

## Backward Control in Samoan

We analyze the coreference between a Possessor and an unpronounced Agent or Goal in Samoan as a case of Backward Control, thus expanding the range of languages exhibiting BC (Tsez, Brazilian P., Japanese, Malagasy; for similar facts in Zapotec, see Foreman 2006).

**1. Background.** Samoan is a nuclear Polynesian prepositional VSO language with Ergative-Absolutive Case marking and it is 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject *pro*-drop (the Ergative is not obligatory, but all clauses contain an Absolutive, hence the patterns (Erg>) Abs (>Obl) (1), and Abs (>Obl) (2); Absolutive DPs can scramble past Ergative DPs); it lacks overt voice morphology (3). There are two Genitive markers, *a* for alienable possession, and *o* for inalienable possession (including kin relations) as well as complements of Nouns.

**2. The facts.** The puzzle is presented in (4)-(5). **a. Coreference.** The sentences are ambiguous, but importantly they can have a reading in which the owner and the hitter of the dog are one and the same individual: that is, there can be coreference between the silent Ergative Agent of a predicate *P* and the Possessor (either alienable or inalienable) of the Absolutive Theme of *P*. In (6), it is the silent Oblique Goal and the Possessor of the Absolutive Theme that corefer (under the interpretation: bring Sina a book that she will own once you give it to her). **b. Restrictions.** On the other hand, the Possessor of an Oblique Theme cannot enter into this coreference relationship (7); nor can the Theme of a Noun, although it bears Genitive Case (8).

**3. Analysis.** We discard three possible hypotheses and then offer our own. **a. Against Short Passive.** Under the coreferential reading, sentences like (4) are not short passives, as shown by (9)-(10), in which the verb agrees in number with the Possessor (Samoan verbs agree with their Ergative argument; agreement is only overt on certain verbs). **b. Against Genitive Subject.** These facts suggest that the subject of the verb is overtly present; however it can't be the Genitive DP itself, because of (i.) the placement of the Genitive within the Absolutive DP (see the canonical prenominal position of the pronoun in (5)), (ii.) the Goal-Possessor identity (6), (iii.) constituency (when topicalized, the Absolutive Theme can pied-pipe a Possessor-DP, not an (Ergative) subject, witness (11)), and (iv.) coordination facts (in (12), Seu has to be the owner of at least the cat, showing that [*DP* a Seu] forms a constituent with the Possessee-DP, i.e. either the nearest DP or the conjunction of the two DPs). **c. Against *pro*.** Due to the *pro*-drop nature of Samoan, one may be tempted to analyze sentences like (4) as containing a silent postposed *pro* subject (obviation of Condition C through A'-movement and late adjunction, cf. Lebeaux 1988: an advantage of such an analysis is that it accounts for the contrast between (4) and (8)): as a matter of fact, Condition C seems to be obviated by postposed Ergative DPs (14). However, (i.) Samoan is not *pro*-drop for 1<sup>st</sup> person (5), (ii.) pronominal binding obtains with a quantifier embedded in the Absolutive DP (15) (no bound reading should be possible if the subject is a *pro*; on the contrary it is the subject that must be a quantificational DP and bind into the Theme), and (iii.) coreference fails to obtain between the matrix Agent and a DP contained in another kind of adjunct to NP, namely a relative clause (16). **d. Backward Control.** The phenomenon under scrutiny is a case of control (as shown by the contrast between exhaustive (17) and partial (18) control predicates). Moreover it is Backward Control (Polinsky & Potsdam 2002; Monahan 2003; Fujii 2004, 2006; Potsdam 2006), best analyzed along the lines of the movement theory of control (Hornstein 1999, 2003): control is a consequence of DP-movement (via copying and PF deletion of the higher copy, Polinsky & Potsdam 2006) between two  $\theta$  positions, the Possessor of the Theme and the Agent or the Goal, assuming Goal>Theme (a DP can 'check' several  $\theta$  roles). The chain is formed through Possessor Raising, analyzed as A-movement (Landau 1999). We capture the aforementioned restrictions: the coreference can only hold between a Possessor-DP and some other DP (4)-(8), and the Possessor of an Oblique Theme cannot be a Controller (7) (*i*-PPs are not transparent to extraction).

- (1) Sa sasa e Seu l.a.na maile.  
PAST hit ERG Seu ABS DET.POSS.3SG dog  
'*Seu hit his dog.*'
- (2) Sa alofa Seu i l.a.na maile.  
PAST love ABS Seu OBL DET.POSS.3SG dog  
'*Seu loved his dog.*'
- (3) Sa 'ai le teine.  
PAST eat ABS DET girl  
'*The girl ate.*' Or: '*The girl was eaten.*'
- (4) Sa sasa le maile a Seu.  
PAST hit ABS DET dog POSS Seu  
'*Seu's dog got hit.*' Or: '*S/he<sub>j</sub> hit Seu<sub>i</sub>'s dog.*' Or: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> dog.*' (Coreference)
- (5) Sa sasa l.a.'u maile. (PAST hit ABS DET.POSS.1SG dog)  
'*My dog was hit.*' Or: '*S/he hit my dog.*' Or: '*I hit my dog.*' (Coreference)
- (6) 'Aumai se tusi a Sina.  
Bring ABS DET book POSS Sina  
'*Bring a book that belongs to Sina!*' Or: '*Bring Sina a book!*' (Coreference)
- (7) Sa alofa i le maile a Seu.  
PAST love OBL DET dog POSS Seu  
'*S/he<sub>j</sub> loved Seu<sub>i</sub>'s dog.*' Not: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> loved his<sub>i</sub> dog.*' (No Coreference)
- (8) Sa gaoi le ata o Seu.  
PAST steal ABS DET picture GEN Seu  
'*The picture of Seu was stolen.*' Not: '*Seu stole the picture of himself.*' (No Coref.)
- (9) Sa pese le pese a le tamāloa.  
PAST sing ABS DET song POSS DET man  
'*The man sang his song.*'
- (10) Sa pepese le pese a tamāloa.  
PAST <RED>sing ABS DET song POSS <RED>man  
'*The men (\*the man) sang their common song.*'
- (11) 'O le maile a/\*e Seu sa sasa.  
TOP ABS DET dog POSS/ERG Seu PAST hit  
'*Seu's dog got hit.*' Or: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> dog.*' (Coreference)
- (12) Sa sasa le maile ma le pusi a Seu.  
PAST hit ABS DET dog and DET cat POSS Seu  
'*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> dog and cat.*' Or: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> cat and somebody else's dog.*' Not: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> dog and somebody else's cat.*'
- (13) Sa sasa e ia le maile a Seu.  
PAST hit ERG 3SG ABS DET dog POSS Seu  
'*S/he<sub>j</sub> hit Seu<sub>i</sub>'s dog.*' Not: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> dog.*' (Condition C effect)
- (14) Sa sasa le maile a Seu e ia. '*S/he<sub>j</sub> hit Seu<sub>i</sub>'s dog.*' Or: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit his<sub>i</sub> dog.*'
- (15) Sa sasa le maile a tama ta'itasi.  
PAST hit ABS DET dog POSS boy each  
'*Each boy hit his own dog.*' (Pronominal Binding) Or: '*Each boy's dog was hit.*'
- (16) Sa sasa le maile na fa'atauina e Seu.  
PAST hit ABS DET dog PAST buy ERG Seu  
'*S/he<sub>j</sub> hit the dog that Seu<sub>i</sub> bought.*' Not: '*Seu<sub>i</sub> hit the dog he<sub>i</sub> bought.*' (No Coref.)
- (17) Sa taumafai e 'ave le ta'avale a Mālia.  
PAST try E take ABS DET car POSS Malia  
'*S/he<sub>j</sub> tried to take Malia<sub>i</sub>'s car.*' Or: '*Malia<sub>i</sub> tried to take her<sub>i</sub> car.*' (Coreference)
- (18) Sa mana'o e 'ave le ta'avale a Mālia. (PAST want E take ABS DET car POSS Malia)  
'*S/he<sub>j</sub> wanted to take Malia<sub>i</sub>'s car.*' Not: '*Malia<sub>i</sub> wanted to take her<sub>i</sub> car.*' (No Coref.)