

GRAMMATICAL RELATIONS, TRANSITIVITY AND ERGATIVITY: AN INTERACTIVE VIEW OF CLEFTABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Keenan and Comrie's Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) applied to clefting predicts greater cleftability of subject (SU) than direct object (DO). However, in some Eastern Austronesian languages, particularly Tongan, some transitive SUs are less cleftable than other transitive SUs or DOs, and some DOs are less cleftable than other DOs. This split pattern relates to both transitivity and ergativity. On the one hand, reduced cleftability cooccurs with middle verbs which have weaker transitivity. On the other hand, the lesser cleftability of 3SG transitive SU exhibits a split ergative pattern, whose apparent conflict with the AH may be resolved by reinterpreting the absolutive NP as SU and the ergative NP as DO. In any case, an adequate description of cleftability needs to address interaction between the AH and other parts of the grammar.

1 INTRODUCTION¹

This paper examines NP cleftability, mainly in several Eastern Austronesian languages, to determine whether the cleftability patterns in these languages conform to Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy (henceforth AH), and, where not, what cause the deviations.

The AH (1) is expressed in terms of grammatical relations, where the higher positions are supposedly more accessible than the lower ones in syntactic processes such as relativization (Keenan & Comrie 1977), passivization (Johnson 1974; Trithart 1975), and clefting (Luo 1993, 1994). The workings of the AH are subject to the Continuity Constraint (2):

- (1) SU > DO > IO > OBL > GEN > OCOMP
- (2) The Continuity Constraint (Keenan & Comrie 1977)

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Any relative clause-forming strategy must apply to a continuous segment of the AH; and strategies that apply at any one point of the AH may in principle cease to apply at any lower point.

(1) and (2) may be considered as a set of implicational universals, whereby the implicatum of the prior universal becomes the implican of the following one. Thus, if in a language an NP on the AH is accessible to relativization or clefting via a given strategy, so are all NPs higher on the Hierarchy. Generalizations like this, as claimed by Keenan (1987), determine constraints on the form, and substance, of possible human languages.

Like relativization, many languages have two or more formally distinct strategies for clefting, the most common being deletion, which leaves a gap where the focused constituent has been dislocated, and pronoun retention, which leaves behind a pronominal copy of the dislocated constituent.

According to Keenan's (1972) Principle of Conservation of Logical Structure (CLS), pronoun retention is viewed as more facilitating than deletion in making certain less accessible constructions more accessible. Basically, the CLS holds that the more that syntactic structures preserve features of their corresponding logical structures, the more accessible they are. In languages in which resumptive pronouns are retained in relativized positions (e.g., Hebrew, Persian, Welsh), relativization is permitted in a greater number of structural configurations, including the positions low on the AH (Keenan & Comrie 1977). This is because pronoun retention is only minimally disruptive in terms of case recoverability (Givón 1990), and syntactic constructions with retained pronouns correspond more closely to their logical-semantic structures than do those formed with deletion. Since the retained pronoun identifies the semantically appropriate position of the NP within the construction that is coreferential to the head, it renders the coreferential relationship semantically more transparent. Moreover, Hawkins (1988) notes that

this means that the wider applicability of rules such as RCF (Relative Clause Formation) in pronoun-retaining languages is not just a function of a more transparent relationship between surface structure and logical structure; it is the result of semantic transparency and process[ing] ease. The comprehension and production of RelCl is facilitated by pronoun retention, and hence certain independent considerations involving real-time language processing reinforce a semantic principle (CLS) in explaining cross-linguistic differences in syntactic rule behaviour.

In this view, pronoun retention is motivated by both semantic transparency and processing ease.

In terms of clefting, I will assume that, given two NP positions on the AH, the one that can be clefted via deletion and has less access to pronoun retention is considered more accessible than the one that can be clefted via pronoun retention and has less access to deletion. In other words, cleftability can be operationalized as (3)²:

- (3) A syntactic position X is more cleftable than another syntactic position Y if X uses the deletion strategy more than Y and/or uses the pronoun retention strategy less than Y.

Since it is possible for a language to use one of the strategies to cleft two or more positions, and the other to cleft only one of them, a mere mention of either strategy as measurement of cleftability would not always adequately reveal the difference in cleftability. For example, if a language can cleft subject (henceforth SU) and direct object (henceforth DO) through pronoun retention but only SU through deletion, according to (3), SU will be considered more cleftable than DO. On the other hand, if we use only pronoun retention as a criterion, no such difference will be revealed, since both SU and DO are susceptible to it. Therefore, (3) mentions both strategies and interactions thereof. Such interactions generate three possibilities that reflect different degrees of cleftability, which are ranked in (4) in descending order from left to right.

- (4) $\begin{bmatrix} +\text{del} \\ -\text{ret} \end{bmatrix} > \begin{bmatrix} +\text{del} \\ +\text{ret} \end{bmatrix} > \begin{bmatrix} -\text{del} \\ +\text{ret} \end{bmatrix}$

In the following examination of crosslinguistic data, I will use (3) and (4) as a criterion to determine relative cleftability of various grammatical relations.

2. CLEFTABILITY AND TRANSITIVITY

Characteristically, most Eastern Austronesian languages have a basic word order VSO, although some outlier languages such as Nukuoro, Sikaiana, and Luangiua seem to have developed an unmarked SVO order (Hohepa 1969). All the languages are genetically related and can be traced back to Proto-Polynesian as their common ancestor. Typologically, these languages can be classified on an accusative-ergative continuum: the Tahitic languages (including Maori), the Marquesic languages (including

² Luo (1993, 1994) also uses other criteria to determine cleftability of a constituent, such as distribution, frequency, promotion, and diachronical precedence.

A slightly different split pattern is found with DO clefting: while most DOs (DO₁) are clefted via deletion exclusively, some (DO₂) require pronoun retention:

- (8) *ko ho'o tivi kuo nau 'ave mama'o (*ai)*
CFM your T.V. PERF they take far 3S
'It is your T.V. that they took away.'
- (9) *ko hoku tuofefine 'oku nau manako *(ai)*
CFM my sister PROG they like PRO
'It is my sister that they like.' (Chung 1978: 230-1)
- (10) *ko e lao kuo pau ke talangofua kotoa ki *(ai)*
CFM the law PERF must SBJN obey all to PRO
'It is the law that everyone must obey.'

In (8), where a DO₁ is clefted, no resumptive pronoun can be used. In contrast, both (9) and (10) require the pronoun *ai* where a DO₂ is clefted. Finally, when an oblique object is clefted, as in (11), the pronoun *ai* must be used, just as in the case of Group 2 DOs (DO₂):

- (11) *ko hai 'oku mahino ki *(ai) 'a e lea faka-Tonga?*
CFM who PROG clear to 3S ABS the language Tongan
'Who is it that understands the Tongan language (lit. who is it that the Tongan language is clear to)?'

Table 1 summarizes the pattern of clefting strategies in Tongan:

Table 1
Use of clefting strategies for cleftable grammatical relations in Tongan

	SU _{vi/vt1}	DO ₁	SU _{vt3S}	SU _{vt2}	OBL	DO ₂
Deletion	+	+	+	+	-	-
Retention	-	-	+	+	+	+

The value grids in Table 1 represent an ordered scale of cleftability according to (3) and (4), given here as (12):

- (12) SU_{vi/vt1}/DO₁ > SU_{vt3S}/SU_{vt2} > OBL/DO₂

which deviates from the AH in the following ways. Although the strategies used or forbidden do form a continuous segment on the AH (thus not violating (2)), the split pattern shows 3SG transitive SUs (SU_{vt3S}) and Group 2 transitive SUs (SU_{vt2}) as less cleftable than intransitive SUs or Group 1 transitive SUs (SU_{vi/vt1}) and Group 1 DOs (DO₁), contrary to the SU > DO sequence on the AH. By the same token, Group 2 DOs (DO₂), which are less cleftable than Group 1 DOs (DO₁), are as cleftable as oblique objects. This

split pattern seems to pose a problem to the AH as a putative language universal.

In the following discussion, I will contend that the split pattern shown in Table 1 is motivated by two syntactic properties: transitivity and ergativity, each accounting for part of the split pattern in the use of clefting strategies.

A closer examination of transitivity facts in (7), (9) and (10) reveals that while SU_{v11} and DO_1 are related to what Andrews (1985) calls 'primary transitive verbs' (PTVs), SU_{v12} and DO_2 are arguments of perceptual, emotional or psychological verbs. These are considered less transitive than PTVs by several of the criteria for transitivity proposed in Hopper and Thompson (1980)—for example, non-action, non-punctuality and non-affectedness. In fact, transitive verbs in many Eastern Austronesian languages are known to fall into canonical transitive (hence CTV) and middle transitive (hence MV) categories, based largely on their semantics (Chung 1978). CTVs (= Andrews' PTVs) describe events which produce a direct, often physical effect on the DO, while MVs describe events that do not affect the DO immediately. Common types of MVs include verbs of perception, emotion, communication, and other psychological states (e.g., *love*, *want*, and *understand*), and verbs normally selecting animate DOs (*meet with*, *help*, *call*, *follow*, *wait for*, and *visit*). Following Chung (1978), I will call transitive clauses with MVs *middle clauses*. Middle clause objects are less DO-like in that the clauses exhibit a separate case pattern which resembles that of oblique NPs (Chung 1978). However, given their semantic difference from real oblique objects (e.g., non-circumstantial), and given that a DO can appear as an oblique object in languages such as Russian (Comrie 1985: 328), such objects are still considered DOs.

The difference in transitivity between CTVs and MVs provides a single, plausible account for the difference in cleftability found in both SU and DO clefting in Tongan. As seen in Table 1, SUs of MVs are less cleftable than those of CTVs; and DOs of MVs, which are treated like oblique objects, are less cleftable than those of CTVs, a decrease of cleftability by one degree in both cases. We will return to the issue of transitivity when we look at the Samoan data. For now, we may say that the AH can interact with, and be affected by, transitivity, resulting in the kind of deviation seen in Table 1.

2.3 Samoan

The generalizability of the transitivity factor in relation to reduced cleftability is seen in the recurrence of similar split patterns in other

Eastern Austronesian languages. In Samoan, a Samoic language, both SU clefting and DO clefting use deletion, the only difference being that while the former requires the presence of a transitive suffix *-ina* attached to a transitive verb, the latter does not. This is exemplified in (13), where (13b) shows that retention is not allowed when clefting a DO.

- (13) a. 'o le 'afa sa fa'aleaga-ina fale
 CFM the storm PST destroy-TRANS house
 'It was the storm that destroyed the houses.'
- b. 'o tamaiti nei na (ia) maua (*latou)
 CFM children these PST he catch them
 'It is these children that he found.'

On the other hand, if an oblique NP is clefted, as in (14a), pronoun retention rather than deletion is in order, as shown in (14b). Thus the only difference between (14a) and (14b) is the presence versus absence of the pro-form *ai*.

- (14) a. 'o e fale'oloa sa'ou maua ai Ioane 'o gaoi niu
 CFM the store PST I catch 3S John COMP steal coconut
 'It was in the store that I caught John stealing the coconuts.'
- b. *'o LE FALE'OLOA sa 'ou maua Ioane 'o gaoi niu
 CFM the store PST I catch John COMP steal coconut

Just as in Tongan, DOs of middle clauses in Samoan are treated like oblique NPs in that a pronominal copy is obligatory after clefting, as in (15):

- (15) 'o ai na ia agaleaga ki *(ai)?
 CFM who PST he mistreat to 3S
 'Who is it that he mistreated?' (Chung 1978:236)

The pairing of middle clause DOs with oblique NPs is further evidenced by the fact that they can share the morphological marking *ki* 'to' or 'i' 'at'. For example, when middle clause DOs marked with *ki* or oblique NPs marked with *ki* are clefted, both are pronominalized to *ki ai*; when middle clause DOs marked with 'i or oblique NPs marked with 'i are clefted, both are pronominalized to *ai*. A possible account of this phenomenon involves transitivity and subsequent case marking. Given that MVs affect the state of being of their objects to a lesser extent than CTVs, they are conceptually more distant from their objects than CTVs. This lesser transitivity and greater conceptual distance is coded morphologically by adding an extra case marker on the middle object NP, resulting in greater linguistic distance between it and the verb, an example of an iconic Proximity Principle (Haiman 1985; Givón 1990; Croft 1990). Once thus marked, middle objects are treated similarly to oblique NPs in syntactic processes such as clefting

and relativization. Thus, cleftability in Tongan and Samoan relies not only on grammatical relations, but also on semantic notions like transitivity.

The use of clefting strategies in relation to cleftable positions in Samoan is shown in Table 2, where DO_{ct} refers to DOs of CTVs, and DO_m to DOs of MVs.

Table 2: Clefting strategies in relation to cleftable constituents in Samoan

	SUB	DO_{ct}	OBL	DO_m
Deletion	+	+	-	-
Retention	-	-	+	+

2.4 Rennellese

Finally, in Rennellese, intransitive SUs and canonical transitive DOs are clefted via deletion, whereas NPs with oblique case marking, e.g., *i 'at'*, via pronoun retention (Chung 1978: 289ff). For example,

- (16) a. *ko te tinana kua kai e te tamana e_i*
 CFM the mother PERF eat ERG the father
 'It was the mother who the father had eaten.' (Elbert & Monberg 1965: 351)
- b. *ko ba'i 'aso e ta'anga hano ai au ki mouku*
 CFM each day PRS PRS go 3S I to bush
 'Every day... I come up here to the bush.'

in (16a), the clefted constituent is a DO of a CTV and deletion is used. The cleft focus in (16b) is a temporal NP treated in Rennellese as an oblique NP, as can be seen from the presence of *ai*, an oblique marking resumptive pronoun.

Middle clause DOs, which are marked with *i 'at'*, pattern after oblique NPs and are clefted through pronoun retention, as seen in (17):

- (17) *ko koe a'u ai au, kau kakabe-'ia*
 CFM you reach PRO I I take-TRANS
 'It is you that I've come for and I will take away.'

2.5 Summary

The discussion on the effect of transitivity on cleftability shows that what originally seems a syntactic problem with the hierarchical order of grammatical relations turns out to be the consequence of a verb-related semantic issue. Thus, the crosslinguistic data examined above shows that the AH is not an isolated and static syntactic principle; rather, it is a dynamic principle that constantly interacts with other aspects of grammar.

The cleftability problem with these languages is therefore best seen as the consequence of semantico-syntactic interface.

3 CLEFTABILITY AND ERGATIVITY

Reviewing Table 1 again, we find that what accounts for the split cleftability of transitive SUs and DOs does not apply equally well to that of 3SG SUs of intransitive and transitive clauses. Although it seems that both cases involve transitivity, the latter concerns intransitive vs. transitive rather than canonical transitive vs. middle transitive. Moreover, while reduced cleftability is related to weak transitivity in the former case, it is not in the latter. In fact, clefting of 3SG SUs in Tongan presents a familiar pattern of split ergativity syntactically, whereby the pairing of S and P as against A is found in cleft sentences with 3SG SU. Evidence of Tongan being an accusative-ergative language with clearly ergative structures includes, among other things, co-existence of ergative and passive structures, with the increasing use of the former, derived by deletion and/or reinterpretation of overt passive markers (Hohepa 1969). Before we discuss further the theoretical implications of such split ergativity in relation to cleftability, let's look at some similar cases in other languages.

3.1 Pukapukan

Pukapukan, a Samoic-Outlier language, has a mixed accusative-ergative case system (Hohepa 1969, Chung 1978) allowing accusative, ergative, and passive case marking for underlyingly transitive clauses. The three patterns appear to vary rather freely with basic transitive sentences; the difference seems to be one of register—accusative patterns used in formal, polite language, the ergative in informal, casual registers and the passive in neutral registers. Table 3 outlines the case-marking systems.

Table 3: Case marking systems in Pukapukan

	TRANSITIVE			INTRANSITIVE
	SU	DO	V _{-sfx}	SU
Accusative	∅	i	∅	∅ ⁷
Passive	e	∅	-Cia	
Ergative	e	∅	∅	

⁷ ∅ = zero. When an intransitive SU is a proper noun or 3SG pronoun marked by a preceding article *a-*, the nominative marker is *i*, a case where S is as marked as P.

In terms of clefting strategies, deletion is limited to SU only, affecting both intransitive SU (18a) and transitive SU in the accusative pattern (18b-c).

- (18) a. *ko Yinaliulu ya tu i te uluuluakau*
 CFM Yinaliulu PST stand at the outer=reef
 'It was Yinaliulu who was standing on the outer reef.'
- b. *ko-na na tuku i te kou*
 CFM-he PST give ACC the gift
 'It is he who gave the present.'
- c. *ko te toa na patu i te wawine*
 CFM the warrior PST hit ACC the woman
 'It is the warrior who hit the woman.'

Accusative DOs or oblique NPs, on the other hand, can not be clefted via deletion; pronoun retention is required. Thus a pronoun, *ai*, appears in (19 a-c):

- (19) a. *ko te wawine na patu te toa ai*
 CFM the woman PST hit the warrior PRO
 'It is the woman that the warrior hit.'
- b. *ko te moana na yi-ika a latou*
 CFM the ocean PST catch-fish PRO they
 'It is the ocean that they were fishing in.'
- c. *ko te tane na maua ai te wua lakau*
 CFM the man PST caught PRO the egg tree
 'It is the man because of whom the fruit was gotten.'

For the ergative pattern, the unmarked NP (P) can always be clefted via deletion, just like the SU in the accusative pattern. This is shown in (20 a-b), where no resumptive pronoun is used when an absolutive NP (P) is clefted:

- (20) a. *ko te wawa ka tunu e te tama*
 CFM the taro FUT cook ERG the boy
 'It is the taro that the boy is about to cook.'
- b. *ko Uyo la kiai la na maua ete patu e te wenua*
 CFM Uyo that not that PST able COMP kill ERG the island
 'It was Uyo who the (island) people were unable to kill.'

The ergative NP (A), on the other hand, is only marginally cleftable through deletion, as in (21):

- (21) a. *?ko te toa na patu te tamaiti*
 CFM the warrior PST hit the child
 'It is the warrior who hit the child.'

- b. *?ko te Malo kiai na pepelu te malo*
 CFM Te Malo not PST don the loincloth
 'It is Te Malo who did not don the loincloth.'

In Pukapukan, then, it is possible to compare accusative clefting and ergative clefting. While the former is in line with the AH, the latter, by (3) and (4), presents more difficulty with transitive SU clefting than with DO clefting, contrary to what the AH predicts.

3.2 Other languages⁸

Hohepa (1969) describes Niuean of the Tongic branch of Eastern Austronesian languages as a truly ergative language, by virtue of having completely lost the Proto-Tongic form **(C)(i)a* as a passive marker, either by erosion or by reinterpretation. A syntactic permutation noted by Hohepa is that in Niuean, the order VNomErg is 'reorderable to NomVErg (with Nom now marked by #*ko*)' (Hohepa 1969: 317). Though no specific example was given, it is quite clear from parallel structures in other Eastern Austronesian languages that the permuted structure is the cleft construction, where an initial focus is marked by a preceding CFM /*ko*/. It is therefore inferable from the above observation that both S and P in Niuean are cleftable. However, it is not clear from the description whether A in Niuean can be clefted at all or what strategies are used in clefting.

Although relevant data from Niuean are yet to be collected, evidence from some other unrelated ergative languages does suggest greater difficulty in clefting ergative NPs. In many such languages, ergative NPs may not as a rule be clefted nor relativized, while absolute NPs can (Shaumyan 1985). In order for an ergative NP to be relativizable or cleftable, it must, for example, first become an absolutive NP by virtue of the verb being anti-passivized with a special detransitivizing suffix, as is the case with relativization in the Australian language Dyirbal (Dixon 1979). With respect to clefting, some Mayan languages exhibit a similar pattern. Consider (22) from Quiche, a Mayan language:

- (22) a. *aree lee achih x-ø-ch'ay-ow lee ixoq*
 CFM the man COMP-3SA-hit-DETRANS thewoman
 'It was the man who hit the woman.' (Shaumyan 1985)

⁸ I thank an anonymous reader for the helpful suggestion that the fully-fledged ergative Polynesian language Niuean as well as other languages be examined to further strengthen the position herein taken.

- b. aree lee ixoq x-Ø-u-ch'ay lee achih
 CFM the woman COMP-3SA-3SE-hit the man
 'It was the woman that the man hit.'

In (22a), the detransitivizing suffix *-ow* is added to facilitate clefting of the ergative NP, *lee achih* 'the man'. Along with this detransitivization, the ergative subject agreement prefix, *u-*, required in a declarative matrix sentence, now disappears from the verb stem, making *lee achih* an absolutive NP. In contrast to ergative NP clefting, clefting of an absolutive NP follows the normal pattern without difficulty. For example, in (22b), where the DO is clefted, there is no change in the verb stem: the ergative subject agreement prefix remains intact and no detransitivizing suffix is added. The directness in clefting an absolutive object vs. the indirectness in clefting an ergative subject thus shows greater cleftability of DO than of SU in Quiche.

Another Mayan language, Aguacatec, presents a similar case (Larsen & Norman 1979):

- (23) a. ja Ø-Ø-b'iy yaaj xna7n
 ASP 3SA-3SE-hit man woman
 'The man hit the woman.'
- b. yaah m-Ø-b'iy-oon xna7n
 man DES.ASP-3SA-hit-DETRANS woman
 'It was the man who hit the woman.'

In (23b), the detransitivizing suffix *-oon* is added and the ergative subject prefix disappears from the verb stem, for the ergative subject to be clefted. The Aguacatec cleft sentence differs from its Quiche counterpart in that there is neither a focus marker nor a complementizer.

3.3 Subject reinterpreted

The fact that DOs in the Eastern Austronesian and the Mayan languages considered are more accessible than (ergative) SUs poses a challenge to the AH as a putative universal. However, given the considerable amount of evidence for the AH presented with respect to relativization (e.g., Keenan & Comrie 1977; Keenan & Hawkins 1987), passivization (Johnson 1974; Trithart 1975), and clefting (Luo 1993, 1994), it would be rather implausible to quickly dismiss the AH as untenable. In the following discussion, I will venture an account by reinterpreting *subject* and *object* in ergative patterns, so that absolutive NPs can be reinterpreted as SUs and ergative NPs as DOs.

First, it should be noted that reinterpretation of SUs relies crucially on the relationship between morphological and syntactic ergativity, regarding which two opposing views have been expressed: the Integrated Position and the Independent Position. According to the former, the syntax of every language should parallel its morphology, so that morphologically accusative languages should not exhibit syntactic ergativity, and morphologically ergative languages should not exhibit syntactic nominativity. According to the latter (Anderson 1976, Perlmutter & Postal 1974), a language's syntax and its morphology may be organized differently, and a morphologically ergative language may turn out to be syntactically accusative. Studies of the world's languages have provided evidence against the Integrated Position in favour of the Independent Position. For example, subject-referring rules such as Clitic Placement, Equi-NP Deletion and Raising exist in some Austronesian languages (Chung 1978), and Basque offers an example of morphological ergativity versus syntactic accusativity.

Taking the Independent Position in characterizing syntactic ergativity/accusativity, Comrie (1978: 365) interprets subjects as follows:

if in a language S and A are regularly identified, that is, if the language is consistently or overwhelmingly nominative-accusative, then we are justified in using the term *subject* to group together S and A; if in a language S and P are regularly identified (consistent or overwhelming ergative-absolutive system), then we would be justified in using the term *subject* rather than to refer to S and P.

According to this view, a transitive subject has the same grammatical status as an intransitive subject in accusative languages, and an absolutive object should be treated grammatically like an intransitive subject in ergative languages.

This analysis is supported by the following argument. To begin with, the grammatical relations *subject* and *direct object* do not have single, universal definitions applicable to every language (Schachter 1976, 1977; Foley & Van Valin 1977; Gil 1984). Instead, the various grammatical relations may be defined in terms of clusters of properties (Keenan 1976). Thus, an NP is a SU or a DO to the extent that it exhibits a specific array of SU or DO properties.

As Comrie (1988) points out, it is in general uncontroversial that the single argument of an intransitive predicate (S) is the SU of that predicate. Therefore, to say that some argument of a transitive predicate is SU of its clause is to claim that it shares properties with SUs of intransitive clauses. In English, S and A are grouped together insofar as they share SU proper-

ties such as nominative case, triggering verb agreement, being the trigger and target for conjunction reduction, and control. In languages exhibiting ergativity, at least some properties are common to S and P, although languages vary as to the extent of such shared properties. A fairly extreme example is Dyrirbal (Dixon 1979), where most relevant SU properties are shared by P and S, not A and S (Comrie 1988, Faarlund 1988).

Typical DO properties, among other things, include lesser referential strength and indefiniteness (Givón 1984, Gil 1984). However, these properties are not exhibited by P in many ergative languages. In Tagalog, for example, patient NPs do not show low referentiality; in fact, patients are more strongly referential than actors/agents and are generally interpreted as definite. Both properties point to P as less DO-like and more SU-like. The clustering of SU or DO features with respect to S, P and A in an ergative language, and concerns over the ergative NP in passive constructions being interpreted as DO, makes it possible, and plausible, to use such terms as *quasi-SU* and *quasi-DO*. As Gil (1984: 100) suggests with regard to patient prominent languages, 'quasi-subjects are like real subjects, except that they are actually more likely to be patients; similarly, quasi-direct-objects resemble *bona fide* direct objects, except that in basic sentences they are generally actors.'

If, as the above argument suggests, it is indeed possible to reinterpret P as SU/quasi-SU and A as DO/quasi-DO in languages where syntactic rules consistently group S and P together, then to the extent that Tongan and Pukapukan exhibit split ergativity in the use of clefting strategies, and that Quiche and Aguacatec show more indirectness in clefting ergative NPs than absolutive NPs, we may reinterpret the relationship as in (24), which provides a possible typological account for the cleftability patterns in the languages examined.

(24)	AH:	SU>DO>...
	Accusative:	S, A P
	Ergative:	S, P A

4 CONCLUSION

It has been shown that the deviations from the AH in terms of cleftability in several Eastern Austronesian languages are due to two factors: transitivity and ergativity. Therefore, while the AH is independently verifiable in terms of clefting (Luo 1994), its interaction with transitivity and ergativity may result in cleftability patterns different from those predicted

by the AH. Although such differences may be explained through reinterpretation in the latter case, it is clear that an adequate description of cleftability needs to take into account the interaction between the AH and other parts of the grammar.

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