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Two Steps to High Absolutive Syntax

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TWO STEPS TO HIGH ABSOLUTIVE SYNTAX

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

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by

Dan Brodkin

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ABSTRACT

Two Steps to High Absolute Syntax

Dan Brodkin

In many ergative languages, the absolutive argument moves to a position above all other arguments in the clause. The mechanisms which underlie this movement remain a matter of dispute: it has been argued to reflect movement to a subject position (Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992), or assimilated to a process of definiteness-related object shift (Aldridge, 2004). This paper investigates the syntax which underlies the High Absolutive configuration in Mandar, an Austronesian language of the South Sulawesi subfamily, and finds evidence for the first view. In this language, the process which places the absolutive argument in its high position is visibly connected to its interaction with a set of functional heads that sit relatively high in the clause. This fact is shown through an investigation of the behavior of internal arguments which are definite but not absolutive. In Mandar, as in related languages nearby, these seem not to raise to a position above the external argument. This observation suggests the need to decouple the High Absolutive configuration from the process of definiteness-related object shift in this language and at large.

To my family,

and especially to Gryff.

We miss you, buddy.

Acknowledgments

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In the same vein, I owe a debt to the many people who welcomed me, supported me, and helped me to learn Mandar through my time in West Sulawesi in 2019. To Dean Richi and Charles Firmansya, thank you for hosting me; to Nabila Haruna, thanks for teaching me about Mandar history, and to Hairul, thank you for introducing me to the king. And of course, to my many friends in Mamuju- especially Adhy and Muthe- thanks for your generosity, your advice, and all the good times. Finally, I would like to acknowledge that debt that I owe to the people in Malang who laid out the academic and social infrastructure that made it possible to conduct this research. To Pak Gatut Susanto at the State University of Malang, thank you for organizing the programs which allowed me to visit to study Indonesian in 2017 and then return for research in 2018-2019. To Pak Irawan and Bu Shanty, thank you for hosting me there and helping me learn how to engage with that world. And to my university friends- especially Mbak Mustika, Mbak Nissa, Mas Bagus, and Mas Eki- thank you for helping me to learn Indonesian when I first came and to understand my presence there later on. *Terima kasih atas semuanya.*

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1   Introduction

Many morphologically ergative languages show an asymmetry in the Ā-domain: extraction of the transitive external argument is constrained in a way that extraction of other arguments is not (Comrie, 1978). This restriction- the Ergative Extraction Constraint, or EEC- reflects one of several patterns which has been grouped under the name of "Syntactic Ergativity" (Dixon, 1979; Aissen, 2017).

In cross-linguistic perspective, the EEC is not homogeneous, and languages vary with respect to the presence and nature of its exceptions (Mondloch, 1981), its generality across the Ā-system (Polinsky, 1994), and its relation to other constraints on extraction (Assmann *et al.*, 2015). But despite this variety, much work has argued for a consistent and specific generalization over its distribution: it surfaces in contexts where an absolutive argument moves above an ergative argument in the same clause (Campana, 1992; Murasugi, 1992; Bittner & Hale, 1996a,b).

There are a range of patterns which provide evidence for this view, and the force of these is to suggest that the absolutive argument behaves as a structural subject in constructions which show the EEC. In many languages, for instance, the absolutive argument controls the highest instance of ϕ-agreement in the clause (Bittner, 1994; Coon *et al.*, 2014; Brown, 2016; Ershova, 2019) and appears to c-command other arguments for the purposes of relative scope and binding (Bittner, 1987; Kroeger, 1993; Richards, 1993). These patterns suggest that the absolutive argument is the nominal which interacts with a set of relatively high functional

heads and moves to the most phrase-structurally prominent position in the clause as the result of this interaction. From this perspective, it seems reasonable to suggest that it is a subject in the classical generative sense (McCloskey, 1997).

This analysis, which was widely adopted throughout the 1990s, enjoys a range of conceptual advantages: it bridges work on ergativity with the rich literature on subject positions (Bobaljik & Jonas, 1996), connects High Absolutive syntax to patterns which are logically independent of the EEC, and allows for differences between ergative languages to be linked to the well-known types of variation which hold over subject positions cross-linguistically (Cardinaletti, 2004). Despite these advantages, however, it is not uncontested. In recent years, an alternative paradigm has emerged which makes no reference to subject positions in the analysis of the EEC. This alternative, first developed by Aldridge (2004), retains the essential insight that absolutive internal arguments move above ergative external arguments in the relevant context but denies the specific connection between the properties of the absolutive argument and the structural relations which underlie subjecthood cross-linguistically. Rather, it holds that absolutive internal arguments reach their high position through a process of object shift which places them at the edge of the thematic domain (*e.g.*, the *voice*P).

This paper investigates the clausal syntax of Mandar, an Austronesian language of Indonesia, and develops an analysis along the lines of the first paradigm above. In this language, it is argued that the absolutive argument behaves as a subject: it interacts with a set of functional heads that sit relatively high in the clause and undergoes a step of movement, linked to a pattern of licensing, which places it in a subject position outside of the the thematic domain. I refer to the resulting

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configuration as one which shows "High Absolute" syntax.

Beyond the advantages which this analysis enjoys, this paper attempts to demonstrate that it has a secondary empirical edge. This lies in the predictions which it makes about the behavior of definite internal arguments which are not themselves absolutive. On the influential approach of Aldridge (2004), the pressure which forces absolutive internal arguments to move above ergative external argument is linked to definiteness: it is taken to be driven by a semantic constraint that forces internal arguments to shift to such a position when they are definite (Diesing, 1992; Rackowski, 2002). It would seem to follow from the logic of this proposal that this constraint should apply evenly to all internal arguments which are definite, regardless of their status as absolutive or oblique. But when the facts on the ground are examined, we find that this is not the case: in Mandar, as in other Austronesian languages, there is no evidence that definite but non-absolutive arguments move above ergative external arguments in this way. The theoretical import of this observation is to suggest that the movement of the absolutive argument cannot simply be linked to a process of definiteness-related object shift.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, I provide background on Mandar and lay out the basic facts of its word order and voice system. In Section 3, I demonstrate that the absolutive argument in Mandar behaves like a subject: it interacts with a set of functional heads that sit relatively high in the clause and undergoes a step of movement, linked to a pattern of nominal licensing, which places it in a derived subject position outside of the the thematic domain. In Section 4, I show that the process which places it in this position is separate from a distinct process of definiteness-linked object shift. In Section 5, I

lay out a new model of High Absolute syntax which incorporates both of these processes. I refer to this as the *Two-Step Model*. In Section 6, I show that the paradigm of facts which motivate this proposal, concerning the behavior of definite but non-absolutive arguments, can be replicated in two other Austronesian languages which show similar High-Absolutive systems: Tagalog and Malagasy. In Section 7, I discuss the theoretical import of the analysis and then conclude.

2   Introducing Mandar

Mandar is an Austronesian language spoken on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi.[1] It belongs to the South Sulawesi subfamily, a primary branch of Western Malayo-Polynesian (Smith, 2017). The Indonesian census of 2000 reports 480,000 speakers in the modern-day province of West Sulawesi.

The South Sulawesi languages are not well-represented in the literature, but they show a number of properies which will be familiar to those acquainted with the languages of the Philippines. Mandar, for instance, shows the basic verb-initial word order and "voice system" which are common to the region. The following section lays out these patterns in the language.

Before moving forward, a note on data is in order. Whenever possible, I use examples from the published literature. When finer argumentation is required, I

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[1]The literature on this language is small. The bulk of English-language work has focused on subgrouping (Mills, 1975; Grimes & Grimes, 1987), while the Indonesian literature includes a grammar (Pelenkahu *et al.*, 1983), a description of adverbs (Sikki *et al.*, 1987), and a compilation of traditional poetry (Muthalib & Sangi, 1991). Recent generative work has touched on transitivity (Lee, 2008), the structure of ᴡʜ-questions, (Brodkin, 2020), the voice system (Brodkin, 2021b), the clitic system (Brodkin, 2021c), and the agreement system (Brodkin, 2021a).

provide examples that have been elicited over three years of work with Jupri Talib and Nabila Haruna, both college-aged speakers from Polewali Mandar.

2.1   Introduction to South Sulawesi

Mandar is a typical language of the South Sulawesi Subfamily. It shows a verb-initial word order, an ergative-absolutive agreement system, no case-marking on nominals, and regular pro-drop. The same properties hold across the subfamily and in many other languages of Sulawesi (Campbell, 1989; Matti, 1994; Strømme, 1994; Valkama, 1995b,a; Friberg, 1996; Finer, 1997; Jukes, 2006; Laskowske, 2016).

The following examples show the shape of the Mandar clause. In pragmatically neutral contexts, the verb precedes all arguments and VP-level modifiers (1).[2]

(1)   *Predicate-Initial Word Order*

Pole=i   iKaco'.
come=3ABS NAME

'Kaco' came.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 134

The verb, in turn, follows middle-field auxiliaries and negation (2).

(2)   *Preverbal Auxiiaries*

Ndam=mi   rua pole dini iKaco'.
not=PFV.3ABS ever come here NAME

'Kaco' never comes here.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 316

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[2]GLOSSING: ABS: absolutive, ANTIP: antipassive, APPL: applicative, CTR: contrastive, ERG: ergative, EXT: external argument, GEN: genitive, INT: internal argument, INTR: intransitive, OBL: oblique, PFV: perfective, PL: plural, PST: past, SG: singular, TR: transitive, QI: quirky intransitive

Within the postverbal domain, word order is free. In texts, there is a tendency for the external argument (EXT) to precede the internal argument (INT), and broad-focus clauses like (3a) are most naturally parsed as VSO. However, the language allows VOS order: both when the INT is definite (3b) and when it is not (3c).

(3)   *Postverbal Word Order*

    a. Na-anu=i   iKaco'   iAli!
        3ERG-something=3ABS   NAME   NAME
        'Kaco' did something to Ali!'   JT: 3.19, 28

    b. Na-timbei=i   de'   boyan-na   iHami' tau   di=bongi.
        3ERG-pelt=3ABS they.say   house-3GEN NAME   people at=night
        'They say people pelted Hamid's house last night.'

                                                  Sikki *et al.* 1987, 529

    c. Map-pamula=i   bungabunga   iMurni.
        ANTIP-plant=3ABS flowers   NAME
        'Murni is planting flowers.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 195

Like its relatives, the language shows an ergative-absolutive agreement system (Brodkin, 2021c,a). In every finite clause, an agreement enclitic tracks the absolutive argument. In transitive clauses, moreover, a verbal prefix tracks the ergative argument. In the literature, the ergative prefix is conventionally glossed A and the absolutive enclitic B (Zobel, 2002) but here, I will gloss them as ERG and ABS.

The following examples illustrate this system. Example (4) shows a clause with a transitive verb 'hurt.' This verb takes two arguments: a null second-person pronoun as the EXT and an overt first-person pronoun as the INT. The EXT is indexed by the ergative prefix *mu-*, while the INT is indexed by the absolutive enclitic *a'*.

(4) *Ergative-Absolutive Agreement*

Mu-pateng=m**a'**   iyau.
2ERG-hurt=PFV.1ABS 1SG

'You really hurt me.'   Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 35

The same absolutive enclitic tracks the sole argument of an intransitive verb. This pattern is shown in example (5), which contains the verb 'go.' The sole argument of this verb is a null first person pronoun. As above, this pronoun triggers the appearance of the absolutive enclitic *a'*.

(5) *Ergative-Absolutive Agreement*

Na=lamba=**a'** dai' Ma'assar.
will=go=1ABS up.to CITY

'I'll go up to Makassar.'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 256

In light of these facts, it could be said that Mandar shows a purely head-marking form of ergativity: there is no trace of case-marking in the language, but there is clearly an ergative-absolutive system of agreement. In this respect, the language patterns with other languages of Sulawesi (Martens, 1988; Mead, 1998) and against the languages of the Philippines, which typically mark the absolutive argument with overt morphological case (De Guzman, 1983; Himmelmann, 1996). Despite this split, however, the argument which triggers absolutive agreement in Mandar behaves much like argument marked with absolutive case in the languages of the second type. As such, I assume that there is a structural similarity between these two types of argument: namely, that they both bear abstract absolutive Case. In light of this view, I refer to this argument as the absolutive.

2.2 The Voice System

Like other ergative languages, Mandar shows a range of constructions which allow different types of arguments to be absolutive. The examples above illustrate the transitive construction, where the INT is absolutive. This construction contrasts with an antipassive, where the EXT is absolutive instead. The difference between these two constructions is signaled by prefixal morphology on the verb.

The following examples illustrate the antipassive construction. In (6), the verb does not bear an ergative prefix: rather, it hosts the invariant prefix *maN-*. The absolutive argument in this context is the EXT: here, a null first-person pronoun tracked by the enclitic *a'*. There is no parallel agreement which tracks the INT.[3]

(6)   *The Mandar Antipassive*

Mang-giling=a'   bata'.
ANTIP-grind=1ABS corn

'I'm grinding corn.'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 38

The alternation between transitive and antipassive verbs forms the core of what has been called a 'voice system' in other languages of the region (van der Tuuk, 1864; Adriani, 1893). Many Philippine-type languages show the same diathesis: they have one construction where the verb bears particular morphology and the INT is absolutive and another construction where the verb bears different morphology and the EXT is absolutive. These categories are classically labeled the "patient voice" and "agent voice" and they correspond to the transitive and antipassive

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[3]The final segment of *maN-* often denasalizes and assimilates to the first segment of its host.

constructions above. The literature on this topic is vast, and it has been treated in the languages of South Sulawesi in a range of previous publications (Béjar, 1999; Lee, 2008; Brodkin, 2021b,a).

Before moving on, I would like to clarify two points about the voice system. The first concerns the status of the voice morphemes. In Mandar, the ergative and antipassive prefixes appear in complementary distribution with other prefixes that influence argument structure. The two alternate, for instance, with a passive prefix *di-* that suppresses the EXT (7a) and a comitative prefix *si-* that selects a PP (7b).

(7)   *Voice Prefixes Influence Argument Structure*

 a. **Di**-issang=di   carita-nna di'e kappung=e?
   PASS-know=CTR.3ABS story-3GEN this village=here
   'Are any stories of this village known?' Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 207

 b. **Si**-ala=ma'   **sola iCicci'**.
   COM-take=PFV.1ABS with NAME
   'I got married with Cicci.'   JT: 12.18, 86

This alternation suggests that the ergative and antipassive prefixes occupy a head which sits relatively low in the clause. In Mandar, I argue that this head is *voice*[0]: the head which introduces the EXT (Harley, 2013; Legate, 2014).

Second, these voice prefixes implicate morphology that is distributed across two distinct heads. While this cannot be seen in the transitive voice, the morphology of the antipassive makes this clear. Like its analogues in other Philippine-type languages, the Mandar antipassive prefix *maN-* is a portmanteau. It contains two parts: an antipassive *paN-* and an "intransitive" *-um-*.

Each of these morphemes can be observed independently. The prefix *paN-*, for instance, does not occur in contexts where the verb lacks an INT. As such,

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unergative verbs never surface with the portmanteau prefix *maN-*. Rather, they surface with the intransitive infix *-um-* alone (8).

(8) *The Intransitive Infix -um-*

    a. Mau   s-**um**-angi'=i, **umm**-ande=to=i.
        although INTR-cry=3ABS, INTR-eat=also=3ABS
        'Although he was crying, he still ate.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 190

    b. Di'o wattu=o,   na=l-**um**-amba=i   s-**um**-obal.
        that time=there, will=INTR-go=3ABS INTR-sail
        'That time, he was going to go sail.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 2

The antipassive prefix *paN-*, in contrast, can be seen in several contexts (Brodkin, 2021b). The simplest of these is the imperative construction. In Mandar, the imperative construction continues a verb form which etymologically bears no voice morphology (the Proto-Malayo-Polynesian 'atemporal': Zobel 2002). As such, transitive imperatives show no the ergative prefix (9a). Antipassive imperatives, however, do not lose the prefix *maN-* completely: rather, they lose the initial segment *m-* and surface instead with the prefix *paN-* (9b).

(9) *The Antipassive Prefix paN-*

    a. Ala=mi,   ande=mi!
        take!=PFV.3ABS, eat!=PFV.3ABS
        'Take it, eat it!.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 108

    b. **Pan**-doe'=tappa=mo='o   dolo'.
        ANTIP-wash=only=PFV=2ABS for.now
        'Just wash for now!'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 785

This pattern shows that the voice alternation implicates morphemes which sit in two distinct heads. In the antipassive voice, both are overt: the higher contains -

um- and the lower contains *paN-*. In the transitive and in all other voices, however, only the higher head is overtly exponed: in the transitive, this hosts the ergative prefix, and in the others, it hosts morphemes like *si-* and *di-*. I assume that these prefixes sit in *voice*^{0}. As a result, I suggest that the lower head contains *paN-* and its null analogues in other voices. I take this head to be v^0, immediately dominated by *voice*^{0} (Harley, 2013; Nie, 2020).

On this view, the morphology of the voice alternation sits in the projection headed by *voice*^{0}. In the strand of work which posits rich functional structure immediately above the verb, this projection resembles the classical VP in two key respects: it is the domain in which arguments are introduced (the "thematic domain;" Wood & Marantz 2017) and it is the domain in which all arguments but the subject are licensed (the "licensing domain;" Legate 2014; Nie 2020).

This analysis allows the transitive-antipassive alternation in Mandar to be understood along the same lines as other types of voice alternation cross-linguistically (Aldridge, 2004; Alexiadou & Doron, 2012; Nie, 2020; Kastner, 2020). Moreover, it provides a means to understand the relationship between the voice alternation and the position of the absolutive argument. In the following sections, I demonstrate how this relationship can be linked to differences in patterns of nominal licensing.

3   High Absolutive Syntax

The preceding section has shown that Mandar behaves as a typical Philippine-type language in many respects: it shows verb-initial word order, morphological ergativity, and the transitive-antipassive alternation known as a voice system. The

following section establishes another point of similarity: across all finite clauses, Mandar requires the absolutive argument to undergo A-movement to a position above all other arguments in the clause. In the transitive voice, this yields the configuration in (10). In the antipassive, it yields the configuration in (11). I refer to these structures as ones which show 'High Absolutive Syntax.'

(10) *Transitive:* INT = ABS

(11) *Antipassive:* $\textsc{ext} = \textsc{abs}$

TP
├── EXT
└── TP
    ├── T^0
    └── *voice*P
        ├── ~~EXT~~
        └── *voice*P
            ├── *voice*^{0}
            └── *v*P
                ├── *v*^{0}
                └── VP
                    ├── V^0
                    └── INT
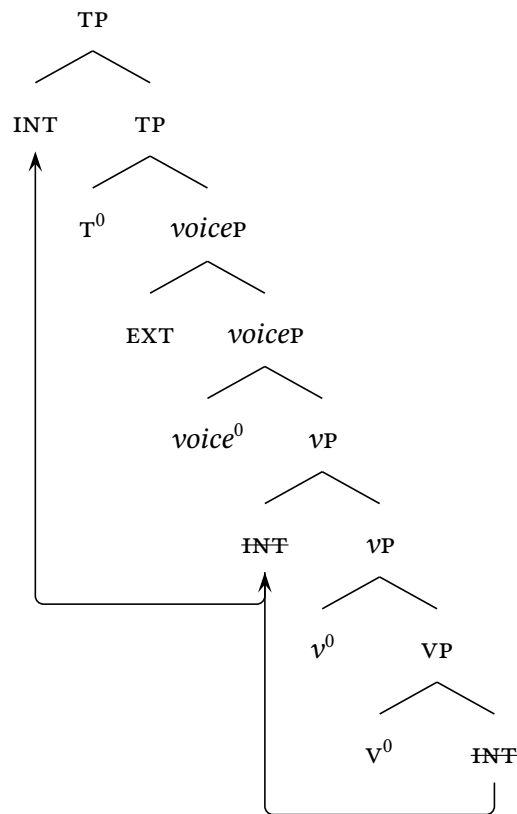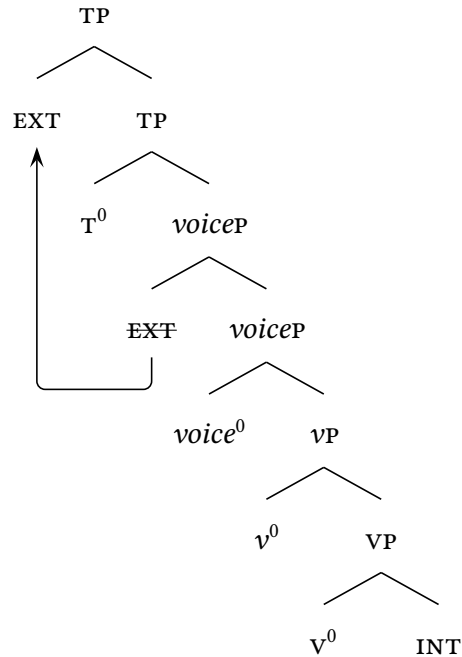
This pattern is not unique to Mandar. In regional perspective, the High Absolutive schema has long been recognized in many other Philippine-type languages (Bloomfield, 1917; Chung, 1976; Keenan, 1976b; Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992; Kroeger, 1993; Rackowski, 2002; Hsieh, 2020) and has formed the basis for various instantiations of the claim that these languages are typologically unique. In broader perspective, however, the evidence for this configuration can be found in a range of ergative languages: for instance, Dyirbal (Dixon, 1979), West Circassian (Ershova, 2019), Salishan (Brown, 2016), Inuit (Bittner, 1994; Bittner & Hale, 1996a,b), and a subset of the Mayan languages (Larsen & Norman, 1979; Coon *et al.*, 2014; Royer, 2020). These empirical parallels suggest that these languages form a natural class and have inspired a range of cross-linguistic analyses which treat them in parallel (*e.g.* Bittner & Hale 1996a,b).

The following section argues that Mandar is another language of this type. To do so, I will point out three facts. First, the absolutive argument triggers agreement on T^0 (Section 3.1). Second, it undergoes A-movement to a position above all arguments in the clause: a fact which can be seen in patterns of pronominal coreference and variable binding (Section 3.2). Third, it shows restrictions which characterize subjects cross-linguistically: for instance, extraction privilege and specificity requirements (Section 3.3). These patterns recur across other High Absolutive languages and provide evidence for the High Absolutive analysis above.

In light of these facts, moreover, I will make one further argument: in Mandar, the absolutive argument is a subject. There is a strand of literature on ergativity which has historically shied away from this view, but the arguments which have driven this shift merit reexamination: they hinge on the assumption that 'subject properties' can be linked to a single syntactic position (Anderson, 1976; Schachter, 1976), when a wealth of generative work has shown that this is not the case (Bobaljik & Jonas, 1996; McCloskey, 1997; Cardinaletti, 2004). On the analysis above, absolutive arguments in Mandar behave much like subjects in English: they interact with T^0, leave the thematic domain (*voice*P), and move to the highest A-position in the clause. I take these properties to show that the absolutive argument is a subject.

3.1   Agreement on T

The first piece of evidence for this analysis lies in the behavior of absolutive agreement. The literature has long held the view that the relative heights of ergative and absolutive arguments in a given language depend on the ways in which these

arguments interact with functional heads along the clausal spine (Bittner & Hale, 1996a,b; Aldridge, 2004; Legate, 2006). In languages where the absolutive argument interacts with T^0, for instance, it has been claimed that it moves to a position above all other arguments in the clause (Bok-Bennema, 1991; Coon *et al.*, 2014).

In Mandar, I argue that this is what occurs. Across all clause types, the absolutive argument triggers the appearance of an agreement enclitic. Four patterns show that this agreement enclitic sits high in the clause. First, it surfaces in a high linear position. Second, it disappears in non-finite contexts. Third, it shows mood-based allomorphy. Fourth, it forms portmanteaux with the markers of aspect. The same patterns hold across the South Sulawesi subfamily (Campbell, 1989; Matti, 1994; Strømme, 1994; Valkama, 1995b,a; Friberg, 1996; Finer, 1997; Jukes, 2006; Laskowske, 2016). In light of these facts, I suggest that absolutive agreement behaves much like nominative agreement in English: it sits in T^0 and attracts the absolutive argument to SPEC,TP.

Before moving on, it is important to note that the source of ergative agreement sits visibly lower in the clause. In Mandar, the ergative prefix shows none of the properties above: it is verb-adjacent, appears in non-finite contexts, and shows no interactions with aspect and mood. Moreover, it surfaces in complementary distribution with the prefixes in *voice*^{0}. These patterns suggest that it sits in *voice*^{0}: a conclusion consistent with the results of work on other languages of the South Sulawesi subfamily (Béjar, 1999; Finer, 1999) and on ergative agreement more broadly (Woolford, 1997; Coon *et al.*, 2014).

3.1.1 Linear Position

The first argument for the high position of absolutive agreement comes from the position of the agreement enclitic. Across the subfamily, this element surfaces in second-position (Kaufman, 2008; Brodkin, 2021c). This pattern suggests that it is not simply a suffix on the verb: rather, it plausibly originates high in the clause (Béjar, 1999; Finer, 1999).

This effect can be seen in contexts where the verb is not the first prosodic word in the clause. For instance, there are a range of middle-field elements which regularly precede the verb: namely, aspectual auxiliaries, modals, and negation. When these elements appear, the absolutive enclitic cannot remain in a post-verbal position. Rather, it must follow the first word in the clause (12).

(12) *Second Position*

    a. Ndang=**i**   melo' ma'-ala.
       not=3ABS want   ANTIP-take
       'He didn't want to take any.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 2

    b. Ndap=pa=**i**   mala **u**-pau.
       not=yet=3ABS can   1ERG-say
       'I can't say it yet.'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 240

The existence of this second-position effect does not demonstrate that absolutive agreement sits in $\textsc{t}^0$, as the process which linearizes the enclitic may be phonological in nature (Brodkin, 2021c). Nevertheless, it establishes a split between absolutive and ergative agreement: the former is a mobile enclitic in the clause, while the latter is a prefix on the verb (12b). In the following sections, I argue that this difference in position reflects a difference in height: in Mandar,

absolutive agreement sits above ergative agreement in the syntax.

3.1.2 Non-Finite Distribution

Beyond their differences in linear position, the absolutive enclitic and ergative prefix interact with finiteness in different ways. Like its relatives (Finer & Basri, 2020), Mandar shows a range of non-finite constructions which conform to a systematic generalization: they can contain the ergative prefix but not the absolutive enclitic. This fact suggests that absolutive agreement bears a close connection to finiteness- much like nominative agreement in English.

This pattern can be seen most clearly in a type of temporal adjunct clause which I term a "genitive absolute." In Mandar, these clauses show voice morphology and host ergative prefixes when their verbs are transitive (13a). Nevertheless, they cannot contain absolutive enclitics. Rather, they require the absolutive argument to be indexed with a genitive suffix on the verb (13b).

(13)   *The Genitive Absolute*

    a. [_{AJT} Ururu u-ita-**mmu**,] tappa'   monge'=a'   mating.
             first   1ERG-see-2GEN   suddenly in.love=1ABS to.you

        'At my first seeing you, I fell in love straightaway.'

Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 3

    b. [_{AJT} Ma-tindo-**'u**,   mang-ipi'-**u**,   ] i'o-na u-pangipi'.
             INTR-sleep-1GEN ANTIP-dream-1GEN   2SG-3G 1ERG-dream

        'At my sleeping, at my dreaming, it's you who I dream of.'

Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 285

A similar pattern can be seen in the complement clauses of restructuring verbs

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like *melo'* 'want' and *ulle* 'can.' These verbs select complement clauses which host voice morphology and ergative agreement (14). Much like the genitive absolutes above, however, these clauses cannot host absolutive enclitics. As such, they show no agreement at all with absolutive arguments.

(14) *Restructuring Contexts*

    a. Melo'=a=di   [_{NFC} **umm**-ande].
       want=may=just.3ABS   INTR-eat
       'Maybe he just wants to eat.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 37

    b. Ndat=to=i   na-ulle [_{NFC} **na**-alli   ].
       not=even=3ABS 3ERG-can   3ERG-buy
       'He can't even buy it.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 212

The import of this trend is clear. While the syntax of non-finite constructions in Mandar cannot be done justice here, the facts above reveal that the absolutive enclitics interact with finiteness in a way that the ergative prefix does not. In light of the positional asymmetry above, this observation suggests that absolutive agreement sits above ergative agreement in the syntax. In the following subsections, I argue that it originates in T^0.

3.1.3 Mood-Based Allomorphy

In Mandar, there is a pattern of mood-based allomorphy which provides support for this view. Like its relatives, this language shows a split in the behavior of absolutive agreement across realis and irrealis contexts. In realis clauses, absolutive agreement surfaces as a second-position enclitic. In irrealis contexts, however, it appears as a suffix on the complementizer.

The following examples illustrate this divide. Example (15a) shows a realis clause where the absolutive argument is a null second-person pronoun. In this context, the exponent of absolutive agreement is the enclitic =o. Example (15b), in contrast, shows an irrealis clause introduced by the subjunctive complementizer *anna'*. In this context, the absolutive argument is still a null second person pronoun. Unlike the realis clause above, however, this clause does not contain the enclitic =o. Rather, it tracks the absolutive argument with a suffix *-mu* on c[0].

(15)   *Irrealis Allomorphy*

    a.   Mamba=mo=**'o**!
        go=PFV=2ABS
        'Go!'   Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 400

    b.   Pattung=a' parrapang gamba, anna=i   di tappere',
        yank!=1ABS like   cork,   place!=3ABS in bed,

        anna'-mu   mamba bonde di tau   laeng.
        that-2ABS.IRR go   fall   in person other

        'Throw me out like a cork and leave me in your bed,

        that you might run off and fall for another.' Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 31

This split reflects a type of allomorphy which holds across transitive and antipassive clauses (Brodkin, 2021a). It provides evidence that absolutive agreement sits high in the clause: if the irrealis complementizer triggers allomorphy, then the head which hosts the realis/irrealis split must be close enough to the locus of absolutive agreement to condition its form. I suggest that this head is *mood*[0] and argue that it immediately dominates and selects the head which hosts absolutive agreement. On this analysis, a natural candidate for this second head is T[0].

3.1.4 Portmanteaux

A second argument for this view comes from the interaction of absolutive agreement with aspect. In Mandar and its relatives, the realis absolutive enclitic forms portmanteaux with the enclitics which mark outer aspect. The process of portmanteau formation is widely taken to require a strictly local relationship in the syntax (Trommer, 1999; Noyer, 1992), and as such, this fact suggests that absolutive agreement must sit in a position adjacent to ASP^0.

The following examples illustrate this pattern. In Mandar, perfective aspect is marked with an enclitic *mo*. When this enclitic co-occurs with the second-person absolutive enclitic *=o*, the resultant string is realized as *=mo'o* (16a). When *mo* co-occurs with the first-person *a'* or third person *i*, however, the expected strings *mo=a'* and *mo=i* do not occur. Rather, the enclitic *mo* undergoes irregular vowel deletion to yield the portmanteaux *ma'* and *mi*.

(16)   *Aspectual Portmanteaux*

    a. Tama=**mo='o**!
        enter=PFV=2ABS

        'Come in!'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 249

    b. Massau=**mi**,   jari malai=**ma'**.
        recover=PFV.3ABS so   return=PFV.1ABS

        'He recovered, so I came home.'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 174

This pattern does not reflect a regular phonological process. The absolutive enclitics do not trigger vowel deletion when they follow other enclitics that end in *o*. When *a'* and *i* co-occur with the inner aspectual marker *bo* 'again,' for instance, the resultant forms are *boa'* and *boi*. There are no forms of the shape *ba'* or *bi*.

(17) *Not Regular Phonology*

    a. Melo'=**bo=a'**   tilua.
       want=again=1ABS throw.up
       'I want to throw up again.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 68

    b. Pole=**bo=i**   kotta'-na.
       come=again=3ABS girlfriend-3GEN
       'His girlfriend came again.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 69

This fact suggests that absolutive enclitics form portmanteaux with the outer aspectual enclitics. This is the view which has long predominated in the descriptive literature on the languages of South Sulawesi (Friberg, 1996; Jukes, 2006) and in work on the related languages nearby.

If this conclusion is correct, it allows us to pinpoint the structural locus of absolutive agreement. The pattern of mood-based allomorphy shows that the form of absolutive agreement can be conditioned by MOOD^0. The pattern of portmanteau formation, moreover, shows that absolutive agreement can condition the form of ASP^0. These facts suggest that absolutive agreement occupies a position between MOOD^0 and ASP^0. The natural candidate for a head in this position is T^0. As such, I argue that the absolutive argument invariably triggers agreement on T^0.

In light of this conclusion, three points come into view. First, Mandar begins to resemble other High Absolutive languages which require the absolutive argument to control the highest source of ϕ-agreement in the clause. Second, the absolutive argument begins to resemble a nominative subject in English in that it invariably interacts with T^0. Third, this pattern sets the stage for a theory on which the absolutive argument systematically moves to SPEC,TP. In the following section, I show that this process does occur.

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3.2 Diagnostics for C-Command

The literature has historically taken agreement facts like the above as one piece of evidence in service of a broader claim: in High Absolutive languages, the absolutive argument undergoes A-movement to a position above all other arguments in the clause. This step of movement has been modeled in several different ways, and in the literature on Austronesian, is often described without specific reference to the notion of ergativity (Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992).

The evidence for this process lies in patterns which suggest that the absolutive INT moves to a position above the ergative EXT. The literature has adduced a range of patterns which suggest this state of affairs: in Inuit, for instance, the absolutive argument obligatorily takes widest scope (Bittner, 1987), while in many Austronesian and Mayan languages, it binds into the EXT as well (Richards, 1993; Pearson, 2005; Royer, 2020).

The following subsections show that the same facts hold in Mandar. In this language, the argument which triggers absolutive agreement systematically moves to a position from which it c-commands all other arguments in the clause. Given that this process occurs alongside with agreement in T^0, I suggest that the absolutive argument moves to SPEC,TP.

3.2.1 Coreference and Condition C

The first piece of evidence for the High Absolutive configuration lies in patterns of coreference between pronouns and R-expressions. Since Reinhart 1983, these constraints have been standardly assumed to reflect c-command. In English, for

instance, it is possible for an object to be a pronoun coindexed with an R-expression inside of a clausemate subject (18a), but it is impossible for the subject to be a pronoun coindexed with an R-expression in a clausemate object (18b).

(18)   *Condition C in English*

    a. Nina$_i$ and John's mother saw her$_i$.

    b. She$_{*i,j}$'ll read the book that Nina$_i$ bought.

These patterns can be derived from the structural relation of C-command. In English, the subject C-commands all other arguments of the clause. As a result, the coindexing in (18b) can be ruled out by a constraint on the distribution of R-expressions which makes direct reference to C-command: for instance, Condition C of the classical Binding Theory (Chomsky *et al.*, 1986).

If the distribution of R-expressions is indeed systematically constrained in this way, we are led to a specific prediction about the languages which show High Absolutive syntax. In these languages, we predict that the absolutive argument should behave like the English subject in two respects. First, it should not be able to be a pronoun coindexed with an R-expression inside another argument of the clause (19a). Second, it should be able to host an R-expression which is coindexed with a pronominal argument elsewhere in the clause (19b). The following examples schematize these predictions in a High-Absolutive version of English.

(19)   *Condition C in High-Absolutive English*

    a. *Nina$_i$ and John's mother saw [$_{ABS}$ her$_i$].

    b. She$_i$'ll read [$_{ABS}$ the book that Nina$_i$ bought].

In Mandar, these predictions are correct. In transitive clauses, it is not possible for the INT to be a pronoun which is coindexed with an R-expression in the EXT. This pattern is shown in example (20). Here, the absolutive INT is a null pronoun and the EXT is a phrase which contains two R-expressions: 'Nina and Kaco's mother.' As in (19a), it is not possible for the INT to be coindexed with either of the R-expressions inside of the EXT.[4]

(20)   *The Absolutive Induces Condition C Violations over the Ergative*

Na-ita=i   [INT *pro*∗i,j]   [EXT kindo'-na   **iNina**i anna' iKaco'].
3ERG-see=3ABS   her   mom-3GEN NAME and   NAME

'Ninai and Kaco's mom saw her∗i,j.   JT: 1.19, 15

In the same vein, it is possible for the absolutive INT to contain an R-expression which is coindexed with a pronominal EXT. This pattern is shown in (21). In this example, the ergative EXT is a null pronoun and absolutive INT is a noun phrase modified by a relative clause that contains an R-expression: 'the book which Nina bought yesterday.' As in (19b), it is possible in this context for the pronominal EXT to be coindexed with the R-expression inside of the INT.

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[4]Two comments are in order on example (20). First, the use of *pro* ensures that its interpretation is not confounded by the effects of focus linked to the presence of overt pronouns. Second, the coordination of possessors allows for an irrelevant parse to be ruled out: in Mandar, a string of two contiguous NPs can be parsed either as two arguments of the predicate or as a single constituent which contains an NP and its possessor, and the use of coordination allows the example to be prosodified in a way that forces the second parse.

(21)   *The Ergative does not induce Condition C Violations over the Absolute*

Na=na-baca=i   [$_\text{EXT}$ **pro**$_i$] [$_\text{INT}$ buku [Ø   na-alli   **iNina**$_i$
will=3ERG-read=3ABS   book   REL 3ERG-buy NAME
dionging]].
yesterday

'She$_{i,j}$ will read the book that Nina$_i$ bought yesterday.'   JT: 5.4, 137

These patterns provide a second piece of evidence that the absolutive argument moves to a position from which it c-commands all other arguments in the clause.

3.2.2   Variable Binding

A similar argument can be made on the basis of variable binding. Like pronominal coreference, variable binding has long been taken to be constrained by the relation of c-command (Reinhart, 1983). On this view, a quantifier can only bind a variable which sits in its c-command domain. In English, this constraint rules out configurations in which a quantified object binds into a clausemate subject (22).

(22)   *Variable Binding in English*
        *His$_i$ teacher scolded every kid$_i$.

This analysis leads to a different prediction about languages which show High Absolutive syntax. If variable binding requires c-command and if the absolutive c-commands the ergative in languages of this type, then we predict that a quantifier inside of the absolutive argument should be able to bind a variable inside of any clausemate argument. If English were a High Absolutive language, for instance, we would predict the possibility of sentences like (23).

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(23) *Variable Binding in High-Absolute English*

[_{ERG} His$_i$ teacher] scolded [_{ABS} every kid$_i$].

In Mandar, this is what we find. In this language, universal quantification is signaled by a second-position enclitic *nasang*. This enclitic does not surface inside of a constituent which contains its associate. Rather, it clusters with other second-position elements after the first word in the clause. From this position, it construes with one of the arguments which follows.

The following examples illustrate this pattern. In (24), the enclitic *nasang* construes with the INT *di'o bau=o* 'those fish these.' In (24b), *nasang* construes with the INT *ana'na* 'his children.' In each case, the quantifier surfaces in the clitic cluster.

(24) *The Universal Quantifier: Nasang*

    a. Na-paressu'=**nasang**=bo=mi   di'o bau=o.
        3ERG-cook=every=again=PFV.3ABS that fish=there
        'She cooked every one of the fish again.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 158

    b. Na-sio=**nasang**=i   mi'oro ana'-na.
        3ERG-order=every=3ABS sit   child-3GEN
        'He ordered every one of his kids to sit.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 1113

When the absolutive argument is quantified in this way, it can bind into any argument in the clause. The following examples illustrate this pattern in the transitive voice (25). In these clauses, the INT associates with *nasang* and the EXT contains a variable (a null possessive pronoun). As in (23), this construction allows the quantifier in the EXT to bind the variable in the EXT..[5]

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[5]Here, there is a note in order. Like English, Mandar also allows a quantified transitive EXT

(25)   *The Absolutive* INT *Binds into the* EXT

    a. Na-salili=**nasang**$_i$=i   kindo'-**na**$_i$ sanaeke$_i$
        3ERG-miss=every=3ABS   mom-3GEN   child

        'Her$_i$ mother misses every$_i$ child.'   JT: 11.23, 31

    b. Na-allai=**nasang**$_i$=i   guru-**nna**$_i$ passikola$_i$
        3ERG-scold=every=3ABS   teacher-3GEN   student

        'His$_i$ teacher scolded every$_i$ student.'   JT: 3.11, 90

This pattern provides a third piece of evidence that the absolutive argument moves to a position above all other arguments in the clause. Alongside the agreement facts and the constraints on pronominal reference, it forms the empirical core of the argument for the basic High Absolutive configuration in Mandar.[6]

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to bind a variable in the INT. The same has been noted in Tagalog (Richards, 1993) and Malagasy (Pearson, 2005). In this context, I claim that the absolutive argument reconstructs to a position beneath the EXT.

Pearson 2005 takes this fact as an argument against A-movement of the absolutive INT in Malagasy. Nevertheless, it is well-known that A-movement can reconstruct for both scope ("*At least one student is likely to fall asleep in my class*"; James McCloskey, *p.c.*) and for variable binding specifically ("*His$_i$ mother seems to every boy$_i$ to be a genius.*": Lebeaux 1991, 231.) As such, I argue this fact to be unproblematic for the A-movement analysis which I adopt.

   [6]Before moving on, it is worth addressing a potential objection to this argument. Since Reinhart (1983), it has been noted that some types of variable binding in some languages can proceed in the absence of a relationship of C-command (see Barker 2012 for a summary). In light of this fact, a skeptic might argue that the 'High Absolutive' pattern of binding in (23)-(25) does not actually provide an argument that the absolutive INT c-commands the EXT. Rather, such a skeptic might continue, it is permissible in Mandar for an independent reason: for instance, the relationship of linear precedence between the quantifier *nasang* and the variable which it binds.

   On a conceptual level, this objection is valid: it may well be the case that patterns of variable binding have been interpreted too literally in work on High Absolutive languages. On the empirical level, however, it misses the following generalization: in Mandar, patterns of variable binding between clausemate arguments do seem to be constrained by c-command.

   This pattern can be seen from the behavior of quantified arguments which are not absolutive. These arguments cannot bind freely into other arguments in the clause. Rather, they can only bind into the arguments which they can be independently shown to c-command. This pattern suggests shows that variable binding does not simply follow from precedence relations or the behavior of the quantifier *nasang*.

   I illustrate this pattern with the behavior of obliques. In Mandar, the quantifier *nasang* can

3.3 Subject Properties

The preceding sections have amassed a range of evidence that Mandar is a High Absolutive language: one which requires that the absolutive argument systematically move to a position above all other arguments in the clause. The following section takes this argument one step further: here, I claim that the absolutive ar-

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construe with arguments inside of prepositional phrases selected by certain verbs. The following examples illustrate this pattern. In (1a), the quantifier construes with a phrase inside of a PP headed by 'with.' In (1b), it construes with a phrase inside of a complex PP headed by 'to.' In both clauses, *nasang* surfaces in second-position.

(1) *Nasang: Associates with PP Arguments*

    a. Si-alla=**nasang**=a'   sola **kandi'-u**.
       COM-fight=every=1ABS with sibling-1GEN

       'I fight with every one of my little siblings.'   JT: 1.18, 29

    b. Palla'=**nasang**=a' lao di **kandi'-u**.
       cold=every=1ABS to at sibling-1GEN

       'I'm cold to every one of my little siblings.'   JT: 1.18, 39

In this construction, it is possible for the quantifier *nasang* to precede an absolutive argument and construe with an element which does not C-command it. When this occurs, the non-absolutive argument cannot bind a variable in the absolutive. The following examples illustrate: in (2a), *nasang* construes with the complement of 'with' and surfaces in second-position before an absolutive argument which contains a potential variable. Nevertheless, the non-absolutive argument cannot bind into the absolutive. The same pattern is shown with a different preposition in (2b).

(2) *Variable Binding Requires C-Command*

    a. Sialla=**nasang**$_i$=i   kandi'-na$_{*i,j}$ sola **sanaeke**$_i$.
       fight=every=3ABS   sibling-3GEN   with kid

       'His$_{*i,j}$ sibling fought with every$_i$ kid.'   JT: 1.18, 78

    b. Palla'=**nasang**$_i$=i   sanaeke-nna$_{*i,j}$ lao di **kindo'**$_i$.
       be.cold=every=3ABS child-3GEN   to at mom

       'Her$_{*i,j}$ child was cold to every$_i$ mother.'   JT: 1.18, 99

These facts suggest that variable binding between clausemate arguments is indeed constrained by C-command. In light of this observation, I suggest that the 'High Absolutive' pattern of binding in (23)-(25) provides a meaningful piece of evidence that the absolutive argument moves to a position from which it C-commands all other arguments in the clause.

gument should be thought of as a subject.

In the following section, I lay out two pieces of evidence for this view. First, I show that Mandar requires the absolutive argument to be definite (Section 3.3.1). Second, I show that it displays a systematic constraint on inter-clausal movement: only the absolutive argument can undergo A- and A'-movement to positions outside of its clause of origin (Sections 3.3.2-3.3.3). The same facts hold in other Philippine-type languages (Keenan, 1976a; Kroeger, 1993).

These patterns are relevant for two reasons. First, they underscore the fact that all absolutive arguments behave as a unitary category in the syntax of Mandar. Second, they reflect characteristic properties of subjects cross-linguistically: in many languages, they must be definite, and in many contexts, they show privilege with respect to both A and Ā-movement (Li, 1976; Shlonsky, 1992). As such, they suggest that the absolutive argument is a subject.

3.3.1 The Definiteness Restriction

The first pattern which suggests that the absolutive argument behaves as a subject lies in a constraint on its definiteness. In Mandar, the absolutive argument can never be indefinite. Example (26a) shows this pattern in the antipassive construction: here, the weakly quantified phrase 'two mothers' cannot be the EXT, even when interpreted as specific and referential. Example (26b) shows the same constraint in a transitive clause: here, such a phrase cannot be the INT.

(26)   *No Nonspecific Absolutives*

    a. *Ma'-balu'=i   **da'dua kindo'-kindo'**.
       ANTIP-sell=3ABS two   RED-mom
       IM: 'Two (specific) mothers are selling.'   JT: 3.11, 296

    b. *Na-saka=mi   posa-u **mesa balao**.
       3ERG-catch=PFV.3ABS cat-1GEN one   mouse
       IM: 'My cat caught one (specific) mouse.'   JT: 1.18, 497

The same prohibition extends to the absolutive argument of an intransitive verb. When indefinite, it cannot appear in a postverbal position and trigger absolutive agreement (27a). Rather, it must be introduced by an existential predicate (27b) or appear in a clause-initial position (27c).

(27)   *Indefinite Arguments of Intransitive Verbs*

    a. *Bemme=mi **tallu talagae**.
       fall=PFV.3ABS three tomato
       IM: 'Three (specific) tomatoes fell.'   JT: 3.11, 294

    b. **Diang**=di   uwai diong   di Polmas?
       there.is=JUST river down.there in PLACE
       'Is there a river down in Polmas?'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 214

    c. Di'o ana'-na   da'dua=o, **mesa** s-um-usu=dua.
       that child-3GEN two=there, one   INTR-milk=still
       'Of their two children, one was still breastfeeding.'

       Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 149

This definiteness restriction holds over the absolutive argument alone. There is no parallel constraint which holds over all types of non-absolutive argument. Various types of indefinite argument can appear, for instance, as the antipassive INT (28a) and the transitive EXT (28b).

(28) *Indefinite Non-Absolute Arguments*

    a. Diang mesa tau **me**-baine **mesa towaine**.
        exist one man ANTIP-wife one woman

        'There was a man who married one woman.' Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 149

    b. Na-timbei=i de' boyan-na iHami' **tau** di=bongi.
        3ERG-pelt=3ABS they.say house-3GEN NAME people at=night

        'They say people pelted Hamid's last night.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 529

These facts suggest that Mandar imposes a systematic constraint on the absolutive argument: it must be definite. This reflects a characteristic property of subjects: in many languages, they must be definite (Li, 1976; Givón, 1978; Diesing & Jelinek, 1995). As such, I take this pattern to provide the first piece of evidence that the absolutive argument in Mandar is a subject.[7]

3.3.2 The Extraction Constraint

The second piece of evidence for the subject analysis lies in constraints on interclausal movement. Like other Philippine-type languages, Mandar shows a strict constraint on a process of apparent Ā-extraction: it targets only the absolutive argument. In a transitive clause, for instance, it is possible for the INT to surface in a left-peripheral position. In the same context, however, the EXT cannot do so.

The following examples illustrate this trend. Example (29a) shows a transitive clause where the EXT is a null first-person pronoun and the INT is a null second-

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[7]Before moving on, one clarification is in order. This constraint holds in many languages of the region, and in some languages, it has been taken as evidence that the absolutive argument is a topic and not a subject (*e.g.* by Pearson 2005). Nevertheless, Kroeger (1993) shows that the absolutive argument does not show the pragmatic properties of a discourse topic in Tagalog: for instance, so long as its referent can be established, it need not have an antecedent in the discourse. The same facts hold in Mandar and as such, I set the topic analysis aside.

person pronoun. In this context, the EXT triggers ergative agreement and the INT triggers absolutive agreement. Example (29b) shows that this construction allows the INT to surface in a clause-initial focus position (note that absolutive agreement disappears). Example (29c), in contrast, shows that the EXT cannot.

(29) *The Ergative Extraction Constraint*

    a. **U**-salili=**o**
       1ERG-miss=2ABS
       'I miss you.'   JT: 4.2, 294

    b. I'o$_i$ **u**-salili t_i
       2SG 1ERG-miss
       'I miss YOU.'   Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 157

    c. ***Innai**$_i$ **na**-salili=o t_i
       who   3ERG-miss=2ABS
       IM: 'Who misses you?'   JT: 4.2, 295

When the pattern of agreement is reversed, this constraint cuts the other way. In antipassive clauses, the EXT can be extracted (30b) but the INT cannot (30c).

(30) *The Absolutives-Only Extraction Constraint*

    a. **Mas**-saka=i   iKaco' manu'.
       ANTIP-catch=3ABS NAME chicken
       'Kaco' is catching chickens.'   JT: 4.2, 296

    b. iKaco'$_i$ **mas**-saka t_i manu'.
       NAME ANTIP-catch   chicken
       'Kaco' is catching chickens.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 52

    c. ***Apa**$_i$ **mas**-saka=i   iKaco' t_i ?
       what ANTIP-catch=3ABS NAME
       IM: 'What is Kaco' catching?'   JT: 4.2, 297

This pattern suggests that the absolute argument bears privilege in the domain of Ā-extraction. Like the definiteness effect above, this pattern reflects another cross-linguistic correlate of subjecthood. There are constructions in nominative-accusative languages which pick out the subject in the same way: for instance, ᴡʜ-movement in many varieties of Arabic, (Shlonsky, 1992; Jarrah, 2019) and the process which forms pseudorelatives beneath verbs of perception across Romance (Cinque, 1992). As such, I take this pattern to provide a second argument that the absolute argument behaves as a subject.

3.3.3 Raising to Subject

The extraction asymmetry laid out above reflects a characteristic property of the Ā-system in the Philippine-type languages of the Austronesian family. In Mandar, however, the same pattern can be observed in contexts which involve interclausal ᴀ-movement as well. In this language, for instance, there is a process of raising to subject which allows the absolute argument of an embedded clause to become the absolute argument of a matrix clause. As above, this process cannot target non-absolute arguments. Its existence provides a final argument that the absolute argument is a subject.

The following examples illustrate this process. Example (31) shows a case of finite embedding. Here, the matrix predicate 'clear' hosts default third-person agreement and embeds a finite clause. In this clause, the argument 'my mom' appears between the predicate and other arguments and triggers agreement.

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(31) *Predicative Adjectives*

      Minassa=mi   macai'=i   **kindo'-u**   mai.
      clear=PFV.3ABS angry=3ABS mom-1GEN at.me

      'It's clear that my mom is mad at me.'   JT: 3.11, 224

Example (31) shows the raising construction. In this context, the marker of absolutive agreement disappears from the embedded clause. The absolutive argument of the embedded clause also undergoes a change in position. Rather than appearing inside of the embedded clause, it precedes or follows it in its entirety.

(32) *Raising to Absolutive*

      Minassa=mi   **kindo'-u**$_i$ [macai t_i mai.
      clear=PFV.3ABS mom-1GEN   angry   at.me

      'My mom is clear to be angry at me.'   JT: 3.11, 225

I propose that this construction involves Raising to Absolutive. On this analysis, the embedded absolutive argument in (31) undergoes a step of A-movement into the absolutive argument position in the matrix clause in (32). The disappearance of embedded absolutive agreement in this context may suggest that the embedded clause is non-finite (Finer & Basri, 2020), much as in English.

Much like Raising to Subject raising in English, this process shows a constraint on its application: it applies only to the absolutive argument of the embedded clause. The following examples illustrate this pattern. When the embedded verb is intransitive or passive, this process targets its sole argument (33a)-(33b). When the embedded clause contains an antipassive, it targets the EXT (33c), and when it is transitive, it strictly targets the INT (33d).

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(33) *Raising Targets Absolutives*

    a. Sa'   masae=**i**   **iKaco'**$_i$ [mottong t_i di aya di Ma'assar].
        truly long=3ABS NAME   live   in up in PLACE

        'Kaco' is long to have lived in Makassar.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 265

    b. Mua' marrang=i bulang, maparri'=**i** [di-saka t_i] **bau**$_i$.
        if   full=3ABS moon, hard=3ABS PASS-catch   fish

        'If the moon is full, fish are hard to catch.' Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 297

    c. Bara'   masiga=**o**   *pro*$_i$ [**mas**-sau t_i].
        hopefully quick=2ABS   ANTIP-recover

        'Hopefully you are quick to recover.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 157

    d. Minassa=o *pro*$_i$ [u-pomelo t_i].
        clear=2ABS   1ERG-love

        'You are clear to be loved by me.'   JT: 6.25, 11

This pattern provides a final piece of evidence that the absolutive argument is a subject. Like the specificity restriction and the constraint on Ā-extraction, the constraint on raising picks out absolutive arguments as a class. Like both restrictions above, moreover, it reflects a property which is cross-linguistically typical of subjects. As such, I take it as a final piece of evidence for this analysis.

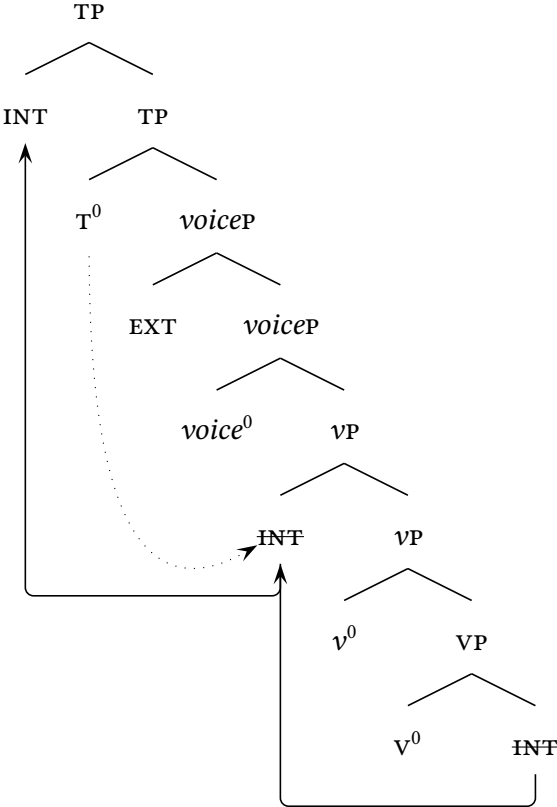# 4   High Absolutive Syntax and Object Shift

The preceding section has advanced three generalizations about the absolutive argument in Mandar: it systematically triggers agreement on T^0, c-commands all other arguments in the clause, and shows properties which characterize subjects cross-linguistically. In each of these respects, it resembles other High Absolutive languages within the Austronesian family and beyond.

In light of these facts, the following sections lay out a theory of the syntax which underlies the High Absolutive configuration. The central theoretical question in this domain concerns the process which places the absolutive argument in its high position. Since the 1990s, the literature has interpreted this step of movement in two ways. One camp has argued that the absolutive argument invariably moves to a subject position as a result of a licensing relationship with T^0 (Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992; Murasugi, 1992; Baker, 1997). Another camp rejects the notion of a subject position and claims that the absolutive argument is simply the highest argument in the thematic domain (Aldridge 2004; Coon *et al.* 2014; Erlewine 2018).
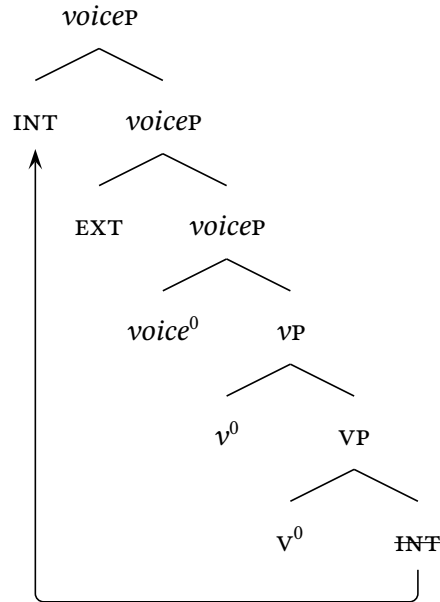
This section attempts to develop an empirical argument in favor of the first view: in Mandar, I argue, the absolutive argument moves to a subject position. From a theoretical standpoint, this is not a trivial task: the original theory in (Aldridge, 2004), for instance, has been modified in ways that blur empirical differences with the alternative. Despite this pattern, it is possible to identify one way in which these two analyses differ. This lies in the theory of object shift.

In transitive contexts, Mandar and other High Absolutive languages require the absolutive INT to move to a position above the EXT. The first set of analyses take this process to reflect movement to a subject position and link it to interaction with T^0 (34). The second set of analyses reject this process. As such, they assume an alternative process which places the INT at the edge of the thematic domain, here labeled *voice*P (35). The following trees lay out this split.

(34)   *The Subject Movement Analysis*

```
                  TP
                 ╱  ╲
              INT    TP
               ↑    ╱  ╲
               ┊  T⁰    voiceP
               ┊  ┊    ╱    ╲
               ┊  ┊  EXT    voiceP
               ┊  ┊        ╱    ╲
               ┊  ┊    voice⁰    vP
               ┊  ┊            ╱    ╲
               ┊  └┈┈┈→ INT     vP
               └──────────┘↑  ╱    ╲
                            v⁰     VP
                                  ╱   ╲
                                 V⁰    INT
                                 └──────┘
```

37

(35)   *The Object Shift Only Alternative*

```
                voiceP
               /      \
            INT       voiceP
             ↑        /      \
             |     EXT       voiceP
             |              /      \
             |          voice⁰     vP
             |                    /    \
             |                  v⁰      VP
             |                         /    \
             |                       v⁰      I̶N̶T̶
             |_____|
```

On the second approach, the process which displaces the INT can be formalized in several ways. The predominant line of analysis, however, equates it with the process of 'object shift' which has been thoroughly investigated in Germanic. The proponents of this view adopt a theory with two specific properties (Aldridge, 2004; Coon *et al.*, 2021). First, they assume that there is a pressure which forces certain types of INT to leave the vP: namely, those which are definite or of category DP (Diesing, 1992). Second, they assume that this pressure forces the INT to move to a position above the EXT (Rackowski, 2002; Aldridge, 2004). I refer to this cluster of analyses as the 'Object Shift Only' (OSO) theory of High Absolutive Syntax.

The OSO analysis makes two specific predictions which stand at odds with those of the 'Subject Movement' alternative. First, the OSO model formally dissociates the process which places the INT above the EXT from the licensing relationship between the INT and T^0 (Aldridge, 2004). The Subject Movement alternative,

in contrast, maintains a strict link between the two. As such, the OSO analysis predicts that when the conditions for the process of object shift are met, it should be possible for an INT which is not absolutive to move to a position above the EXT.

Second, the OSO model makes a prediction about the nature of definiteness-related object shift. On this analysis, the process of definiteness-based object shift is the operation which places the INT above the EXT. There is no room in this theory for a process of definiteness-based object shift which moves the INT but does not place it above the EXT. As such, it predicts that High Absolutive languages should not allow such a process to occur.

My goal in this section is to show that both predictions are false. The argument proceeds in three steps. First, I illustrate that the original arguments for the OSO model can be reproduced in Mandar (Section 4.1). As such, I take this language to provide a fair testing ground for this analysis. Second, I show that the first prediction of the OSO model is not correct: in Mandar, there is no context in which a non-absolutive INT moves to a position above the EXT (Section 4.2). Third, I show that the second prediction is incorrect as well: in Mandar, there is an independently visible process of definiteness-related object shift which moves the INT out of the VP but does not place it above the EXT (Section 4.3).

4.1 The Definiteness Effect

The central motivation for the OSO analysis lies in a definiteness effect which holds in many High Absolutive languages of the Austronesian family. In this subset of languages, there is a correlation between the definiteness of the INT and the choice of voice morphology in matrix monotransitive contexts. As the voice mor-

phology determines the pattern of case-marking and the pattern of case-marking determines the relative height of the INT and EXT, there is a link between the definiteness of the INT and its height in the clause.

This pattern holds most famously in Tagalog, where it has been recognized since colonial times (de San José Blancas, 1610; Adams & Manaster-Ramer, 1988). On the island of Sulawesi, however, it appears equally robust: it occurs across the South Sulawesi (Campbell, 1989), Kaili-Pamona (Martens, 1988) and Bungku-Tolaki (Mead, 1998) subfamilies and holds even in the languages which have lost overtly ergative morphosyntax (Van Den Berg, 1995). It has been explicitly noted, moreover, in the literature on Mandar (Lee, 2008).

The following examples illustrate this pattern. In matrix monotransitive contexts, Mandar requires that verbs bear antipassive morphology when the INT is indefinite. This voice is required, for instance, when the referent of the INT is not uniquely identifiable in the discourse context. In example (36a), for instance, the INT 'fish' is being introduced into a narrative and the verb bears the antipassive prefix *me-*. In example (36b), in the same vein, the INT 'this book' is being presented in a discourse and the verb bears the antipassive prefix *maN-*.

(36) *Antipassive: Indefinite INT*

    a. **Me**-ala=i   **bau** wattu di'o.
         ANTIP-catch=3ABS fish time   that
         'He caught fish at that time.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 153

    b. **Mam**-baca=a'   **di'e buku**=e.
         ANTIP-read=1ABS this book=here
         'I'm reading this book.'   JT: 12.6, 78

When the INT is definite, in contrast, Mandar requires the transitive voice. This

can be seen in the examples below. In (37a), the INT 'the fish' has had its referent established in the preceding discourse (as part of the story in example 36a). In this context, the verb bears the ergative prefix which marks the transitive voice. In example (37b), in the same vein, the INT 'the queen' has a referent which can be inferred from context. As such, transitive morphology is again required.

(37)   *Transitive: Definite INT*

    a. **Na**-ande=i   **di'o bau**=o.
        3ERG-eat=3ABS that fish=there
        'He ate the fish.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 159

    b. **U**-pelambi'i=i   gena'   **mara'dia**!
        1ERG-meet=3ABS just.now queen
        'I just met the queen (of England)!'   JT: 3.9, 206

The descriptive literature on the languages of South Sulawesi has historically treated this pattern as a type of Differential Object Marking (DOM: Aissen 2003). This view reflects a particular interpretation of the relationship between definiteness, voice, and agreement. In these languages, the INT only triggers agreement in the transitive construction, and the transitive construction can only be used if the INT is definite (Friberg, 1996; Jukes, 2006; Laskowske, 2016). As such, it is a surface-true generalization that the INT only triggers agreement when definite.

When one considers the voice system as a whole, however, the situation becomes more complex. The transitive and antipassive voices do not simply differ in terms of the definiteness of the INT and the agreement schema. Rather, they differ in two additional respects: in the morphology which appears in *voice*^{0} and *v*^{0} and in the hierarchical relations which they create between the INT and the EXT. When the INT is definite, it does not simply trigger agreement: it forces the appearance

of transitive morphology and moves to SPEC,TP as well. As such, there is a complex relationship between the definiteness of the INT, its height, the morphology of the verb, and the agreement pattern of the clause.
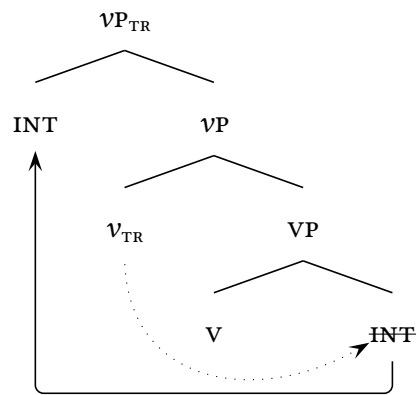
When one steps back from the details, however, a parallel comes into focus. Broadly speaking, there is a similarity between Philippine-type languages like Mandar and Germanic languages like Icelandic: both require the INT to move out of the VP when it is definite (Diesing, 1992; Collins & Thráinsson, 1996). This parallel led Rackowski (2002) to a proposal which has since risen to dominance in work on Philippine-type languages of this type: that the high position of the transitive INT can be attributed- at least in part- to a process of object shift.

In Brodkin 2021b, I argue that this operation underlies the definiteness effect in Mandar. Following Rackowski (2002), I assume that Mandar does not allow definite arguments to remain in the VP (Diesing, 1992). In the same vein, I assume that Mandar has two different v^0s which differ in their capacity to trigger definiteness-related object shift. In the transitive voice, I argue that the language employs a v^0 which allows the INT to shift. In the antipassive voice, in contrast, I argue that it does not. The following trees illustrate.

(38)   *Antipassive: No Shift*

$v\text{P}_{\text{ANT}}$

$v\text{P}$

v_{ANT} VP

✗

V   INT
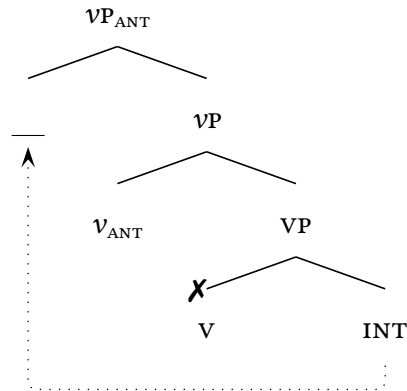
(39)   *Transitive: Shift*

$v\text{P}_{\text{TR}}$

INT $v\text{P}$

v_{TR} VP

V   ~~INT~~

This analysis delivers the definiteness effect from a requirement for definiteness-related object shift and a property of the antipassive v^0. This system, originally proposed in Rackowski (2002), captures a key generalization about the position of the INT in languages of this type. Moreover, it fits well with the morphology of Mandar and its relatives and accommodates a range of facts which suggest a process of vP-level object shift in this language. I return to the evidence for this process of object shift in Section 4.3.

4.2 Case and Definiteness Disentangled

This type of definiteness effect has been taken as evidence for the OSO model in Tagalog (Aldridge, 2004). Such an analysis would link the high position of the transitive INT to the process of definiteness-based object shift alone. This view rests on two distinct assumptions: first, that there is a pressure which forces definite INTs to leave the VP (Diesing, 1992), and second, that this process places them above the EXT (Rackowski, 2002).

In Mandar, the OSO analysis makes correct predictions about the hierarchical position of the INT in matrix monotransitive clauses. This success, however, occurs only because of a confounding quirk of this context: it does not allow the influence of being definite to be separated from the influence of being absolutive. In matrix monotransitive clauses, the INT must be absolutive whenever it is definite. As such, it is not possible to tell whether its high position arises through a general process which targets all definite arguments or through a specific process which targets the absolutive argument alone.

Once one moves beyond matrix monotransitive contexts, however, it is possible to disambiguate between the two hypotheses above. In Mandar, there are several constructions where the definiteness of the INT and its abstract Case come apart. One of these is an applicative construction common to many Philippine-type languages: the equivalent of the "locative voice." This construction allows the INT to be definite without being absolutive. As such, it provides a means to investigate the specific influence of definiteness on its height.

The following examples illustrate the applicative construction, which is formed

with regular voice prefixes and the applicative suffix -*ang*. In example (40a), for instance, the transitive verb 'cut' hosts the suffix -*ang*. The EXT is a null pronoun which triggers ergative agreement on the verb, the INT is left implicit, and the applied argument is the phrase 'his family.' Absolutive agreement targets the applied argument. Another example is given in (40b), where the EXT is the 'my boss,' the INT is 'permission,' and the applied argument is a null first person pronoun.

(40)   *Applicative Constructions*

   a. Na-ta'bang-**ang**=i   luluare'-na'.
      3ERG-cut-APPL=3ABS family-3GEN
      'He's cutting (bananas) for his family.'   Friberg & Jerniati 2000, 56

   b. Pitungallo bappa   na-be-**ngan**=a'   paramisi   punggawa-u.
      one.week   hopefully 3ERG-give-APPL=1ABS permission boss-1GEN
      'Hopefully my boss gives me permission for one week.'

      Sikki *et al.* 1987, 509

This construction allows the INT to be definite even when it is not absolutive. The following examples illustrate. In example (41a), the INT is the phrase *sara-nna* 'the matter.' In example (41b), it is the phrase *gayang-na* 'his sword.' In both cases, absolutive agreement targets not the INT but the applied argument 'me'.

(41)   *Applicative Constructions allow definite INTs*

   a. Na-gattung-**am**=ma'   **sara-nna**.
      3ERG-hang-APPL=PFV.1ABS matter-3GEN
      'They'll hang the matter on me.'   Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 336

   b. Na-giling-**am**=ma'   **gayan-na**.
      3ERG-wave-APPL=PFV.1ABS sword-3GEN
      'He waved his sword at me.'   Muthalib & Sangi 1991, 26

In this context, the INT should undergo definiteness-related object shift. Nevertheless, it is not absolute. As such, the OSO model and the Subject Movement alternative make different predictions about its position. The OSO model holds that definiteness-related object shift places the INT above the EXT, and as such, predicts that the INT should C-command the EXT in this context. The Subject Movement analysis, in contrast, holds that definiteness-related object shift is not the process that places the absolutive argument in its high position. As such, it predicts that a non-absolutive INT should never move above the EXT.

In Mandar, it is the prediction of the Subject Movement analysis which is correct: it is not possible for a definite but non-absolutive INT to move above the EXT. This pattern can be seen from the diagnostics for C-command above. In the applicative construction, these diagnostics show that the absolutive goal moves to a position above all other arguments in the clause. For instance, when it is quantified with the enclitic *nasang*, it can bind a variable in the EXT (42).

(42)   *Applicative Goals C-Command the EXT*

Na-be-ng**an**=**nasang**=i   kindo'-na   **sanaeke**   kandekande.
3ERG-give-APPL=every=3ABS mom-3GEN   kid   snack

'His*ᵢ* mom gave every kid*ᵢ* a snack.'   JT: 4.16, 49

The same diagnostics show that the definite but non-absolutive INT does not move to the same position. In the applicative construction, it is possible for the non-absolutive INT to associate with the quantifier *nasang* (43a). When this occurs, however, it is not possible for the INT to bind a variable inside of the EXT. In example (43b), for instance, the non-absolutive INT 'every book' cannot bind the variable in the EXT 'its author.'

(43) *Applicative* INT: *Cannot C-Command the* EXT

    a. U-be-ngan=**nasang**=i   iting sanaeke   **kado**.
       1ERG-give-APPL=every=3ABS that child   present
       'I gave that kid every present.'   JT: 1.18, 22

    b. Na-kiring-an=**nasang**=a'   panulis-na **buku**.
       3ERG-send-APPL=every=1ABS author-3GEN book
       'Its$_{*i,j}$ author sent me every book.'   JT: 4.16, 68

This pattern shows that the INT only moves above the EXT when it is absolutive. It provides the first piece of evidence for a broader generalization: when the influence of definiteness is separated from the influence being absolutive, it becomes clear that there is no general operation which applies to all definite INTs and places them in a position above the EXT. This observation runs directly against the first prediction of the OSO analysis.

4.3 Definite Arguments Still Shift

The preceding subsection has noted a pattern which undermines the central theoretical mission of the OSO analysis: to derive the High Absolutive configuration from a process of definiteness-related object shift alone. To accommodate this fact, an OSO analysis of Mandar would be forced to stipulate that the pressure which triggers this process could be called off under the right circumstances. In principle, such a proviso could allow such an analysis to handle the behavior of the definite but non-absolutive INTs above.

This stipulation is suspect for a range of reasons. First, it posits a divergence from the type of definiteness-related object shift which can be observed in Germanic, which applies to both dative and accusative arguments in tandem (Diesing,

1992; Collins & Thráinsson, 1996). Second, it assumes this divergence for purely theory-internal reasons. Third, it undermines the theoretical underpinnings for the theory of definiteness-related object shift itself: if this process is driven by invariable semantic constraints, then it should not be able to be called off for syntax-internal reasons. As such, it seems that such a move would be best avoided.

Despite these concerns, this specific proviso has been independently proposed by proponents of the OSO model for an additional context. This is a construction which poses the same challenge which we have seen above: it allows the INT to be definite but not absolutive, and it shows evidence that the INT does not undergo definiteness-related object shift to a position above the EXT in this context.

The relevant construction is a type of clause which shows Ā-extraction of the EXT. In this type of clause, Philippine-type languages generally require antipassive-like morphology on the verb. In this context in Mandar, for instance, the verb typically bears an exponent of the intransitive *voice*^{0} *-um-*. The following examples illustrate this pattern. In (44a), the EXT 'you' appears in a clause-initial position, and the verb which follows bears the intransitive *voice*^{0} alone. In (44b), the EXT *Sitti* appears in this position and the verb bears the antipassive prefix *me-*.

(44) *Extraction of the EXT*

    a. I'o **umm**-ande.
        2SG INTR-eat
        'You ate.'   Pelenkahu *et al.* 1983, 215

    b. iSitti **me**-alli   duriang anna' lasse'.
        NAME ANTIP-buy durian and langsat
        'Siti bought durians and langsat.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 333

Despite the presence of apparent antipassive morphology, Mandar allows the

INT to be definite in this context. When this occurs, the intransitive *voice*^{0} remains but a distinct morpheme appears in v^0. The resultant verbs bear the portmanteau prefix *maN-* (here glossed QI, 'quirky intransitive') and show a type of "low" absolutive agreement with the INT (here glossed as C).

The following examples illustrate this trend. In (45a), the EXT 'you' appears in the clause-initial position and the verb bears the prefix *mat-* (an allomorph of *maN-*). The INT, 'my mango,' is definite and triggers an exceptional type of low agreement on the verb. In (45b), the same pattern occurs: the EXT 'what' appears in the clause-initial position, the verb bears the prefix *maN-*, and the INT, a null first-person pronoun, triggers the same exceptional low agreement.

(45)   *Mandar: The Quirky Intransitive*

    a. I'o=kapang **mat**-timbe=**i** kacci'-u.
        2SG=maybe QI-throw=3C mango-1GEN
        'Maybe you threw my mango.'   Sikki *et al.* 1987, 1132

    b. Apa **mam**-bokko'=a'?
        what QI-bite=1C
        'What bit me?'   JT: 1.19.78

This type of construction has long been recognized to pose problems for the OSO analysis of other languages of the region. This is for the following reason. On the OSO analysis, the presence of a definite INT should force the occurrence of definiteness-based object shift. This process, in turn, should force the appearance of transitive morphology and should force the INT to behave as the absolutive argument. In this context, however, it is clear that neither of these processes occur: the verb hosts the intransitive *voice*^{0} *-um-*, rather than transitive morphology, and the EXT behaves as the absolutive argument insofar as it is able to be extracted.

In light of these facts, the proponents of the OSO analysis have historically denied the presence of object shift in this construction entirely. In her analysis of Tagalog, Rackowski (2002) argues that the INT simply fails to undergo definiteness-related object shift and formalizes her account with specific assumptions about feature-checking. Aldridge (2004) argues for the same conclusion in a slightly different way. In Tagalog, she notes, the structures which appear to involve Ā-extraction are actually copular clauses in which the apparently extracted element is the predicate and the material which follows it is a headless relative clause in the subject position. On this view, the INT in the headless relative clause does not sit inside of the matrix VP. As a result, Aldridge suggests, there is no need for it to undergo object shift in the embedded VP.

These two analyses, however, both face serious conceptual challenges. As Aldridge (2004) points out, it is problematic to stipulate that semantically-driven movements can be called off when syntactic constraints do not allow them to occur. The account that she proposes, however, does not fare any better. While the analogous construction in Tagalog may place the INT outside of the matrix VP, this does not change the fact that it sits inside of an embedded VP of its own. As such, it is only possible for this analysis to deny the occurrence of object shift in this context with a proviso that calls off the pressure for this operation inside of a VP that sits outside of the VP of the clause which contains it. This type of proviso, however, appears to be incompatible with a derivational theory of syntax that assembles syntactic structures from the bottom up

Beyond these objections, this analysis faces an empirical challenge as well: in Mandar, it is clear that this construction allows object shift to occur (Brodkin,

[2021b](). This evidence comes from a pattern of prosodic incorporation which targets material inside the vp. Under typical circumstances, focused elements which stay inside of the vp can be prosodically incorporated into the verb ([Brodkin, 2020]()). While the antipassive INT can typically undergo this process, the definite INTs in this construction cannot. I take this pattern to suggest that they undergo a step of definiteness-related object shift to a position outside of the vp.

The following examples illustrate the pattern of vp-level focus. In example ([46a]()), the verb is followed by the focused locative adverb 'here.' In this context, the verb and this adverb form a single prosodic word (marked with a hyphen) and the absolutive enclitic =*i* follows this prosodic constituent. In example ([46b]()), the same process applies to an antipassive INT: here, 'what.'

(46) *VP-Level Focus*

    a. Mas-sikola-**dini**=i.
        INTR-school-here=3ABS
        'They're in school HERE.'   [Friberg & Jerniati 2000](), 202

    b. Man-dundu-**apa**=i   anna' ma'doya?
        ANTIP-drink-what=3ABS so.that stay.awake?
        'WHAT is he drinking to stay awake?   JT: 6.21, 98

When the INT is indefinite, this process remains marginally possible (with some degree of lexical sensitivity) when the EXT is placed in the clause-initial focus position. This pattern is shown in ([47]()): here, the verb 'become' and the INT 'fish' form a single word and the enclitic 'again' follows the sequence.

(47) *VP-Level Focus and Extraction*

  Innai men-jari-**bau**=boi?
  who INTR-become-fish=again

  'Who turned into a fish again?'   JT: 11.20, 278

When the INT is definite, however, the same process cannot occur. In example (48), the EXT surfaces in the clause-initial focus position and the INT is the second-person pronoun 'you.' It is not possible to subject the pronoun to the same process. I take this pattern to suggest that the INT undergoes a step of definiteness-related object shift to a position outside of the VP.

(48) *Definite INT: No VP-level Focus*

  *Innai ma'-ita-**i'o**=boi?
  who   QI-see-2SG=again

  'Who saw you again?'   JT: 11.20, 334

This observation provides further evidence for two of the arguments above. First, it provides additional evidence that there is a genuine operation of definiteness-related object shift in the language. Second, it shows that this process can occur in contexts where the EXT is the absolutive argument. In the clauses above, the verb bears the intransitive morphology which suggests that the EXT moves to SPEC,TP and the INT remains relatively low. As such, I argue, the process of definiteness-related object shift cannot place the INT in a position above the EXT.

These facts point toward an analysis of Mandar clause structure on which definiteness-related object shift and subject movement are two distinct operations

that coexist in the language. In contexts like the above, the two can be seen independently. In these clauses, I propose, the EXT undergoes subject movement to SPEC,TP- a process signaled by the appearance of the intransitive *voice*^{0} which forms a part of the portmanteau prefix *maN-*. The INT, in contrast, undergoes definiteness-related object shift to SPEC,*v*P- a process triggered by the special *v*^{0} which appears in this construction. The following tree illustrates this syntax.

(49)   *The Quirky Intransitive: Object Shift*
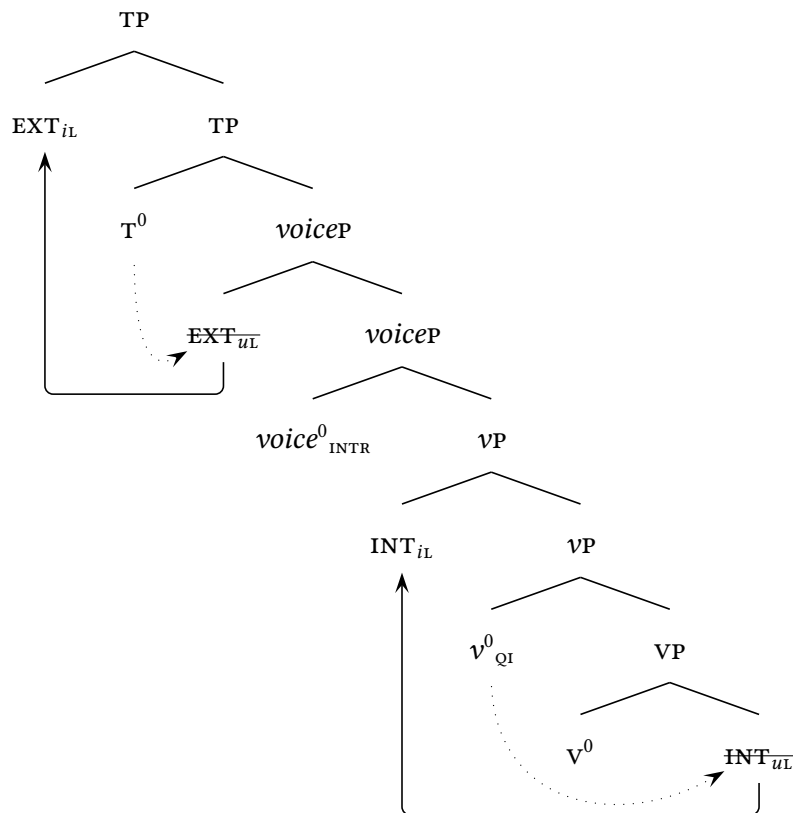
This analysis converges in several ways with the observations which we have made about Mandar clause structure until this point. First, it distributes the voice morphology across *voice*^{0} and *v*^{0} and links its appearance to the distribution of arguments across the clause. Second, it places the absolutive argument in a ded-

icated subject position outside of the thematic domain (*voice*P) and connects this step of movement to its interaction with T^0. Third, it recognizes the existence of an operation of definiteness-related object shift- but as above, does not allow this process to place the INT above the EXT.

The following section develops this analysis into a fuller model of Mandar syntax. Before moving on, however, it is important to note the implications of this analysis for the broader OSO approach to High Absolutive syntax. In Mandar, I argue, there is no direct link between the definiteness of the INT and its movement to the High Absolutive position. In every context where the influence of definiteness can be separated from the influence of absolutive Case, it is clear that definiteness alone does not provide sufficient motivation for the movement of the INT above the EXT. In light of the facts above, however, it is clear that the operation of definiteness-related object shift is active in the language. As such, we are led to a theory on which this operation exists but does not underlie the High Absolutive configuration. This conclusion undermines the central logic of the OSO analysis.

5   The Two-Step Model

Scoping out, the preceding sections have argued for two central generalizations about Mandar. First, the language requires the absolutive argument to interact with T^0 and move to a dedicated subject position outside of the thematic domain (Section 3). Second, the language shows evidence for a process of definiteness-related object shift which occurs within the *v*P and does not place the INT above the EXT (Section 4). The following section links these two observations to lay out

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a new theory of High Absolutive syntax: the Two-Step Model (Brodkin, 2021b,d).

The Two-Step Model continues the central intuition of the Subject Movement analysis: it holds that the absolutive argument moves to a subject position outside of the thematic domain as a result of patterns of nominal licensing. Following the classical analysis, I argue that in Mandar, the absolutive argument cannot be (Case-)licensed within the thematic domain (Bok-Bennema, 1991; Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992). As a result, it must interact with a higher functional head to be licensed: namely, T^0. Moreover, I argue that this process forces it to move to SPEC,TP. I refer to this step as Licensing Movement.

This analysis breaks from alternatives in two ways. Unlike the classical analysis, I propose that this step of Licensing Movement can be prefigured by a step of definiteness-related object shift. In Mandar, I argue that the INT shifts to SPEC,vP when definite, and following Rackowski (2002), I assume that this process can occur in the presence of certain types of v^0. Unlike the proponents of the OSO analysis, however, I argue that the process of definiteness-related object shift does not place the INT above the EXT. Rather, I maintain that the High Absolutive schema arises exclusively through the step of Licensing Movement above.
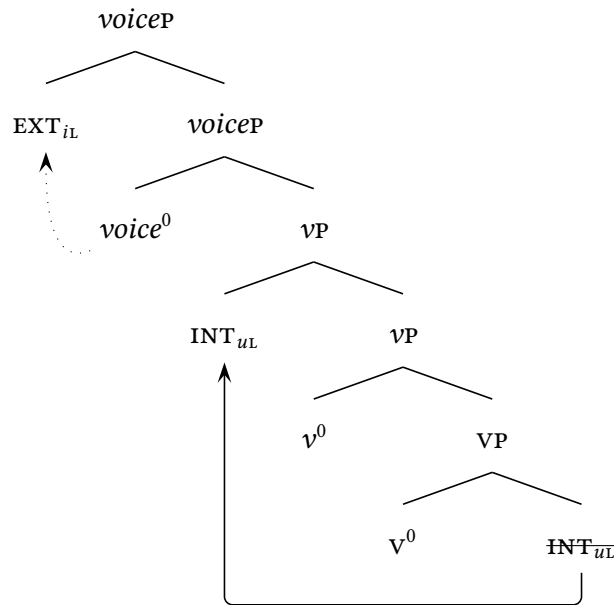
The following section illustrates this system in three parts. First, I lay out the derivation of the basic transitive voice (Section 5.1). Second, I step through the derivation of the antipassive (Section 5.2). Third, I lay out an analysis of the applicative construction (Section 5.3).

5.1 The Transitive Voice

In the transitive voice, I propose that Mandar requires the absolute INT to undergo a step of Licensing Movement to a subject position: namely, SPEC,TP. This step occurs as the byproduct of a licensing relationship between the absolute argument and T^0. Here, however, it is prefigured by a step of definiteness-related object shift: as the transitive INT is always definite, it shifts first to SPEC,vP.
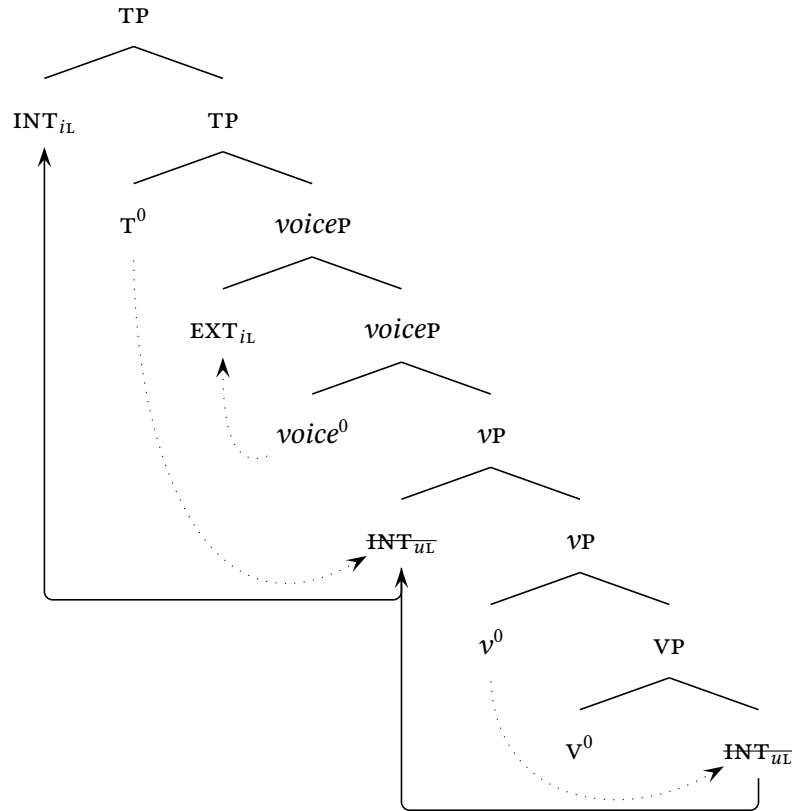
The following tree illustrates the derivation of a transitive clause up to the *voice*P. I assume that a definite INT is merged as the complement of v^0. As the INT is definite, I maintain that it must move to a position outside of the VP for the derivation to converge. This constraint forces this VP to be selected by the transitive v^0, which triggers object shift of the INT to SPEC,vP. This transitive vP is then selected by the transitive *voice*^{0}, which merges the EXT in its specifier and agrees with it. This agreement relationship yields the ergative prefix on the verb and licenses the EXT. I mark this licensing with a valued 'licensing feature' iL.

(50) *The Transitive Clause: voiceP*

voiceP
├── EXT$_{i\text{L}}$
│   (↑ dotted movement from voice^0)
└── voiceP
      ├── voice^0
      └── *v*P
            ├── INT$_{u\text{L}}$
            └── *v*P
                  ├── *v*^{0}
                  └── VP
                        ├── V^0
                        └── ~~INT$_{\overline{u\text{L}}}$~~

The High Absolute configuration arises once the transitive *voice*P merges with T^0. At this point, the absolutive agreement probe on T^0 finds the INT as the highest unlicensed argument in its search domain. It then agrees with this argument and attracts it to SPEC,TP. This process licenses the INT and places it in a subject position above all other arguments in the clause.

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(51) *The Transitive Clause: TP*

```
                          TP
                      ╱        ╲
              INT_{iL}          TP
                ↑          ╱         ╲
                │        T⁰           voiceP
                │         ⋮      ╱          ╲
                │         ⋮   EXT_{iL}       voiceP
                │         ⋮      ↑      ╱         ╲
                │         ⋮      ┆   voice⁰        vP
                │         ⋮      ┆            ╱         ╲
                │      ⋯⋯→ INT_{uL}          vP
                │                        ╱        ╲
                │                      v⁰          VP
                │                       ⋮     ╱        ╲
                │                       ⋮    V⁰      INT_{uL}
                └───────────────────────⋯⋯⋯⋯→
```

In the transitive voice, the step of licensing movement which places the INT in the subject position is non-local in character. This is a consequence of my analysis of definiteness-related object shift: in Mandar, I have argued that it does not place the INT above the EXT. As such, the licensing movement which occurs in this context will attract the INT from SPEC,*v*P to SPEC,TP, crossing over the EXT in SPEC,*voice*P. In this respect, it does not obey any absolute constraint on locality (*e.g.* 'Attract Closest': [Chomsky 1999](#)).

This problem is not unique to this analysis: rather, it is a systematic challenge to the theory of locality which all High Absolute configurations raise. The literature on ergativity has historically dealt with this in three ways. Some analyses

have posited an intermediate step of movement which yields a multiple-specifier configuration that allows locality to be circumvented (Rackowski, 2002). Others have denied the existence of a locality constraint entirely (Assmann *et al.*, 2015). Lastly, yet others have assumed that the High Absolutive configuration arises through relativization of the attracting probe: either through case-discrimination (Otsuka, 2006; Deal, 2016) or through the notion of *Activity* (Ershova, 2019).

The Two Step Analysis adopts this last approach. I propose that the transitive INT undergoes A-movement from SPEC,vP to SPEC,TP, crossing over the EXT in SPEC,*voice*P, as a direct consequence of patterns of licensing. The central intuition is the following: High Absolutive languages allow the ergative EXT, but not the absolutive INT, to be licensed within the complement of T^0. As a result, the INT serves as the highest 'unlicensed' argument when T^0 is merged- and as such, is able to interact with T^0 and move into its specifier. This pattern reflects the historical logic of the Subject Movement analysis of High Absolutive syntax (Bok-Bennema, 1991; Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992), and I argue that it is essentially correct.

5.2   The Antipassive

The same logic drives the derivation of constructions where other arguments are absolutive. On this view, the absolutive argument behaves like a subject: it is the highest argument that is unlicensed within the complement of T^0, and it systematically undergoes A-movement to SPEC,TP as the result of interaction with this head.The transitive and antipassive constructions- and all of the other Austronesian 'voices'- simply differ with respect to patterns of licensing within the *voice*P.

The following tree illustrates the derivation of an antipassive clause up to the

*voice*P. In this context, I assume that an indefinite INT is merged as the complement of v^0. As the INT is indefinite, the derivation cannot converge if it moves to the subject position. As such, the successful derivations which contain arguments of this type will involve selection of the *v*P by the antipassive v^0, which triggers no object shift. The resultant antipassive *v*P is then selected by the intransitive *voice*^{0}, which merges the EXT in its specifier and does not agree with it. This pattern has two consequences: it yields the absence of agreement on the antipassive prefix and renders the EXT the highest unlicensed argument in the *voice*P.

(52)   *Antipassive:* EXT > INT
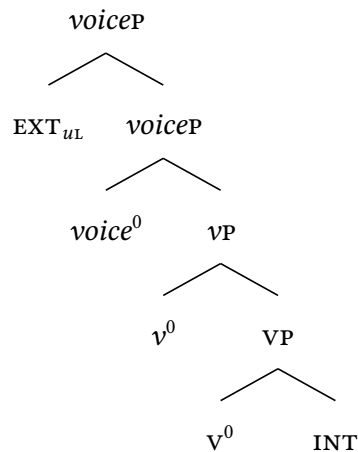
When the intransitive *voice*P merges with T^0, the agreement probe on T^0 finds the EXT as the highest unlicensed argument in its search domain. The probe then agrees with this argument and attracts it to SPEC,TP. This process licenses the EXT and the concomitant step of movement places it in a subject position. I propose that in the antipassive construction, the INT simply remains in-situ: it can receive *v*P-level focus, which suggests that it remains low, and as an indefinite NP, I assume that it does not require licensing at all (Danon, 2001; Massam, 2001). As such, the

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following tree illustrates the shape of a complete antipassive clause.

(53) *Antipassive:* EXT > INT

```
                    TP
                   /  \
              EXT_iL    TP
                ↑      /  \
                ┊    T⁰    voiceP
                ┊         /  \
                ┊    EXT_uL    voiceP
                ┊             /  \
                        voice⁰    vP
                                 /  \
                               v⁰    VP
                                    /  \
                                  v⁰    INT
```
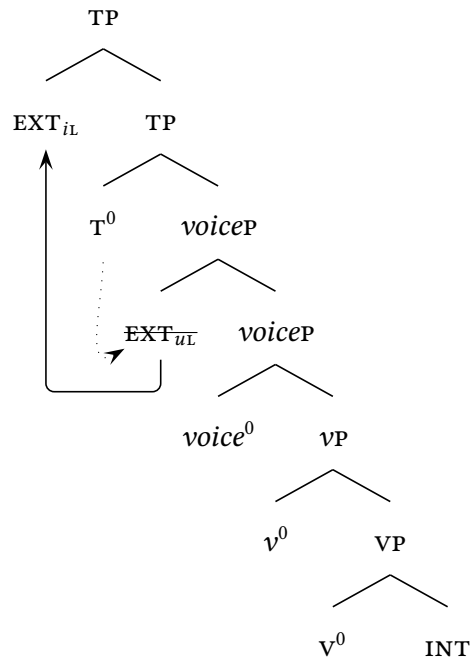
5.3 The Applicative Construction

The same logic drives the derivation of the applicative constructions above. In these clauses, I assume that the INT merges as the complement of v and that this vP is selected by v^0. This v^0 is then selected by an applicative $v^0{}_{\text{APPL}}$ which introduces the goal in its specifier. The resultant vP$_{\text{APPL}}$ is selected by the transitive *voice*^{0}, which merges the EXT in its specifier and agrees with it. This process licenses the EXT and renders the applied argument the highest unlicensed argument in the *voice*P. When this *voice*P is selected by T^0, the applied argument moves to SPEC,TP.

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(54) *The Applicative Clause*
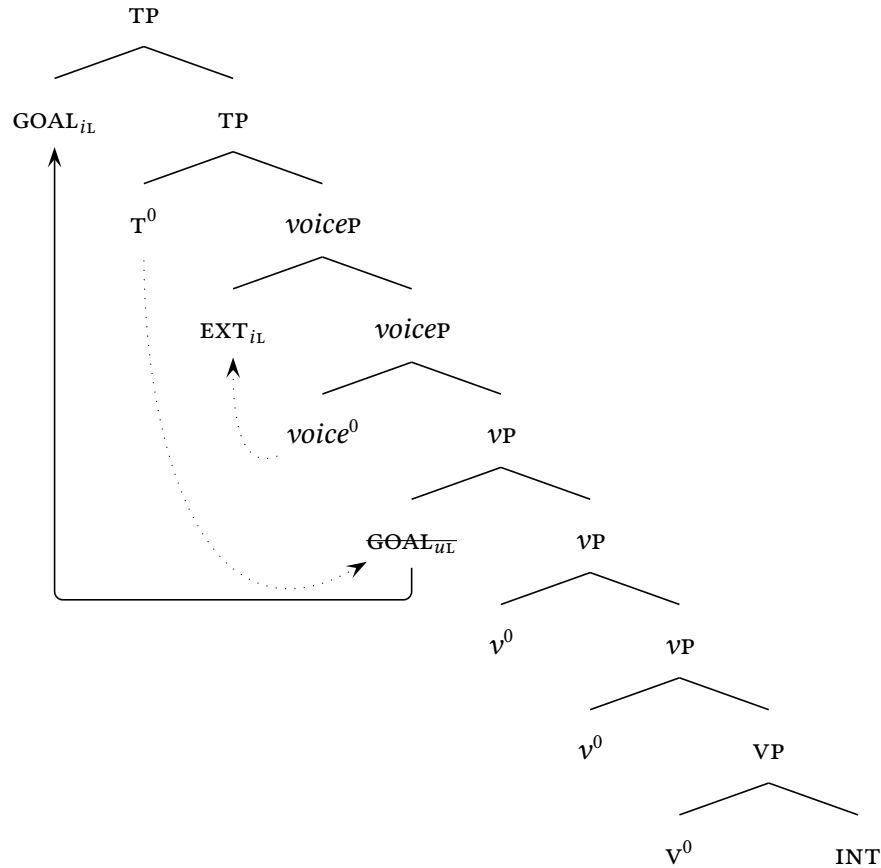
5.4   An Interim Summary

In this implementation, the Two-Step Model captures a range of facts about the syntax of Mandar. First, it connects the properties of the absolutive argument to a distinct syntactic position (SPEC,TP) and an associated morphological cue (agreement with T^0). Second, it derives the definiteness effect in the voice system from a constraint on the position of definite arguments and an associated morphological pattern: the antipassive voice does not allow the INT to be definite because definite INTs must move out of the VP and only the transitive v^0 allows this to step of

movement to occur. Finally, it connects the patterns of object shift above to the broader logic of the High Absolutive system: definite but non-absolutive INTs do not move above the EXT because the sole operation which places arguments outside of the *voice*p is the step of licensing movement which places the absolutive argument in the subject position.

This analysis provides a better way to understand the syntax of Mandar than any previous approach to High Absolutive syntax. Unlike the classical formulation of the Subject Movement Analysis, it recognizes the role of definiteness-related object shift in the determination of voice. Unlike the OSO analysis, moreover, it makes correct predictions about the nature of definiteness-related object shift in the language. As such, I take this analysis to reflect a concrete improvement over these alternatives- and suggest that it may generalize to other High Absolutive languages in the region and beyond.

6   Object Shift in Western Austronesian

Before concluding, I would like to provide a final piece of evidence for the broader applicability of the Two-Step model. This observation lies in the behavior of definiteness-related object shift in the other languages of the region. In Mandar, I have argued that there is no single operation which applies obligatorily to definite INTs and places them in a position above the EXT: in other words, the object shift of the OSO model does not exist. This pattern can be seen in cases where the INT could be definite without being absolutive. In these contexts, in Mandar it is clear that the INT does not move to a position above the EXT.

This pattern is not an isolated quirk of Mandar. Rather, it appears to reflect a systematic fact which holds across the High Absolutive languages of the region. The following section illustrates this pattern in two such languages which have featured prominently in the analysis of Philippine-type syntax: Tagalog and Malagasy. In each of these languages, I show that there is no operation which applies obligatorily to definite INTs and places them in a position above the EXT. In other words, I argue that these languages provide the same type of evidence against the OSO analysis of High Absolutive syntax.

6.1 Object Shift in Tagalog

I illustrate this pattern first in Tagalog, a language of the Greater Central Philippines subgroup of Western Malayo-Polynesian. The literature on this language has established that it patterns with Mandar in several respects (Schachter, 1976; Kroeger, 1993; Rackowski, 2002; Aldridge, 2004; Hsieh, 2020). First, this language shows an ergative-absolutive pattern of case-marking which mirrors the ergative-absolutive agreement schema in Mandar. Second, it shows the same basic diathesis between the antipassive and transitive voices. In Tagalog, these are traditionally known as the "Agent Voice" and "Patient Voice," respectively.

The following examples illustrate the shape of the basic Tagalog clause. In (55a), the verb bears the antipassive prefix *mag-* and the absolutive case marker *ang* falls on the EXT. In (55b), in contrast, the verb bears the transitive suffix *-in* and this case marker falls on the INT. Like Mandar, the language shows a basic

verb-initial word order, with some postverbal flexibility.[8]

(55) *Tagalog: The Voice Alternation*

   a. **Mag**-luluto   **ang** lalaki ng adobo.
      ANTIP-will.cook ABS man   OBL FOOD
      'The man will cook adobo.'   [Rackowski 2002, 83]

   b. Lulutu-**in**   ng   lalaki **ang** adobo.
      will.cook-TR ERG man   ABS FOOD
      'The man will cook the adobo.'   [Rackowski 2002, 76]

Like Mandar, Tagalog also shows High Absolutive syntax ([Schachter, 1976];
[Kroeger, 1993]; [Richards, 1993]). This pattern can be illustrated with the binding
diagnostics above: in the transitive voice, the INT appears to C-command the EXT
for the purposes of pronominal coreference and variable binding. When the INT is
a pronoun, for instance, it cannot co-refer with an R-expression in the EXT ([56a]).
When quantified, moreover, it can bind a variable inside the EXT ([56b]).

(56) *Tagalog: High Absolutive Syntax*

   a. M**in**amahal **siya** ng   nanay ni   Juan.
      TR.loves   3ABS ERG mom   GEN NAME
      'John's$_i$ mother loves him$_{*i,j}$.'   [Kroeger 1993, 115]

   b. M**in**amahal ng   kanyang ama ang bawat anak.
      TR.loves   ERG her   dad ABS every child
      'Her$_i$ father loves every child$_i$.'   [Rackowski 2002, 36]

---

[8]There has been substantial debate in the literature on Tagalog over the status of the morpheme
ang. This forms part of a larger terminological discussion about the argument which undergoes A-
movement to a position above all other arguments in the clause across the family ([Guilfoyle *et al.*,
1992]): on an ergative analysis, this element is the absolutive, and on a nominative analysis, it is
the subject (see [Paul & Travis 2006] for an overview). On a High Absolutive analysis, there is no
distinction between these two alternatives: the absolutive argument is the subject.

Much like Mandar, moreover, Tagalog shows a link between the definiteness of the INT and its position and Case in matrix monotransitive clauses (Schachter & Otanes, 1983; Adams & Manaster-Ramer, 1988). The language generally requires the transitive construction when the INT is definite (57a). In the same vein, it generally requires the antipassive when the INT is indefinite (57b).

(57)   *Tagalog: The Definiteness Effect*

    a. Babasah-**in** ng   manager **ang** ulat.
        will.read-TR ERG manager ABS report
        'The manager will read the report.'   Hsieh 2020, 65

    b. Mag-babasa   ang manager **ng**   ulat.
        ANTIP-will.read ABS manager OBL report
        'The manager will read a report.'   Hsieh 2020, 65

The Tagalog pattern above has historically provided the central motivation for the OSO analysis. In matrix monotransitive contexts, Tagalog shows a strict correlation between the definiteness of the INT and its case. As such, it is not immediately clear whether the transitive INT reaches its high position through a process of definiteness-related object shift or through a step of licensing movement. This ambiguity led Rackowski (2002) to propose the theory of object shift which became central to the OSO model of Aldridge (2004).

Outside of matrix monotransitive contexts, this ambiguity disappears. If we examine the behavior of definite but non-absolutive INTs, it becomes clear that Tagalog has no single process which applies obligatorily to definite INTs and places them in a position above the EXT. I illustrate this fact in the applicative construction which mirrors the Mandar clauses in (40): the "Locative Voice." In this context, the verb bears an applicative suffix *-an* and the applied argument bears the

absolutive case-marker *ang*. The INT can be definite, but it does not surface with absolutive case-marking (58).

(58) *Tagalog: The Applicative Construction*

Binigy-**an** ko   ang ama ng anak.
give-APPL 1ERG ABS dad OBL child

'I gave the father his child.'   Rackowski 2002, 55

In this context, the binding tests show that the definite INT does not move above the EXT. I illustrate this pattern with variable binding below. Example (59) contains four pieces: an applicative verb, an absolutive applied argument, a quantified but non-absolutive INT, and an EXT which contains a variable. In this context, it is not possible for the non-absolutive INT to bind into the EXT (59). In this respect, Tagalog behaves exactly like Mandar.

(59) *Tagalog: A Non-Absolutive INT cannot bind into the EXT*

Pinakita-an ako ng nanay niya ng bawat bata.
show-APPL 1ABS ERG mom   3GEN OBL every child

'Her mom$_{*i,j}$ showed me every child$_i$.'   Jed Sam Pizarro-Guevara, *p.c.*

6.2   Object Shift in Malagasy

The same argument can be replicated even more clearly in Malagasy, a language of the Barito subgroup of Central Borneo. This language shows a pattern which is widespread in the languages of Western Indonesia: it has lost the definiteness effect in matrix monotransitive contexts. As such, the INT can be definite in the

construction where the EXT is absolute: namely, the "Actor Topic" construction, which corresponds to the etymological antipassive.

The following examples illustrate this pattern. Like other languages of Western Indonesia, Malagasy has lost overt morphological ergativity outside of its pronominal system. Like other languages of the region, however, it requires the absolutive argument to surface in a special linear position: namely, after all other arguments in the clause (Paul, 2000; Pearson, 2005). In example (60a), for instance, the verb bears what is etymologically an antipassive prefix and the absolutive EXT surfaces after the INT. In example (60b), in contrast, the verb bears what is etymologically a transitive suffix and the absolutive INT surfaces after the EXT.

(60)   *Malagasy: The Voice System*

    a. **Man**-asa   lamba **izy**.
        ANTIP-wash clothes 3SG.ABS
        'She is washing clothes.'   Paul 2000, 2

    b. Hita-**n**-dRamatoa **iBakoly**.
        respect-TR-NAME NAME
        'Rasoa respects Bakoly.'   Paul 2000, 10

In the etymological antipassive construction, Malagasy allows the INT to be definite. When this occurs, the EXT continues to behave as the absolutive argument (Paul, 2000; Pearson, 2005). In example (61), for instance, the EXT 'Sahondra' surfaces at the right edge of the clause even though the INT is definite.

(61) *Malagasy: No Definiteness Effect*

Nan-apaka   **ity hazo ity** tamin'ny antsy iSahondra.
PST.ANTIP-cut this tree   this with.the knife NAME

'Sahondra cut this tree with the knife.'   Paul & Travis 2006, 323

In this context, a proponent of the OSO model might suggest that definiteness-related object shift simply does not occur. Nevertheless, there is evidence that it does. This evidence lies in a correlation between the definiteness of the INT and the flexibility of its position. In this language, the INT must be postverbal when it is indefinite (62a). When it is definite, in contrast, it does not show the same requirement: it can surface either postverbally (62b) or in a position to the right of adverbs like 'often' (62c) (Rackowski, 1998; Pearson, 1998; Paul, 2004)).

(62) *Malagasy: Object Shift in the Antpassive*

a. **Mam**-itaka **ankizy** matetika Rabe.
   ANTIP-trick child   often   NAME
   'Rabe often tricks the children.'   Paul 2009, 20

b. **Mam**-itaka **ny ankizy** matetika Rabe.
   ANTIP-trick the child   often   NAME
   'Rabe often tricks children.'   Paul 2009, 19

c. **Mam**-itaka matetika **ny ankizy** Rabe.
   ANTIP-trick often   the child   NAME
   'Rabe often tricks the children.'   Paul 2009, 19

This positional flexibility suggests that definite INTs do not occupy the same position as indefinite INTs. In Malagasy, it has been shown that indefinite INTs are not incorporated into the verb (Paul, 2004): rather, they simply remain in the VP. As such, it would appear that the definite INT has moved left this domain: either

through definiteness-related object shift (Pearson, 1998) or through this operation and some type of scrambling.

No matter the analysis of the positional alternation in (62b)-(62c), however, it is clear that the process of definiteness-related object shift does not place the INT above the EXT in this language. This fact can be seen from patterns of variable binding. In Malagasy, as in Mandar and Tagalog, a quantified INT can bind a variable in the EXT when it is absolutive. In the transitive example in (63), for instance, it is possible for the INT 'every student' to bind the variable inside of the EXT 'his father.' This pattern suggests that the absolutive argument moves above the EXT.

(63)   *Malagasy: The Absolutive binds into the Ergative*

   No-vangian'   ny rai-ny   ny mpianatra tsirairay.
   PST.TR-visited the father-3GEN the student   every

   'His father visited every student.'   Pearson 2005, 67

When the INT is definite but not absolutive, it cannot bind into the EXT. In the etymological antipassive construction, it is possible for the INT to host the universal quantifier (64). In this context, however, it cannot bind a variable in the EXT. This pattern suggests that non-absolutive INTs do not move above the EXT.

(64)   *Malagasy: Non-Absolutive Arguments cannot bind into the EXT*

   *Nam-angy   ny mpianatra tsirairay ny rai-ny.
   PST.ANTIP-visited the student   every   the father-3GEN

   'His father visited every student.'   Pearson 2005, 67

6.3   The Theory of Object Shift

In light of these facts, a parallel comes into view. Like Mandar, Malagasy and Tagalog both show evidence for a process which displaces definite INTs. In Tagalog, this can be seen in the definiteness effect which holds over the voice system (57), while in Malagasy, it emerges from facts of linear order (62). In both languages, it is possible to distinguish this process from the step which places the absolutive argument in its high position: in Tagalog, in applicative constructions, and in Malagasy, in matrix monotransitive contexts as well. Once this separation is made, moreover, it becomes clear that this process does not yield the patterns of binding which characterize the High Absolutive configuration. As such, I argue that it does not place the INT above the EXT.

This conclusion provides further evidence for the Two-Step Analysis of High Absolutive syntax above. In all of these languages, the facts run against the predictions of the OSO analysis: there is no operation which applies obligatorily to all definite INTs and places them in a position above the EXT. This conclusion suggests that there is a separate process which places the absolutive argument in its high position, and the natural candidate for this operation is licensing movement.

Scoping out to a broader cross-linguistic perspective, this step appears a welcome result. While many languages show evidence for a process of definiteness-related object shift, it seems to be the case quite generally that the arguments which undergo this process do not show the properties of the Philippine-type absolutive INT. In Germanic, for instance, definite INTs do not show the binding properties of the absolutive argument in Mandar, Tagalog, and Malagasy: they

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cannot bind variables inside of the EXT or induce condition-C violations inside of it. In other ergative languages, moreover, there are processes of definiteness-related object shift which exist in the absence of evidence for the High Absolutive configuration: for instance, Mayan languages like Ch'ol (Little, 2020). These facts seem to suggest the need for a theory which separates the process of definiteness-related object shift from the operation which underlies the High-Absolutive configuration-and they dovetail with the observations above.

7 Conclusion

At this point, it seems a valuable exercise to step back and consider the position to which we have come. In Mandar, we have seen, the absolutive argument behaves much like a nominative subject: it interacts with a set of functional heads that sit relatively high in the clause, it undergoes a step of movement, linked to a pattern of nominal licensing, which places it in a derived subject position outside of the the thematic domain, and it shows definiteness restrictions and extraction privileges which characterize subjects cross-linguistically.

These facts align neatly with a second observation of the paper: namely, that the behavior of the absolutive argument cannot be reduced to the results of a process of definiteness-related object shift. This observation can be seen quite clearly from the set of contexts in which internal arguments are definite but not absolutive: in Mandar, the canonical diagnostics for C-command show that they do not move above the ergative EXT in this context. As such, I argue, the mechanism which underlies the High Absolutive configuration must be linked to a process

which exists independently from that of object shift.

In light of these facts, I have developed a novel theory of the syntax of the High Absolutive configuration: the Two-Step Model. This proposal continues an intuition of the earliest work on High Absolutive languages (Bok-Bennema, 1991; Guilfoyle *et al.*, 1992): the notion that the absolutive argument behaves as a subject in the classical generative sense. In Mandar, I have argued that the absolutive argument systematically undergoes A-movement to a subject position outside of the thematic domain as a byproduct of a licensing relationship with T^0. Even so, it appears necessary to incorporate a separate observation about the relevance of object shift (Rackowski, 2002; Aldridge, 2004): in Mandar, definite internal arguments must leave the vp. On the theory assumed here, the occurrence or non-occurrence of this step of movement is correlated with the appearance of certain types of morphology in v^0. This pattern, in turn, determines the surface pattern of voice marking and thus the facts of case-marking, binding, and extraction.

On the empirical level, this analysis enjoys several distinct advantages over alternative possibilities. In the past, for instance, I have shown that it makes correct predictions about patterns of agreement and licensing in other contexts in Mandar (Brodkin, 2021d). More broadly, I argue that it provides the means to understand several facts about Philippine-type languages as well. First, it explains the behavior of definite but non-absolutive internal arguments in several other languages of this type: for instance, Tagalog and Malagasy. Second, it allows us to understand a restriction which holds over absolutive arguments in languages of this type: like subjects cross-linguistically, they must be definite.

On a broader theoretical level, moreover, this analysis lays out the foundations

for a new means to understand variation across ergative systems cross-linguistically. Since the 1990s, the literature has recognized substantial variation in the precise position of subject arguments across nominative-accusative languages (McCloskey, 1997; Cardinaletti, 2004). In the same vein, the literature on ergativity has long been aware of parallel variation in the height of absolutive arguments (Bittner & Hale, 1996a,b; Legate, 2006; Coon *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, these two literatures have not yet been brought into contact, and modern work on ergativity typically assumes a version of the binary parameterization between 'High' and 'Low' absolutive languages first proposed in Bittner & Hale (1996a,b).

Despite the relative lack of work on this domain, the need for a richer theory of variation is inescapable. The ergative languages which fall on the High Absolutive side of the line, for instance, do not form a homogeneous class by any metric. To begin, they show immense diversity with respect to the nature and distribution of extraction asymmetries in the Ā-domain (Polinsky, 1994; Assmann *et al.*, 2015; Aissen, 2017). Second, they appear to show meaningful diversity with respect to the height of absolutive agreement. The Austronesian languages of the South Sulawesi and Bungku-Tolaki subgroups, for instance, show similar evidence for High Absolutive syntax, but morphological facts suggest that the height of absolutive agreement differs across these two groups (Mead, 1998; Edwards, 2014). Given this variation, it may be possible to uncover further variation across ergative languages in the precise height of the absolutive argument- and assimilate this variation to the independent theory of subjecthood.

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