

# Argument Encoding in Syntax II: Optimality Theory

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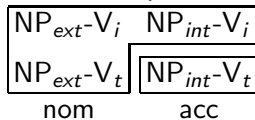
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# Basic Question

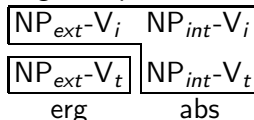
How can existing patterns of argument encoding be derived from theories of theories of case and agreement?

accusative pattern



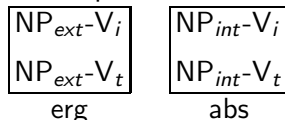
(Icelandic, Navajo)

ergative pattern



(Archi, Sierra Popoluca)

active pattern



(Basque, Guaraní)

- 1 split ergativity based on argument-type (Dyirbal)
- 2 split ergativity based on tense/aspect (Hindi)
- 3 split ergativity based on clause type (Sierra Popoluca) clause-type based

# Optimality Theoretic Analyses

Answer given in Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky (2004), Smolensky & Legendre (2006)):

All natural languages obey exactly the same constraints on argument encoding. For instance:

- (1) a. All languages have a constraint that requires  $NP_{ext-V_t}$  to be marked by **ergative** CASE.
- b. All languages have a constraint that requires  $NP_{int-V_t}$  to be marked by **accusative** CASE.

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- b. All languages have a constraint that requires  $NP_{int-V_t}$  to be marked by **accusative** CASE.

However: Constraints are violable and ranked. Different constraint rankings produce different grammars with different argument encoding systems.

## Relevant literature:

- Kiparsky (1999)
- Wunderlich (2000)
- Stiebels (2000; 2002)
- Woolford (2001)
- Lee (2003)

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... and:

- de Hoop & Malchukov (2006): Case Marking Strategies

Upcoming talk:

Andrej Malchukov (MPI-EVA) will present this paper on Wednesday, November 8, 2006 (18:15, GWZ 4.415) in the Graduiertenkolleg lecture series.

- (2) Basic assumptions:
- a. Constraints are **violable**.
  - b. Constraints are **ranked**.
  - c. Constraints are **universal**.
  - d. Wellformedness (grammaticality) of a linguistic expression is decided by a **competition** of forms: The candidate with the best constraint profile in a given candidate set is optimal (= grammatical), all other candidates are suboptimal (= ungrammatical).

# Optimality Theory: Definitions

(3) **Optimality:**

A candidate  $C_i$  is optimal (= grammatical) iff there is no candidate  $C_j$  in the same candidate set that has a better constraint profile.



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A candidate  $C_i$  is optimal (= grammatical) iff there is no candidate  $C_j$  in the same candidate set that has a better constraint profile.

## (4) **Constraint Profile:**

A candidate  $C_j$  has a better constraint profile than a candidate  $C_i$  iff there is a constraint  $Con_k$  such that (a) and (b) hold:

- a.  $C_j$  satisfies  $Con_k$  better than  $C_i$ .
- b. There is no constraint  $Con_l$  ranked higher than  $Con_k$  on which  $C_i$  and  $C_j$  differ.

*Note:*

$C_j$  satisfies a constraint  $Con$  better than  $C_i$  iff  $C_j$  has fewer violations of  $Con$ . This implies the case that  $C_i$  violates  $Con$  once (or more often), and  $C_j$  does not violate  $Con$  at all.

# Organization of the Grammar



# Organization of the Grammar



This presupposes that in addition to the constraints employed by the Gen component, which are inviolable and unranked, the H-Eval component relies on a system of constraints that are violable and ranked (and, by assumption, universal) in order to determine the best constraint profile, hence, optimality. The ranking among the violable local constraints of the H-Eval component is indicated by the symbol  $\gg$ ; the H-Eval constraints themselves are typically written with small capitals. Optimality-theoretic competitions are often illustrated by tables (so-called **tableaux**); optimality of a candidate is indicated by the **pointing finger** (here:  $\rightarrow$ ); violation of a constraint is shown by a star **\*** in the appropriate column of the table; if this violation is fatal for a candidate (i.e., responsible for its suboptimality), an exclamation mark **!** is added. In the abstract H-Eval competition in table  $T_1$ , in which the candidate set consists of  $C_1$ – $C_5$ ,  $C_1$  emerges as the optimal candidate: It avoids a violation of the high-ranked constraints A and B (unlike  $C_3$ – $C_5$ ), and it minimizes a violation of the low-ranked constraint C (unlike  $C_2$ ). Hence, there is no competing candidate with a better constraint profile than  $C_1$ .

*T<sub>1</sub>: Determining optimality*

Candidates	A	B	C
→ C <sub>1</sub>			*
C <sub>2</sub>			**!
C <sub>3</sub>		*!	
C <sub>4</sub>	*!		
C <sub>5</sub>		*!	*

*T<sub>1</sub>: Determining optimality*

Candidates	A	B	C
→ C <sub>1</sub>			*
C <sub>2</sub>			**!
C <sub>3</sub>		*!	
C <sub>4</sub>	*!		
C <sub>5</sub>		*!	*

*T<sub>2</sub>: Reranking*

Candidates	A	C	B
C <sub>1</sub>		*!	
C <sub>2</sub>		*!*	
→ C <sub>3</sub>			*
C <sub>4</sub>	*!		
C <sub>5</sub>		*!	*

# Important Concepts 1

## Constraint reranking = parametrization:

By reranking the constraints B and C in  $T_1$ , candidate  $C_3$  emerges as the optimal candidate. Reranking of constraints forms the basis of the concept of parametrization in optimality-theoretic syntax.

# Important Concepts 1

## Constraint reranking = parametrization:

By reranking the constraints B and C in  $T_1$ , candidate  $C_3$  emerges as the optimal candidate. Reranking of constraints forms the basis of the concept of parametrization in optimality-theoretic syntax.

## Non-cumulativity:

A further characteristic feature of this approach is that it is essentially non-cumulative; i.e., no number of violations of a low-ranked constraint can outweigh a single violation of a higher-ranked constraint. Thus, suppose that there were an additional, lowest-ranked constraint D in  $T_1$  that  $C_1$  violates, say, five times, and that  $C_2$ – $C_5$  do not violate at all. This would not undermine  $C_1$ 's optimality.

# Important Concepts 2

## Candidates and candidate sets:

- 1 The input defines the **candidate set** (for present purposes).
- 2 The competing **candidates** are phrase-structure trees (sentences)



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## Two types of constraints:

- 1 markedness constraints
- 2 faithfulness constraints

# Woolford's (2001) Analysis

Background assumptions:

- 1 There are (ordered) markedness constraints that block the realization of cases.
- 2 There are faithfulness constraints that demand the realization of case specifications in the input (lexical, inherent case).
- 3 Nominative/absolute and accusative are structural cases; dative and ergative (and genitive) are inherent cases (that must be specified on a verb).
- 4 Every NP must be case-marked.

# Woolford (2001) on Dative Subjects 1

- (5)
- a. **\*DAT** (“\*Dative”):  
Avoid dative case.
  - b. **\*ACC** (“\*Accusative”):  
Avoid accusative case.
  - c. **\*NOM** (“\*Nominative”):  
Avoid nominative case.
  - d. **FAITH-LEX**:  
Realize a case feature specified on V in the input.
  - e. **FAITH-LEX**<sub>trans</sub>:  
Realize a case feature specified on transitive V in the input.

## Woolford (2001) on Dative Subjects 2

- (6) a. *Ranking in Icelandic:*  
FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> ≫ FAITH-LEX ≫ \*DAT ≫ \*ACC ≫ \*NOM

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- b. *Ranking in Japanese:*  
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- b. *Ranking in Japanese:*  
FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> » \*DAT » FAITH-LEX » \*ACC » \*NOM
- c. *Ranking in English:*  
\*DAT » FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> » FAITH-LEX » \*ACC » \*NOM

## Woolford (2001) on Dative Subjects 3: Icelandic

- (7) a. Bátnum hvolfdi  
boat<sub>dat</sub> capsized
- b. Barninu batnadhí veikin  
child<sub>dat</sub> recovered from disease<sub>nom</sub>

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*T<sub>3</sub>: Intransitive V in Icelandic; inherent dative*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	FAITH-LEX	*DAT	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>			*		
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>		*!			*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>		*!		*	



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→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>			*		
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>		*!			*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>		*!		*	

*T<sub>4</sub>: Transitive V in Icelandic; inherent dative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	FAITH-LEX	*DAT	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub>			*		*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>			*	*!	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>	*!	*		*	*

## Woolford (2001) on Dative Subjects 4: Japanese

- (8) a. Akatyan-ga/\*-ni moo arukeru  
baby<sub>nom/dat</sub> already walk can
- b. Taroo-ni eigo-ga hanaseru  
Taro<sub>dat</sub> English<sub>nom</sub> speak can

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$T_5$ : *Intransitive V in Japanese; no inherent dative*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	*DAT	FAITH-LEX	*ACC	*NOM
C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>		*!			
→ C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>			*		*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>			*	*!	

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$T_5$ : *Intransitive V in Japanese; no inherent dative*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	*DAT	FAITH-LEX	*ACC	*NOM
C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>		*!			
→ C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>			*		*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub>			*	*!	

$T_6$ : *Transitive V in Japanese; inherent dative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	*DAT	FAITH-LEX	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub>		*			*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>		*		*!	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+dat]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>	*!		*	*	*

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns: 1

- (9) \***ERG** (“\*Ergative”):  
Avoid ergative case.

Note:

- 1 \***ERG** is ranked high in languages with an accusative argument encoding system.
- 2 The ergative is an inherent case; it must be specified for an external argument on V (and it can be specified only for an external argument).

## Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns: 2

### (10) Standard ergative pattern: Niuean (Polynesian)

- a. Ko e tohitohi a au (he) mogo-nei  
PRES write NOM I on time this  
'I am writing at the moment.'
- b. To lagomatai he ekekafo a ia  
FUT help ERG doctor NOM him  
'The doctor will help him.'

(Seiter (1980))

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### (11) Active ergative pattern: Basque (Isolate):

#### (12) *Intransitive and transitive verbs in Basque:*

- a. Jon-Ø etorri da  
Jon-ABS come:PTCP.PRF be:3.SG.INTR  
'Jon came.'
- b. Jon-ek saltatu du  
Jon-ERG jump:PTCP.PRF have:3.SG.TR  
'Jon jumped.'
- c. Jon-ek ardo-a-Ø ekarri du  
Jon-ERG wine-DET-ABS bring:PTCP.PRF have:3.SG.TR  
'Jon brought the wine.' (Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina (2003, 364))

## Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns: 3

- (13) a. *Ranking in Niuean (standard ergative pattern):*  
FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> ≫ \*ERG ≫ FAITH-LEX



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- (13) a. *Ranking in Niuean (standard ergative pattern):*  
FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> » \*ERG » FAITH-LEX
- b. *Ranking in Basque (active ergative pattern):*  
FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> » FAITH-LEX » \*ERG

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- b. *Ranking in Basque (active ergative pattern):*  
FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> » FAITH-LEX » \*ERG
- c. *Ranking in English (accusative pattern):*  
\*ERG » FAITH-LEX<sub>tr</sub> » FAITH-LEX

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns 4: Niuean

$T_7$ : *Intransitive V in Niuean; no ergative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	*ERG	FAITH-LEX	*ACC	*NOM
C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>		*!			
→ C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>			*		*

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns 4: Niuean

$T_7$ : *Intransitive V in Niuean; no ergative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	*ERG	FAITH-LEX	*ACC	*NOM
C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>		*!			
→ C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>			*		*

$T_8$ : *Transitive V in Niuean; inherent ergative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	*ERG	FAITH-LEX	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub>		*			*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>		*		*!	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>	*!		*	*	*

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns 5: Basque

$T_9$ : *Intransitive V in Basque; inherent ergative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	FAITH-LEX	*ERG	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>			*		
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>		*!			*

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns 5: Basque

$T_9$ : *Intransitive V in Basque; inherent ergative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	FAITH-LEX	*ERG	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>			*		
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub>		*!			*

$T_{10}$ : *Transitive V in Basque; inherent ergative on NP<sub>ext</sub>*

Candidates	FAITH-LEX <sub>tr</sub>	FAITH-LEX	*ERG	*ACC	*NOM
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub>			*		*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>			*	*!	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> V <sub>[+erg]</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub>	*!	*		*	*

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns 6: Hindi

## (14) Aspect-based split ergativity in Hindi

- a. Raam                      toTii                      khaataa  
Ram.MASC-NOM bread.FEM-ACC eat.IMP.MASC  
thaa  
be.PAST.MASC  
'Ram (habitually) ate bread.'
- b. Raam-ne roTii              khaayii              thii  
Ram-ERG bread-NOM eat.PERF.FEM be.PAST.FEM  
'Ram had eaten bread.'
- (Mahajan (1990))

# Woolford (2001) on Ergative Patterns 7: Hindi

Assumptions:

- 1 There is another constraint **FAITH-LEX<sub>perf</sub>**.
- 2 Not all verbs with an external argument NP have an ergative case feature for this argument (this handles exceptions).
- 3 **FAITH-LEX<sub>perf</sub>** is the only **FAITH-LEX** constraint outranking **\*ERG** in Hindi.

(15) Ranking in **Hindi**:

**FAITH-LEX<sub>perf</sub>**  $\gg$  **\*ERG**  $\gg$  **FAITH-LEX**, **\*ACC**



# Woolford (2001) on Person-based Splits

## Person-based split ergativity in Dyirbal:

In Dyirbal, NP<sub>ext</sub> of V<sub>t</sub> is marked ergative (-*ngu*) if it is a 3rd person pronoun or an item to the right of it on the person/animacy scale. NP<sub>int</sub> of V<sub>t</sub> is marked accusative (-*na*) if it is a 1st or 2nd person pronoun. All other types of argument NP remain without an overt marker (see Dixon (1972; 1994)).

Assumption (p. 534, following Comrie):

“All transitive subjects in Dyirbal have ergative Case that is simply not morphologically realized on first- and second-person pronouns.”

(p. 535:) “My conclusion is that (virtually) all subject splits (and some object splits) involve an alternation between realizing or not realizing one abstract Case.”

# Stiebels (2000; 2002): Lexical Decomposition Grammar

Background assumptions (Wunderlich, Kiparsky):

- 1  $\Theta$ -roles are characterized by **contextual features** derived from argument structures (that involve lexical decomposition):  $[\pm hr]$ ,  $[\pm lr]$  ('there is a higher role; there is a lower role').
- 2 Cases are defined in terms of the same primitive features; cases match  $\Theta$ -role specifications as much as possible (specificity).

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- 2 Cases are defined in terms of the same primitive features; cases match  $\Theta$ -role specifications as much as possible (specificity).

(16)  *$\Theta$ -roles in lexical entries of verbs:*

a. *sleep*:  $\langle \theta_1 \rangle$

$[-hr, -lr]$

b. *read*:  $\langle \theta_1, \theta_2 \rangle$

$[-hr, +lr]$        $[+hr, -lr]$

c. *give*:  $\langle \theta_1, \theta_2, \theta_3 \rangle$

$[-hr, +lr]$        $[+hr, +lr]$        $[+hr, -lr]$

# Cases in Lexical Decomposition Grammar

(17) Cases:

NOM	[-]	
ACC	[+hr]	
ERG	[+lr]	
DAT	[+hr]	[+lr]

# Stiebels (2000; 2002) on Constraints

## (18) Faithfulness constraints:

- a. **IDENT([hr]):**  
The value of a [hr] feature of a  $\Theta$ -role  $\alpha$  in the input must not conflict with the value of the [hr] feature of an argument bearing  $\alpha$  in the output.
- b. **IDENT([lr]):**  
The value of a [lr] feature of a  $\Theta$ -role  $\alpha$  in the input must not conflict with the value of the [lr] feature of an argument bearing  $\alpha$  in the output .
- c. **MAX([+hr]):**  
A [+hr] specification of a  $\Theta$ -role  $\alpha$  in the input must appear on the argument bearing  $\alpha$  in the output.
- d. **MAX([+lr]):**  
A [+lr] specification of a  $\Theta$ -role  $\alpha$  in the input must appear on the argument bearing  $\alpha$  in the output.

## (19) Markedness constraints:

- a. **\*[+hr]:**  
[+hr] must not appear in the output.
- b. **\*[+lr]:**  
[+lr] must not appear in the output.
- c. **UNIQUENESS:** A case can show up only once per clause.

# Stiebels (2000; 2002): Naive Predictions

## Predictions:

- If there were only faithfulness constraints, every language would have both ergative (for  $NP_{ext}-V_t$ ) and accusative (for  $NP_{int}-V_t$ ) for the arguments of transitive verbs.
- Nominative should always be optimal for the sole argument of an intransitive verb.
- Dative should always be optimal for the intermediate argument with ditransitive verbs.

Markedness constraints ensure that these consequences can sometimes be avoided:  $*[+hr]$  blocks accusative;  $*[+lr]$  blocks ergative.

# Deriving Specificity Effects 1

$T_{11}$ : *Accusative pattern: transitive verbs*

<i>read</i> : [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	IDENT([hr])	IDENT([lr])	MAX([+hr])	MAX([+lr])
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V				*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V			*!	*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!		*	*
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V	*!			*
C <sub>5</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> V		*!		*
C <sub>6</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V	*!			
C <sub>7</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> V	*!	*		
↪ C <sub>8</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V				

# Deriving Specificity Effects 2

$T_{12}$ : *Accusative pattern: ditransitive verbs*

<i>give</i> : [-hr,+lr],[+hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	IDENT([hr])	IDENT([lr])	MAX([+hr])	MAX([+lr])
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V				*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V				**!
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V			*!	*
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*!	**
C <sub>5</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> V		*!		*
C <sub>6</sub> : NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V	*!			
C <sub>7</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> NP <sub>dat</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V	*!			*



# Deriving Specificity Effects 3

$T_{13}$ : *Ergative pattern: transitive verbs*

<i>read</i> : [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	IDENT([hr])	IDENT([lr])	MAX([+hr])	MAX([+lr])
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V			*	
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V			*!	*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!		*	*
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>acc</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V	*!			*
C <sub>5</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>erg</sub> V		*!		*
↪ C <sub>6</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V				

# Stiebels (2000; 2002) on Accusative vs. Ergative Patterns

## *T<sub>14</sub>: Nominative/accusative pattern*

V: [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	UNIQU	MAX([+hr])	*[+hr]	*[+lr]	MAX([+lr])
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*		*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V		*!		*	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*	*!	
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!	*			*

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V: [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	UNIQU	MAX([+hr])	*[+hr]	*[+lr]	MAX([+lr])
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*		*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V		*!		*	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*	*!	
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!	*			*

## *T<sub>15</sub>: Ergative/absolute pattern*

V: [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	UNIQU	MAX([+lr])	*[+lr]	*[+hr]	MAX([+hr])
C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V		*!		*	
→ C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V			*		*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*!	*	
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!	*			*

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## *T<sub>14</sub>: Nominative/accusative pattern*

V: [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	UNIQ	MAX([+hr])	*[+hr]	*[+lr]	MAX([+lr])
→ C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*		*
C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V		*!		*	
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*	*!	
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!	*			*

## *T<sub>15</sub>: Ergative/absolute pattern*

V: [-hr,+lr],[+hr,-lr]	UNIQ	MAX([+lr])	*[+hr]	*[+hr]	MAX([+hr])
C <sub>1</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V		*!		*	
→ C <sub>2</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V			*		*
C <sub>3</sub> : NP <sub>erg</sub> NP <sub>acc</sub> V			*!	*	
C <sub>4</sub> : NP <sub>nom</sub> NP <sub>nom</sub> V	*!	*			*

↪ Under which rankings are C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>4</sub> predicted to become optimal?

# Stiebels (2000; 2002) on Splits 1

## Strategy:

The existing constraints are relativized with respect to certain features. The more fine-grained versions of the constraints (which are ranked higher than the general versions) then derive (e.g.) person-based split ergativity in Dyirbal and aspect-based split ergativity in Hindi.

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(20) Some further constraints:

- a.  $*[+I_r]/[+1]$   
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- b. **\*[+hr]/[-anim]**  
(‘Avoid accusative marking in third person inanimate contexts’)
- c. **\*[+lr]/[-perf]**  
(‘Avoid ergative marking in non-perfect contexts.’)



# Stiebels (2000; 2002) on Splits 2

## Notes:

- 1 In contrast to what we have seen with Woolford (2001), this implies that, e.g., first and third person NP<sub>ext</sub>-V<sub>t</sub>'s have a different case in Dyrbal.
- 2 Kiparsky (1999) has an opposite constraint with a similar effect; see (21).

(21) **Max([+lr])/[+perf]:**  
(‘Realize ergative marking in perfect contexts.’)

# Lee's (2003) Analysis

The analysis is developed within **OT-LFG** (Bresnan (2001), Sells (2001)).  
An assumption taken over from work in LFG is that **cases (or case markers) have core meanings.**

(22) **ERG:**

- a. highest argument role
- b. volitional agent
- c. causer

(23) **ACC:**

- a. not highest argument role
- b. proto-patient

(24) **DAT:**

- a. goal
- b. sentience
- c. not a volitional agent
- d. not a causer

(25) **NOM:** –

# Lee (2003) on Hindi 1

What we have seen so far (Woolford (2001)):

## (26) Aspect-based split ergativity in Hindi

- a. Raam                      toTii                      khaataa  
Ram.MASC-NOM bread.FEM-ACC eat.IMP.MASC  
thaa  
be.PAST.MASC  
'Ram (habitually) ate bread.'
- b. Raam-ne roTii                      khaayii                      thii  
Ram-ERG bread-NOM eat.PERF.FEM be.PAST.FEM  
'Ram had eaten bread.'
- (Mahajan (1990))

However, upon closer inspection the situation is a bit more complicated.

# Lee (2003) on Hindi 1

Four classes of verbs (based on Mohanan (1994)):

verb type	perfective	imperfective
class 1 (agentive transitive V)	erg	nom
class 2 (unergative intransitive V)	erg/nom	nom
class 3 (unaccusative intransitive V)	nom	nom
class 4 (unaccusative transitive V)	dat	dat

Note:

- (class 1): V in (26) belongs to class 1.
- (class 2): “Ergative case is conditioned by the semantic property of **volitional** participation in the action, not transitivity.”

## Lee (2003) on Hindi 3

(27) **Class 2** (non-volitional vs. volitional) in perfective contexts:

- a. Raam-do acaanak šer dik<sup>h</sup>aa.  
Ram-DAT suddenly lion-NOM appear.PERF  
Vah/\*us-ne cillaayaa.  
**he-NOM**/\*he-ERG scream.PERF  
'Ram suddenly saw a lion. He screamed.'
- b. Us-ne/\*vah jaanbuuj<sup>h</sup>kar cillaayaa.  
**he-ERG**/\*he-NOM deliberately shout-PERF  
'He shouted deliberately.'

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'Ram suddenly saw a lion. He screamed.'

b. Us-ne/\*vah jaanbuuj<sup>h</sup>kar cillaayaa.

he-ERG/\*he-NOM deliberately shout-PERF

'He shouted deliberately.'

(28) **Class 3** (unaccusative) in perfective contexts:

Raam/\*Raam-ne giraa.

Ram-NOM/\*Ram-ERG fall-PERF

'Ram fell hard.'

# Lee (2003) on Hindi 4: Constraints

(29) Constraints (order indicates ranking in Hindi):

- a. **IDENT(Sem):**  
Semantic features must not change their values from input (argument structure) to output (case marker).
- b. **MAX/DEP([GOAL]):**  
A [GOAL] specification can neither be added nor deleted from input to output.
- c. **ERG<sub>perf</sub>:**  
The highest argument role in a perfective clause must be in the ergative.
- d. **\*ERG:**  
Avoid ergative case markers.
- e. **MAX([VOL]):**  
A feature [VOL] in the input (argument structure) is realized in the output (case marker).
- f. **\*SUBJ/DAT:**  
Avoid dative case markers for subjects.
- g. **\*NOM:**  
Avoid nominative case markers.

# Lee (2003) on Hindi 5: Class 1/2a

## $T_{16}$ : *Class 1/2a: imperfective*

$V(\Theta_1, \Theta_2)$ [+VOL]	IDENT (Sem)	MAX/DEP ([GOAL])	ERG (perf)	*ERG	MAX ([VOL])	*SUBJ/ DAT	*NOM
$C_1$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -ERG[+VOL]				*!			
→ $C_2$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -NOM					*		*
$C_3$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -DAT[-VOL, +GOAL]	*!	*				*	



# Lee (2003) on Hindi 5: Class 1/2a

## $T_{16}$ : Class 1/2a: imperfective

$V(\Theta_1, \Theta_2)$ [+VOL]	IDENT (Sem)	MAX/DEP ([GOAL])	ERG (perf)	*ERG	MAX ([VOL])	*SUBJ/ DAT	*NOM
$C_1$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -ERG[+VOL]				*!			
$\rightarrow C_2$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -NOM					*		*
$C_3$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -DAT[-VOL, +GOAL]	*!	*				*	

## $T_{17}$ : Class 1/2a: perfective

$V(\Theta_1, \Theta_2)$ [+VOL]	IDENT (Sem)	MAX/DEP ([GOAL])	ERG (perf)	*ERG	MAX ([VOL])	*SUBJ/ DAT	*NOM
$\rightarrow C_1$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -ERG[+VOL]				*			
$C_2$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -NOM			*!		*		*
$C_3$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -DAT[-VOL, +GOAL]	*!	*	*			*	

# Lee (2003) on Hindi 5: Class 2b/3

$T_{18}$ : *Class 2b/3: imperfective*

$V(\Theta_1)$ [-VOL]	IDENT (Sem)	MAX/DEP ([GOAL])	ERG (perf)	*ERG	MAX ([VOL])	*SUBJ/ DAT	*NOM
$C_1$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -ERG[+VOL]	*!			*			
→ $C_2$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -NOM					*		*
$C_3$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -DAT[-VOL,+GOAL]		*!				*	

# Lee (2003) on Hindi 5: Class 2b/3

## $T_{18}$ : *Class 2b/3: imperfective*

$V(\Theta_1)$ [-VOL]	IDENT (Sem)	MAX/DEP ([GOAL])	ERG (perf)	*ERG	MAX ([VOL])	*SUBJ/ DAT	*NOM
$C_1$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -ERG[+VOL]	*!			*			
$\rightarrow C_2$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -NOM					*		*
$C_3$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -DAT[-VOL, +GOAL]		*!				*	

## $T_{19}$ : *Class 2b/3: perfective*

$V(\Theta_1)$ [-VOL]	IDENT (Sem)	MAX/DEP ([GOAL])	ERG (perf)	*ERG	MAX ([VOL])	*SUBJ/ DAT	*NOM
$C_1$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -ERG[+VOL]	*!			*			
$\rightarrow C_2$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -NOM			*		*		*
$C_3$ : NP <sub>ext</sub> -DAT[-VOL, +GOAL]		*!	*			*	

## Lee (2003) on Dyirbal

- Lee presents an analysis that is similar in its effects to the one developed by Stiebels. However, rather than relativizing the relevant constraints by adding person/argument type information, Lee relies on harmonic alignment and constraint conjunction, more or less as in Aissen (1999; 2003).

# Conclusion 1

Do optimality-theoretic approaches to argument encoding meet the criteria for explanatory adequacy?

- 1 There are no construction-specific rules for cases like *ERG*, *ACC*.
- 2 The projection of arguments from lexicon to syntax is uniform across languages.
- 3 There are no semantically irrelevant projections like *Agr<sub>s</sub>P*, *Agr<sub>o</sub>P* (Chomsky (1995; 2001)).
- 4 Case assignment is independent of movement (Chomsky (2000; 2001)).
- 5
  - 1 *ERG*, *ACC* → internal structural case ( $K_2$ )
  - 2 *NOM*, *ABS* → external structural case ( $K_1$ )
- 6 Internal case is generally morphologically more marked; external case often remains without overt marking (Comrie (1989), Dixon (1994)).

## Conclusion 2

Claim:

- 1 Existing optimality-theoretic analyses have problems with criterion (5) (it is not really clear why ergative and absolutive are mutually exclusive in the vast majority of languages).
- 2 Existing optimality-theoretic analyses all fail with respect to criterion (1): Some of the constraints are highly construction-specific. This may be taken to be indicative of a more general problem: The analyses are surface-oriented; there is little theoretical abstraction and, consequently, little progress towards explanatory adequacy.

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- 1 Existing optimality-theoretic analyses have problems with criterion (5) (it is not really clear why ergative and absolutive are mutually exclusive in the vast majority of languages).
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An obvious example: Perfective environments in Hindi.

- |   |                           |                   |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | FAITH-LEX <sub>perf</sub> | (Woolford (2001)) |
| 2 | *[+lr]/[-perf]            | (Stiebels (2000)) |
| 3 | Max([+lr])/[+perf]        | (Kiparsky (1999)) |
| 4 | ERG <sub>perf</sub>       | (Lee (2003))      |

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