

Typology I: Homework for Session 7, 2015/06/17

(All of these could be exam questions.)

1. Explain the term “ergative” in terms of the three universal core roles.
2. Why would you be surprised to find a nominative-accusative language that marks the nominative with some prefix, but leaves the accusative case unmarked? By an analogous argument, explain what you would expect in an ergative-absolutive language.
3. What is split ergativity? Why is it such a common phenomenon?
4. Here are three example sentences from Chechen, a major Northeast Caucasian language with basic word order SOV. Decide which alignment system the language uses, and justify your answer.
 - Marjam jilxira. “Marjam cried.”
 - Cicko ch’aara bu’u. “The cat eats a fish.”
 - Marjamas cicig doexkira. “Marjam sold a cat.”