

慶應言語学コロキウム

Be careful where ergative looks default: A phase-based account of (split) ergativity in Mayan and beyond

講師: 今西 祐介 氏 (関西学院大学総合政策学部助教)

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参加費無料 申込不要 (使用言語: 日本語)

In this talk, I propose the hypothesis that ergative Case in certain languages may be assigned to a DP which would be otherwise Case-less within a certain domain. In this sense, ergative Case appears to be a default. At the same time, I argue that ergative Case may be assigned by *any phase head* to the *highest* Case-less DP within its Spell-Out domain (= henceforth *phase head Case*) – it is not just a default. This gives rise to the impression that assignment of ergative Case is a default, though it is in fact structurally determined.

One of the crucial consequences of this approach is that ergative Case can be aligned with grammatical relations more flexibly than in previous approaches. Ergative may look like an ‘alignment’ because in the majority of sentences the subject in a transitive sentence is aligned with ergative Case. I argue that appearances are deceiving, and that if we look carefully at the full range of instances in which ergative is found, a different generalization emerges. I demonstrate that what is called ergative may constitute phase head Case in certain languages. There is thus no a priori reason to posit a correlation between ergative Case and grammatical relations – a DP receiving ergative Case could be either subject or object. Furthermore, I show that a subset of derived subjects (particularly the unaccusative subject) is allowed to receive ergative Case under the present analysis, contra the widely accepted generalization that derived subjects such as the subject of unaccusatives and passives are not marked with ergative (Marantz 1991).

I investigate (split) ergativity in Mayan languages – mainly Kaqchikel, Chol, Q’anjob’al and Ixil – as a testing ground for the plausibility of the hypothesis that phase head Case exists, and is the correct analysis of certain phenomena generally analyzed as instances of ergative alignment. I also explore possible avenues in which we can expand the scope of our analysis. For this purpose, I discuss languages outside Mayan: Chukchee, Tagalog and Kurmanji. I focus on a cross-linguistically attested syncretism between ergative and oblique case, and suggest that ergative may also be assigned to an otherwise Case-less DP in these languages in the same way as in Mayan languages.

主催: 慶應義塾大学言語文化研究所
協力: 慶應義塾大学次世代研究プロジェクトB

<お問い合わせ先>

〒108-8345 港区三田 2-15-45 慶應義塾大学言語文化研究所

電話: 03-5427-1595 (事務室直通) メール: genbu@icl.keio.ac.jp

<http://www.icl.keio.ac.jp>