A feature-based analysis for vestigial ergativity in Shughni
Abstract submitted to MOTH 6—March 2, 2018

1. Introduction.
This paper examines the phenomenon of *vestigial ergativity* in Shughni (Eastern Iranian, Afghanistan), a phenomenon most recently discussed by Hippisley & Stump (2011), but see also Payne 1980. The objective of the paper is essentially two-fold. First, I provide a thorough descriptive account of the Shughni past-tense alignment system and demonstrate how a small portion of the grammar indeed displays an ergative-like pattern. Then, I provide a feature-based account of this phenomenon, under which the effects of vestigial ergativity are derived via the feature-based movement of certain internal arguments out of VP. Such an account has a number of advantages, most notably its reliance on a theoretical tool (i.e. feature-based DP-movement) which has been used to account for an array of other linguistic phenomena, including clitic doubling and differential object marking (see Kramer 2015 and Preminger 2017 for an overview). Moreover, this analysis avoids positing that Shughni is ergative in such a miniscule part of its grammar, a notion which seems unintuitive at best.

2. Background
It is generally agreed upon that an earlier stage of Iranian underwent a change in alignment from accusative to ergative, likely via the reanalysis of a passive construction as active. Modern Iranian languages, for their part, show a variety of different alignment systems in their past tenses, suggesting that this former stage of ergativity has trickled down in a number of different ways (see Haig 2008 and references therein for an overview of this alignment change and its modern reflexes). Some modern Iranian languages (e.g. Persian) are fully accusative in their past-tense alignment, while others (e.g. Pashto) are fully ergative, and still others (e.g. Davani (Moghaddam 2016)), show various kinds of hybrid systems which conform to neither alignment type. The latter type of alignment system often presents an interesting puzzle for theoreticians, as analyses often require recourse to a number of theoretical tools to capture the idiosyncrasies of alignment.

3. Shughni Data and Analysis
In the case of Shughni, ergativity has faded away everywhere except in 3SG subject agreement. In this one cell, the language shows a split-intransitive pattern whereby subjects of unergative verbs (e.g. *run, dance, jump*) behave like transitive subjects in taking an overt agreement morpheme, while subjects of unaccusative verbs (e.g. *come, go, arrive*) behave like objects in taking no overt agreement morpheme. This pattern is exhibited in the examples below:

(1) a. Yo=**ye** mu wint.
         he=3SG me see.PST
         'He saw me.'   (TRANS)

     b. Yo=**ye** taram zhexht.
         he=3SG there run.PST
         'He ran there.'   (UNERG)

     c. Yo tuyd.
         he leave.PST.MASC
         'He left/went.'   (UNACC)

To be sure, all other past-tense unaccusative subjects—except 3SG—take an overt agreement morpheme. In this paper, I present an analysis whereby it is the features [PARTICIPANT] and [PLURAL] which allow unaccusative subjects (i.e. internal arguments) to move out of VP to the phase edge, from where they can be reached by a probe and be the target of an agreement relation. Internal arguments which lack this probe stay within VP and are therefore unable to agree. Unergative 3SG subjects, for their part, are generated high enough in the structure to be viable targets for agreement, presumably in Spec,vP.

Importantly, this analysis derives the pattern of vestigial ergativity in Shughni without having to claim that the language has an ergative-assigning v^0 in such a small portion of its grammar. This contrasts to analyses of other Iranian languages displaying hybrid alignment systems, such as that of Moghaddam (2016) for Davani. Moreover, if this analysis is correct, then Shughni has lost all trace of ergativity in its structure. The ergative pattern which remains is the result of feature-based DP-movement.

4. Selected References
Haig, Geoffrey. 2008. Alignment change in Iranian languages: a construction grammar approach (Vol. 37). Walter de Gruyter. **Hippisley, A. and Stump, G., 2011.** Head & dependent marking and the Pamiri verb: a defaults-based account in Network Morphology. Explorations into Syntactic Government and Subcategorisation, University of Cambridge. **Kramer, R. 2014.** Clitic doubling or object agreement: the view from Amharic. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory, 32*(2), 593-634. **Moghaddam, S., 2016.** *Split Ergativity in Davani.* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto (Canada)). **Preminger, O. 2017.** What the PCC tells us about 'abstract agreement', head movement, and locality. To appear.