SOME PATTERNS OF *WA* IN NXA?AMXCIN (MOSES-COLUMBIA SALISH)[1]

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nxa?amxcín (Moses-Columbian) is a Southern Interior Salish language spoken in central Washington State. There has been relatively little research devoted to the syntax of the language, especially from any theoretical perspective. The purpose of the paper is to provide an analysis of **wa**, a particle surfacing very frequently in collected data[2]. Czaykowska-Higgins (to appear) has suggested that **wa** is linked to the absolutive argument. This paper supports this suggestion by illustrating that **wa** optionally surfaces with subjects in intransitive constructions and objects in transitive constructions, demonstrating an absolutive pattern. I suggest an analysis of **wa** that accounts for its appearance in both simple and cleft constructions. I propose that **wa** is an absolutive particle that optionally surfaces when a maximal projection has an absolutive case feature. This maximal projection can be an NP that has been directly assigned absolutive case, or a CP which has an absolutive case feature as a result of Spec-head agreement between the specifier of CP and the head C. The paper is organized as follows. I first discuss some properties of Nxa?amxcín that are directly relevant to the discussion in this paper (section 2). I then examine simple clauses and the **wa** pattern in these constructions (section 3). Cleft constructions are then analyzed following current analyses within the Salish literature (section 4).

2.0 SOME PROPERTIES OF THE LANGUAGE

While post-predicate word order appears to be free in Nxa?amxcín, basic word order is VOS, as in (1)[3]:

(1)	ɬéq^{w}s	wa	ttẃít	?aní	kiḥána?
	√ɬəq^{w}-t-s-ø				
	slap-(TR)-3S-(3O)	WA	boy	DET	girl
	'The girl slapped the boy.'				(ECH: 91.121)

Like other members of the Salish family, Nxa?amxcín is a pro-drop language exhibiting both null subjects and objects. Both person and number of the subject and object are determined by the morphology on the predicate in transitive constructions:[4]

(2) ?ámtən
√?əm-t-n-ø
feed-TR-1sS-(3O)
'I feed him/her.' (ECH: 90: (N) 204)

In intransitive constructions the morphology indicating the person and number of null subjects is not realized on the predicate, but rather as a clitic[5]:

(3)	ċəlút	kən
	stand	1sS
	'I stood up.'	(MDK: W.4.9.167)

Finally, it is important to note that the morphological paradigm for person agreement is suggestive of a split case system in the language. 1st and 2nd person follow a nominative/accusative-type

system, whereas 3rd person exhibits an ergative/absolutive pattern. Whether or not Nxa?amxcín is syntactically a split-ergative language remains to be seen. The analysis of the particle **wa** in this paper is the first source of evidence for an ergative-type system, at least with respect to 3rd person.

3.0 SIMPLE CLAUSES

I use the term "simple clause" to refer to constructions where there is no marked "fronting" of constituents.[6] Thus, simple clauses consist of VS, VOS or VSO word order. The following subsections discuss the appearance of **wa** in both intransitive and transitive simple clauses. (The absolutive argument has been underlined in the examples throughout this paper.)

3.0.1 Intransitive

The following intransitive constructions demonstrate that **wa** surfaces to the left of intransitive subjects:

(4) tqənúxʷ **wa** sqʷəsqʷésaʔs
tqənúxʷ-ø sqʷəsqʷəsaʔ-s
hungry 3S WA baby-3POSS
'Her baby got hungry.' (AB.4.7)

(5) xʷáy̓əm **wa** ʔinxxəx̌cín
√xʷay̓-m-ø ʔin-x̣x̣əx̌cin
run away-INTR-3S WA 1POSS-dog
My dog ran away. (AB.4.10)

(4) contains an adjectival predicate and (5) an intransitive verb with an overt nominal subject marked by **wa**. Thus, as (4) and (5) demonstrate, in intransitive constructions **wa** surfaces to the left of the subject NP.[7]

3.0.2 Transitive

The following transitive constructions show that **wa** surfaces to the left of the transitive object:

(6) t̓éqʷs **wa** ttw̓it ʔaní kiḥána?
√t̓əqʷ-t-s-ø
slap-(TR)-3S-(3O) WA boy DET girl
'The girl slapped the boy.' (ECH: 91.121)

(7) t̓ám̓s **wa** John ł hacmíntns pro
√t̓əm̓-t-s-ø hacmintn-s
cut-(TR)-3S-(3O) WA John POSS rope-3POSS 3S
'He cut John's rope.' (ECH: 92.78)

Example (6) contains two overt nominals and **wa** surfaces to the left of the object NP. (7) has a null subject represented by the null element "pro". Again **wa** surfaces to the left of the object NP. (7) shows that **wa** does not just mark the head as it surfaces outside of both the possessed NP and the possessor.

At this point it seems clear that the particle **wa** is linked to the absolutive argument. Considering that there is only one absolutive argument per clause, we would expect only one **wa** particle to surface per clause. Example (8) shows that this is the case:

(8) * kxáps **wa** púS **wa** xxəɬcín
chase-(TR)-3S-(3O) WA cat WA dog (ECH: 92.27)

In (8) the double appearance of the particle **wa** results in an ungrammatical structure.

3.1 Optionality

The particle **wa** is optional in that it is not required to co-occur with an absolutive argument. This is shown in (9) for intransitive constructions and (10) for transitive constructions:

(9) tqənúx^{w} sq^{w}əsq^{w}ésaʔs
sq^{w}əsq^{w}əsaʔ-s
hungry baby-3POSS
'Her baby got hungry.' (ECH: 91.101)

(10) máɬ^{w}s nlx^{w}átk^{w}tn smʔáməm
√máɬ^{w}-t-s-ø
break-(TR)-3S-(3O) pot woman
'The woman broke the pot.' (AB.1.19)

wa is not required to appear with the intransitive subject in (9), nor with the transitive object in (10).

3.2 Marks Absolutive NP

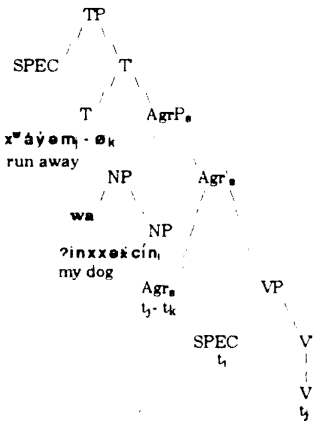
Having established that **wa** co-occurs with absolutive arguments, it is now necessary to address how this structure can be represented. I suggest that **wa** optionally marks a maximal projection when that maximal projection has an absolutive case feature. In the examples provided thus far, it is clear that this maximal projection can be an NP that is assigned absolutive case.

Following Chomsky (1991, 1993) I assume that case is assigned by the head of a functional projection to its specifier position. Given that transitive subjects are marked by one morpheme and intransitive subjects by another with respect to 3rd person morphology, I assume it is the head Agr_s that assigns absolutive case and the head Agr_o that assigns ergative case in 3rd person constructions in Nxaʔamxcín.[8] This results in a "nested paths"-type movement (to be illustrated in (13)) that places the object in a higher position in a tree than the subject, a view supported for various other languages by Campana (1992), Jelinek (1993), Johns (1992) and Murasugi (1992). In Nxaʔamxcín, when a head Agr_s assigns absolutive case to an NP in its specifier position, that NP can be optionally marked by the **wa** particle. We can schematize this as follows:

(11) NP [+ absolutive] → (**wa**) NP

This is illustrated in the following tree for the intransitive construction in (5):

(12)

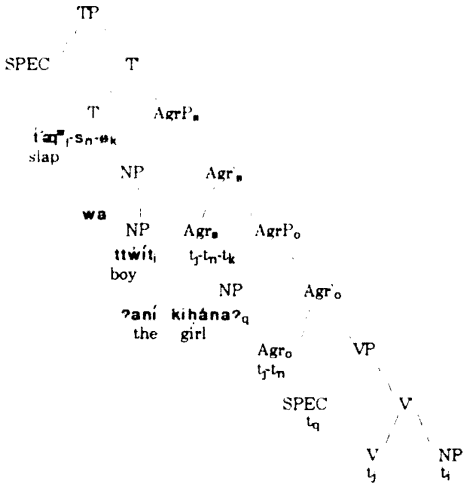


I am assuming that Nxaʔamxcín generates the functional projection TP (Tense Phrase) following Chomsky (1991, 1993) and Pollock (1989) on English and French. I further assume that the specifier of $AgrP_s$ is a case-marked position: in (12) the head Agr_s will assign absolutive case to the argument that raises to its specifier.

In (12) the predicate **x^{w}áẏəm** 'run away' raises from its base-generated position under V to the head Agr_s. The predicate then raises to T where it is marked for the feature [+ tense]. The sole argument of the clause, **ʔinxẋəẋcín** 'my dog', is the intransitive subject (or the absolutive). It is base-generated in SPEC of VP and then raises to the specifier of $AgrP_s$ position where it is assigned absolutive case by the head Agr_s. When this NP is licensed, **wa** surfaces to mark the noun phrase with the absolutive case feature. I represent **wa** in an adjoined structure.

A transitive construction like (6) is shown below:

(13)



The predicate **təq^w** 'slap' raises to each of the Agr head positions where it is marked for subject and object agreement respectively. It then raises to the head T(ense) where it is marked with the [+ tense] feature. The ergative argument **ʔaní kiḥánaʔ** 'the girl' raises to the specifier position of $AgrP_o$ where it is assigned ergative case by the head Agr_o. The absolutive argument **ttẇít** 'boy' raises to the specifier position of $AgrP_s$ where it is assigned absolutive case by the head Agr_s. When this NP is assigned the absolutive case feature, the particle **wa** surfaces to overtly mark it as absolutive. As before, I represent this particle in an adjoined structure.

At this point we have determined that **wa** marks a maximal projection NP that has been assigned absolutive case. In the following section I suggest that the appearance of **wa** is not restricted to absolutive NPs, but rather to any maximal projection that has an absolutive case feature.

4.0 CLEFT CONSTRUCTIONS

Cleft constructions in Nxaʔamxcín contain a preposed argument followed by the particle **ɬuʔ**. Such constructions may contain a clefted nominal or wh-element. We have seen thus far that when the particle **wa** appears in a clause, it consistently surfaces to the left of an absolutive argument. We see in the following sections that, at least on the surface, **wa** in cleft constructions demonstrates a different pattern.

4.0.1 Clefted Ergatives

The following examples illustrate that in clauses where there is a clefted ergative element, the positioning of **wa** is the same as in simple clauses:

(14) **Jóhn ɬuʔ céks wa Máry**
√cək-t-s-ø
John PART hit-(TR)-3S-(3O) WA Mary
'It was John who hit Mary.' (ECH: 92.240)

(15) **sɬaʔcínəm ɬuʔ ʔaẇtáps wa ttẇít**
√ʔaẇt=ap-t-s-ø
deer PART follow=foot-TR-3S-(3O) WA boy
'The deer followed the boy.' (AB.4.16)

In (14) the ergative argument **John** is clefted in initial position followed by the particle **ɬuʔ**. The absolutive argument **Mary** appears in a non-clefted position following the predicate and, as we would expect, **wa** appears to the left of it as in the simple clauses. (15) demonstrates the same pattern.

4.0.2 Clefted Absolutives

The following examples containing clefted absolutive arguments have the particle surfacing in an apparently alternative position:

(16) **sɬaʔcínəm ɬuʔ wa ʔaẇtáps tẇít**
√ʔaẇt=ap-t-s-ø
deer PART WA follow=foot-(TR)-3S-(3O) boy
'It was the deer that the boy followed.' (AB.2.4)

(17) **stám̓ ɬuʔ wa cḥaẇistús**
c-√ḥaẇi-stu-s-ø
what PART WA STAT-make-CAUS-3S-(3O)
'What is he making?' (AB.2.17)

Examples (16) and (17) demonstrate a clefted absolutive nominal and wh-element respectively, followed by the particle **ɬuʔ**. In these examples, **wa** is surfacing to the right (not left) of the absolutive element and the particle **ɬuʔ**. In fact, it is not possible for **wa** to surface to the left of a clefted absolutive (unlike what is found in simple clauses), as shown in (18):

(18) ***wa Chúck ɬuʔ qiy̓xíc**
WA Chuck PART write-IND-TR-3S-(3O) (ECH: 91.52)
('It was Chuck that someone wrote to.')

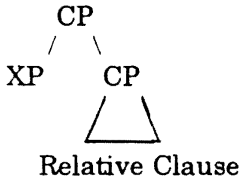
The above example demonstrates that **wa** cannot precede an absolutive when it is the clefted element in a clause.

The question that presently needs to be addressed is why the particle is surfacing to the left of absolutives in a non-clefted position and to the right of absolutives in a clefted position. The following section proposes that **wa** patterns in both cases in parallel: in both instances, **wa** is surfacing to the left of a maximal projection that has an absolutive case feature.

4.1 NOMINAL PREDICATES

Before examining the appearance of **wa** in cleft examples, it is necessary to address what the underlying structure of these constructions actually is. It has been generally assumed that cleft constructions are comprised of a nominal predicate followed by a relative clause (Gardiner 1993, Gerdts 1988, Hukari 1994, Kroeber 1991). This type of construction can be illustrated as in (19)[9]:

(19)



In (19) XP is an open category that contains a predicate which may be in the form of a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase or an adjectival phrase. (We are only concerned with nominal predicates in this paper.)

Similar cleft constructions in Shuswap clearly show that what follows the nominal predicate is a relative clause since it is morphologically marked as a relative clause. In Nxa?amxcín, relative clauses are introduced by the morpheme **t**, which is also the oblique marker. This morpheme is optional in relative clauses. Regarding cleft constructions, almost none of the ones in the data available to me contain the **t** morpheme. However, I have checked the cleft examples in this paper with a native speaker and it is clear that **t** can optionally surface in these constructions, as shown below:

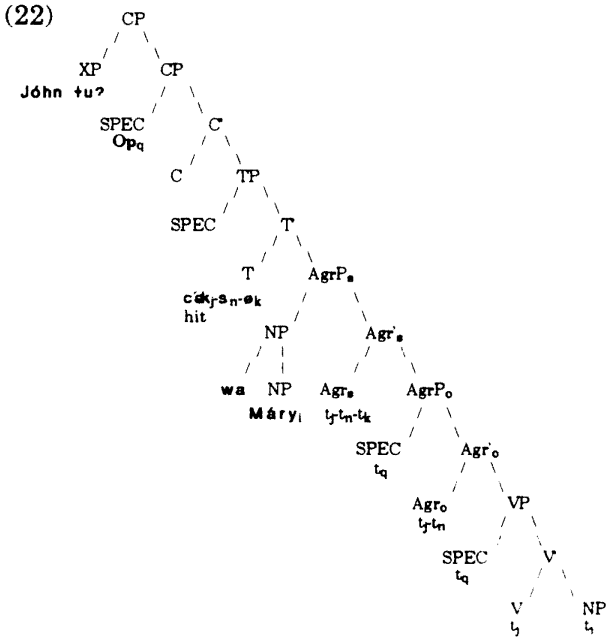
(20) Jóhn ɬu? (t) cáks **wa** Máry
√cək-t-s-ø
John PART (OBL) hit-TR-3S-(3O) WA Mary
'It was John who hit Mary.' (AB.5.1)

(21) sx̣acínəm ɬu? **wa** (t) ʔawt̓áps ttw̓ít
√ʔaw̓t=ap-t-s-ø
deer PART WA (OBL) follow=foot-TR-3S-(3O) boy
'It was the deer that the boy followed.' (AB.5.6)

While the cleft examples in this paper do not give any overt morphological indication that what follows the nominal predicate is a relative clause, I assume based on (20) and (21) that a relative clause is present, as in Shuswap.

Kroeber (1991) has noted that Salish languages do not have any overt form corresponding to a relative pronoun. Following Gardiner (1993), I assume that instead of an overt relative pronoun there is an empty operator which is marked for the [+ wh] feature like relative pronouns in English. Thus, in Nxa?amxcín cleft constructions there is empty operator movement taking place. I represent this in (22) for example (14):

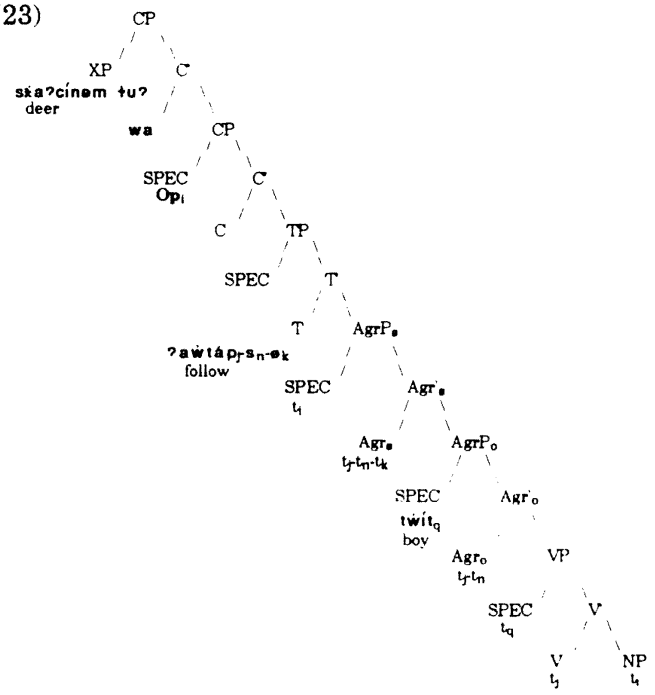
(22)



In the tree in (22), the NP **John** is the predicate of the clause. It is modified by a relative clause, the lower CP. Within the relative clause, the ergative argument is the empty operator **Op**. This operator raises to SPEC of CP where it binds the variable t_q in the SPEC of $AgrP_o$ (which itself binds a trace in the SPEC of VP). This variable is assigned ergative case by the head Agr_o in the specifier position of $AgrP_o$. The relative clause predicate **cək**, base-generated under V, raises to the head T passing through Agr_o and Agr_s and acquiring the necessary morphological agreement. The absolutive argument **Mary** is base-generated in the V-complement position and raises to SPEC of $AgrP_s$ where it is assigned absolutive case by Agr_s. When the maximal projection NP has an absolutive case feature, the particle **wa** surfaces to mark that NP. Note that although the nominal **John** syntactically has a predicative role, semantically it represents the empty operator.

The syntactic account of the appearance of **wa** in the cleft construction in (22) is parallel to that given for **wa** in the simple clause in (13). If we now consider an example like (16) where the empty operator has an absolutive role, we see that **wa** can not only mark a maximal projection NP but also a CP. Example (16) is illustrated in (23):

(23)



In (23), the nominal **sx̌a?cínəm** 'deer' is the predicate of the clause as a whole. It is followed by a modifying relative clause headed by CP. Within this relative clause, the ergative argument is base-generated under SPEC of VP and raises to SPEC of $AgrP_o$ where it is assigned ergative case by the head Agr_o. The verb raises from the head V to the head T, passing through Agr_s and Agr_o where it acquires the necessary agreement morphology. The absolutive argument, an empty operator, is base-generated in the V-complement position and raises to the specifier of CP position, passing through SPEC of $AgrP_s$. The operator binds a variable t_i which is assigned absolutive case by the head Agr_s. As shown in (23), **wa** surfaces to the left of the empty operator.

There are two possible assumptions we could make concerning the appearance of **wa** in this position. The first is that we have a parallel situation to (22) where **wa** is surfacing next to an NP that has been assigned absolutive case, this NP being the empty operator. However, if **wa** can mark a null element like an empty operator, one would expect it to surface with other absolutive null elements like null subjects and objects. I have seen no evidence to indicate that **wa** can mark a "pro" element in a clause. Thus, an alternative analysis might be more appealing.

A second possible assumption is that **wa** is not marking the NP containing the empty operator, but rather marks the maximal projection dominating that NP. This maximal projection is CP. In the tree in (23), the CP heading the relative clause is not directly being assigned absolutive case. Therefore, **wa** must be surfacing adjacent to CP for another reason. I suggest that in Nxa?amxcín, Spec-head agreement between the specifier of CP and the head C (i.e. COMP agreement) is obligatory and that **wa** surfaces as a result of this agreement.[10] In the following sections, I discuss the details of COMP agreement in general and how it applies to Nxa?amxcín.

4.2 Comp Agreement

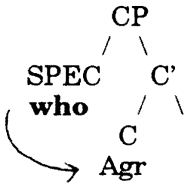
Rizzi (1990) discusses the possibility of Spec-head agreement between the specifier of CP and the head C, noting that "a number of languages show processes of morphological modifications of Comp when a wh-element is moved to its Spec" (p.54). This kind of Comp agreement takes place when the specifier of CP position is filled by a wh-operator (or a trace). The head of the maximal projection dominating that operator is marked for agreement with the operator. This agreement

may either have some overt morphological form or appear covertly as an independent head Agr. In English Comp agreement is covert, as shown in (24):

(24) Who [t left]
[Agr]

We can illustrate English Comp agreement as in (25):

(25)



Rizzi states that in order for an example like (24) to be grammatical, the inert head C must be turned into a proper head governor for the trace **t**. This is possible through Spec-head agreement where the head C is assigned the feature Agr as in (25). Even though the Agr feature is present to ensure that C is a proper head governor, in English this Agr feature is not overtly realized.

There are languages where agreement in Comp is overt, and the feature that is morphologically reflected by this agreement appears to be language specific. For example, in Kinande (Bantu) there is evidence of agreement in C as a wh-element in the specifier of CP position triggers agreement in class on the head C (Schneider-Zioga 1987), as exemplified by the data in (26):

(26) Kinande COMP Agreement

a.	IyondI	y0	kambale	alangIra
	who (cl.1)	that (cl.1)	Kambale	saw
b.	aBahI	Bo	kambale	alangIra
	who (cl.2)	that (cl.2)	Kambale	saw
c.	EkIhI	ky0	kambale	alangIra
	what (cl.7)	that (cl.7)	Kambale	saw
d.	EBIhI	By0	kambale	alangIra
	what (cl.8)	that (cl.8)	Kambale	saw

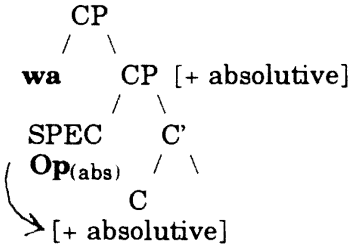
As (26) demonstrates, the complementizer 'that' in Kinande must morphologically agree in class with the wh-element in the specifier position. Thus in Kinande, though not in English, agreement between the specifier of CP and a head C is overtly realized.

4.3 Nxaʔamxcín Comp Agreement

Assuming that Comp agreement could also be present in Nxaʔamxcín, we could pursue this route as a possible solution for the position of **wa** in (23). Let's assume that Spec-head agreement is required in Nxaʔamxcín when there is an empty operator in the specifier of CP position. If we consider the tree in (22), it appears that this agreement is not overtly marked in any way when the empty operator is the ergative argument. We see that in (23), however, when the empty operator is the absolutive argument the particle **wa** can surface. I suggest that when Comp agreement takes place in Nxaʔamxcín, the feature of the operator in SPEC of CP that is reflected as agreement in the head C is case. We have seen that ergative case does not trigger any special particle in Nxaʔamxcín, however absolutive case does. Thus, when Comp agreement takes place with an ergative operator, there is no overt agreement. However, when Comp agreement takes place with an absolutive operator, the **wa** particle can optionally surface to reflect this agreement. Since **wa** otherwise appears marking maximal projections with an absolutive case feature, I assume that in (23) **wa** is marking the maximal projection CP.

If agreement is taking place between the specifier of CP and the head C, why is **wa** marking the maximal projection CP as absolutive? In other words, how is CP acquiring the feature [+ absolutive]? This feature is present in CP via feature percolation from the head C to its maximal projection. Thus, what is a feature of the head is a feature of the maximal projection as a whole. This is schematized in (27):

(27)



If we assume that when a maximal projection has an absolutive case feature it may be optionally marked by the particle **wa**, then (27) represents an environment where it should be possible for **wa** to surface.

Given the possibility that the particle **wa** can mark a maximal projection CP, we should now revise the statement in (11) that **wa** surfaces with NPs with an absolutive case feature. (11) might now best be represented as (28) (where X is an open category):

(28) XP [+ absolutive] → (**wa**) XP

In summary, in this section we have advanced the claim that **wa** can surface as a result of Spec-head agreement between an empty operator and a head C. This agreement is transferred to the maximal projection CP through feature percolation resulting in a maximal projection with an absolutive case feature. As a result, **wa** surfaces to mark this maximal projection.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to define a rule that will predict the pattern for the particle **wa** in Nxaʔamxcín. It appears that **wa** marks an argument that has been assigned absolutive case. If we make this assumption, then we can only structurally define the appearance of **wa** in simple clauses and in cleft constructions where the empty operator is not the absolutive. In order to account for all appearances of **wa** in both simple and cleft forms we must link this particle to any maximal projection that has an absolutive case feature. Thus, we find that **wa** not only marks absolutive NPs, but also CPs marked for absolutive case as a direct result of Spec-head agreement.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank my Nxaʔamxcín teacher Mrs. Agatha Bart. This work has greatly benefitted from comments by Leslie Saxon and Tom Hukari. In addition, Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins has provided me with much productive discussion on the Nxaʔamxcín language in general. I am grateful to both E. Czaykowska-Higgins and M. D. Kinkade for allowing me access to their files on Nxaʔamxcín. This research has been supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship and by SSHRC Research Grant #410-92-1587 to E. Czaykowska-Higgins.

2. The data in this paper come from three sources: E. Czaykowska-Higgins' files (ECH), M. D. Kinkade's files (MDK), and my own field notes (AB). The morpheme glosses provided for all examples are my own.

3. The abbreviations used throughout this paper are as follows: CAUS = causative, DET = determiner, IND = indirective, INTR = intransitive, O = object, OBL = oblique, PART = particle, POSS = possessive, s = singular, S = subject, STAT = stative, TR = transitive.

4. The translations are taken directly from the source. All null subjects and objects translated as either 'he' or 'she' should be interpreted as 's/he'.

5. Third person intransitive morphology is zero.

6. I borrow the term "fronting" from Kroeber (1991).

7. It is of interest to note that intransitive subjects must be marked for possession in order for **wa** to surface. Why such a requirement is in place is unclear at this point.

8. This assumption is, of course, tentative pending further evidence that an ergative system is present in the language.

9. Gardiner (1993) assumes the same structure.

10. I would like to thank T. Hukari and L. Saxon for discussion leading to this conclusion.

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