

# THE NOUN PHRASE ACCESSIBILITY HIERARCHY REVISITED: A VIEW FROM ERGATIVE LANGUAGES

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This paper reexamines the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977). A careful study of relative clauses in sixteen ergative languages reveals that the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy is not able to account for the relativization facts found in ergative languages; instead, Fox's (1987) Absolutive Hypothesis can characterize the relativization constraints for absolutive NPs and ergative NPs in ergative languages. Although Fox's Absolutive Hypothesis correctly predicts the relativization behavior of absolutive NPs and ergative NPs in ergative languages, Fox does not discuss the behavior of other NPs. Based on the relativization facts found in these languages, I suggest a revised noun phrase accessibility hierarchy for ergative languages. Furthermore, this paper will suggest a different interpretation of the nature of 'syntactic ergativity'.