

Re: understanding ergativity

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-08/msg00278.html>

- *From:* Joachim Pense <spam-collector@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 03 Aug 2005 16:49:37 +0200
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Lukas Pietsch:

> Joachim Pense wrote:
>> Having read some elementary descriptions of what an ergative language is,
>> I try the following gedankenexperiment.
>>
>> Take Latin, as it is, but apply one minor change:
>> For transitive sentences, make the passive the unmarked form, and active
>> the marked one, that is, assume that people prefer to say
>>
>> (A) frater sorore laudatur
>>
>> rather than
>>
>> (B) soror fratrem laudat
>>
>> Also, call the active "antipassive", and the ablative of "sorore" an
>> "ablativus ergativus", and voila – you got an ergative language.
>>
>
> But to make it a real ergative language, you'd need another, more
> radical change: turn all intransitive verbs into deponents, with
> passive-like morphology.

Good point. I did not think of that. You brought me a step forward.

Joachim

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- *Follow-Ups:*
 - ◆ [Re: understanding ergativity](#)
◇ *From:* Neeraj Mathur
- *References:*
 - ◆ [understanding ergativity](#)
◇ *From:* Joachim Pense
 - ◆ [Re: understanding ergativity](#)

Re: understanding ergativity

◇ *From:* Lukas Pietsch

- Prev by Date: [**Re: He, she and it against hem**](#)
- Next by Date: [**Re: understanding ergativity**](#)
- Previous by thread: [**Re: understanding ergativity**](#)
- Next by thread: [**Re: understanding ergativity**](#)
- Index(es):
 - ◆ [**Date**](#)
 - ◆ [**Thread**](#)