Syntactic Distributions and Co-referentiality in Shipibo-Konibo

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1. Introduction

Shipibo-Konibo is a Panoan language spoken in Eastern Peru by some 30,000 people. Most speakers live in separate villages along the Ucayali River and main tributaries, in the Departments of Ucayali and Loreto.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss co-referentiality-related issues in Shipibo-Konibo (henceforth, SK) through the examination of three selected syntactic constructions: Internally-headed relative clauses, different-subject marking, and Participant Agreement; the last two are part of the SK switch-reference system. A second question that I will address, though indirectly, is the degree to which SK exhibits ergative-absolutive distributions. It will be argued that SK is a language with a fairly consistent ERG-ABS case-marking system but dominantly non-ergative syntax, internally-headed relatives being the only documented exception.

The organization of this paper is as follows. Section 2 deals with the SK case-marking system; this treatment is necessary to understand the subsequent discussion. Sections 3, 4 and 5 discuss the syntactic distributions in internally-headed relatives, different-subject marked clauses, and Participant Agreement-marked adjuncts, respectively. Finally, a summary and some remarks are provided in section 6.
2. Case-Marking

SK exhibits a fairly consistent ERG-ABS case-marking system for both pronouns and nouns. Generalizing, there are no case-marking splits triggered by the inherent semantics of the noun phrase, TAM distinctions or the status of the clause (i.e. ERG-ABS alignment is kept with non-volitional/inanimate agents, unexpressed/unaffected patients, frustrated events, incompletive/irrealis aspect/modality, non-finite clauses, etc.). However, there are ergative-splits at the intraclausal level involving the verbal plural -kan and case-marking on emphatic pronouns (Valenzuela 2003).

The morpheme -n is attached to the last word of a NP to indicate ergative, instrument/means, genitive (except for 1st and 3rd sing.), interessive (except for 1st, 2nd and 3rd sing., as well as 1st pl.), locative/allative, and temporal. The marker -n is the only means to convey ERG and INSTR, there are alternative ways to encode GEN and INTERESSIVE with certain pronouns, and LOC/ALL and TEMP with certain nouns.

The morpheme -n is realized through various allomorphs whose distribution is, to a large extent, morpho-phonologically conditioned (Valenzuela 1998, 2003:118-126).

-N-marked forms exhibit the following endings: -n; -an, -en, -in; -kan, -ten, -tan; -man; -nin;

-ton, -tonin are used with derived nominals, nominalized clauses. Addition of -n to NPs ending in the plural/collective -bo results in -baon, -boan, or -boon.

Absolutive case is indicated through zero or -a; the latter allomorph is attested on the following pronouns: 1st and 2nd sing., 1st pl. and the interrogative tso- ‘who’.

(1) **E-a-ra** Kako-nko ka-iba-ke. **S_a**
   1-ABS-EV Kako-ALL go-PST2-CMPL
   ‘I went to Kako yesterday.’

(2) **E-a-ra** mi-n jamá-ke. **O/A**
   1-ABS-EV 2-ERG kick-CMPL
   ‘You kicked me.’
(3) **E-n-ra** mi-a jamá-ke. A/O
   1-ERG-EV 2-ABS kick-COMPL
   ‘I kicked you.’

(4) **Mi-a-ra** ransa-[a]i. S_a
   2-ABS-EV dance-INCR
   ‘You are dancing.’

Examples (5)-(9) illustrate different endings and functions of -n-marked forms:

(5) Sanke-man-ra jawen piakan pia-n koyaparo tsaka-ke. 
   Sanken:ERG-EV 3POSS nephew:GEN arrow-INSTR tucunaré:ABS hit-CMPL
   ‘Sanken hit a tucunaré (k. fish) with his nephew’s arrow.’

(6) Inka-n shinaman manan-xawe-n pei-ki seke-nan-a iki. 
   Inka-ERG mind:MEANS hill-turtle-GEN wing-OBL break-MAL-PP2 AUX
   ‘The Inka, with his mental power, broke the motelo’s (k. tortoise) wing.’
   (Valenzuela 1997)

(7) Jisis-in-ra Sanke-man bake natex-ke. 
   ischimi-ERG-EV Sanken:GEN child:ABS bite-CMPL
   ‘A/the ischimi (k. ant) bit Sanken’s child.’

(8) Sisar-nin-ra Maria-nin wai rera-ke machito-nin. 
   César-ERG-EV Maria-GEN chacra:ABS fell-CMPL machete-INSTR
   “César fell (trees in) Maria’s chacra with a machete”. (Valenzuela 1997)

(9) Sabaro-nin-ra e-a paboro-nin ka-kas-ai. 
   Saturday-TEMP-EV 1-ABS cove-ALL go-DES-INC
   ‘On Saturday I want to go to the cove.’ (Valenzuela 1997)

Examples showing that -n is added to the last word of the corresponding NP are (20) and (22).

Unless otherwise indicated, the absence of a required argument is interpreted as a 3rd sg.; (2)-(3).

The following examples have been taken from data elicited through the “Fish Film” experiment designed by Russ Tomlin. As can be seen, the ERG-ABS pattern is kept even when the focused participant plays the O function.
“Fish Film” Data: Showing that agent and patient are always marked ERG and ABS, respectively

RED FISH (CUED) EATS GRAY FISH

(10) Joshin yapa-\textbf{nin}-ra, manxan yapa, bechi-xon moa xea-bain-ai, red fish-ERG-EV gray fish:ABS meet-PSSA already “drink”-AND2-INC moara winó-kain-ai. already pass:MID-AND1-INC ‘The red fish (cued) meets the gray fish, eats it (while going), and leaves (while going).’

PINK (CUED) EATEN BY BLACK FISH

(12) Amí keská yapa-\textbf{nin}-ra wiso yapa…. wiso yapa-\textbf{nin}-ra pink fish-ERG-EV black fish:ABS….. black fish-ERG-EV joshin yapa moa xea-bain-ke red fish:ABS already “drink”-AND2-CMPL ‘The pink fish (cued), the black fish…. The black fish ate the red fish (while going).’

BLACK FISH (CUED) EATEN BY RED FISH

(12) Wiso yapa-\textbf{nin}-ra joshin-shaman yapa…. joshinshaman yapa…-\textbf{nin}-ra black fish-ERG-EV red-INTENS fish:ABS red-INTENS fish... -ERG-EV wiso yapa moa xea-bain-ke. black fish:ABS already “drink”-AND2-CMPL ‘The black fish (cued), the red fish….the red fish ate the black fish (while going).’

3. Internally-Headed Relative Clauses and Syntactic Ergativity

In SK almost all interclausal control properties operate on a nominative-accusative basis: deletion under coreference, same-subject markers and, to a lesser extent, the morpheme -\textit{a} indicating co-referentiality between a dependent clause object and a matrix clause subject (i.e. S/A).

For example, when two conjoined clauses with co-referential subjects are juxtaposed, the subject of the second clause, whether S or A, is elided.

The same principle is found in biclausal constructions involving the verb \textit{keen}- ‘want.’ The complement clause bears no overt subject when \textit{keen}-.
functions as a same-subject modality verb, while the non-coreferential subject must be expressed in manipulative constructions:

(13)a. E-a-ra keen-ai [Kontámanain ka-ti-n].

   1-ABS-EV want-INC Contamana:ALL go-INF-OBL

   ‘I want to go to Contamana.’

b. *E-a-ra keen-ai [e-a Kontámanain kati-n]

   1-ABS-EV want-INC 1-ABS Contamana:ALL go-INF-OBL

   ‘I want to go to Contamana.’

(14) E-a-ra keen-ai [mi-n piti meni-ti-nin] manipulation.

   1-ABS-EV want-INC 2-ERG food:ABS give-INF-OBL

   ‘I want you to give (me) the food / fish.’

The non-coreferential subject in the complement clause may be expressed through the plural -kan:


   ‘I want them to kill Sani.’

However, SK has one documented instance of syntactic ergativity: Internally-headed relative clauses.

**Internally-Headed Relative Clauses**

As in many languages of the world, in SK relativization is one of the functions of nominalized clauses. Let us consider the similarities and differences between main clauses / verbs and relative clauses / verbs:

**Similarities:**

- Main clauses and relative clauses share the same argument structure (i.e., number of arguments and case-marking frame).
- The Participant Agreement system operates in the same way in both types of clauses (see section 5 below).

**Differences:**

- Main clauses have flexible constituent order, whereas relative clauses are obligatorily verb final.
- A relative verb may take most verbal morphology (body-part prefixes, causatives, applicatives, middle, adverb-like clitics, tense, negative, plural,
etc.) but cannot take finite tense / illocutionary force markers. In addition, certain tense + nominalizer combinations are not possible.

- A main verb cannot take nominal morphology directly, but a relative verb can.
- A main clause may contain evidentials, but a relative counterpart cannot.

The following nominalizing morphemes are found in SK: -ai (incompletive participle PP1), -a (completive participle PP2), -a iki (PP2 AUX), -0 (+ stress shift when after monosyllabic base + REM -ni), and -ti (INF/IRREALIS).

These markers do not constitute a differential nominalization strategy; i.e., it is not possible to distinguish the grammatical role (A, S, O, etc.) of the relativized element through the use of different nominalizers (pi-a [eat-PP2] ‘the one who ate’/‘the thing eaten’).

SK has prenominal, postnominal and internally-headed relative clauses. It is uncommon for a language to exhibit these three positional types to relativize the same syntactic position, and using the same strategy (gap). Consider the following relative constructions:

**Prenominal relative clauses**

(16) [Papa-n rete-ibat-a] jono-ra moa no-n keyo-ke.
father-ERG kill-PST2-PP2 collared.peccary:ABS-EV already 1p-ERG finish-CMPL

‘We already finished the collared-peccary father killed yesterday.’

**Postnominal**

(17) Jono [papa-n rete-ibat-a]-ra moa no-n keyo-ke.
c.peccary father-ERG kill-PST2-PP2:ABS-EV already 1p-ERG finish-CMPL

‘We already finished the collared-peccary father killed yesterday.’

**Internally-headed**

(18) [Papa-n jono rete-ibat-a]-ra moa no-n keyo-ke.
father-ERG c.peccary:ABS kill-PST2-PP2:ABS-EV already 1p-ERG finish-CMPL

‘We already finished the collared-peccary father killed yesterday.’

In several languages, internally-headed relative clauses allow certain degree of ambiguity, since (except for the discourse context) there is no way to decide which argument of a transitive ClREL is to be interpreted as co-referential with a matrix clause argument. However, this is not the case in SK, where in transitive,
internally headed Cl\textsubscript{REL}s it is always the O argument which must be interpreted as head, and therefore as co-referential with the matrix clause argument:

(19) [Joni-n \textit{ino} rete-a]-ronki
    man-ERG jaguar:ABS kill-PP2:ABS-HSY
    kikin siná ik-á iki.
    extremely brave/fierce do.I-PP2 AUX
    ‘The jaguar that the man killed was extremely fierce.’
    *‘The man who killed the jaguar was extremely brave.’

(20) [Bawa-n \textit{bake} natex-a]-ra nokona iki.
    parrot-ERG child:ABS bite-PP2:ABS-EV mine COP
    ‘The child the parrot bit is mine.’
    *‘The parrot that bit the child is mine.’

Ex. (21) shows that the O-argument of an internally-headed Cl\textsubscript{REL} is interpreted as head even when this reading would run against semantico-pragmatic feasibility:

(21) [Joni-n \textit{yawa} rete-ibat-a]-ra
    man-ERG w.l.peccary:ABS kill-PST2-PP2:ABS-EV 1POSS m.uncle COP
    nokon koka iki.
    ‘The white-lipped peccary that the man killed is my maternal uncle.’
    *‘The man that killed the white-lipped peccary is my maternal uncle.’

    Given that the main clauses in (19)-(21) are intransitive, one may wonder whether the interpretation of the O arguments as head is due to some kind of absolutive arrangement. This is not the case, however. In (22) the O argument is read as head even when the co-referential participant plays the A function in the main clause:

(22) [Bawa-n \textit{bake} natex-a]-tonin-ra joshin pi-ke.
    parrot-ERG child:ABS bite-PP2-ERG-EV banana:ABS eat-CMPL
    ‘The child the parrot bit ate the banana.’
    *‘The parrot that bit the child ate the banana.’

To relativize on the A argument, an externally-headed Cl\textsubscript{REL} construction must be used:

(23) [Yawa rete-ibat-a] \textit{joni}-ra nokon koka iki.
    w.l.peccary:ABS kill-PST2-PP2:ABS man:ABS-EV 1POSS m.uncle COP
    ‘The man who killed the white-lipped peccary is my maternal uncle.’
(24) [Bake natex-a] bawa-n-ra joshin pi-ke.
   child:ABS bite-PP2 parrot-ERG-EV banana:ABS eat-CMPL
   ‘The parrot that bit the child ate the banana.’

The next example shows that it is also possible to relativize on an S argument through internally-headed relativization. Note that the V_REL is semantically active; i.e., it is O / S arguments and not patients that serve as pivot in this specific construction:

(25) [Mi-bé ainbo jo-a]-ra no-n onan-yama-ke.
   2-COM woman:ABS come-PP2:ABS-EV 1p-ERG know-NEG-CMPL
   ‘We don’t know the woman who came with you.’

Therefore, internally-headed relativization exhibits an absolutive pivot and probably constitutes the only instance of interclausal syntactic ergativity in SK.

In SK there is no independent morpho-syntactic basis for grammatically distinguishing direct from indirect object (or primary vs. secondary object). Thus in a construction with a ditransitive verb, both patient and recipient arguments are marked absolutive and may exchange positions. Furthermore, the two objects do not exhibit differences with regard to control properties such as relativization:

(26)a. [Tsoma-n joni koríki meni-a]-ra ono yaká-ke.
   Tsoma-ERG man:ABS money:ABS give-PP2-EV DIST sit-CMPL
   ‘The man to whom Tsoma gave money is sitting further over there.’

   b. [Tsoma-n joni koríki meni-a]-ra jawen pisha-n iki.
   Tsoma-ERG man:ABS money:ABS give-PP2-EV 3POSS bag-LOC COP
   ‘The money that Tsoma gave to the man is in his bag.’

   Internally-headed relativization does not differentiate between base and applicative objects:

(27) Beso-n-ra ainbo bake kena-xon-ke.
   Beso-ERG-EV woman:ABS child:ABS call-BEN-CMPL
   ‘Beso called the child for the woman / Beso called the woman for the child.’

(28) E-n-ra bena-[a]i
   1-ERG-EV look.for-INC

   [Beso-n ainbo bake kena-xon-a].
   Beso-ERG woman:ABS child:ABS call-BEN-PP2:ABS
   ‘I am looking for the woman that Beso called for the child.’
‘I am looking for the woman for whom Beso called the child.’
‘I am looking for the child that Beso called for the woman.’
‘I am looking for the child for whom Beso called the woman.’

In sum, internally-headed relative clauses exhibit an ERG-ABS distribution, since only O and S arguments can be read as co-referential with a main clause argument.

4. Different-Subject Marking

The main reference-tracking mechanism of SK is its elaborate switch-reference system. Dependent reference-marked clauses, which are obligatorily verb-final, may (immediately) precede or follow their matrix clause, or occur embedded in it. In most instances, reference-marked clauses ground the situation described by the main clause; however, the exact relationship between the events in the two clauses is not specified but left to be inferred from the context. Alternatively, a reference-marked clause can encode an event that advances the main storyline. Hence, SK reference-marked clauses may correspond to English temporal, purposive, conditional, reason, concessive, and even coordinate clauses.

Different-subject marked clauses in SK can be divided into (a) those which lack an object that is co-referential with the matrix clause subject (including intransitive ones), and (b) those whose object is co-referential with the matrix clause subject (i.e., instances of Object-to-Subject co-referentiality).

4.1. Dependent Object and Matrix Subject Non-Coreferentiality

Different-subject marked clauses lacking an object or whose object is not co-referential with the matrix clause subject take the aspect morphemes -ai (INC) or -ke (CMPL). -ai is used when the two events are viewed as contemporary or overlapping, while -ke is selected when the event in the marked clause is presented as previous. In the majority of cases, these clauses also take the temporal -tian which has specialized as different-subject marker:

(29) [pikó-ke-tian]-bi no-a ani a-kan-ai…
take.out:MID-P-DS-EMPH 1p-ABS big do.T-PL-INC
‘From the moment we are born, they (our parents) take care of us….’
(30) [iná tsaka-ke-tian]
domesticated.animal:ABS shoot.with.arrow-P-DS
westíora ainbo-nin ja-bé ainbo-bo kena-ke.
one woman-ERG 3-COM woman-PL:ABS call-CMPL
‘After (the men) shot at the domesticated animal, a woman called the
other women accompanying her.’

(31) [jene-n rete-ai-tian]-ra
flowing.water-ERG kill-S-DS-EV
ainbo sai ik-ai.
woman:ABS ONOM:cry.out.for.help do.I-INC
‘Since (s)he was drowning, the woman cried out for help.’
(i.e., the one drowning is not the one crying out for help)
*‘Since she was drowning, the woman cried out for help.’

In (31), the subject of the dependent clause is jene ‘flowing water.’ A
literal translation would be ‘Since the flowing water was killing her, the woman
cried out for help’; there is no verb equivalent to ‘drown’ in SK. If -ai-tian
strictly coded simultaneity of events and non-identity of subjects, the second
interpretation above would be perfectly possible. However, the drowning
woman being the object of the dependent clause cannot be the one crying out for
help, or else it would be an instance of Object-to-Subject co-referentiality which
is treated below. Hence, in addition to coding non-identity of subjects, -ke-tian
and -ai-tian indicate that the object of a transitive marked clause is non-
coreferential with the matrix clause subject.

4.2. Dependent Object and Matrix Subject Co-referentiality

The more idiosyncratic reference-marker -a indicates that the object of a
dependent clause conveying a previous event is co-referential with the subject
(S/A) argument of its matrix clause; i.e., differently from -ai-tian and -ke-tian
this marker restricts the reference of the dependent clause in the same way SS
markers do. Through the marker -a, glossed as Previous Object-to-Subject
Coreferentiality (P.O=S/A), a participant can be kept, introduced, or
reintroduced as discourse topic even when being the patient rather than the agent
of an event. In this respect constructions involving -a can be viewed as
fulfilling the pragmatic function of the passive voice in languages like English.
DEM Inka Woman:ABS-HSY be-PP2 AUX peanut eat-one.who.likes.to
‘It is said that the Inka woman loved to eat peanut.’

b. Ja i-t-ai-bi, westióra Shipibo ainbaon-ki
3:ABS do.I-PROG-SDS-EMPH one Shipibo woman:ERG-HSY2
ak-á iki tama toban washi-kin.
do.T-PP2 AUX peanut roasted be.stingy.about-SSSA
‘Then, a Shipibo woman denied her toasted peanut.’

c. Ja washit-a-ronki ka-a iki. O = S
3:ABS be.stingy.about-P.O=S/A go-PP2 AUX
‘Being denied (the toasted peanut), (the Inka Woman) left.’

In (33), the speaker talking about himself is the topic of all three clauses, but switches grammatical role from O to A in the first clause; -a is employed to keep the man as topic:

(33) Xeta-n chexa-a-ra rimon bero chaka-xon rao-n-ke. O = A
tooth-ERG ache-P.O=S/A-EV lemon seed:ABS grind-PSSA cure-CMPL
‘Since I had a toothache, I ground lemon seeds and treated it.’

(34) Ja waste-n i-xon ainbo-nin joni noko-a,
that piripiri-INSTR do.I-PSSA woman-ERG man:ABS meet-P.O=S/A
keen-yama-pacho-kin-bi kikin a-kin noi ka-i.
‘Making use of that piripiri, when the woman meets the man, even
though he didn’t want her before, he is going to fall in love with her.’

In a converse situation, i.e. when the dependent subject and the matrix object are co-referential, different-subject marking must be employed (see ex. (29)).

There is no dedicated morpheme, equivalent to -a, coding object-to-subject co-referentiality with simultaneous events. However, the restriction that “different-subject” entails Object-to-Subject non-coreferentiality still holds, as has been shown through ex. (31).

When the dependent clause is ditransitive, either object, the recipient or the patient, can be selected for Object-to-Subject co-referentiality:
(35) Pena-n bake-shoko meni-a-ra ainbo xobo-n ka-ke.  
‘After Pena gave (her) the baby, the woman went home.’

(36) Pena-n ainbo meni-a-ra bake-shoko wini-ke.  
Pena-ERG woman:ABS give-P.O=S/A-EV child-DIM:ABS cry-CMPL  
‘After Pena gave (it) to the woman, the baby cried’.

5. Participant Agreement

“Participant Agreement” (PA) can be considered the typologically most salient feature of Panoan grammar. It refers to the use of a distinct inflectional morphology on adjuncts, in correlation with the syntactic function of the participant they are predicated of.

Consider the following sentences where the locative βotšiki takes the marker -s, -son or -0 when oriented towards the S, A, or O participant, respectively:

(37) Bake-ra bochiki-a-x paké-ke.  
child:ABS-EV up-ABL-S cause.to.fall:MID-COMPL
‘A/the child fell from high up.’

(38) Bake-n-ra Piko bimi-n tsaka-ke jiwi bochiki-xon  
child-ERG-EV Piko:ABS fruit-INSTR hit-COMPL tree up-A
‘The boy up in the tree hit Piko with a fruit (e.g., while Piko was passing by).’

(39) Piko-n-ra jami kentí bochiki a-ke.  
Piko-ERG-EV metal pot:ABS up do.T-CMPL
‘Piko placed the metal pot high up.’ (only the pot is high up).

The sentences in (40) show that locatives are to be interpreted as semantically oriented towards one core participant (Participant Agreement and not Transitivity Agreement):

(40)a. E-n-ra nokon ochíti ransa-ma-[a]i tapo-n.  
1-ERG-EV POS1 dog:ABS dance-CAUS-INC palm.bark.floor-LOC:O
‘I make my dog dance on the palm-bark floor.’ (specifies location of causee)

b. E-n-ra nokon ochíti ransa-ma-[a]i tapo-n-xon.  
1-ERG-EV POS1 dog:ABS dance-CAUS-INC palm.bark.floor-LOC-A
‘I make my dog dance on the palm-bark floor.’ (specifies location of causer).
Panoan PA exhibits interesting peculiarities, which significantly contribute to a typology of participant-oriented adjuncts. First, PA is not attested on adjectives or adjectival phrases, the most widely recognized instances of participant-oriented adjuncts (Himmelmann and Schultze-Berndt 2004); however, PA in Panoan is found on a very large, and sometimes unexpected, semantic range of expressions, such as location and direction, quantification and distribution, manner, simultaneous and subsequent events, emphatic pronouns and “interessives” (i.e. benefactives/malefactives). Also, differently from most languages exhibiting agreement on adjuncts, in Panoan there is no NP-internal agreement (Schultze-Berndt and Himmelmann 2004:83, Valenzuela 2003 and to appear). Finally, the agreement markers are not synchronically transparent.

Table 1. Overt Participant Agreement Markers in Shipibo-Konibo

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<tr>
<th>Morpheme</th>
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<th>A-agreement</th>
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<td>life-stage proprietive privative (only A forms) emph. pronoun conjunction manner quantity ablative (only S forms) locative/allative (only A forms)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>manner quantity conjunction</td>
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<td>-nox</td>
<td>-no(n)xon</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>subsequent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hierarchical Arrangement: 1 > 2 > 3

Intraclausal

(42) no-n joi-n-bi-ribi wisha-bo, bake-baon
1p-GEN language-OBL-EMPH-also write:PP2-PL:ABS child-PL:ERG
yoyo a-ti iskoira-nko-xon-bicho-ma no-n xobo-nko-xon-ribi.
ONOM:speak do.T-INF school-LOC-A-only-NEG 1p-GEN house-LOC-A-also
‘Children should read books in our own language not only in the school
but also at home.’ (Soi Rawa 1995:5)

(43) Ja-ra e-onmea-x-bi wano-ke.
3:ABS-EV 1-INTRSS:LOC:ABL-S-EMPH marry.a.woman-CMPL
‘He got married in spite of being with me.’

(44) Mi-on-xon bake-n kinan-a.
2-INTRSS-A child-ERG vomit-PP2
‘The child vomited being under your care.’

(45) Ja-riba-ke bake chea-a-ti, bake-x-bi
exist-REP-CMPL child:ABS very.very.skinny-do.T-INF child-S-EMPH
too-ke-tian pokomea-bi bake maxko a-ti.
become.pregnant-P-DS womb-LOC:ABL-EMPH child:ABS small do.T-INF
‘There is also (a plant with special powers) to make the fetus very very
skinny, to make the fetus small when a girl becomes pregnant at / from a
very early age.’

clay do.T-SSSA begin-INF EV-COP child-DIM-A-EMPH
‘To make pottery one has to begin at a very young age.’

(47) Xawe Ainbaon-ronki machítoma-xon-bi wai a-káti-ai.
‘It is said that the Turtle Woman worked in the chacra without a
machete.’

(48) Jawe keskat-ax-ki mi-a jo-a / piko-t-a?
what SIML-S-INT 2-ABS come-PP2 take.out-MID-PP2
‘How did you come / escape?’

(49) Chaikoní, jawe keská-xon-ki a-ti iki no-n awin
chota-kin?
have.sexual.intercourse.with-SSSA
‘Brother in law, how do we have to do to have sexual intercourse with our wives?’

(50) E-n onan-yama-ke tsomea-x-ki e-a axet-i iki 1-ERG know-NEG-CMPL who:LOC:ABL-S-HSY2 1-ABS learn-COMP COP
i-xon iama-x e-n-bi-x-ki e-a i-ti iki i-xon.
do.I-PSSA or-S 1-NOM-EMPH-S-HSY2 1-ABS do.I-INF COP do.I-PSSSA
‘I don’t know from whom I should learn or whether I should learn by myself.’

kikin ‘extremely’

S-orientation

(51) Kikin-i pake-t-a.
extremely-S cause.to.fall-MID-PP2
‘He fell hurting himself hard.’

(52) Kikin-ax chankat-a.
extremely-S stand-PP2
‘He is standing very elegantly dressed and / or posing.’

A functional distinction becomes obvious in the examples above: whereas kikini can be said to modify the event, kikinax rather predicates about the S participant. Therefore it might be useful to distinguish between event-oriented versus participant-oriented functions. Let us now turn to transitive clauses.

A-orientation

(53) Kikin-a-kin rete-a.
extremely-do.T-A kill-PP2
‘He really killed (him).’

(54) Kikin-xon pi-ke.
extremely-A eat-CMPL
‘He ate elegantly (like the mestizos, with tablecloth, silverware, taking out the bones from the fish....), or ‘He was dressed elegantly and ate.’

There seems to be a semantic distinction between the more event-oriented kikin-a-kin and the rather participant-oriented kikin-xon. Note also in the above examples that kikin requires addition of the semantically generic
transitive verb *a(k)*- before taking *-kin* but not before taking *-xon*. This difference suggests that at least some constructions taking *-kin* and *-i* are functionally and syntactically distinct from those taking *-xon* and *-ax*.

Same-subject markers signal syntactic dependency (they occur in lieu of aspectual/illocutionary force finite morphology), identity of subjects (where subject is the conflation of S and A), and the relative temporal or logical order of the events depicted by the dependent clause and its matrix clause. But most interestingly, same-subject markers alternate in correlation with the S/A function of the matrix verb subject.

Previous Events

(55) [...bachi meran jiki-*ax*] Ashi manó-res-a iki…
    mosquito.net inside enter-PSSS Ashi:ABS disappear-just-PP2 AUX
    ‘… Ashi entered into the mosquito net and disappeared…’

(56) [[Jawen tapon bi-*xon*] kobin-*a-*xon] naka-kati-kan-ai.
    ‘After getting its (i.e., the *yotokonti* plant’s) root and boiling it, they chewed it.’

Simultaneous Events

(57)a. E-a-ra nokon tita-n [ese-*kin*] ani-a iki.
    1-ABS-EV 1POSS mother-ERG advise-SSSA big-do.T:PP2 AUX
    ‘My mother raised me giving me advice.

b. E-a-ra esé-ya iki
    1-ABS-EV advice-PROP AUX
    I am wise
    [nokon tita-n yoii-ai ninká-xon-katit-*i*].
    POS1 mother-ERG tell-PP1:ABS hear-BEN-PST4-SSSS
    because I listened to what my mother used to tell me.’ (Valenzuela 1999:365)

Subsequent Events

(58) no-a i-ti ja-ke [westiora metsá ainbo i-*nox*] raotia.
    1p-ABS do.I-INF exist-CMPL one beautiful woman do.I-FSSS adorned
    ‘...we must be adorned in order to be a beautiful woman.’
(59) Westíora nete winó-ma-xon, kachio bo-ti iki one day:ABS pass:MID-CAUS-PSSA to.the.forest take-INF AUX
[xete-ma-noxon].
smell-CAUS-FSSA
‘After one day, one takes (the dog being treated with a special plant preparation in order to make it a good hunter) to the forest and has it smell (at animals).’

6. Summary

SK is a good example of a language with fairly consistent ERG-ABS case-marking but predominantly non-ergative syntax. The only documented instance of syntactic ergativity is internally-headed relativization. The employment of an ergative-absolutive pattern in a language whose syntax is otherwise organized in a nominative-accusative fashion seems compatible with the major functions played by relative clauses in general and their interaction with S and O (Fox 1987:861-864).2 Other languages where internally-headed relatives have an absolutive pivot are Tibetan, Belhare (Tibeto-Burmese), and probably Korean (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:304 and references therein).

The main reference-tracking mechanism of SK is its elaborate switch-reference system. Reference-marked clauses divide into “DS” and SS. In turn, DS-marked clauses divide into (a) those which lack an object that is co-referential with the matrix clause subject (including intransitives), and (b) those whose object is co-referential with the matrix clause subject (i.e., instances of Object-to-Subject co-referentiality).

(Most) SS-marked clauses take specific morphology in agreement with the syntactic function (S/A) of the matrix clause subject. PA is also found on non-clausal adjuncts, where it can be shown that the determining factor in the selection of PA markers is the semantic orientation towards one participant rather than the transitivity status of the clause.

2 According to Fox, a major function of CIRELs is to situate a referent which is being introduced, as a relevant part of the ongoing discourse. This general function may be accomplished in two different ways:

“The CIREL provides a stative description of some aspect of the referent that situates it, and justifies its introduction.” This strategy typically utilizes intransitive clauses where the relativized referent is the subject; hence, the large number of S-relatives.

“The CIREL provides a link via a referent that has already been introduced into the discourse”. This strategy typically utilizes a transitive CIREL where the A argument tends to be a personal pronoun (especially first and second) and the relativized referent is encoded as object; hence, the large number of O-relatives.
It can be said that the SK switch-reference system follows a NOM-ACC distribution in that “subject” is always the conflation of S/A. However, other distributions are attested such as +/- O = S/A co-referentiality in DS marking and an overall tripartite distribution in the PA system.

References


