# Remarks on split intransitivity
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In the first part of my talk, I will address general aspects of the study of split intransitivity. A variety of terms have been used with reference to this question: *split intransitivity*, *split S*, *unaccusativity*, *agentive alignment*, *active-stative alignment*, *semantic alignment*. *Split intransitivity* is retained as the most general and neutral term for situations in which verbs occurring in intransitive constructions divide into two classes characterized by a contrast in the way their single core argument S aligns with the two core terms of the transitive construction, A and P.

Sapir 1917 initiated a tradition with a marked typological orientation, which concentrates on cases of *overt* split intransitivity, i.e., split intransitivity apparent in the coding characteristics of S (case marking and/or verb agreement), and tends to neglect *covert* split intransitivity, i.e., split intransitivity manifested in some aspects of the behavior of S in languages in which the coding characteristics of S do not depend on the choice of a particular verb (for example, *ne*-cliticization in Italian).

Another tradition, initiated by Pearlmutter 1978, deals mainly with covert split intransitivity in languages in which the coding characteristics of S consistently follow accusative alignment (S = A ≠ P), and is mainly concerned with the discussion of the *unaccusative hypothesis* according to which intransitive subjects that have the same coding characteristics as transitive subjects but are aligned with objects in some aspects of their behavior are objects at some level of representation. But another crucial aspect of this tradition is that it considers relevant to this question not only phenomena straightforwardly definable in terms of alignment variations (S = A ≠ P *vs.* S = P ≠ A), but also variable properties of intransitive constructions that cannot be defined in terms of alignment of S either with A or P. This is in particular the case of auxiliary selection, which occupies a prominent place in discussions on unaccusativity.

Both traditions are concerned with the semantic correlates of split intransitivity. Many studies have pointed out the relevance of aspectuality (in particular, telicity) and agentivity. Concerning a possible relation between the types of properties involved in intransitivity splits and their semantic correlates, it is striking that, in languages in which auxiliary selection is a possible criterion for distinguishing two classes of intransitive verbs, verbs of change of location are among the most typical unaccusative verbs, whereas in languages in which the intransitivy split concerns the coding properties of S, they usually behave as unergative verbs. It is also striking that, in languages in which agentivity plays the decisive role, verbs referring to involuntary bodily processes that however allow for some degree of control, such as *cough* or *cry*, regularly behave in the same way as verbs describing volitional acts.

Most authors in both traditions discard the possibility of purely lexical intransitivity splits (i.e., intransitivity splits devoid of any semantic consistency), but this possibility should be considered at least in cases of splits involving two subsets of intransitive verbs of a very unequal numerical importance – see in particular Trask on Basque. In connection with that, it is important to observe that, among the possible historical scenarios responsible for the emergence of split intransitivity, some at least involve no semantic conditioning, and consequently can result in semantically arbitrary intransitivity splits.

Both traditions share the same bias in the way they deal with predominantly ergative and predominantly accusative languages. In predominantly ergative languages having a minor class of verbs whose construction involves an argument having the coding characteristics of A but not argument with the coding characteristics of P (as for example in Basque), nobody hesitates to recognize an intransitivity split with a minor class of 'unergative' verbs following accusative alignment. But when the symmetrical situation is found in predominantly accusative languages (for example, in languages like Latin, German or Russian that have a minor class of 'impersonal' constructions involving an accusative NP but no nominative NP), the possibility to analyze it in terms of split intransitivity or unaccusativity is generally neglected.

In the second part of my talk, I will illustrate some of the points addressed in the first part with the example of Akhvakh, a Nakh-Daghestanian language spoken in Daghestan (Russia) and Azerbaijan. With the exception of a very limited number of verbs comparable to the 'unergative' verbs of Basque, this language is consistently ergative in case marking and gender-number agreement of the verb. But in one tense (and only in one tense), in addition to gender-number agreement with S/P, verbs show (a very atypical kind of) person agreement according to a split intransitive pattern (transitive verbs uniformly agree in person with A, and intransitive verbs divide into two classes, those agreeing with S in the same way as transitive verbs with A, and those showing no person agreement). Semantically, intransitive verbs agreeing in person with S can be characterized as assigning a role implying control to their S argument. Diachronically, comparison with related languages suggests that person agreement is a relatively recent innovation of Akhvakh, and there is morphological evidence that it results from the reanalysis of a former aspectual distinction.