Remarks and Replies

Ā-Probing for the Closest DP

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We consider the typology of attested Ā-extraction asymmetries between core argument DPs and argue that an Ā-probe can be required to specifically target the closest DP. Such an Ā-probe specification is part of Aldridge's (2004, 2008) influential analysis of syntactically ergative extraction restrictions, but has not been widely adopted outside of work on ergative languages. We argue that restricted probing of this form underlies subject-only extraction behaviors in a number of nonergative languages, including some of those in Keenan and Comrie's (1977) typology of relativization asymmetries. We describe the behaviors of such probes in detail and relate them to other probe-goal behaviors in recent work on composite A/Ā probes.

Keywords: extraction asymmetries, probing, relativization, subjects, syntactic ergativity

1 Introduction

A central concern of syntactic theory is how nonlocal dependencies are formed and constrained. Since Chomsky 2000, 2001, much of this work has been fruitfully discussed in terms of *probes* and their specifications. A probe initiates a search for a *goal* that matches a particular feature specification, to Agree with or to Move. This article contributes to our understanding of the possible feature specifications and behaviors of probes that trigger Ā-movement.

For example, we may describe *wh*-movement in a language like English as involving C probing for the closest [WH] constituent (see, e.g., Rizzi 1990). This allows for *wh*-movement of the embedded subject in (1a) or the embedded object in (1b); in either case, the moved goal is the closest constituent with a [WH] feature. Intervening non-[WH] constituents are ignored. When

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multiple potential goals are accessible to the probe, the structurally closest goal is chosen, as reflected in the contrast in (1c).

(1) *Ā-probing for the closest [WH] goal*
   a. C[PROBE:WH] you expect **who** to eat the sandwich ⇒
      Who do you expect ___ to eat the sandwich?
   b. C[PROBE:WH] you expect Sara to eat **what** ⇒
      What do you expect Sara to eat ___?
   c. C[PROBE:WH] you expect **who** to eat **what** ⇒
      Who do you expect ___ to eat **what**?
      *__What__ do you expect **who** to eat ___?

Concretely, we adopt the definition for *closest* in (2), which is equivalent to the locality condition on Agree stated in the discussion in Chomsky 2000:122.

(2) *Closest*
   A potential goal G for probe P is closest if no other potential goal for P c-commands G.

There are, however, languages with much stricter restrictions on Ā-extraction, such that only particular types of arguments can be Ā-extracted. Aldridge (2004, 2008) develops one influential approach to the analysis of so-called syntactic ergativity, narrowly defined as a ban on the Ā-extraction of transitive subjects. (See Deal 2015, 2016 and Polinsky 2017 for overviews and discussion.) One component of Aldridge's analysis is a claim that Ā-probing can be restricted as in (3).

(3) *Ā-probing for the closest DP*
   An Ā-probe can be specified to target the closest DP.

Combined with a commonly adopted approach to the clause structure of a subtype of ergative languages, a probe of this type will necessarily target absolutive arguments. Ā-probing of the form in (3) has been adopted for the analysis of Philippine-type Austronesian languages, for which the analysis was developed, as well as for similar extraction restrictions in Mayan languages in more recent work (Levin 2018, Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021). However, probing of this form has not been commonly invoked in the analysis of nonergative languages, leading some linguists to the impression that probing of this form is a special property of ergative languages.

In this article, we argue that Ā-probing for the closest DP is indeed attested in the grammars of nonergative languages, manifest in extraction constructions with apparent subject-only restrictions. In particular, Ā-probing for the closest DP makes accurate predictions for apparent exceptions to subject-only extraction restrictions: for example, even in a language where the subject is frequently the highest DP in a clause, if the language has a strategy for raising a nonsubject DP to a higher position, such raising may feed the restricted extraction. We conclude that Ā-probes indeed can be specified to necessarily target the closest DP, as Aldridge proposes, and that such Ā-probes are not limited to ergative languages.

After reviewing the motivation for this conjecture as part of the analysis of syntactic ergativity in section 2, we formalize this mode of probing and present two novel arguments for it from relativization in Turkish and Rejang in section 3. In section 4, we then review and highlight relevant results from Keenan and Comrie's (1977) typology of relativization and related subsequent work, which serves to motivate and contextualize the research reported here. In section 5, we argue that this restriction on Ā-probing to the closest DP must be a specification on individual probes, rather than a language-level or construction-level parameter. We conclude in section 6.

2 Syntactic Ergativity via Ā-Probing for the Closest DP

We begin by reviewing Aldridge's (2004, 2008) analysis for syntactic ergativity in "Philippine-type" Austronesian languages, such as Tagalog. Philippine-type languages are verb-initial, with case-marking patterns that can be analyzed as exhibiting ergative-absolutive alignment.[1] Among core arguments of the verb, these languages allow only for Ā-extraction of the absolutive DP.

(4) *Absolutive-only extraction restriction in Tagalog*
a. isda=ng [binili ng babae]
fish=LK bought ERG woman
'fish that the woman bought'
b. *babae=ng [binili ang isda]
woman=LK bought ABS fish
'woman who bought the fish'
(Aldridge 2017:25, (61a–b))

Aldridge's theory for this extraction restriction is one specific instantiation of what Deal (2016) calls the "standard theory of syntactic ergativity," narrowly referring to the absolutive-only extraction restriction. The shared intuition of these proposals is that transitive objects (O) canonically occupy a structural position above that of transitive subjects (A).[2] For Aldridge, in a transitive clause with two core arguments, an agent and a theme, the theme will move to the outer specifier of vP.[3] The agent is base-generated as the inner specifier of DP. See (5). The verb is ultimately pronounced higher, preceding its arguments.

[1] *Philippine-type* refers to a set of languages with certain shared grammatical characteristics; see Himmelmann 2002, Ross 2002, and Blust 2010. Another major subgroup of Austronesian languages is the *Indonesian-type*, discussed below.

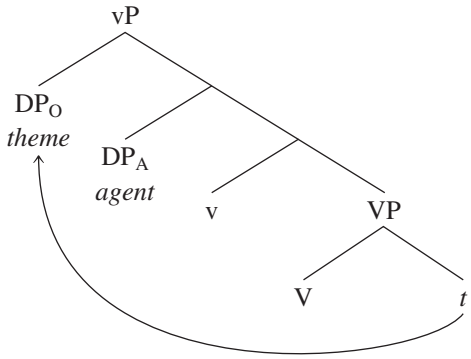
The description of Philippine-type Austronesian languages as ergative has been controversial; see, for example, Chen 2017, Erlewine, Levin, and Van Urk 2017, and Kaufman 2017.

Our glossing for Tagalog examples simplifies their verbal morphology and in some cases reglosses case markers for uniformity throughout. See the source works for further details.

[2] Other examples of the "standard theory" include Campana 1992, Murasugi 1992, Ordóñez 1995, Bittner and Hale 1996, Coon, Mateo Pedro, and Preminger 2014, Assmann et al. 2015, Levin 2018, and Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021.

[3] This analysis dovetails with the widely adopted inherent case theory for ergative case (e.g., Woolford 1997, 2006, Legate 2002, 2008, Aldridge 2004, 2008; see also Sheehan 2017 for an overview). Because the agent receives ergative case in its thematic position, there is no need for it to syntactically associate with a higher functional head such as T as in many proposals for structural nominative case.

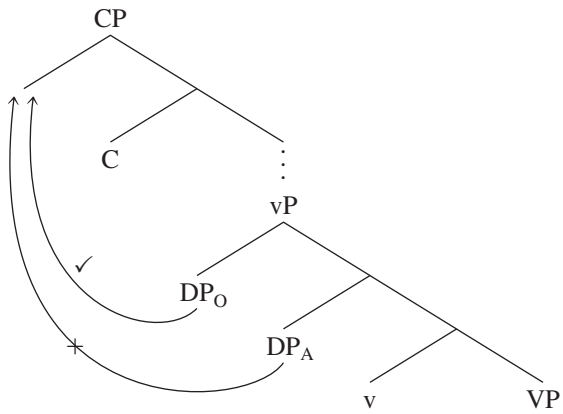
(5) *Monotransitive vP as in Aldridge's account*



Aldridge also discusses clauses with applicatives, where the DP moved to the outer specifier of vP is a goal, instrument, location, or possessor (see Nie 2019) instead of a theme.

We now turn to Ā-extraction. Ā-extraction of DPs in Tagalog is limited to the extraction of absolutive arguments (e.g., transitive objects (O) and intransitive subjects (S)); transitive subjects (A) cannot be Ā-extracted. Aldridge proposes that Ā-probing by C necessarily targets the closest DP.[4] Following the proposed structure for transitive clauses, Ā-extraction from a transitive clause will thus necessarily target the outer specifier of vP, which may be a transitive object (O) or an applicativized argument (see above). See (6). There is no way to target a transitive subject (A) for Ā-movement.[5]

(6) *Ā-probing for the closest DP from (5)*



[4] Specifically, Aldridge (2004:338) writes, "C has an EPP feature, which attracts a DP. In a transitive clause, the closest DP will be the internal argument absolutive, residing in the outer specifier of v. The external argument will not be attracted, because doing so would violate Attract Closest." Aldridge (2012:197n9) later clarifies that *closest* must be defined so that two specifiers of the same phrase do not count as equidistant for higher probes, *pace* Chomsky's (2000: 122, 130; 2001:27) Equidistance principle. Our definition of *closest* in (2) satisfies this desideratum.

[5] Syntactically ergative languages generally have a strategy for Ā-extracting notional transitive subjects (A). A common one is to antipassivize the clause, so that the A subject becomes a formally intransitive S subject and thus eligible for Ā-extraction. See Aldridge 2012 for discussion of this approach in Tagalog.

In an intransitive clause, the sole DP argument (S) is the closest DP to the probe and thus can be Ā-extracted as well.[6] This derives the syntactically ergative Ā-extraction restriction.

Aldridge's analysis for the extraction asymmetry in Philippine-type languages thus relies on the conjecture stated in (3), repeated here:

(7) *Ā-probing for the closest DP*
An Ā-probe can be specified to target the closest DP.

This conjecture has been adopted as part of the analysis of syntactically ergative extraction asymmetries in other languages as well, including the ones proposed by Levin (2018) and Coon, Baier, and Levin (2021) for a number of Mayan languages. Also see Erlewine and Lim to appear for an investigation of extraction asymmetries in Bikol, a sister language to Tagalog, which strengthens the empirical case for extraction asymmetries in Philippine-type Austronesian languages to be based on (7), over and above Aldridge's original argumentation.

We should step back, however, and note that Ā-probing of this form—if it exists—is perhaps unusual and conceptually surprising.[7] Such probing would lead to an Ā-extraction process that has the locality profile of A-movement, rather than the familiar long-distance and "relativized" character of Ā-movement (as in, e.g., Chomsky 1977, Rizzi 1990; see (1)). It also raises the questions of whether non-DPs can be Ā-extracted in such a language and if so, how; we return to these questions in section 5.3. We also note that alternative accounts for the extraction behavior of such Philippine-type languages exist, which do not require Ā-probing that is restricted to the closest DP (7).[8] In the pursuit of a maximally restrictive theory of grammar, then, it is tempting to reject the possibility of probing of the form in (7), or perhaps to somehow limit its availability to ergative languages.

The goal of this article is to show that there in fact *is* substantial motivation in nonergative languages for the existence of Ā-probing that is restricted to the closest DP (7). This conclusion

[6] In Aldridge's approach, intransitive v does not move any argument to its specifier. Intransitives are either unergative, with the agent DP being the sole specifier of vP, or unaccusative, where the sole DP argument is lower, but with vP being a "weak phase" in Chomsky's (2001) terms and thus permeable for probing from above.

[7] There has been rather little explicit discussion of this notable aspect of Aldridge's proposal. We are aware of such discussion only in Aldridge 2008:990, 992n6, Deal 2015:698–699, and Polinsky 2017:18–20.

[8] For example, see the "case agreement" approaches of Pearson (2001, 2005) for Malagasy and Rackowski (2002) and Rackowski and Richards (2005) for Tagalog, which take the apparent absolutive-only extraction restriction to be epiphenomenal.

Another alternative approach discusses apparent "extraction" restrictions in these languages without appealing to extraction at all, instead analyzing different "voice" forms as different participant nominalizations; see Keenan 2008 for Malagasy and Kaufman 2009 for Tagalog (but see also Hsieh 2019 for a forceful response to Kaufman's proposal). Such nominalization analyses may also extend to subject-only participial relatives in European languages mentioned by Keenan and Comrie (1977:70); see footnote 23 below.

Finally, see also Hsieh 2021 for a novel analysis of DP-extraction restrictions in Tagalog that does not involve Ā-probing for the closest DP.

For syntactic ergativity in other language families, too, there are accounts that do not involve Ā-probing for the closest DP (7). See Deal 2016, 2017 and Polinsky 2017 for two recent approaches.

Here, we will not review or evaluate the arguments for analyzing syntactically ergative extraction restrictions in (potentially) morphologically ergative languages as involving Ā-probing for the closest DP. Instead, we concentrate on the applicability of Ā-probing for the closest DP in nonergative languages.

in turn lends support for the plausibility of Aldridge's proposal for absolutive-only extraction restrictions in ergative languages as well.

3 Subject-Only Extraction Restrictions from Ā-Probing for the Closest DP

Given the potentially unusual nature of the idea that an Ā-probe would be limited to attracting the closest DP goal (7), as discussed above, we seek independent motivation for this possibility in grammar from beyond its original application to syntactic ergativity. In this section, we present two case studies of relativization in two nonergative languages, Turkish and Rejang, which we claim are best analyzed as involving an Ā-probe that can only attract the structurally closest DP. This approach will allow us to account not only for the basic subject-only restriction on these Ā-processes, but also for its apparent exceptions.

Let us begin by detailing, in schematic terms, the behavior that we expect from Ā-probing for the closest DP (7).[9] Here, we describe such probes as a particular version of a probe that seeks a goal that bears both an Ā-feature (e.g., [WH], [REL]) and an A-feature ([D]), which we notate [PROBE:Ā+D] in the general case. This probe is additionally required to match with a goal that is the closest DP to the probe, where *closest* is defined as in the discussion of Agree in Chomsky 2000:122, repeated here from (2):

(8) *Closest*
A potential goal G for probe P is closest if no other potential goal for P c-commands G.

With [PROBE:Ā+D] restricted to the closest DP, we expect extraction of DP_2 in (9) to be impossible: DP_1 c-commands DP_2 and therefore counts as structurally closer to the probe.

(9) *[PROBE:Ā+D] . . . [DP_1 . . . [$DP_{2[\bar{A}]}$ . . .

This logic makes two predictions. First, if a language has an independent mechanism for bringing DP_2 above DP_1, we expect the probe to then be able to interact with DP_2.

(10) ✓[PROBE:Ā+D] . . . [$DP_{2[\bar{A}]}$ . . . [DP_1 . . . [⟨$DP_{2[\bar{A}]}$⟩ . . .

Second, if there is no c-command relationship between two DPs, we might expect either to be extractable, as neither is closer to the probe than the other. (See again the definition of *closest* in (8).) One such configuration would arise when DP_2 is at the edge of DP_1.

(11) ✓[PROBE:Ā+D] . . . [$_{DP_1}$ $DP_{2[\bar{A}]}$ . . .] . . .

[9] See Branan and Erlewine to appear for discussion of how probing of this form can be implemented in procedural terms.

The possibility that two constituents in this configuration both count as closest for a higher probe is also discussed and invoked in Pesetsky and Torrego 2001:363.

We now present evidence from relativization in Turkish and Rejang that motivates the existence of Ā-probing for the closest DP. In particular, we will show that the configurations in (10) and (11) indeed allow for Ā-extraction of DP_2 in constructions that disallow extraction in the configuration in (9). Neither language is morphologically ergative. We also situate our proposal in relation to work (e.g., Van Urk and Richards 2015, Bossi and Diercks 2019, Colley and Privoznov 2020, Scott 2021) that argues for probes of the form [PROBE:Ā+D] yet allows those probes to skip closer partial matches.

3.1 Turkish

Turkish has two forms for relative clauses, shown in (12), traditionally described as a subject/nonsubject distinction (e.g., Underhill 1972, Hankamer and Knecht 1976). We follow Cagri (2005, 2009) in glossing these forms 'subject relative' (SR) and 'nonsubject relative' (NSR). Here, we concentrate on the behavior of relativization with the SR suffix, which receives a simple analysis as the exponent of a head that has an Ā-probe specified to seek the closest DP. We will discuss the syntax of NSR forms below.

(12) *Two relative clause forms in Turkish*

a. [___ kız-ı sok-**an**] arı
girl-ACC sting-SR bee
'the bee that stung the girl'
(Cagri 2005:24, (15a))

b. [arı-nın ___ sok-**tuğ**-u] kız
bee-GEN sting-NSR-3SG girl
'the girl that the bee stung'
(Jaklin Kornfilt, pers. comm.)

It is well-known that, under certain limited circumstances, nonsubjects may be extracted using the SR form (see, e.g., Underhill 1972, Hankamer and Knecht 1976, Kornfilt 1984, 1997, 2000, and subsequent work). For instance, object relativization with the SR form is possible in examples such as (13a), where the subject is indefinite and in a low, immediately preverbal position.[10] The source for this relative clause in (13a) is therefore (13b), where the accusative object is the highest

[10] Evidence for the low structural position of indefinite immediately preverbal subjects comes from their position with respect to low adverbs. Taylan (1984) shows that a morphologically simple manner adverb must be immediately preverbal, except when a caseless indefinite object follows it. Such adverbs have been used as a diagnostic for the edge of the predicate domain (Kornfilt 1984, Kelepir 2001, Öztürk 2009). Low indefinite subjects also follow these adverbs.

(i) Ali-yi fena arı sok-tu.
Ali-ACC badly bee sting-PAST
'A bee stung Ali badly.'
(Sağ-Parvardeh 2019:92n20)

DP in the clause. In contrast, object relativization across a high, nonindefinite subject must use the NSR form, as in (12b).

(13) *Low indefinite subject makes object highest*
  a. Object relative with SR form
     [___ arı sok-an] adam
     bee sting-SR man
     'the man that a bee stung'
  b. Source structure
     Adam-ı arı sok-tu.
     man-ACC bee sting-PAST
     'A bee stung the man.'
     (Temürcü 2001:147, (199a); 146, (197a))

Temporal relatives may also be constructed with the SR form if the subject is a low, indefinite subject, as in (14). This too is explained by our analysis for the SR probe, as temporal adjunct DPs naturally occupy a position above low indefinite subjects.

(14) *Temporal relatives with SR form*
  a. [___ bomba patlay-an] gün
     bomb explode-SR day
     'the day a bomb exploded'
  b. [___ kar yağ-an] gün-ler
     snow rain-SR day-PL
     'the days it snowed'
     (Cagri 2005:180, (62a–b))

Such examples show that the apparent subject orientation of the SR form is really a requirement to extract the closest nominal, rather than to extract the subject per se. We propose that the SR form reflects the use of [PROBE:REL+D] restricted to extract the closest nominal. Movement of the object (DP_2 in (15)) across a low, indefinite subject (DP_1) allows for the SR probe to target the object.

(15) ✓[PROBE:REL+D] . . . $DP_{2[REL]}$ . . . [DP_1 . . . ⟨DP_2⟩ . . .

Possessor relativization presents a further class of apparent exceptions to the subject orientation of SR relatives. Example (16a) shows that the possessor of a subject is extracted using the SR form. Note that subjects in NSR clauses as in (16b) receive genitive case, as seen in the grammatical (12b), whereas subjects of SR clauses as in (16a) retain their unmarked, nominative case.

(16) *Possessor-of-subject relative with SR form*
  a. [[___ oğl-u] mekteb-e gid-en] adam
     son-POSS.3SG school-DAT go-SR man
     'the man whose son goes to school'

b. *[[___ oğl-u-un] mekteb-e git-tiğ-i] adam
son-POSS.3SG-GEN school-DAT go-NSR-3SG man
(Underhill 1972:88, (4); 89, (6))

This possibility of possessor relativization is also explained by our analysis of SR as involving Ā-probing for the closest DP and our definition of *closest* in (8). Both the subject (DP_1 in (17)) and its possessor (DP_2) count as closest for the probe, as the former does not c-command the latter.

(17) ✓[PROBE:REL+D] . . . [$_{DP_1}$ $DP_{2[REL]}$ . . .] . . .

Also as our approach predicts, SR relativization can target the possessor of an object if the subject is in the low, immediately preverbal position (18). The derivation for (18) simply combines movement of an object above an indefinite subject that stays low, illustrated in (15), with the SR probe targeting the possessor of the highest DP, which counts as closest, as in (17). This derivation is illustrated in (19).[11]

(18) *Possessor-of-object relative with low subject, with SR form*
[[___ kız-ın-ı] arı {sok-an / *sok-tuğ-u}] adam
girl-POSS.3SG-ACC bee sting-SR / *sting-NSR-3SG man
'the man whose daughter a bee stung'
(Hankamer and Knecht 1976:133, (36))

(19) ✓[PROBE:REL+D] . . . [$_{DP_2}$ $DP_{3[REL]}$ . . .] . . . [DP_1 . . . ⟨DP_2⟩ . . .

In contrast, if the subject is higher than the object—whether a bare definite or a *birkaç* 'some' indefinite—relativization of the object's possessor must take the NSR form.

(20) *Possessor-of-object relative with high subject, with NSR form*
a. [(birkaç) arı-nın [___ bacağ-ın-ı] sok-tuğ-u] kız
some bee-GEN leg-POSS.3SG-ACC sting-NSR-3SG girl
'the girl whose leg the/some bee stung'
(Cagri 2005:99, (29a); 32, (25a))
b. *[(birkaç) arı [___ bacağ-ın-ı] sok-an] kız
some bee leg-POSS.3SG-ACC sting-SR girl
'the girl whose leg the/some bee stung'
(Cagri 2005:99, (29b); Jaklin Kornfilt, pers. comm.)

The behavior of relativization with the SR form shows the clear hallmarks of Ā-probing for the closest DP. SR relativization often targets subjects, which are generally highest in the clause,

[11] This derivation constitutes an instance of "smuggling"; see Belletti and Collins 2021 for an overview. See also Nakamura 1996 and Branan 2018 for discussion of similar subextraction facts in Tagalog, compatible with Aldridge's (2004, 2008) account and the discussion of possessor subextraction here.

but can also target nonsubjects when the subject is exceptionally low, as well as possessors of the highest DP, which also count as closest. This suggests that SR forms are regularly subject-oriented because the subject is regularly the highest DP in the clause, not because the SR form specifically reflects other subjecthood properties of the goal.[12]

Next, we address the structure of relatives with NSR morphology and their relation to relatives with SR morphology. The above data show that SR and NSR forms are in complementary distribution, with the SR form appearing specifically where relativization can use Ā-probing for the closest DP, and the NSR form appearing otherwise.[13] We propose that this reflects a preference for the use of SR relativization where possible, which in turn reflects a more general and familiar pressure for grammar to minimize probe-goal relations while maximizing featural matching.

Specifically, we propose that in any relative clause, the complex probe on the relative complementizer, [PROBE:REL+D], probes first. If this joint probing finds a matching goal, that goal is extracted and the complementizer then realizes SR morphology. If it does not find a match, the head is able to probe separately as [PROBE:REL] and [PROBE:D]; the former process will attract a [REL] goal that was inaccessible using Ā-probing for the closest DP, and the latter will copy back subject ϕ-features. The resulting complementizer will then be spelled out as the *-DIK* suffix with subject ϕ-agreement, which is more generally the default form for nominalized finite embedded clauses in the language. Here, use of the complex probe is privileged over use of two simple probes, since a perfect match for the complex probe will check two features with only one probe-goal relationship.

Probe interactions very similar to this have been proposed by Van Urk and Richards (2015) for Dinka and by Bossi and Diercks (2019) for Kipsigis. In each case, there is a probe that seeks a goal using a combination of A- and Ā-features. If there is an accessible goal carrying both features, the probe targets it, due to a principle that Van Urk and Richards (2015) call Multitasking. But if this joint probing fails, the head instead probes separately for a goal with the A-feature and a goal with the Ā-feature.[14] There are just two differences between these interactions in Dinka

[12] For instance, SR morphology does not correlate with relativization of a nominal with a particular case form, either as the result of agreement in case features (Chung 1982, 1994, 1998, Georgopoulos 1985, 1991, Pearson 2005, Rackowski and Richards 2005) or as the result of the SR form reflecting a case-discriminating probe (Deal 2017). The SR probe's target is nominative in (12a), accusative in (13a), and genitive in (16) and (18).

A reviewer asks whether the difference between the SR and NSR forms could be viewed as an alternation in complementizer morphology akin to the French *que*/*qui* alternation. (This connection is also made in Kornfilt 2008.) Here, it is relevant to note that subextraction from a subject does not trigger the *qui* form of the complementizer in French.

(i) Combien est-ce que tu crois {que / *qui} [___ de gens] viendront?
how.many is-it that you think que / *qui of people will.come
'How many people do you think will come?'
(Starke 2001:45)

This clearly contrasts with the behavior of SR morphology in Turkish, which is also employed for subextraction from the highest DP. Thus, analyses for the *que*/*qui* alternation and the like, which generally do not involve distinct probes (see Pesetsky 2017 for an overview) cannot be directly imported for Turkish.

[13] Cagri (2005:33n36) notes that there is some dialectal variation in the strength of this effect. This could be analyzed as a difference among individual grammars in the strength of the preference we describe here, or in their underlying structures.

[14] These interactions could also be productively described in terms of the derivational "splitting" of heads or probes (Martinović 2015) or as reflecting a preference for their "bundling" (Erlewine 2018). See Erlewine 2018:sec. 4.4 (especially note 32) for discussion of such ideas in prior literature.

and Kipsigis on the one hand and Turkish on the other. First, in Dinka and Kipsigis probing separately results in multiple movement, whereas in Turkish it results in movement of the [REL] goal and ϕ-agreement with the DP. Second, in Turkish probing jointly for a goal with both A- and Ā-features requires Ā-probing for the closest DP, whereas in Dinka and Kipsigis closer partial matches can be skipped.[15] Abstracting away from these two differences, however, the mechanism that yields apparent "competition" between SR and NSR forms is equivalent to that proposed in these prior works.[16]

Finally, we note that the ability of an unsatisfied complex probe such as [PROBE:Ā+D] to subsequently probe separately for Ā- and D-goals must be subject to lexical variation, rather than being a general property of complex probes. In particular, in the case studies we discuss below, as well as those in section 5, we show that if Ā-probing for the closest DP is unable to find a suitable goal, the relevant Ā-construction is simply impossible.

3.2 Rejang

Rejang is an Austronesian language spoken in southwest Sumatra. Ā-extraction of DPs in the language is limited to the highest nominal, whether or not that is the subject.[17]

Rejang is canonically SVO. Transitive verbs have two forms, active and passive. Active themes and passive agents cannot be Ā-extracted (with one exception, discussed below). For example, transitive theme relativization requires first promoting the theme to subject position using a passive.

(21) *Rejang theme relativization requires passivization*

a. *tun [gi pelisi o m-akep ___ kelem] o
person C_{gi} police the ACT-catch last.night the
'the person that the police arrested last night'

b. tun [gi ___ t⟨en⟩akep pelisi ___ kelem] o
person C_{gi} PASS-catch police last.night the
'the person that was arrested by the police last night'
(McGinn 1998:362, (5b), (6))

There is evidence that this apparent subject-only restriction on extraction in Rejang is in fact better described as a requirement that only the highest nominal may undergo extraction. Evidence for this comes from three sources: agent cliticization, long-distance extraction, and extraction of possessors, which we discuss in turn.

[15] For other case studies proposing probes that target goals with both A- and Ā-features that are not necessarily closest DPs, see Colley and Privoznov 2020 on Khanty and Scott 2021 on Ndengeleko.

[16] This effect also echoes Chomsky's (1991, 1995) Fewest Steps principle (see also Collins 2001 and references therein), which favors derivations with fewer steps. It may also be described as a violable version of Maximize Matching Effects from Chomsky 2001.

[17] Here, we rely heavily on the work of Richard McGinn, who conducted extensive fieldwork on Rejang for over four decades but unfortunately passed away in 2018 (see Blust 2018). There are some empirical questions that we cannot answer on the basis of McGinn's existing publications; perhaps most importantly, there are no tests of island sensitivity described in any work on Rejang that we have been able to access. Future fieldwork is necessary to provide this confirmation.

McGinn (1998:372ff.) notes one exception to the ban on active theme extraction: extraction of active themes is possible if the agent subject is a clitic pronoun, as in (22).[18]

(22) *Active theme* wh*-question across a pronominal subject*
Jano [gi ko t⟨em⟩okoa ___]?
what C_{gi} 2SG ACT-buy
'What did you buy?'
(McGinn 1989:208, (1b))

As McGinn argues, the agents in such cases are not conventional preverbal subjects, but instead occupy a lower position and are cliticized to the verb. Consider the contrast between the baseline canonical declarative in (23a) and the grammatical active theme relative in (23b), both with the preverbal inchoative auxiliary *mulaé* and the active verb 'watch'. The canonical subject position precedes preverbal tense/aspect auxiliaries (23a), but a pronominal agent may appear in immediately preverbal position (23b), which allows the active theme to be extracted. Note also that the first person singular pronoun *uku* appears in the reduced form *ku* when immediately preverbal.

(23) *Subject pronoun positions*
a. **Uku** mulaé t⟨em⟩oton pilem o.
1SG AUX ACT-watch movie the
'I began to watch the movie.'
b. pilem [gi mulaé **ku** t⟨em⟩oton ___ kelem] o
movie C_{gi} AUX 1SG ACT-watch last.night the
'the movie that I began to watch last night'
(McGinn 1998:373, (38); 372, (36))

As McGinn (1989) notes, the structure here is reminiscent of the so-called passive type 2 in nearby Malayic languages (see, e.g., Chung 1976, Arka and Manning 1998). This is illustrated with Indonesian in (24), where an agent of limited or reduced size (see Nomoto 2021) immediately precedes the lexical verb and then allows for theme extraction.

(24) *Theme relativization across a pronominal agent in Indonesian*
Orang [yang sudah **saya** tulis-i ___ surat] adalah paman-mu.
man C_{REL} AUX 1SG write-APPL letter be uncle-2SG
'The man that I wrote a letter was your uncle.'
(Chung 1976:72, (91b))

However, importantly, the Rejang structures (22) and (23b) retain active voice morphology on the verb, whereas no voice morphology appears in the Malayic structures exemplified by (24). See McGinn 1989 for further discussion and comparison of these forms in Rejang and Malayic.

[18] McGinn (1982:24, 1998:363–364) proposes that such *wh*-questions are pseudoclefts that involve relativization over the gap, which explains the presence of the relative complementizer. Such pseudocleft strategies are common across Austronesian verb-initial languages (Potsdam 2009).

Our proposal straightforwardly accounts for the possibility of active theme extraction with agent cliticization in Rejang, as in (22) and (23b). It is well-documented that clitic arguments do not intervene for extraction in the same way that full DPs do (McGinnis 1998, Anagnostopoulou 2003). Presumably, cliticization of an argument to the verb renders it invisible for higher [D]-sensitive probes; or it is skipped, as it is not eligible for movement (see also Branan 2022). As the subject is a clitic, the object is now the closest DP to the probe on C.

Next, we turn to long-distance relativization. First, we note that in nonextraction contexts, embedded clauses take the complementizer *bawo*, in contrast to *gi* in the extraction examples above. This alternation will be important for the discussion that follows.

(25) *Complement clause with complementizer* bawo
Alui m-adea' [$_{CP}$ **bawo** Desi teko ceño'].
Alui ACT-say C Desi come late
'Alui said that Desi came late.'
(McGinn 1998:359, (2a))

Long-distance subject extraction in Rejang comes in two forms. In one, the embedded clause has the complementizer *bawo*, with a resumptive pronoun in its subject position (26a). In the other, the embedded clause is headed by *gi*, with a subject gap (26b). In both cases, the higher clause must appear in the passive.

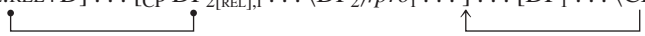
(26) *Two forms of long-distance subject relatives*
a. tun tuey [gi ___$_{CP}$ n-adea' Alui [$_{CP}$ **bawo si** teko ceño']] o
person old C_{gi} PASS-say Alui C 3SG come late the
'the old person of whom it was said that he/she came late'
b. tun tuey [gi ___$_{CP}$ n-adea' Alui [$_{CP}$ **gi** ___$_{DP}$ teko ceño']] o
person old C_{gi} PASS-say Alui C_{gi} come late the
'the old person of whom it was said that he/she came late'
(McGinn 1998:368, (26), (28))

We first consider these complementizer and gap/resumptive alternations. Both reflect strategies for getting the nominal target for relativization to the edge of the embedded CP. The nominal can be base-generated at the embedded clause edge and bind a local pronoun (26a) or it can move from embedded subject position using the complementizer *gi* (26b).

As proposed by McGinn (1998:368–369), the entire embedded CP itself is then moved to the higher subject position via passivization of 'say', although it is then pronounced to the right, leaving the CP gap indicated in (26).[19] Movement of the embedded clause to this higher subject position causes the DP at the embedded clause edge to be the highest nominal in the clause, allowing the relative complementizer *gi* to extract it.

[19] See Rackowski and Richards 2005, Van Urk and Richards 2015, and Erlewine and Lim to appear for similar analyses of long-distance extraction in Tagalog, Dinka, and Bikol, respectively. The postverbal position of the agent *Alui* in (26) forms an argument against passive morphology simply appearing as a reflection of extraction across the verb.

(27) *The closest nominal may be* in *a clausal subject*



In addition, long-distance relativization may proceed across a higher active verb if the higher verb's agent is a preverbal clitic pronoun; see (28a–b). Per the discussion above, clitic pronouns are skipped, making the highest DP in the embedded clause the closest DP for the higher Ā-probe. In (28a), this is the embedded subject. Example (28b) furthermore shows long-distance theme relativization across multiple clitic pronouns, each complementizer along the way attracting the closest DP, skipping an agent clitic.[20]

(28) *Long-distance relativization over active verb with pronominal subject*

a. tun [gi ku m-adea' [CP gi ___ t⟨em⟩anang Pak Lu'ea' kelem]] o
person C_{gi} 1SG ACT-say C_{gi} ACT-visit Mr. Headman last.night the
'the person that I said visited the headman last night'

b. filem [gi ko m-adea' [CP gi mulaé ko t⟨em⟩oton ___ kelem]] o
movie C_{gi} 2SG ACT-say C_{gi} AUX 2SG ACT-watch last.night the
'the movie that you said that you began to watch last night'
(McGinn 1998:373, (37a–b))

Further evidence that the extraction restriction in Rejang reflects [PROBE:Ā+D] on C, and is not specifically limited to subjects, comes from possessor relatives. Possessor relativization in Rejang is possible with a resumptive pronoun, but generally only for possessors of subjects.

(29) *Possessor relativization with resumptive*

a. tun [gi [nyung *(**ne**)] panjang] o
person C_{gi} nose 3SG.GEN long the
'the person whose nose is long'

b. *tun [gi Alui k⟨em⟩lea' [ngenyan **ne**]] o
person C_{gi} Alui ACT-see wife 3SG.GEN the
Intended: 'the person whose wife Alui saw'
(McGinn 1998:370, (33a–b))

However, relativization of object possessors is possible if the subject is a clitic pronoun, as attested in Dibul's (2019) translation of the Quran into Rejang.

(30) *Object possessor relativization over pronominal subject*
api bae [de[21] Keme m-anjang [omor ne]]
who only C_{gi} 1PL.EXCL ACT-long age 3SG.GEN
'whomsoever We cause to live long' (Quran 36:68; Shakir translation)
Literally: 'whoever We lengthen their age'

[20] Both our account and the discussion in McGinn 1998 predict the availability of long-distance theme relativization via passivization in both higher and lower clauses, but McGinn does not discuss examples of this form.

[21] The form of the *gi* complementizer is subject to dialectal variation.

These examples show that possessor relativization is locality-sensitive and does not reflect a free process of pronominal binding. The use of the *gi* complementizer—which correlates with movement, as illustrated in (26)—also supports the view that possessor relativization as in (29a) and (30) involves extraction.

We can imagine two possible analyses for this possessor relativization: one where the target of relativization originates in the possessor position, with its trace pronounced as the pronoun *ne* (as in a recent proposal in Jeoung 2018 and as suggested by a reviewer), or with the target of relativization being generated at the edge of the DP and locally binding the possessive pronoun. In either case, the restriction of possessor relativization to possessors of the highest nominal (normally the subject) is explained by our analysis as analogous to the long-distance extraction facts above: the target in these cases is at the edge of the highest DP and therefore counts as closest to the probe.

(31) *The closest nominal may be* in *a nominal subject*
✓[PROBE:REL+D] . . . [$_{DP_1}$ $DP_{2[REL],i}$ . . . N ⟨DP_2⟩/pro_i] . . .

In sum, a close look at the apparent subject-only extraction restriction with the *gi* complementizer in Rejang—and the shape of its various exceptions—provides strong motivation for the theory of probing presented here. Rejang allows for the extraction of nonsubject nominals across clitic agents with *gi*, and it provides strategies to place nominals at the edge of subjects—both nominal and clausal—causing those nominals to become the closest nominals to the probe and therefore licit targets for extraction.

4 Evidence from Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Typology

We now turn to the broader typology of extraction asymmetries for further evidence of the possibility of Ā-probing for the closest DP (7). Our discussion will center around Keenan and Comrie's work on the typology of relativization (Keenan and Comrie 1977, 1979 (K&C), Comrie and Keenan 1979). In this work, K&C claim that there exist languages with relativization strategies that apply specifically to subjects but to no other types of arguments.[22] As Deal (2015:698–699) notes, such forms of relativization may be candidates for being analyzed as involving Ā-probing for the closest DP.

Revisiting all the subject-only relativization strategies identified by K&C, we note that the level of detail they provide on individual languages is generally insufficient to determine whether any of these relativization strategies are best analyzed as involving Ā-probing for the closest DP. Thankfully, however, more detailed subsequent studies exist for some of these languages. We conclude that some but not all of K&C's subject-only strategies provide further evidence for our

[22] K&C discuss "strategies" of relativization, of which a particular language may have more than one. Individual strategies are distinguished, for example, by whether they involve gapping, resumptive pronouns, or relative pronouns, or by other morphosyntactic characteristics.

conjecture. This section thus serves two purposes: First, it highlights a few more case studies—from Arabic, Māori, and Toba Batak—which we take to provide strong supporting evidence for the possibility that Ā-probes may be restricted to the closest DP. Second, it serves as a note of caution against taking K&C's results to have already established the necessity of Ā-probing for the closest DP in grammar, thereby underscoring the motivation for this article.

In their survey, K&C report eleven languages with relativization strategies that can target subjects but not other nominals: Northeast Aoba/Ambae, Arabic, Iban (Sea Dayak), Javanese, Kera, Kiribati (Gilbertese), Malagasy, Māori, Minangkabau, Tagalog, and Toba Batak. Of these, only Malagasy and Toba Batak are discussed in any detail in K&C 1977. With the exception of Arabic and Kera (East Chadic), all of these languages are Austronesian.[23]

We first discuss Kiribati (Oceanic; VOS), which K&C describe as utilizing a gap strategy for subject relatives (32a) but a pronoun strategy for object relatives (32b). (This same description applies to Northeast Ambae (also Oceanic), Arabic, and Kera; we discuss Arabic below.) Object pronouns appear on the verb with the linker *-i-*.[24]

(32) *Kiribati relative clause data*

a. te aine are orea te mane
the woman REL hit the man
'the woman who hit the man'

b. te mane are oro-i-**a** te aine
the man REL hit-TR-3SG the woman
'the man that the woman hit'
(K&C 1979:337)

At first glance, such a language seems amenable to an analysis utilizing an Ā-probe that targets the closest DP: Ā-extraction is limited to the structurally highest DP, the subject, and relativization of other arguments necessitates the use of resumptive pronouns.

However, this view is challenged by data on long-distance object extraction in Sabel 2013. In (33), fronting the embedded plural object 'Mary and Tien' triggers a third person plural pronoun on the embedded verb 'love', as expected, but also on the higher verb 'know'.

(33) *Long-distance object movement in Kiribati*
Meeiri ao Tien aika ti ata-i-**ia** bwa e tangir-i-**ia** Rui.
Mary and Tien REL.3PL 1PL know-TR-3PL that 3SG love-TR-3PL Rui
'It's Mary and Tien that we know that Rui loves.'
(Sabel 2013:18)

[23] Austronesian languages make up 11 out of 49 languages in K&C's survey (1977:76–79, table 1) and thus may be generally overrepresented in their study. Interestingly, K&C discuss Turkish but treat the SR and NSR forms as a single strategy; see K&C 1979:348. They also note in passing that "many European languages (e.g. German, Russian, and Polish) have participial [relative clause]-forming strategies that apply only to subjects" (K&C 1977:70); see our footnote 8.

[24] Following Harrison (1978), Sabel (2013) calls *-i-* a transitivity marker and we follow their glossing here. It is possible that the verb *orea* in (32a) includes the third person singular object marker but without the transitivity marker, as Sabel (2013) suggests. In fact, K&C (1979) gloss *orea* in (32a) as 'hit-3SG' and *oroia* in (32b) as 'hit-him'. Here, we follow Trussel (1979:140–145) in simply treating the verb as *orea.*

On the basis of such examples, Sabel argues that the object "pronoun" on Kiribati object extraction verbs is a form of agreement fed by successive-cyclic movement of the object. Thus, the difference between subject and object relativization illustrated in (32) may simply be morphological. Kiribati thus represents an instructive test case where further work on the language casts doubt on taking K&C's reported behavior as a natural candidate for an analysis using Ā-probing for the closest DP.[25]

K&C's description of relativization as subject-only in Malagasy and Tagalog also does not immediately necessitate Ā-probing for the closest DP. Both are Philippine-type Austronesian languages explicitly discussed by Aldridge (2004, 2008) as amenable to her analysis for syntactic ergativity reviewed above. However, alternative approaches for these languages exist that do not involve such an Ā-probing restriction; see footnote 8.

In some cases, however, subsequent work on the subject-only relativization strategies identified by K&C has led to forceful arguments for Ā-probing that is limited to the closest DP. Such is the case for Toba Batak (Erlewine 2018), where relativization is limited to the subject (active agent or passive theme), relativization of transitive themes being fed by passivization. (K&C also give this same description for Iban, Javanese, and Minangkabau—all Indonesian-type Austronesian languages (see footnote 1).) Although Cole and Hermon (2008) have proposed that this restriction reflects the "frozen" nature of the nonsubject DP arguments, Erlewine (2018) shows that, under certain circumstances, a subject DP and a nonsubject DP can be fronted simultaneously. Erlewine argues that the basic extraction restriction thus must be due to Ā-probing being limited to the closest DP—with options for further probing leading to multiple extractions—rather than being due to the general immobility of nonsubject DPs as Cole and Hermon propose.

Further work on Māori has also led to an analysis involving Ā-probing for the closest DP. Douglas (2018) discusses the fact that clefting in Māori—built from a kind of headless relative clause—can only target subjects of verbal and prepositional phrase predicates, not subjects of nominal predicates. He argues that this is because the Māori cleft construction uses Ā-probing for the closest DP; in this predicate-initial language, a nominal predicate is higher than its argument. However, as with their description of Toba Batak, K&C's initial description of Māori as having a subject-only relativization strategy does not by itself force a limited Ā-probing analysis; only with further investigation can a decisive argument for restricted probing be made.

Finally, we discuss the analysis of relativization in Arabic due to Shlonsky (1992). Arabic allows extraction of subjects but requires pronominal resumption for extraction of all other arguments. Shlonsky proposes that Spec,CP in Palestinian Arabic is an A-position, rather than an Ā-position, and thereby obeys the locality profile of A-movement. Although not cast in the contemporary probe-goal terms used here, Shlonsky's analysis amounts to proposing that the Ā-probe for relativization must target the closest DP. Similar proposals have since been advanced for new-information clefts in French (Belletti 2015) and topicalization in southern Bantu (Bliss and Storoshenko 2009, Pietraszko 2021), which target subjects.[26]

[25] A reviewer notes that Sabel's long-distance extraction facts are not replicated in Fijian, which otherwise exhibits the same behavior as Kiribati. Presumably, this is a point of crosslinguistic variation.

[26] We thank Asia Pietraszko (pers. comm.) for bringing these works on Bantu to our attention.

In sum, although the evidence provided by K&C (1977, 1979; see also Comrie and Keenan 1979) is by itself generally insufficient to motivate the existence of Ā-probing restricted to the closest nominal, stronger arguments for proposals of this form have been subsequently developed for three of the languages in their study—Arabic, Māori, and Toba Batak—all of which are, again, clearly not ergative. These three case studies thus join our discussion of Turkish and Rejang to form a compelling reason to think of Ā-probing for the closest DP as a true possibility in grammar, and not only in ergative languages. This evidence in turn indirectly supports the feasibility of Aldridge's (2004, 2008) approach to syntactic ergativity presented in section 2.

5 Variation in Probing

We have now established that Ā-probing for the closest DP is indeed a strategy employed by the grammar of nonergative languages. At the same time, we know that languages also employ relativized Ā-probing that can skip intervening nominals without the matching Ā-feature; see (1). In this section, we turn to the nature of this variation. We show that Ā-probing for the closest DP is neither a language-level parameter nor a construction-level parameter. Instead, we argue that this choice of restricted probing is made with respect to individual heads.

5.1 Haya

We begin by discussing relativization in Haya, a Bantu language of the Great Lakes region of Africa. Haya demonstrates that heads at different positions in a single Ā-construction can differ in their choice to employ Ā-probing for the closest DP or not.

Local relativization in Haya can target both subjects and objects.[27]

(34) *Local relativization in Haya is unrestricted*
  a. embw' é-y-a-ly' ébitooke
     dog REL-it-PAST-eat bananas
     'the dog that ate the bananas'
  b. ebitook' eby' émbwá y-á-lya
     bananas REL dog it-PAST-eat
     'the bananas that the dog ate'
     (Duranti 1977:120, (1); 121, (13))

Duranti (1977) shows that, in long-distance relativization of an object in Haya, the object must be promoted to subject before undergoing further Ā-movement to the final landing site in the matrix clause, as demonstrated through the contrast in (35b–c).

(35) *Long-distance theme relativization requires passivization*
  a. Kató n-a-tekeléz' [$_{CP}$ aty' ómwáána y-a-bon' ábasháija].
     Kato PRS-he-thinks C child he-PAST-see men
     'Kato thinks that the child has seen the men.'

[27] The form of the relative marker in (34)–(35) varies due to agreement. In addition, in subject relatives such as (34a), the relative marker prefixes to the verb.

b. *abasháíj' [ábó Kat' á-lí-ku-tékelez' [$_{CP}$ aty' ómwáána y-á-bôna]]
men REL Kato he-be-to-think C child he-PAST-see
'the men that Kato thinks the child has seen'

c. abasháíj' [ábó Kat' á-lí-ku-tékelez' [$_{CP}$ ati ba-a-bon-**w'** ómwáana]]
men REL Kato he-be-to-think C they-PAST-see-PASS child
'the men that Kato thinks have been seen by the child'
(Duranti 1977:129, (i)–(iii))

We can understand this effect as resulting from intermediate movement being driven by [PROBE:REL+D] on embedded C that must target the closest DP, even though the highest clause of the relative is not restricted in this way.[28] Promotion of an embedded object to subject position through passivization causes the theme to be the highest nominal in the embedded clause, allowing it to then be probed from above and thereby extracted.

For the analysis developed here, whether or not the extraction restriction obtains in a configuration involving C is a function of the lexical items in the context. It is relatively common for embedded complementizers to differ from matrix complementizers in terms of what they attract; consider, for instance, the presence vs. absence of T-to-C movement and *do*-support in standard English matrix and embedded questions. Haya, then, is a language in which the outermost relative complementizer (*abo* in (35b–c)) simply probes for [REL], but the embedded complementizer *ati* must find a [REL] target that is the closest DP. Only extraction out of clauses headed by *ati* exhibits the subject-only restriction, even within a single long-distance extraction chain.

5.2 Late Archaic Chinese

Late Archaic Chinese (LAC) exhibits a number of extraction asymmetries that are attributable to restricted Ā-probing by [PROBE:Ā+D] as described here. At the CP level, Aldridge (2019) shows that only subjects can be Ā-extracted to the clause edge in LAC and therefore proposes that these processes involve Ā-probing for the closest DP. In the interest of space, we will not review this evidence from movement to Spec,CP here. Instead, we call attention to a restriction on the behavior of nonsubject *wh*-phrases that undergo Ā-movement to a clause-medial position in LAC (Aldridge 2010).

While the canonical word order of LAC is SVO, Aldridge (2010) shows that *wh*-objects in LAC appear preverbally.[29]

(36) *Clause-medial* wh-*fronting*
a. Wú **shéi** [qī ___]?
I who deceive
'Who do I deceive?'

[28] Other Bantu languages display similar subject-only restrictions on all clauses; see in particular Demuth and Harford 1999 and Henderson 2006 for more details on these and other patterns of relativization in Bantu.

[29] We follow Aldridge 2010 and other literature on historical Chinese linguistics in presenting transcriptions based on modern Mandarin pronunciations of the attested examples.

b. Gōng **shéi** [yù xiāng ___]?
you who want appoint
'Who do you want to appoint?'
(Aldridge 2010:2, (2b); 7, (12b))

As Aldridge (2010, 2019) notes, basic ditransitives in LAC take their theme as their second object, in "V recipient theme" order. With certain verbs, there is also an option to bring the theme in front of the verb using the object marker *yǐ*. Aldridge (2010) observes that only the first object of either of these ditransitive predicates can move; in particular, a theme *wh*-word in second object position is left in situ as in (37a), whereas a theme *wh*-word that precedes the other internal argument is then fronted as in (37b).

(37) *Only first objects of ditransitives may undergo* wh-*movement*
a. . . . [nài wú jūn **hé**]?
do our lord what
' . . . what will (this) do to our lord?'
b. Kè jiāng **hé** [yǐ ___ jiào guǎrén]?
you will what YI teach me
'What are you going to teach me?'
(Aldridge 2010:22, (49a); 23, (52a))

These facts support the view that Ā-probing for the closest DP is an option for movement-driving heads in general, and not just with C. In LAC, the head that triggers clause-medial movement (perhaps v, following Aldridge 2010, 2019) bears [PROBE:WH+D] restricted to seeking the closest DP.[30]

5.3 Non-DP Movement in Tagalog and Rejang

The existence of Ā-extraction constructions that must target the closest DP naturally leads to the question of whether and how non-DP constituents can be Ā-extracted. As we have argued, Ā-probing for the closest DP is not a language-level parameter. A language that utilizes [PROBE: Ā+D] in some configurations may also Ā-move non-DPs, but we predict that this will involve different heads or probes.

Here, we return to Tagalog—one of the languages that motivated the idea of Ā-probing for the closest DP in Aldridge's work—and show that the extraction of DPs and the extraction of non-DPs indeed behave differently, exemplified here with *wh*-questions. DP-fronting as in (38a) must target the absolutive argument—here, the object of 'play'—which appears with an *ang* case marker in preverbal position. Fronting of a non-DP as in (38b) lacks this *ang* marker. In addition,

[30] If the predicate-internal subject hypothesis holds of LAC, the agent may be base-generated in Spec,vP as well. [PROBE:WH+D] on v cannot attract the agent, which is already its specifier, making the first object of the ditransitive count as its closest nominal goal. See Branan 2022.

note that the second-position clitic pronoun *=nila* encliticizes to the verb in (38a) but to the *wh*-phrase itself in (38b). See Hsieh 2020a,b for in-depth work on these non-DP extraction constructions in Tagalog.

(38) *DP vs. non-DP* wh*-fronting in Tagalog*
a. **Ano** ang tutugtugin =nila sa party ___?
what ABS FUT.play ERG.3PL OBL party
'What are they going to play at the party?'
b. **Saan** =nila tutugtugin ang bago=ng kanta ___?
where ERG.3PL FUT.play ABS new=LK song
'Where are they going to play the new song?'
(Hsieh 2020a:273, (1)–(2))

Structural differences are also observed between DP and non-DP extraction in Rejang. Recall that relativization over DP arguments must target the closest DP. Such examples allow for an optional relative pronoun before the complementizer, as in (39).[31]

(39) *Rejang subject relative with optional relative pronoun*
tun [(**api**) di ___ k⟨en⟩léa Jon] 'o
man who C_{gi} PASS-see Jon the
'the man that was seen by Jon'
(McGinn 1982:20, (39))

Relativization in Rejang can also target prepositional objects. In such cases, a *wh*-containing PP fronts to a position *following* the complementizer.

(40) *Rejang prepositional object relative*
tun [{di} [$_{PP}$ **magea api**] {*di} Jon m-lié bukew ___] 'o
man C_{gi} to who Jon ACT-give book the
'the man to whom Jon gave a book'
(McGinn 1982:21, (40i–ii))

We can understand prepositional object relatives as in (40) as involving a separate, optional process of PP-fronting described by McGinn (1982:10); this movement "smuggles" the relative operator to a position above the subject for successful targeting by [PROBE:Ā+D]. Although these relative operators are normally optionally realized as a *wh*-word in Spec,CP (as in (39)), the morphological needs of the preposition require that it be pronounced overtly next to the preposition in (40).

Such structural differences between DP and non-DP extraction are unsurprising under our account. As Aldridge 2004 and much subsequent work has argued for Tagalog, and as we have

[31] These examples come from McGinn 1982, which gives Musi dialect forms, including *di* for the complementizer corresponding to *gi* above.

argued for Rejang, DP-movement takes place via an Ā-probe that must target the closest DP, [PROBE:Ā+D]. As this probe cannot target non-DPs, a separate, second Ā-probe—for instance, simply [PROBE:Ā], potentially on a different functional head—must be involved in the fronting of non-DPs.

An important remaining question is why these separate Ā-probes cannot also target DPs, potentially leading to the extraction of nonclosest DPs. One possibility, suggested by Erlewine (2018) and Hsieh (2020a) for Toba Batak and Tagalog, respectively, is that the Ā-probe that leads to successful movement of non-DPs cannot target nonclosest DPs because doing so would bleed case licensing on the fronted DP. For more details, see these accounts and the argumentation there.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we argued that Ā-probes can be restricted to target only the closest nominal, as originally proposed by Aldridge (2004) as part of an analysis for syntactic ergativity. We showed that this (possibly conceptually surprising) form of restricted Ā-probing is well-attested in nonergative languages. Probing of this form in many languages gives rise to what at first glance may appear to be a subject-only extraction restriction. However, on closer examination certain nonsubjects can also be be extracted via processes that rearrange nominals as well as via subextraction from highest nominals. We illustrated this type of extraction restriction in Turkish and Rejang in detail and provided references to other work describing such facts in Arabic, Māori, and Toba Batak—all nonergative languages.

Establishing the existence of Ā-probing restricted to the closest DP contributes to the growing literature on possible interactions between A- and Ā-features in probe specifications (e.g., Van Urk 2015, Van Urk and Richards 2015, Baier 2018, Erlewine 2018, Bossi and Diercks 2019, Colley and Privoznov 2020, Coon, Baier, and Levin 2021, Scott 2021) and on the space of variation therein. We furthermore clarified that Ā-probing for the closest DP is a property of specific probes on heads, rather than a language- or construction-level parameter. In particular, languages with constructions that involve Ā-probing for the closest DP often also have other strategies for Ā-extraction that are not so restricted.[32] What this implies, then, is that these grammars must also have mechanisms for choosing between different extraction strategies. We pointed to two such mechanisms here: the ability of some complex probes to prefer full matches but optionally allow partial matches (see discussion at the end of section 3.1) and the ability of certain movements to bleed case licensing and therefore be unable to target DPs (section 5.3).

[32] Further support for this view comes from the observation that, even among DP arguments, in many languages some Ā-extractions are more restricted than others in what arguments they can target. See, for example, the discussions of differences between relativization and *wh*-movement in Chukchi (Paleo-Siberian) in Polinsky 1992, 2016, between topicalization and focus/*wh*-movement in Bikol (Philippine) in Erlewine and Lim to appear, and between various Ā-constructions in Kaqchikel (Mayan) in Heaton 2017:chap. 13.

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