

Ergativity in Kolyma Yukaghir nominalizations

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This paper investigates the ergative alignment pattern attested in Kolyma Yukaghir texts collected at the end of 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century. The basic alignment of contemporary Kolyma Yukaghir, including case marking and agreement in both finite and non-finite constructions, is regarded as a nominative-accusative pattern. Although the language has a special type of construction, called the focus construction, which treats the intransitive subject and transitive object identically as a focal element, this has been considered an isolated instance of ergativity in the language. However, the Kolyma Yukaghir data collected by Waldemar Jochelson (Jochelson 1900) contain examples of nominalized constructions, which follow not only the nominative-accusative pattern, but also the ergative-absolutive pattern. In this paper, I illustrate the realization of the ergative-absolutive pattern in nominalizations and the coexistence of both nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive patterns in earlier Kolyma Yukaghir data.