krham
cook do (1.s Pres)
I said that I will cook the chicken.
- c. ma wi chi ma manda krha
I (erg) said that I(erg) run do
I said that I ran.

- d. *za* *waim* *chi ma* *manda wowahala*.
 I (nom) say/saying that I (erg) run beat
 I say that I ran/run.
- e. *za* *waim* *chi* *ma* *cherg* *pokh*
 I (NOM) say CP I (ERG) chicken (s.m) cook
kare *de*
 do (s.m) PF(s.m Pres)
 I say that I have cooked the chicken.

In (15b) the subject of matrix clause is in ergative case while the subject of the embedded clause is in nominative case, in view of the fact that matrix clause is in past tense and the embedded clause in present tense. Similarly, the subject of the matrix clause in (15c) is in nominative case while the subject of the embedded clause is in ergative case in view of the fact that Asp head carries [-IMPF]₁ features and subject is assigned agent theta role which require that the subject of the clause be in ergative case.

1.3.3. Pashto Ergative case Inherent or Structural?

Bobaljik claims that ergativity in SA languages is structural [06]. As It is based on a particular structure of the clause i.e. perfect aspect, past tense. However, it is equally plausible to argue that the case is inherent in the languages including, Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi, Gojri etc owing to the reason that only A subject can bear ergative case marker. [08] [09]

That Subject which takes experiencer role cannot take ergative case as represented in (16). In Gojri, experiencer subject bears -nă which stands for dative and accusative case marker. Similarly, in Pashto too, Genitive case, a case other than ergative, is assigned to experiencer subject.

16.

- a. *zama* *yakhni* *washwa*
 I (GEN) cold be PST
 I felt cold.
- b. **ma* *yakhni* *washwa*
 I (ERG) cold be PST
 I felt cold.
- c. *zama* *pa ser* *dard* *wo*.
 I (GEN) head (DAT) pain be PST
 I was feeling headache.
- d. *pa ma* *taba* *raghali* *wa*.
 I (DAT) fever come FP be s.f Pres
 I was suffering from fever.

In Pashto, ergative case is not represented in form of a clitic like Gojri and other Indo-Aryan languages where ergative case has a special marker. In Urdu, -na is ergative case marker. In Pashto, however, if it is noun (both common and proper); there is no observable difference between the nominative and ergative noun on the other hand, if it is pronoun then the base form is changed so as represented in the table below in (17). Agreement pattern found in the clause determines the case of the subject. If the verb agrees with subject, the latter bears nominative case whereas in case the verb establishes agree-relation with object, the subject then bears ergative case. The following table illustrates the ergative-nominative alternations of pronouns in Pashto.

17.

	Nominative Pronouns	Ergative Pronouns
First person singular	<i>Za</i>	<i>Ma</i>
First person plural	<i>Mong</i>	<i>Mong or monga</i>
Second person singular	<i>Té</i>	<i>Taa</i>
Second person plural	<i>Taso</i>	<i>Taso</i>
Third person singular Masc	<i>Hagha</i>	<i>haghé</i>
FEM	<i>Hagha</i>	<i>haghi</i>
Third person plural	<i>Haghoi</i>	<i>haghoi</i>

From the above table, it is apparent that the ergative form of first person singular pronoun is *ma* (I) while its nominative form is *za* (I). The ergative form of second person singular pronoun is *taa* (you) however, when marked for nominative case it is *té* (you). The ergative and nominative forms of second person plural are isomorphic. The ergative form of third person singular masculine is *haghé* while its nominative form is *hagha* whereas its feminine alternate is *haghi*-depicting a slight difference in the last vowel. The ergative and nominative forms of third person plural are isomorphic.

As it is true for Gojri, in Pashto too, inanimate subject DP cannot be assigned ergative case. This entails that ergative case is an inherent case. Illustrations in (18) confirm that an inanimate subject DP cannot be assigned ergative case.

18.

- a. **kursai* *rotai* *waxwar*.
 chair (ERG) meal (NOM) eat.sg.F. PST
 Chair eats the meal.
- b. **laptop* *woba* *skali* *di*
 laptop (ERG) water (NOM) drink FP be.sg.F. Pres
 Laptop has drunk water.

The examples in (18) demonstrate that ergativity is closely associated with the agent role of the subject. Ergative case cannot be assigned to *Kursi* 'chair' since it is an inanimate entity and thus cannot perform the action of eating. Similarly, laptop being inanimate object cannot perform a volitional action. Thus, *kursai* and *laptop* both cannot be marked with an ergative case, despite the fact that all other requirement of ergative case namely, past tense or perfect aspect, are satisfied. The sole cause of ungrammaticality of constructions in (18) is that the subject is an inanimate entity.

Thus it is concluded that in Pashto, like Gojri and other Indo-Aryan languages, ergative case is both structural and inherent. Structural means that the subject takes ergative case when the structural prerequisites for ergative case i.e. past tense and/or perfect aspect are met. Further, it is essential to have subject with agent theta role. Experiencer subject cannot be assigned ergative case. Moreover, like Gojri, in Pashto too ergative case is not allowed on an inanimate subject DP. However, there is a striking differences between Pashto and the Indo-Aryan Languages i.e. Pashto allows ergative case on the subject of unergative verbs which the Indo-Aryan languages does not allow the said.

1.4. Ergative Case Assignment in Pashto

Up till now, it has been established that in Pashto ergative case is both inherent and structural. The thematic requirement of ergativity is that only A subject can be assigned ergative case. The subject DP enters the derivation with an uninterpretable and unvalued features that need to be valued and deleted in the course of time. For two reasons these uninterpretable features are checked and valued; firstly, at PF, an DP cannot be pronounced unless the case that it bears is valued and secondly, the deletion of the uninterpretable features at LF is possible only when the case features are valued. This phenomenon of case checking is in line with the claim of Chomsky (1995) and Nunes (1995: 231), who argue that uninterpretable features are illegitimate, at LF.

Following Chomsky [13] [15] [16] it is assumed that T assigns nominative case to the closest DP it C-commands and which does not already have a case value. In nominative-accusative constructions subject is the closest available DP is hence has a scope over other DPs to assigned nominative case. On the other hand, little *v* assigns agent theta role to the subject and V assigns accusative case to the object in transitive constructions.

Conditions on ergativity in Pashto can be generalized as in (19).

19.

- a. Ergative case is assigned to subject DP that bears agent theta role and that the Asp head carries [-IMPF], or otherwise T head is marked for [+PST].
- b. However, if Asp is marked [+IMPF] ergative case is still assigned when T head is marked for past tense

Bukhari & Akhtar (2008) postulates the following generalization about ergativity in Gojri.

20.

The ergative case is assigned to a subject when (a) the Asp head is marked for [-IMPf] and (b) *v* assigns agent theta role to the subject DP.

The given generalization about ergativity in Pashto entails that ergativity in Pashto is relevant to tense, aspect and the semantic property of the subject DP_i. Moreover, in Pashto, ergativity is relevant to agentivity rather than transitivity. The subjects of unergative and accusative verbs have been treated differently in Pashto while in Gojri and other Indo- Aryan languages they are treated the same. In Pashto A is treated differently than other argument like O and S in past/perfect aspects. The rest of the possible conditions like type of clause and mood are irrelevant in this regard.

The aspectual system found in Pashto is not as rich as that of Indo-Aryan languages. There are only two aspects in Pashto; namely, perfect and imperfect. The aspect head realizes it aspect as [-IMPf] and imperfect as [+IMP]. So it is very convenient to capture both the features as binary features [+/-IMPf] as Bukhari & Akhtar (2008) proposes for Gojri. When the aspect head has the value [-IMPf], the subject DP in the spec/vP is assigned ergative case. So perfect aspect is realized as [-IMPf], while imperfect aspect is realized as [+IMPf]. In this way, ergative case is assigned to subject in perfect aspect. However, if the aspect head carries [+IMPf] features and T head carries [PST], the subject is assigned ergative case regardless of the features that the Asp head carries. In case the T head carries [Pres], then the aspect head needs to be in [-IMPf], otherwise ergative case is not assigned. Thus, it implies that ergative case is assigned in both in past perfect and imperfect constructions.

As it happens in Gojri and Maharati, in Pashto aspect morphology is always visible as a suffix on verb. Consider the following.

21.

- a. *Kaloo-ne ka kepyo*
kaloo (ERG) grass (NOM) cut PST
Kaloo cuts the grass
Gojri. (Bukhari.2008)
- b. *ma waxa rebali di.*
I (ERG) grass (NOM) cut PF be.1.sg.M.Pres
I have cut the grass.

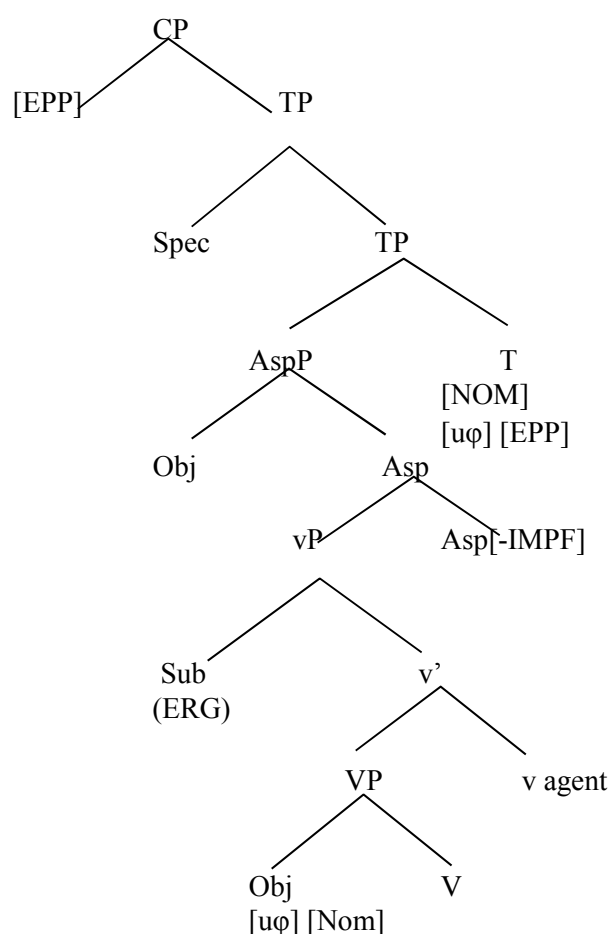
From the above discussion it is concluded that in Pashto, ergative case is based on agentivity, tense. Perfect aspect is considered to base in past tense thus aspect cannot be considered to have bearing on the ergativity pattern found in Pashto (Dixon, 1994). In Gojri, ergativity is based on agentivity and aspect only. Tense plays no role in this regard. Bukhari & Akhtar (2000) argue that past tense always combines with perfect aspect but in Pashto we cannot combine past imperfect with perfect since in Pashto imperfect aspect includes both progressive and habitual which are treated separately in Gojri. In Gojri, ergative case is assigned only in past habitual, not in past progressive, in addition to perfect aspect in past and non-past tenses. However, in Pashto, ergative case is assigned in both habitual and progressive aspects in past tense in addition to perfect aspect aspects in past and non-past tense. Consider the following examples.

22.

- a. *ma biskat xwarhal.*
I (ERG) biscuit (NOM) eat. 3.s.f PST
I was eating the biscuit.
- b. *ma biskat wexwarha.*
I (ERG) meal (NOM) eat. 3.s.f PST
I ate the meal.
- c. *ma rotai xwarhali wa.*
I (ERG) meal (NOM) eat.PF be.3. S.f PST
I had eaten the meal.

The following structure illustrates ergative case assignment in Pashto.

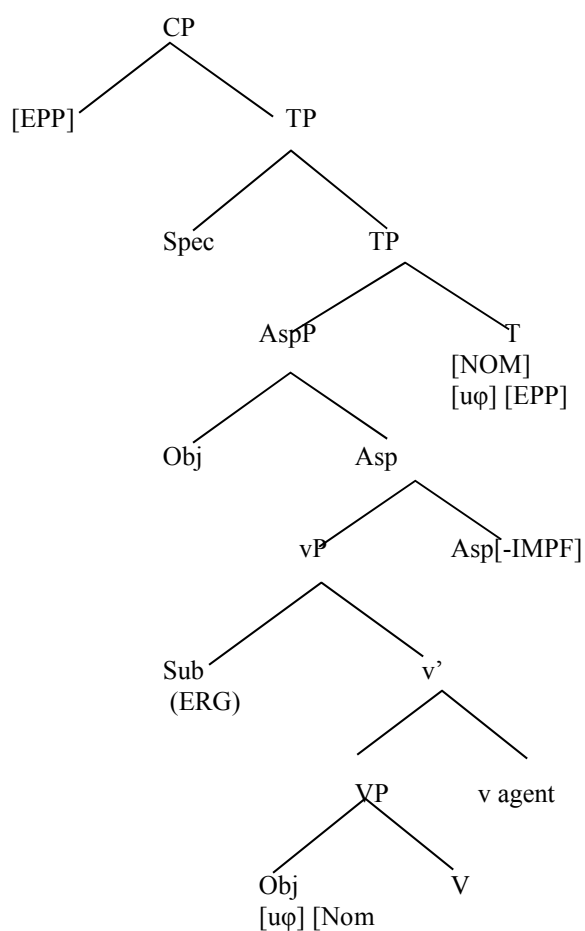
23.



(This diagram has been adopted from [8] and applied to Pashto data in modified form)

First of all, the verb merges with object DP *xat*, forming VP. Next, the *v* merges with vP, to form v' the latter then merges with its specifier subject DP to form vP. At this stage in the derivation, the little *v* assigns agent theta role to the subject; one of the prerequisite for ergative case marking on subject DP in the spec/v position. Then, vP merges with Asp to form AspP. Provided that the Asp head carries [-IMPF] features, ergative case is assigned to the subject concurrently hence the requirements for ergative case are met. Since in the above given structure Asp head bears [-IMPF] features, the subject is assigned ergative case. However, if the Asp head bears [+IMPF] feature, then the features of the T head have to be checked. If the latter is marked for past tense [+PST] then ergative case is assigned to the subject regardless of the features of Asp head, since in Pashto ergative case is assigned to A subject in past tense; in all aspects as in the following structure.

24.



(This diagram has been adopted from [8] and applied to Pashto data in modified form)

wo and *de* represent past and present tense respectively. It is, therefore, plausible to argue that in Pashto tense is realized with a verbal clitic like *de* and *wo* as it holds for English. In Pashto –*wo* is a verbal clitic positioned at the end of the clause as in (24c). However, in progressive aspect it behaves like a full verb deriving the de-adjectival verb from the root. The habitual aspect in past tense is shown with the tense marker attached to the verb as a prefix as in (24).

25.

- a. *ma poster walagawalo*
 I (ERG) poster (NOM) paste (Hab)
 I pasted the poster.
- b. *ma chat lagawal(w)o*
 I (ERG) chart (NOM) paste (Prog)
 I pasted the chart.
- c. *ma pato lagawale wo*
 I (ERG) picture (NOM) paste PF be. sg.M.PST
 I had pasted the picture.

1.5. Case, Agreement and the Derivation of Clause in Pashto

This section focuses on case, agreement and derivation of Pashto clause along with different patterns of case marking and their bearings on verbal agreement.

Only a caseless DP is assigned Nominative case by T. In this regard, [08][09] maintain that nominative case has a special relation to agreement in many SAL languages. Accusative case is commonly realized by an overt case marking whereas the nominative DP does not exhibit any case marking. Following Chomsky, it is anticipated that structural case is assigned to an DP by functional head such as T while lexical case is assigned to an DP by little *v*. Accusative case being a lexical case is assigned to an object DP by little *v* while ergative case is assigned by Asp head when the structural and lexical formalities for its assignment are fulfilled. The prerequisites for ergative case in Pashto are those which holds for Brushaskib [20] and different from those of Gojri [08] [09]. In case the T head carries [+PST] features, ergative case is assigned regardless of the features of the Asp head. However, if the T head carries [-PST] features then in order for the subject to be assigned ergative, the Asp head must be marked with [-IMPF] features.

The rules of case and agreement of Pashto are as follows.

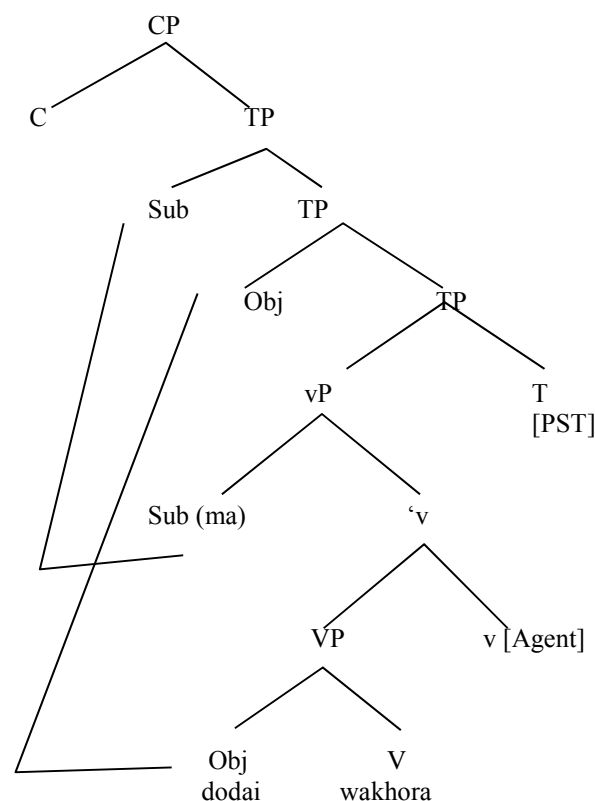
- d. Nominative DP values the phi-features of T, irrespective of the grammatical function of the latter; it may be the subject or the object.
- e. Following the economy principle, the verb agrees with the highest available nominative DP
- f. If a clause does not have nominative DP at subject position which is the highest position in the clause then the verb agrees with nominative DP at object position. In case of double objects, the verb agrees with direct object which is always nominative case in Pashto.
- g. Accusative case is assigned to an object by little *v* and is covertly checked if the clause take single object (Chomsky.1995)
- h. If the subject DP is assigned experiencer role instead, Genitive case is assigned to it concurrently.
- i. If the little *v* assigns agent theta role to its external argument and the Asp head carries [-IMP] features then the subject DP is valued for ergative case.
- j. However, if the T head is marked with [+PST] features then the case of subject is valued as ergative regardless of the features of Asp head.
- k. Ergative case is assigned to the A subject regardless of the transitivity of the verb. Thus the subject DP of unergative also requires ergative case.

The above mentioned generalizations about Pashto are outlined within the framework of Minimalism. As it is the case with Gojri [09] in Pashto all head final word order such as TP, VP are derived by linearization of their complements to their left. In inflection layer all the complements are linearized on left. Same is the case with specifier. However, being a head final projection, complementizer is quite different from the rest. Complementizer linearizes its complement on it right.

1.5.1. Ergative- Nominative Constructions

As the split is on tense, in past tense the A bears ergative case both in perfective and imperfective aspects. In Indo-Aryan languages, conversly, A bears ergative case only when the aspect is perfect. Structure in (5) illustrates how ergative-nominative construction in past tense is derived.

26.



(This diagram has been adopted from [8] and applied to Pashto data in modified form)

The head V merges with its complement DP, *dodai* 'meal' to form VP. Subsequently, the little v merges with VP to form v' projection. Then, the v' merges with its specifier DP to form vP. At this stage in the derivation, the little v assigns agent theta role its Specifier. After that, vP merges with T that has [+PST] features, forming TP. As the requirements for ergative case have been fulfilled, thus ergative case is assigned to the subject DP. In this kind of constructions, ergative case is valued on subject due to the reason that the T head carries [+PST] features. In the next step, object merges with TP to form another TP which in turn merges with subject DP to project TP. TP merges with C to form CP. Object at spec/T position values the case feature of the head and thus get nominative case, the subject DP is already assigned ergative case.

1.5.2. Ergative-Accusative Constructions

Constructions, in which subject is marked for ergative case and object is marked for accusative while T head carries default case marking are called ergative-accusative constructions. The following examples illustrate Ergative-Accusative constructions in Pashto.

27.

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. | <i>ma</i>
I (erg) | <i>asman ta</i>
sky (Dat) | <i>wakatal.</i>
look. PST |
| | I looked at the sky. | | |
| b. | <i>ma</i>
I (erg) | <i>genai ta</i>
girl (Dat) | <i>wakatal.</i>
look. Pst |
| | I looked at the girl. | | |
| c. | <i>ma</i>
I (erg) | <i>largi</i>
wood (Dat) | <i>waswazawal.</i>
fire. Pst |
| | I have fired the wood. | | |
| d. | <i>ma</i>
I (erg) | <i>mashoman</i>
children (Dat) | <i>wayarawal.</i>
scared.pst |
| | I scared the children. | | |

The given examples illustrate default case marking in Pashto. The verb does not established agree-relation with none of its arguments. The subject DP and object DP carry ergative and dative cases respectively thus not eligible for nominative case assignment and the consequent agree-relation with T. Consequently, the T reflects only the tense; no other grammatical features are visible on the T head. In Gojri and other Indo-Aryan Languages the default case on the T means something more than just tense features [08].

1.5.3. Nominative –Accusative Constructions

That construction in which the subject DP is marked for nominative case while object is marked for accusative is allowed in Pashto. Ergative-accusative and nominative-nominative constructions are not allowed in Pashto. Nominative-accusative type of constructions is only permissible in imperfect non-past tenses, since in past tense and non-past perfective constructions the subject DP of the transitive clause bears ergative case. Examples in (30) illustrate nominative-accusative constructions.

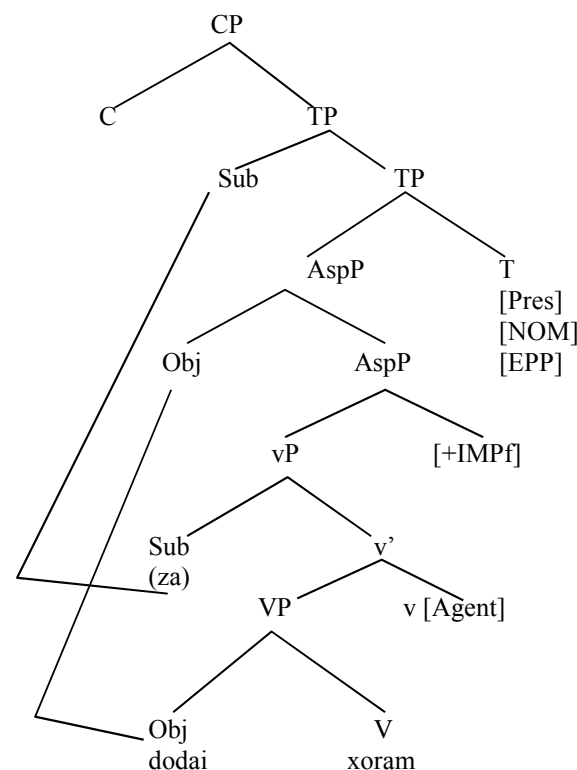
28.

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| a. | <i>mung</i>
We (NOM) | <i>manhi</i>
apple (ACC) | <i>xro</i>
eat. 1.PL.Pres |
| | We eat/are eating apples. | | |
| b. | <i>Shahid</i>
Shahid (NOM) | <i>jami</i>
clothes (ACC) | <i>estri kai.</i>
iron do 3.S.F.Pres |
| | Shahid irons/ is ironing clothes. | | |

- c. *za* *dodai* *paxom*
 I (NOM) meal (ACC) cook. 1.S. Pres
 I am cooking the meal.
- l. *haghoi* *moter* *rakagi*
 They (NOM)car (ACC) drag. 3.PL.Pres
 They are dragging the car.

The presence of nominative argument at subject position implies that subject DP values the unvalued and uninterpretable features on T head namely, case, phi- and EPP features. Accordingly, an agree relation between subject and T head is established. Similarly, the uninterpretable features of T head are valued; the subject gets nominative case from T. The agree-relation between subject DP and T is morphologically reflected on the verb. The following illustration shows how this agreement is projected.

29.



In the given structure, the requirements for ergativity case assignment are not satisfied, as the Asp head is marked with [+IMPf] while ergative case requires [-IMPf] on Asp head and the tense head is marked with [Pres] while ergativity requires past tense as per generalization no.(f) and (g) in section (4.5). The little v assigns accusative case to the object DP. EPP features on T head triggers the movement of object DP out of vP to spec/Asp position by tucking under DP. Correspondingly, the subject DP moves out of spec/v to spec/TP position by merging with TP, tucking under C, so that it could value the case and phi-features of T and fulfill the EPP requirement of C. So, consequent upon the valuation of the grammatical features on T head subsequent to its matching with the features of its specifier's DP and accusative case assignment to the object DP, the derivation converges at LF.

1.6. Conclusion:

Thus it is concluded that in Pashto ergativity is conditioned on tense. All the past tense base constructions i.e. preterit, pluperfect, past participle etc requires it's a subject to bear ergative case. Ergative case is assigned to the subject of an unergative verb too. This feature of the language is in striking contrast with Gojri, Hindi, Punjabi etc.

Following the conventions of Minimalist Programme, it is proposed that in Pashto nominative and accusative DPs are raised to specifier T position to check its cases. Nominative DP checks its case against the corresponding T head. The dislocation of accusative or ergative DP is triggered by EPP features, since EPP is the only feature which triggers the dislocation of DP in ergative and accusative constructions. The same T head checks the features of both subject and object DPs. In case of nominative subject, the subject DP moves out of vP slot merging with TP, tucking under C. In this way, it values the phi-features of T head and satisfies the EPP requirement. The accusative DP, on the other hand, checks its case in situ. However, the EPP features on T head triggers its movement out of VP merging with AspP under T. The little v assigns agent theta role to the subject and accusative case to the object. In past tense object gets absolutive case while subject gets ergative. In ergative constructions, object is raised to spec/T position, tucking under TP. Once the object has checked its features against T and got nominative case from the latter and the subject DP in the specifier/v position is already assigned agent theta role, ergative case is assigned to subject DP. In present tense, in case, the subject DP is assigned agent theta role by little v and at the same time the Asp head carries [-IMPf] features, the subject DP is assigned ergative case. Thus T head matches its features with object DP and as a result assigns nominative case to object. The results of this paper are consistent with the assumptions of Minimalism [13]

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