

On ergative (and other) splits in Salish¹

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In this paper I argue that the ergative properties of Halkomelem derive from the syntax of transitivity and the distribution of agreement morphemes. The ergative splits found in the language are a result of the fact that Halkomelem, along with the other Salish languages, has several syntactic positions for subject agreement. In interaction with the fact that the associated paradigms are not always complete, we can straightforwardly derive these splits. The system developed correctly predicts that there should be languages where we find splits that do not have anything to do with ergativity, supporting the major claim that ergativity in Halkomelem is a derived rather than a primitive concept.

1 Ergativity in Halkomelem

In English, the verb agrees with the subject, no matter whether we are dealing with a transitive (1)a or an intransitive predicate (1)b:

- (1) a. John kisses Mary
b. John laughs

In contrast, in Upriver Halkomelem,² the verb (in matrix clauses) agrees with the subject only in case it is a transitive predicate (2)a. In case of intransitive predicates we do not find subject-verb agreement (2)b:

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² Halkomelem is a Central Coast Salish language, spoken in British Columbia. There are three main dialects: Upriver, Downriver and Island Halkomelem. Original data as well as data from Galloway are from the Upriver dialect (Stó:lō Halq'éméylem). All examples from Upriver Halkomelem are presented in the practical orthography used by the Stó:lō Nation. The key to this orthography is as follows: a = æ or ɛ; ch = tʃ, ch' = tʃ', e (between palatals) = ɪ, e (between labials) = ʊ, e (elsewhere) = ə, lh = ɬ, o = a, ɔ̃ = ɔ, xw = x^w, x̣ = x, y = j, sh = ʃ, th = θ, th' = tθ', tl' = tɬ', ts = c, ts' = c', x = x or x^j, x̣w = x̣^w, ' = ʔ, ' = high pitch stress, ˘ = mid pitch stress (see Galloway 1980 for discussion of this

- (2) a. q'ó:y-t-es te Strang te sqelá:w
kill-TRANS-3S DET Strang DET beaver
'Strang killed the beaver.'
- b. í:mex te Strang
walking DET Strang
'Strang is walking.'

The Halkomelem pattern shown in (2) suggests that Halkomelem has ergative properties (Gerdtz 1980, 1988, Hukari 1976) because the transitive subject behaves differently from intransitive subjects, which seem to pattern more like transitive objects. This is summarized in the following table:

	English	Halkomelem
trans subj. (A)	-s	-s
intrans. subj. (S)		Ø
trans. obj (O)	Ø	

Table 1: English vs. Halkomelem agreement patterns

In previous work (Wiltschko 2001, 2002b, 2003) I have argued that the ergative properties of Halkomelem derive from the morpho-syntax of transitivity in the following way. Transitive suffixes are analyzed as secondary predicates, which introduce the external argument (as in Kratzer 1994) and head their own syntactic phrase (vP). It then follows that transitive subjects are associated with a different position than intransitive subjects or transitive objects as shown in the following structural representations:

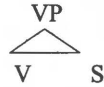
- (3) a. Transitives:
- ```

graph TD
 vP --> A
 vP --> v_prime[v']
 v_prime --> v[v]
 v_prime --> VP
 v --> trans_suffix[trans.suffix]
 VP --> V
 VP --> O

```
- transitive subjects (A) are generated in SpecvP  
→ transitive objects (O) are generated VP-internally

orthography). Data from other languages are cited as they appear in their sources. Abbreviations used are as follows: 1=1<sup>st</sup> person; 2=2<sup>nd</sup> person; 3=3<sup>rd</sup> person; aux=auxiliary; comp=complementizer; cont=continuative; cpl=copula; det=determiner; intrans=intransitive suffix; lnk=linker; neg=negative marker; nom=nominalization; o=object; obl=oblique; pl=plural; poss=possessive agreement; s=subject; ser= serial; sg=singular; ss=subjunctive agreement; stv= stative; subj.cl=subject clitic; subj.suffix = subject suffix; trans=transitive suffix

- b. Intransitives (including unaccusatives and unergatives)



→ intransitive subjects (S) are generated VP-internally

I further assume that the “ergative agreement” found in (2) is generated in *v* (along with the transitive suffix). It thus follows that ergative agreement is only generated in the presence of a transitive suffix. This much derives the pattern in (2). In contrast, subject agreement in English is generally assumed to be associated with I(NFL) which is present independent of the transitivity of the main predicate.

A crucial feature of this analysis is the assumption that ergativity is a derived rather than a primitive property of natural languages. I take this to be a welcome result given the diverse properties of ergativity across languages on the one hand and given the goal of the principles and parameters framework (Chomsky 1981 and subsequent work) to get rid of construction specific notions.

## 2 The problem: Split ergativity

It is a well-known fact that languages are almost never purely ergative (see for example Dixon 1994). Rather, it is often the case that only some phenomena in a given language show an ergative/absolutive pattern whereas others show a nominative/accusative pattern (like English). Halkomelem is such a language in that there are phenomena that show a nominative/accusative pattern. The major goal of this paper is to address the issue as to how to account for the split ergativity of Halkomelem within an analysis that assumes ergativity to be a derived notion.

### 2.1 Split ergativity 1: Person split

Above we have seen that 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects trigger an ergative agreement pattern. The situation is different with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person, which show a nominative/accusative pattern as shown in (4)–(6). In other words, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person subjects trigger subject-verb agreement independent as to whether the verb is transitive (4) or intransitive (5). Moreover, transitive objects trigger object agreement which is different from subject agreement (6):

- |     |    |                  |    |                               |
|-----|----|------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| (4) | a. | máy-t-tsel       | b. | máy-t-tset                    |
|     |    | help-TRANS-1SG.S |    | help-TRANS-1PL.S              |
|     |    | ‘I help him.’    |    | ‘We help him.’                |
|     | c. | máy-t-chexw      | d. | máy-t-chap                    |
|     |    | help-TRANS-2SG.S |    | help-TRANS-2PL.S              |
|     |    | ‘You help him.’  |    | ‘You <sub>pl</sub> help him.’ |

Galloway 1980: 126

- (5) a. yó:ys-tsel  
work-1SG.S  
'I work.'
- b. yó:ys-tset  
work-1PL.S  
'We work.'
- c. yó:ys-chexw  
work-2SG.S  
'You work.'
- d. yó:ys-chap  
work-2PL.S  
'You<sub>pl</sub> work.' Galloway 1980: 126
- (6) a. may-th-óx-es  
help-TRANS-1SG.O-3S  
'He helps me.'
- b. may-t-óxw-es  
help-TRANS-1PL.O-3S  
'He helps us.'
- c. may-th-óme-tsel  
help-TRANS-2SG.O-1SG.S  
'I help you.'
- b. may-t-óle-tsel  
help-TRANS-2SG.O-1SG.S  
'I help you<sub>pl</sub>.' Galloway 1980: 126

The different patterning of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> versus 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects suggests that Halkomelem is an ergative system, which is split along the person dimension (Gerds 1980, 1988, Jelinek and Demers 1983):

|         | A     | S | O    |
|---------|-------|---|------|
| 1sg.    | tsel  |   | -óx  |
| 2sg     | chexw |   | -óme |
| 1pl     | tset  |   | -óxw |
| 2pl     | chap  |   | -óle |
| 3sg./pl | -es   | Ø |      |

Table 2: Non-subordinate subject and object agreement

## 2.2 Split ergativity 2: Subjunctive agreement

We further note that even 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects do not always trigger an ergative/absolute pattern. Rather subjunctive agreement triggers a nominative/absolute pattern even with 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects, i.e. subjunctive agreement does not distinguish between transitive and intransitive subjects:

- (7) a. éwe lí-s í:mex  
NEG AUX-3SS walking  
'He is not walking.'
- b. éwe lí-s tl'íls-th-óx-es  
NEG AUX-3SS want-TRANS-1SG.O-3S  
'He doesn't like me.' Galloway 1993: 186

This suggests that ergativity in Halkomelem is also split along the dimension "indicative versus subjunctive" (Gerds 1980, 1988):

|                        | A   | S | O |
|------------------------|-----|---|---|
| 3rd person subjunctive | -s  |   | Ø |
| 3rd person indicative  | -es | Ø |   |

Table 3: Subjunctive agreement



Note in passing that the subjunctive pattern provides indirect support for the claim that ergativity is a derived phenomenon. Observe that in the transitive clause (7)b we find subjunctive agreement on the auxiliary co-occurring with ergative agreement on the verb. This would mean that one and the same clause can simultaneously be ergative/absolutive and nominative/accusative.

But the question remains as to how we can derive split ergativity in Halkomelem. Recall that I assume that the ergative properties of Halkomelem are derived from the syntax of transitivity. However, the syntax of transitivity is the same in the context of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects, i.e. the transitive suffix is only found with transitive predicates (4) but not with intransitives (5) in context of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person subjects.

Similarly, transitive suffixes are only present with transitive predicates in subjunctive clauses (7). But if indeed subject agreement is tied to the presence of transitive suffixes, then why are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person agreement on the one hand and subjunctive agreement on the other hand not dependent on the presence of the transitive suffix? In the remainder of this paper I will propose an analysis for the split ergative properties of Halkomelem that keeps in line with the assumption that ergativity in Halkomelem derives from the syntax of transitivity. I will start with the person split.

### 3 Deriving split ergativity 1: Person split

I propose that the person based split in the Halkomelem agreement pattern derives from the fact that there are two different structural positions for subject agreement available (see Davis 2000). Ergative agreement (labeled “subject suffixes” in Davis 2000) are associated with *v*. It so happens that the ergative paradigm is defective in that it is only associated with an entry for 3<sup>rd</sup> person. I further assume, following Wiltschko 2002a that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person indicative agreement is generated in *C*. In other words, the so-called subject clitics of Halkomelem are reminiscent of inflected complementizers. It immediately follows from these independently motivated assumptions that Halkomelem has “split ergative” properties. Recall from above that ergative agreement, being located in *v* can only show up in the presence of *v* (i.e. in transitive environments). Since 1st and 2nd person agreement is generated in *C*, and the occurrence of *C* is independent of the presence of *v*, it follows that the occurrence of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person agreement is independent of the transitivity of the clause. Consequently, 1st and 2nd person subjects show a nominative/accusative pattern. This is shown in the following abstract representations:

- (8) a. transitives  $[_{CP} [C \text{ 1}^{\text{st}}/\text{2}^{\text{nd}}] \dots [_{VP} [v \text{ 3}^{\text{rd}}] [_{VP} V]]]$   
 b. intransitives:  $[_{CP} [C \text{ 1}^{\text{st}}, \text{2}^{\text{nd}}] \dots [_{VP} V]]$

In sum, the present proposal has two key ingredients. First, there are two different syntactic positions for subject agreement and secondly each of

these positions is crucially not associated with a complete paradigm: v agreement is restricted to 3<sup>rd</sup> person while C-agreement is restricted to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person. Empirical evidence for these assumptions stems from the fact that 3<sup>rd</sup> person ergative agreement has rather different distributional properties compared to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person indicative agreement, as is well-known in the Salish literature. In essence, ergative agreement is suffixal, whereas indicative agreement has a mobile, clitic-like distribution. This can be seen on the basis of the following data. The position of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person subject agreement is influenced by the presence of an auxiliary: the clitic follows the verb in the absence of the auxiliary (*li*) (9) but it precedes the verb if such an auxiliary is present (10):<sup>3</sup>

- (9) a. máy-t-tsel                      b. máy-t-tset  
       help-TRANS-1SG.S            help-TRANS-1PL.S  
       'I help him.'                'We help him.'
- c. máy-t-chexw                d. máy-t-chap  
       help-TRANS-2SG.S            help-TRANS-2PL.S  
       'You help him.'              'You<sub>pl</sub> help him.'
- Galloway 1980: 126
- (10) a. li-tsel      máy-t            b. li-tset      máy-t  
       AUX-1SG.S   help-TRANS    AUX-1PL.S   help-TRANS  
       'I helped him.'                'We helped him.'
- c. li-chexw    máy-t            d. li-chap      máy-t  
       AUX-2SG.S   help-TRANS    AUX-2PL.S   help-TRANS  
       'You helped him.'              'You<sub>pl</sub> helped him.'
- Galloway 1980: 126

In contrast, 3<sup>rd</sup> person ergative agreement always appears attached to the main verb, independent of the absence or presence of an auxiliary:

- (11) a. máy-t-es  
       help-TRANS-3S  
       'He helps someone.'
- b. \*li-s      máy-t  
       AUX-3S    help-TRANS  
       'He helped someone.'
- c. li      máy-t-es  
       AUX    help-TRANS-3S  
       'He helped someone.'

Furthermore, evidence for the claim that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person subject clitics are generated in C stems from the fact that they are in complementary

<sup>3</sup> Note that the clitic can also precede the verb in the absence of an auxiliary (Galloway 1993, Bar-el et al. 2003)

distribution with complementizers. That is, in embedded clauses, where we find a complementizer (*kw'* in (12) and *we* in (13)) subject clitics are impossible:

- (12) a. *skw'áy* [kw'-(el)-s(\*-tsel) *kw'éts-lexw*  
impossible [COMP-1SG.POSS-NOM-(1SG.S) see-TRANS  
'I can't see it.'
- b. *skw'áy* [kw'-(a)-s(\*-chexw) *kw'éts-lexw*  
impossible [COMP-2SG.POSS-NOM-(2SG.S) see-TRANS  
'You can't see it.'
- c. *skw'áy* [kw'-es(\*-tset) *kw'éts-lexw-(tset)*  
impossible [COMP-NOM-1PL.S see-TRANS-1PL.POSS  
'We can't see it.'
- d. *skw'áy* [kw'-(a)-s(\*-chap) *kw'éts-lexw-(elep)*  
impossible [COMP-2.POSS-NOM-2PL.S see-TRANS-2PL.POSS  
'Youpl can't see it.' Galloway 1993: 181
- (13) a. *we-(\*tsel) lám-(èl)* b. *we-(\*tset) lám(-et)*  
if-(1SG.S) go-1SG.SS if-(1PL.S) go-1PL.SS  
'If I go...'
- c. *we-(\*chexw) lám-(exw)* d. *we-(\*chap) lám-(elep)*  
if-(2SG.S) go-2SG.SS if-(2PL.S) go-2PL.SS  
'If you go...'
- Galloway 1993: 184

In sum, the person based split ergative properties straightforwardly follow from the assumption that 3<sup>rd</sup> person ergative agreement is located in a different syntactic position than 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person indicative agreement. In the next subsection I will show that a similar proposal derives the second split, namely the one along the indicative/subjunctive dimension.

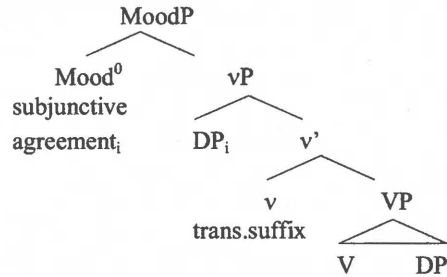
#### 4 Deriving split ergativity 2: Subjunctive agreement

To derive the second split, I propose that subjunctive agreement is generated in a position higher than *v* but lower than *C*. Since this position probably encodes mood, I will tentatively call it MoodP. Since the appearance of MoodP is independent of the appearance of *vP* it follows that subjunctive agreement shows a nominative/accusative pattern just like subject clitics. This is shown in the following representations:

- (14) a. intransitive structure:
- ```

      MoodP
     /    \
  Mood0   VP
  subjunctive
  agreementi
           / \
          V  DPi
  
```

b. Transitive structure:



Again, the crucial part of the analysis is the assumption that subjunctive agreement is generated in a different position than ergative agreement. Consequently subjunctive agreement, which is not dependent on the presence of *v* shows up every time we find a subject. As was the case with subject clitics, empirical evidence for this claim stems from the distributional differences between ergative agreement and subjunctive agreement. What we observe is that subjunctive agreement does not have a fixed distribution, rather we observe the mobile behavior typical of “clitics” (see Kroeber 1999, Davis 2000). In the presence of an auxiliary, subjunctive agreement attaches to the auxiliary:

- (15)
- | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------|-------|------------|---------|--|
| a. | éwe | tset | li-l | yóyes | |
| | NEG | 1SG.S | AUX-1SG.SS | working | |
| | 'I'm not working.' | | | | |
| b. | éwe | chexw | li-xw | yóyes | |
| | NEG | 2SG.S | AUX-2SG.SS | working | |
| | 'You are not working.' | | | | |
| c. | éwe | tset | li-t | yóyes | |
| | NEG | 1PL.S | AUX-1PL.SS | working | |
| | 'We are not working.' | | | | |
| d. | éwe | chap | li-p | yóyes | |
| | NEG | 2PL.S | AUX-2PL.SS | working | |
| | 'You're not working.' | | | | |
- Wiltschko 2002 ex (15)

In the absence of an auxiliary, subjunctive agreement appears on the main verb:

- (16)
- | | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------|----------|
| a. | éwe-chap | t'ilem-ap | wáyeles |
| | NEG-2PL.S | sing-2PL.SS | tomorrow |
| | 'You folks won't be singing tomorrow.' | | |
| b. | éwe-tset | t'ilem-et | wáyeles |
| | NEG-1PL.S | sing-1PL.SS | tomorrow |
| | 'We won't be working tomorrow' | | |
| c. | éwe-chexw | kw'ákw'eth-eth-óx-exw | |
| | NEG-2SG.S | looking-TRANS-1SG.O-2SG.SS | |
| | 'You are not going to be looking at me' | | |
- Wiltschko 2002c, ex. (37)

I take the mobile distribution of agreement to be indicative of its being generated higher in the syntactic tree than ergative agreement (which has a fixed distribution). In other words, ergative agreement always appears attached to the verb because the verb always moves to v. The verb can move higher up, but only in the absence of an auxiliary (this is a typical minimality effect).

So far we have seen that subject clitics and subjunctive agreement pattern similarly in that they are generated in a position higher than v and therefore do not show an ergative/absolute pattern. There is however one crucial difference between subject clitics and subjunctive agreement. We have seen above that subject clitics do not have a full paradigm. In particular, there is no 3rd person subject clitic – consequently we do not find 3rd person agreement in intransitive constructions. Subjunctive agreement differs in this respect in that it is associated with a full paradigm, including 3rd person. Consequently, we find subject agreement in intransitive environments. And crucially, we find 3rd person subjunctive agreement co-occurring with 3rd person ergative agreement in subjunctive clauses. Thus, the present account straightforwardly accounts for the fact that we find two agreement endings in subjunctive transitive environments (see example (7)b above). Under the present analysis, there is nothing funny about having two agreement endings co-occurring, one showing an ergative/absolute pattern and the other showing a nominative/accusative pattern. In fact, the present analysis, which takes ergativity to be a derived property, predicts just this type of patterning.

5 Conclusion

We have seen that ergativity in Halkomelem derives from the morpho-syntax of transitivity in the following way. Only transitive subjects appear in SpecvP, whereas intransitive subjects are generated VP-internally. Split ergativity derives from the syntactic distribution of different kinds of agreement morphology and the fact that not every position for agreement is associated with a full (audible) paradigm. This result is summarized in the structure in (17) and the corresponding table 4:

(17) [CP [C **subject cl**] [MoodP [Mood **subjunctive agr**] [vP [v **ergative agr**] [vP]]]]

	subject clitics =C-agreement	subjunctive agreement Mood-agreement	“ergative” v-agreement
1sg	tse1	-l	--
2sg	chexw	-exw	--
3	--	-s	-es
1pl	tset	-t	--
2pl	chap	-ep	--

Table 4: Subject agreement paradigms of Halkomelem Salish

Thus, it is a crucial assumption of the present proposal that subject agreement is not uniformly associated with I(NFL), as in more standard theories

of agreement.⁴ The other crucial ingredient of the analysis is the fact that agreement paradigms are not uniformly associated with a full paradigm. This of course leaves some room for cross-linguistic variation, as we would expect that different languages have no or different gaps in their paradigms. This is indeed what we find, as I will now show.

6 A cross-Salish perspective

In this last section, I attempt to answer two questions. First, given the present system we found in Halkomelem, one might wonder how such a system could have developed. And secondly, given the nature of the analysis, we expect systems with different paradigmatic gaps and consequently with different splits.

We have seen in section 3 that the Halkomelem is such that v-agreement and C-agreement complement each other, which gives the appearance of split ergativity. In particular, v-agreement is restricted to 3rd person whereas C-agreement has entries for 1st and 2nd person. How could such a system have evolved?

According to Davis 2000, the Proto-Salish system had a complete paradigm of subject suffixes (i.e. our v-agreement) as shown below:

	indicative clitic [C-agreement]	conjunctive clitic [=Mood-agreement]	subject suffix [=v-agreement]
1sg	*=kan	*=wan	*-an
2sg	*=kaxw	*=waxw	*-axw
3sg	*Ø	*=was	*-as
1pl	*=kat	*=wat	*-at
2pl	*=kap	*=wap	*-ap
3pl	*Ø	*=was	*-as

Table 5: Proto-Salish subject agreement (from Davis 2000: 513 table 2)

In order to explain the emergence of the Halkomelem pattern, I propose the following condition on agreement:

- (18) Economy of agreement:
Use agreement only if you need to.

For Proto-Salish this economy condition predicts that in the presence of v-agreement, C-agreement is not used, since it is not needed (i.e. agreement is already established at the vP level). This predicts that we should only find C-agreement in intransitive environments.

- (19) a. transitives [CP [C --] ... [vP [v 3rd] [vP V]]]
b. intransitives: [CP [C 1st, 2nd] ... [vP V]]

⁴ Similar claims have been made by Davis 2000 for Salish more generally, Déchaine 1999 for Algonquian languages, and Saxon 2001 for Navajo.

It turns out that this is exactly the pattern we find in the Interior Salish languages (except in Lillooet). Here, subject clitics (=C-agreement) are used with intransitive predicates and subject suffixes (=v-agreement) are used with transitive predicates (Kroeber 1999). The following data from Shuswap exemplify this pattern:

- (20) Intransitives
- a. *cút-kt*
intend-1PL.SUBJ.CL
'We intend.'
 - b. *cút-k*
intend-2SG.SUBJ.CL
'You intend.'
 - c. *cút-Ø*
intend-3.SUBJ.CL
'S/he intends.'
- Kuipers 1974: 44
- (21) Transitives
- a. *píc'-n-x*
squeeze-TRANS-2SG.SUBJ.SUFFIX
'You squeeze him/her/it.'
 - b. *lx-nt-és*
squeal.on-TRANS-3SUBJ.SUFFIX
'She/he squeals on him/her.'
- Kuipers 1974: 48

Note in passing that the split we observe in Shuswap is based on transitivity, i.e. we could not call this an ergative split. This supports the claim that the split "ergative" properties are epiphenomenal.

Now, let us get back to our original question: How could the Halkomelem pattern have developed? Note first, that there is a transparent morphological relation between v- and C-agreement in Proto-Salish, to the effect that v-agreement seems to be contained in C-agreement. I speculate that speakers of Halkomelem have at one point reanalyzed v-agreement as actually being part of C-agreement as shown in table 6:

	indicative clitic [C]	subject suffix [v]
1sg	*=k-an	*-an
2sg	*=k-axw	*-axw
3sg	*Ø	*-as
1pl	*=k-at	*-at
2pl	*=k-ap	*-ap
3pl	*Ø	*-as

Table 6: Reanalyzing subject suffixes (v-agreement)

However, crucially, the Proto-Salish system could also give rise to the following reanalysis. Suppose a language were to overtly realize both agreement paradigms simultaneously as in the following abstract representation, where **agr** indicates overt agreement:

- (22) a. transitives [CP [C **agr**] ... [vP [v **agr**] [vP V]]]
 b. intransitives: [CP [C **agr**] ... [vP V]]

(23) Subject clitics (noncontinuative aspect)

a.	ʔit	ʔiln-čn	b.	ʔac-ʔaʔá-ci- čn
	CPL	sing-1S.SUBJ.CL		STV-love-TRANS+2S.OBJ-1S.SUBJ.CL
		'I sang.'		'I love you.'
c.	ʔit	č'áč-i-Ø		
	CPL	watch-TRANS+2SG.OBJ-3SG.SUBJ.CL		
		'He/she watched you.'		Kinkade 1964: 32-34

- (24) Subject suffixes (continuative aspect)
- | | |
|--|---|
| a. s-ʔɪlan-anš
CONT-sing-1SG.S
'I am singing.' | b. s-č'is-mi-ci-nš
CTN-come.after-TRANS-2SG.O-1SG.S
'I'm coming after you.' |
|--|---|
- Kinkade 1964: 32-34

⁵ Note that this might not be an accidental gap. If we assume that C-agreement is “discourse agreement” (cf. Déchaine 1999), then it might follow that only direct discourse participants (speaker and hearer = 1st and 2nd person) can license C-agreement. This is supported by the fact that in many languages, which show agreement in C, this is restricted to 1st and 2nd.

Note that this is another split, which has nothing to do with ergativity, and thus supports our claim that the split ergative pattern of Halkomelem is a derived phenomenon.

Finally, our system predicts that anytime we have two agreement endings, at least one of them must encode some meaning.⁶ I think that this is in fact the case. Take again subjunctive agreement in Halkomelem, which not only co-occurs with ergative agreement but also with subject clitics:

- (25) éwe tsel lí-l tl'íls-th-òmə
 NEG 1SG.S AUX-1SG.SS want-TRANS-2SG.
 'I don't like you.' Galloway 1993: p.186

We can view subjunctive agreement as encoding some sort of hypothetical meaning component, whereas C-agreement might be analyzed as serving for clause typing: it indicates "matrix indicative". Note that these final speculative remarks are consistent with the fact that both indicative clitics (=C-agreement) and subjunctive agreement (=Mood-agreement) are (at least diachronically) morphologically complex.⁷

	indicative clitic [C]	conjunctive clitic [Mood]	subject suffix [v]
1sg	*=k-an	*=w-an	*-an
2sg	*=k-axw	*=w-axw	*-axw
3sg	*Ø	*=w-as	*-as
1pl	*=k-at	*=w-at	*-at
2pl	*=k-ap	*=w-ap	*-ap
3pl	*Ø	*=w-as	*-as

Table 7: The Proto-Salish system (from Davis 2000: 513 table 2)

We observe that indicative clitics consist of an initial consonant *k* in addition to the subject suffix and conjunctive clitics consist of an initial consonant *w* in addition to the subject suffix.⁸ I suspect that these initial consonants might be the source of the meaning encoded.

To sum up, we have seen that the "ergative" pattern of Halkomelem Salish derives from the morphosyntax of transitivity and agreement. Assuming that "ergativity" is a derived phenomenon helps us to understand different kinds of splits including splits that are not "ergative" at all.

⁶ See Davis 2000 for a detailed discussion of other instances of double agreement across the Salish family.

⁷ See Kroeber 1991, Newman 1979, 1980, Thompson 1979, Thompson and Thompson 1992. Note however that there is no synchronic evidence that these elements are indeed complex.

⁸ Thompson (1979) proposes that these initial consonants derive from auxiliaries.

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