SAMOAN ERGATIVITY AS DOUBLE PASSIVIZATION *

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1 Introduction.

In this short paper, I will argue that the current theoretical understanding provided by 'cartographic' approaches and strictly derivational approaches allows a new understanding of the problem of ergative case marking and transitivity in Samoan, a nuclear Polynesian language[1]. A precise account of the distribution of ergative case in Samoan is difficult: ergative case can only occur in the presence of an absolutive object, and is not an inherent property of a predicate. Traditionally, linguists have taken the transitive ergative form as basic, and assumed detransitivation to account for absolutive case on external arguments of transitive predicates. A different approach is suggested in light of the atomization of syntactic and morphological structures (Cinque 1999), the cartography of argument structure, the cartography of "object" positions (Hallman 2004), and the understanding that what appear to be simple lexical items correspond to complex syntactic structures that "spell out" or "span" a certain size of the syntactic representation. Starting from the tiniest structures, and lexicalization patterns we should consider how syntactic constituency is built up from the atomic parts, through cyclic (re)Merge, in accordance with strict and inviolable locality, and universal hierarchies.

The core of Samoan ergativity can be brought back to the lexicalization patterns of morphologically simplex predicates. These spell out small syntactic structures that roughly equivalent in size to English passive participles (big VPs following Collins 2005)(section 5): these bare predicates are thus crucially smaller than English active predicates, or accusative Austronesian languages with active voice prefixes (Samoan lacks active prefixes). The small size of the predicates causes a chain of derivational events that eventually lead to ergative as "double passive voice" constructions: passive voices must be merged to allow "smuggling" (Collins 2005) to overcome Minimality violations. A low passive voice is required to smuggle affected objects (affected objects) into the region where they receive their interpretation (i.e. higher than the lowest position of the external argument Hallman 2004)). A higher passive voice (which the ergative case depends on) must be merge to smuggle the subject out from under the intervening absolutive, but will only be merged under that circumstance. The lexicalization patterns in Samoan cause a

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* This paper is dedicated to Memo for his inspirational work, friendship and support.

[1] This short paper will not be able to pay its proper dues to the literature on Samoan (Chung 1978, Mosel and Hovdhaugen (MH 1992), Cook (1996), Duranti (1990), Duranti and Ochs (1996), Ochs (1982), among others), nor to the extensive literature on ergativity and argument structure. The Samoan data reported here have been gathered during the UCLA fieldmethods class (fall 07 and winter 08), and are part of a bigger project on the syntax of Samoan ergativity and causatives. I want to thank John Fruean (borne in 1986, raised in Apia, Samoan) and Kare'l Lokeni for sharing their language with us; our class participants, Martine Bruil, Ben George, Ben Jones, Vincent Homer, Ji-eun Kim, Robyn Orfitelli, Constanze Weise, Kristine Yu, and Kie Zuraw, as well as Daniel Büring, Peter Hallman, Ed Keenan, Anoop Mahajan, Viola Schmitt, Dominique Sportiche, audiences in Tromsoe (June 08), Utrecht (June 08), and Afla XV (Sydney, July 2008) for comments and feedback. While the presentations focused on causatives, the present paper only treats "simple" transitive verbs. A very special thanks to Robyn Orfitelli and Vincent Homer for feedback and comments. I will follow the (loose) orthographic conventions for Samoan (g=ŋ, and ' for glottal stop), except for length which will be marked with a semicolon (a: instead of ā.).

cascade of derivational problems that ultimately lead to double passive voice constructions, explaining why the ergative patterns are restricted to the special contexts in which ergative arises.

2. Background on Samoan Case and case marking.

Samoan is a nuclear Polynesian prepositional "VSO" language, with ergative-absolutive case marking (erg>abs>obl case marking), 3rd person subject pro-drop, scrambling in the postverbal domain, and (phrasal) predicate fronting, not V-movement. A Samoan clause consists of three regions, the left peripheral C region, the finite "C-T" region, which hosts tense/aspect markers, subject clitics (Scl), negation and some restricted focus-type adverbs[2] and the predicate and postpredicate domain, the VSO region, the syntax of which is relevant for the understanding of the general case marking patterns in Samoan.

(1) (ʻo) (Top/Foc DP) "C"– Scl "T" (Neg) **[..Pred……] erg.DP abs.DP (i-obl.DP)**
"left periphery" C- T domain [**predicate - postpredicate domain]**
"V" S O

Topics and Foci can only be DPs, (often) preceded by a "presentational" particle *o* (conceivably a genitive P or a copular element); subject clitics (Scl) do not vary for case. Only in postverbal position are DPs case marked, either by the oblique P *i* (which is the locative/directional P), or ergative *e*, (*e* has no other prepositional or nominal uses; it does occur in the clausal spine as a seemingly unrelated, generic T, or a non-finite/unrealized like C). The absolutive DP is preceded by a H- boundary tone, as discovered by Kristine Yu in her careful instrumental study of the intonation of Samoan ergativity (Yu, 2008). Promotion of the ergative to the finite C/T region or the left periphery generally requires the presence of a (n outer) voice suffix, -ina (or -a), not further discussed in this paper[3].

The Case hierarchy in Samoan can be described as follows (with > representing c-command, and overt forms given in parentheses): (Erg)>Abs>(Obl).(= *e* DP> $^{H-}$ DP> *i* DP).

Samoan clauses contain an obligatory absolutive, and show two types of case marking patterns.

I. Abs (>Obl), with Abs c-commanding Oblique.[4] This pattern arises whenever the highest argument in the thematic domain can map directly onto the absolutive, i.e. when there is no intervention. Morphological simple experiencer verbs fall into this class (cf. *alofa* 'love' has an absolutive experiencer, and an oblique theme/location).

II. (Erg)>Abs>(Obl).

[2] Under the assumption that subject clitics occupy a fixed position, prepredicate tense and aspect marker (called TAM marker in MH) distribute over the "C" node and "T" node as follows: at spell out "C" contains *na* (definite past), *sa* (indefinite past), *a:* future, *ua* (perfect), and T *e* generic T/present. The C-T region further expands to: C (adv) Scl T (adv) Neg (adv) Pred, with adv restricted to adverbial particles elements that translate as 'just' or 'almost', suggest involvement of focus. (see MH 1992 and Orfitelli (2008) for an initial description of these forms for our speaker). Mapping of the Cinque hierarchy for Samoan remains to be carried out.

[3] See Chung (1978)and MH (1992, Homer (2008) –Ina can stack onto predicates that bundle an overt "low passive" voice suffix ((C)(i)a)), called the long form by MH.

[4] In addition Samoan has Obl> abs predicates (*galo* 'forget'). With these predicates, only the oblique argument can correspond to the subject clitic, and Q-float is possible from the oblique for our speaker.

Ergative case is optional and dependent on the presence of an absolutive object. These objects occur with highly transitive predicates that have volitional/agentive subjects, including volitional *fa'a*-causatives, as well as with predicates that bundle an overt low "passive" voice suffix ((C)(i)a)).

3. On Samoan absolutive as nominative

Absolutive is obligatory in all tensed clauses (modulo pro-drop); it is least marked phonologically (it is marked by a H- boundary but not by segmental material). This makes it like nominative (Bittner and Hale 1996). Since H- only appears to show up post-predicatively, I conclude that absolutive is *not* an unmarked or a default case. I take as the null hypothesis that absolutive within Samoan should be given a uniform structural analysis: thus absolutive=nominative. Absolutive objects occur in clauses that are arguably non-finite (Chung 1978, MH 1992, and Homer 2008), and in imperatives. This shows it is NOT determined by the finite C/T under closest c-command. This is important, as the countercyclic nature (waiting for the relevant C/T probe to be merged to check absolutive=nominative, or probe down in any non-finite clause) and the non-local nature (ergative subjects are "invisible" or "inert" for nominative case) clash with strictly local derivational approaches. If absolutive is not an unmarked case and if absolutive =nominative how should we capture its possible independence on finiteness in Samoan? Strictly cyclic derivational theories dictate local determination of absolutive/nominative. Assume then that UG does not provide any variability in the configuration, but does allow for variability in terms of "height of merger." Like nominative, absolutive, must be determined by some "C/T" complex, of which there is more than one possible site of merger in a "single" clause. Standard terminology distinguishes two phases: "CP" and "vP", each with edges. Let us adopt that what is called vP and its edge, in fact is a "C T" complex as well (with T is one of Cinque's functional heads) (Hallman 1997, Koopman and Szabolcsi (2000), with potential recursion of the high left periphery (Belletti 2004). The linguistic variability in nominative case can then be attributed to the location of the C/T(nom) complex, with the possibility of recursion leading to multiple nominatives (Koopman 2005). This yields the following rough typology (with the possibility that Samoan falls under (2c) as well (see fnt 9):

(2)	C_{fin}	$[_{DP}$] T ..	[C_{low} $[_{DP}$] T [v/V	*Nom depends on finiteness*
a.		nom		*yes*
b.			[nom/abs	*no (Samoan…)*
c.		nom	[nom	*yes and no ("double nominative")*

In Samoan then, the highest argument, including external arguments will directly map onto the absolutive in the absence of an intervener. What needs an explanation is why certain objects map onto the absolutive, and the external argument onto the ergative. What blocks accusative alignment in these particular contexts?

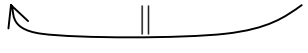
4. On the missing accusative in Samoan

DP objects end up marked oblique or absolutive, but neither qualifies as an exponent of accusative. Thus, oblique objects are incompatible with affected object interpretations, and cannot occur in causative constructions, neither (agentive) *fa'a-* causatives, nor with predicates with natural force initiators. The latter require argument reversal (i.e. obligatory passivization) with the theme mapping onto the absolutive and acting as the highest argument, and with the natural force/cause argument marked as an i-oblique (Chung's 1978 'stative agent') (*ua mamago 'ofu i le la: lit: PERF dry the clothes from the sun, 'the sun dried the clothes'*). The predicate is bare, which is compatible with silent passive voice (cf (15 below)). If the absolutive on objects was a morphological realization of accusative (Legate 2005), transitive structures should come out as double nominative/double "absolutive" constructions (with the highest argument mapping on the T absolutive, and the lower one in the v domain). To block this, extra assumptions must be made, like imposing phonological distinctness (Marantz 1991, Mahajan 1993) (see fnt9 for how this follows under the current proposal). The lack of accusative does not seem accidental. On the most general level, Samoan lacks accusative constructions. There are no *have* possessives (no surface forms like **have erg/abs John abs/obl- a house'* for 'John has a house'). Possession is expressed with an existential predicate *e iai le ta'avale a ioane* [T [EXIST *[the car a_{poss} John]*$_{abs}$] 'John's car exists'. There are no double object constructions, i.e. no strings of the following type: ** T give erg John abs Mary abs/obl DP* with the goal argument absolutive and the theme absolutive or oblique; no "have/be" alternations etc, no expressions like 'have need' (the verb 'need' *mana'omia* (erg>abs) is derived from 'want' *mana'o* (abs>obl) by low passive voice).

Can the absence of accusative case be derived? Stipulating Samoan v lacks an accusative case feature simply begs the question. Stating the relevant little v has an absolutive feature leaves the problem of detransitivizing v and runs intro trouble understanding when ergative case is available and when it is not. I will therefore pursue a syntactic account, which rests on what we have discovered about the distribution of objects, an assumption about the locus of accusative, in conjunction with the particular lexicalization patterns of Samoan predicates.

On the basic of scopal properties of objects and their interaction with predicates, Hallman (2004) establishes that there are (at least) three different object positions, with the highest object position higher than the lowest subject argument position (cf also Travis' (1992, in press) outer aspect). This is an important finding as the conclusions are based on scopal interactions alone, and are independent of accusative case or surface distribution. This raises the question where in the (universal) hierarchy of object positions affected objects are and where accusative is located. My proposal rests on the following two assumptions: first, "affected" objects must map to the high object region for interpretive reasons, and second, this is the region where the high object accusative is universally located. From these, the absence of accusative will follow from the falure of the mapping in (3) fails. (using Ramchand 2008 terminology for the simplified v/V map as v (INIT (initiator of the event) and Process/Result for big V):

(3) DP_{obj} $[_{Init}$ DP_{init} INIT $[\sout{DP}_i$ Process/result…



That the mapping in (3) fails is expected, because of Minimality. Unexpected is that it does not always fail. How can a relevant DP ever (A-move or object shift) over the external argument and map onto accusative? Chomsky (1993/1995)'s notion of Equidistance[5] ties this in with the surface position of the verb. A predicate like "give" bundles a position higher than the accusative, allowing the object to shift past the external argument. It is well-known that object shift fails to shift a regular DP object past the verb. This means that the absence of accusative in Samoan will therefore fall out from in (3) if the lexical predicate remain is too low in the structure, i.e. if the predicate spans too small a syntactic structure. In this case, the language needs to resort to other means for convergence, i.e. passivization, explaining why the object is actually nominative. Both claims are supported in the following sections.

5. Lexicalization patterns: basic process/result predicates.

Basic result predicates in Samoan can systematically get either a process or a result reading (*mama*: 'be clean, become clean'), but never a causative one (**mama*: erg abs 'clean something'). A volitional argument with (low) causatives requires an additional lexical item, the causative prefix *fa'a* (*fa'a-mama:* erg.abs 'to clean something'). A natural force initiator with low causatives must appear in an oblique with the affected object in the absolutive and hierarchical superior to the oblique, all this without visible morphological change (*ua mama: (le 'i:e) i le timu* 'it (the sheet) became clean from the rain'). This reversal indicates that the bare predicate combines with a silent passive voice, which enables an affected object to move over an intervening subject and map onto the relevant domain for interpretive reasons. These simple predicates do not allow for active alignments, because they spell out a structure no bigger than V(process/result). They must combine with a low (silent) passive voice when they project two arguments.
Because of (3), Minimality effectively prohibit the object from moving over the subject, and the language needs to resort to special means for convergence, i.e. pulling out a passive voice, which attracts the process/result phrase and smuggles the object over the subject (Collins 2005).

(4) $[C_{abs}\ [\ DP_i[T_{abs}[\ \sout{DP_i}\ PROC/RES]\ VOICE_{PASS}[_{Init}\ DP_{init}\ INIT[[\sout{DP_i}\ PROC/RES]$

Two further questions arise: how do simple transitive predicates like '*ai* 'eat' fit into the picture (see section 8 for evidence why even 'ai 'eat' does not bundle the external argument), and second, what happens when the external argument maps onto ergative case, since now the absolutive intervenes for A-movement.

6. On ergative case: why ergative case is not an inherent case and why it depends on a passive voice projection

Ergative case is not an "inherent" case. Volitional agents do not obligatorily map onto ergative. The ergative can map onto volitional agents, but *only* in the presence of an absolutive object. Samoan ergative case is not linked to "agentivity" either, as

[5] Precursors of equidistance are Van Riemsdijk's 1978 "Head Constraint" and Baker's 1988 "Government Transparency Corrolary" .

experiencers of certain predicates (*lagona* 'feel' *iloa* 'know') map onto the ergative. These predicates are visibly morphologically complex, ending in a passive voice suffix. The ergative is not linked to animacy either. Inanimate DPs can map onto the ergative with predicates that bundle an overt passive voice suffix (C(i)a) (*si'omia* 'cover', *si'osi'omia* 'surround'). These predicates are compatible with either ergative *e* or oblique *i*, the latter coocurring with "low" silent passive voice, and obligatorily marking natural forces or inanimates with "smallest" causative predicates (Koopman 2008).

(5) 'ua si'omia le teine i /e le palaikeke
PERF cover.MIA ABS D.SG girl OBL/ERG D.SG blanket
'The blanket covered the girl'

The syntactic behavior of these strings varies in expected ways depending on oblique marking or ergative marking. Ergative case thus looks more like a structural case, i.e. what it combines with depends on the local syntactic configuration, not directly on thematic role.[6] It depends on the presence of a particular (region of the) structure, which contains ergative *e*. Let's refer to this region as "ergative voice" and determine when ergative voice can be merged. It turns out, quite surprisingly, that it is the class of "exceptional" (non-agentive) verbs that shows the answer. These predicates are arguably (almost[7]) all morphologically complex, visibly bundling the low passive voice suffix. This leads to the hypothesis that ergative voice can merge in the presence of a passive voice complement. Since any structure which contains an absolutive object contains passive voice (4), the restricted environment can be stated in a completely general way:

(6) Ergative voice selects for a passive voice complement.

This raises the question why (6) holds, and what ergative voice exactly is. The answer is purely syntactic: ergative voice is a type of passive voice which must be merged to attract the predicate containing the external argument, which, by itself, cannot get over the intervening absolutive. The basic function of passive voice is thus to attract a predicate that smuggles an argument around an intervener. Ergative *e* , just like the English by-phrase, coocurs with the merger of a particular passive voice with the properties in (6).

7. Mapping a basic transitive verb.

Let us next turn to mapping the environments of a basic transitive predicate *'ai* 'eat', against the theoretical assumptions outlined above (i.e. the hierarchy of object positions, the case hierarchy Erg>abs>Obl, and a fixed configuration for absolutive, asking how to motivate and support the analysis. This will allow a gradual discovery of the derivational

[6] MH (1992: 765) write "most of them (the ergative noun phrase) refer to participants (in the broadest sense which initiate the event through some inherently given energy". It is unclear how this description covers experiencers exactly. Note that MH is quite compatible with my proposal according to which ergative voice attracts the InitP to get around the absolutive. My proposal has the added advantage that it also can smuggle an ExpP around an intervener, i.e. since what counts is the general structural configuration.

[7] MH (1992: 767: 18.278) cite one example where this does not hold: *selu* 'to comb', with an ergative tool initiator. They add: "Tools which do not have an engine are, however, less likely to occur in the ergative case" (MH 1992:767). This type of example needs to be further investigated with our speaker.

history, and support the strongly modular syntactic analysis for the ergative patterns of Samoan outlined in the previous sections.

With the theme implicit (7), "pseudoincorporated" (8), or in a "conative" construction (9), the "agent" of *'ai* 'eat' maps onto the absolutive.

(7) na 'ai le teine
PAST eat ABS D.SG girl
'The/a girl ate'

(8) e ['ai i'a] le teine
gen eat fish ABS D.SG girl
'The girl is a fish eater'

(9) na 'ai le teine i le i'a
PAST eat ABS D.SG girl OBL D.SG fish
'The/a girl ate from the fish/the/a girl ate away at the fish

The implicit theme in (7), if represented at all, is arguably very low in the structure. "Pseudoincorporated" objects are below the external argument at all points in the derivation (they front with the predicate), and are not case marked. Pronominal binding and subject cliticization in contexts like (9) show that a postverbal absolutive c-commands the oblique (hence ABS>OBL). Thus the external argument is always higher than any of these objects, and maps onto absolutive.

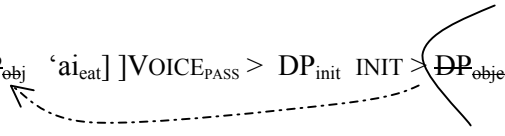
(10) C_{low} DP > T_{abs} > DP **INIT** > (OBL objects>incorporated objects>implicit objects)
|_____|

With "affected" themes, however, *and* expressed agents, the theme must map onto the absolutive, and the agent onto the ergative, with the unmarked linear order Pred-ergative-absolutive:

(11) na 'ai e le teine le i'a
PAST eat ERG D.SG girl ABS D.SG fish
the girl ate a/the fish

Given Minimality, direct movement over the external argument (Init) is blocked. The derivation in (11) thus requires a step in which the affected object is smuggled over the initiator, which I argued is achieved by (a silent) Passive voice, yielding the following derivational step:

(12) C_{low} [$_{DP}$le i'a$_{fish}$]> T_{abs} >[~~DP$_{obj}$~~ 'ai$_{eat}$]]VOICE$_{PASS}$ > DP$_{init}$ INIT > ~~DP$_{object}$~~ fish>…
|_____|



The presence of passive Voice is empirically supported (see (15) below). The intuition that there is a deep connection between ergativity and passive has of course been present since the earliest works on ergativity, but the problem is how to make it work exactly. Samoan ergative absolutive structures are not equivalent to English passive structures. The absolutive object does not show the behavior of the highest argument, the

agent/initiator does. Only the ergative DP can correspond to a subject clitic (Chung, 1978), and a postverbal ergative QP binds a pronoun inside the absolutive. This must yield a partial "derivational" history for (10), with an instance of the external argument of *'ai* 'eat' both *below* and *above* the absolutive. If these are associated with a single (A) chain, a minimality problem arises again, since now the affected absolutive object intervenes:

(13) *(to be revised* **Erg** > ..DP_{INIT}> C_{low} **DP** > T_{abs} > ~~**DP**~~$_{\textbf{objecti}}$ Abs > ~~DP_{INIT}~~ INIT > …
|_____| |_____ X _____ |_____|

The derivations thus pose the same problem twice: first how can the "affected" object get over the initiator without incurring a minimality violation, and second how can the initiator get over the intervening absolutive. The solution is the same: a smuggler (a silent passive voice) merges in different locations and ensures convergence. The " low" passive voice merges with InitP and attracts a ProcessP/ ResultP (and comes with a i- (by) phrase which can only mark inanimate DPs); the higher "ergative" passive voice merges with a passive voice complement and attracts InitP, and comes with *e* (by-phrase). The fundamental function of passive voice is to attract a predicate that "smuggles" the affected object in (12) over the initiator or the initiator predicate in (13) over the absolutive (Collins 2005)). Linear order aside, the derivation of (11) must contain thus two "passive" voice heads.

(14) **Erg** >[[$_{INITP}$DP INIT.] $VOICE_{ERG}$ C_{low} DP T_{abs} [$_{ProccessP}$[$DP_{\textbf{object}}$ …] $VOICE_{PASS}$ [DP INIT [$_{ProcessP}$~~DP V~~}

As (14) shows, the ergative voice merges with a low "CP" that contains a passive voice, i.e. it merges with a passive voice complement in accordance with (6). In a sense than the traditional intuitions were right: an understanding however only comes within reach with a better understanding of the finely grained nature of syntactic structure.

8. On the optionality of the ergative

A (third person) ergative DP is never required in the context of a transitive verb like *'ai* 'eat' with an affected object. This can be interpreted as the optional merger of the ergative voice region, expected if this is passive voice. Predicates like *'ai* 'eat' by themselves do not "bundle" the ergative.[8] *'Ai* 'eat' happily survives as a short passive (as indicated, and

[8] Samoan disposes of another way to "avoid" the expression of the ergative case marked DP: bundling the external argument of the verb (the initiator) as a possessor of the theme *Duranti (1990), Duranti and Ochs, (1996) Mosel and Hovdhaugen p.547),* Homer (in prep).

(i) na 'ai [le i'a a le teine]
PAST eat ABS D.SG fish POSS D.sg girl
"The girl ate her fish (lit: ate the fish of the girl)"

This example is structurally ambiguous in many ways, (someone ate [a fish of the girl's], h/she ate the girl's fish, the girl's fish got eaten , or [the girl's fish ate something]). What is relevant is that it *can* have a reading where the possessor is understood as the initiator of the event ("the girl's fish was eaten by the girl"). This construction (dubbed backwards possessor raising by Homer), is a completely normal way of dealing both with transitivity and double object constructions. Kayne's 2005 merger of *of* and *de* with VP attracting the postnominal possessor suggest a derivation

irrelevant for the discussion, the example is structurally ambiguous because of third person pro-drop).

(15)
na ‘ai le i’a
PAST eat ABS D.SG fish
‘a/the fish got eaten/ someone ate a/the fish’ (also: ‘s/he ate the/a fish’ or ‘a/the fish ate something’

The typical “passive” type reading (‘the fish got eaten’) suggests the presence of a hidden silent (passive) Voice. Support for its presence comes from the fact that the absolutive object can behave as the highest argument, e.g. it can be controlled (see MH 1992, and Homer 2008). Thus low silent passive Voice can be merged with $Init_{v,}$ yielding short passives. To account for the word order in (15), a constituent containing the predicate raises to the left of the absolutive: i.e. the remnant ProcessP moves to the edge of the C_{low} level (which will be realized at spell out as H-):

(16) [‘C’P [$_{ProcessP}$[~~DP$_{object}$~~ **V**...**]** [C_{H-} **DP** > T_{abs} > [$_{ProcessP}$[~~DP$_{object}$~~ V...**]** $Voice_{pass}$> DP INIT [$_{ProcessP}$~~DP V~~

This derivation shows that the constituent that contains the spell out form *‘ai’* ‘eat’ does not sit in INIT/v (cf Collins’ 2005 proposal the passive participle correspond to VP, not vP). The Samoan bare predicate in absolutive environments is thus comparable to an English passive participle.

The structure in (16) has independent syntactic existence and can merge with the finite C-T region, yielding the surface string in (15), or with the ergative passive voice region, since the complement is “passive” voiced (6). Ergative Passive Voice attracts the InitP over the absolutive, thereby smuggling the Initiator over the absolutive and bringing it local to the ergative *e.* The remnant ProcessP, containing the lexical predicate raises around the ergative to yield the unmarked *Pred erg DP abs DP* linear order; this structure eventually merges with the finite C-T domain:

(17) [[e [[DP INIT …] [$VOICE_{ERG}$[‘C”P [$_{ProcessP}$[~~DP$_{object}$~~ **V**...**]**[C_{H-} **DP** > T_{abs} > [$_{ProcP}$[~~DP$_{object}$~~ V**]** $VOICE_{PASS}$DP INIT

In a very literal sense then, clauses with ergative absolutive case markings are double passive structures: the low passive voice lifts an affected object over an intervening Initiator, ergative passive voice lifts the predicate containing the external argument over an intervening absolutive.[9]

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where the possessor actually raises to INIT and then to POSS merged with INITP with the DP raising around.. giving the appearance of underlying constituency.

[9] Minimality ensures such constructions can never lead to double nominative constructions: even if the higher finite nominative were available, the external argument could NOT map onto. At best then such constructions will converge to ABS ERG ABS, given (2c). Daniel Bűring asks why INITP does not create a

9. How to ever get accusative.

Ken Hale (1968) observed that some Australian languages are accusative and others are ergative. The accusative types differ from those that are ergative in that they have active-passive distinctions marked overtly. Samoan fits into this pattern as it does not seem to mark active-non active distinctions in ways so typical of other Austronesian languages (Hohepa, 1969), where languages with active voice prefixes have accusative case alignment. My proposal will have to answer the question how an accusative object can ever map onto the position higher than Init and what the role of active voice is in this respect. However we explain the accusative configuration eventually, it is clear that predicate movements will have to figure prominently into the explanation. What Samoan ergativity suggests is that lexicalization patterns (i.e. English 'give' vs Samoan 'give'), the presence/absence of active voice prefixes, the form of simple possessive constructions (absence or presence of *have* possessives (Kayne 1993)) or have-be alternations (Mahajan 1993), and smallest causatives (natural force-causatives) all cluster together.

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minimality violation for the movement of PROCESSP. This might follow if the direct complement of Voice cannot move (Abels 2003, Kayne 2005).

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