We just can't agree about agreement (or case, or morphology...)

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Introduction

Modeling abstract Case (licensing), morphological case, and φ-agreement has long been a central concern of syntactic and morphological theory.

A well-behaved example:

(1) *Adıyaman Kurmanji (Indo-Iranian)*
kırık-ın çay-ê dı-kırr-∅-ın-e.
child-PL tea-ACC IMPF-buy-NONPST-PL-COP
'The children are buying tea.'

Introduction

Today:

- Minimalist model of nominal licensing
- Distributed Morphology model of case and agreement
- Dependent case model and case-discriminating agreement
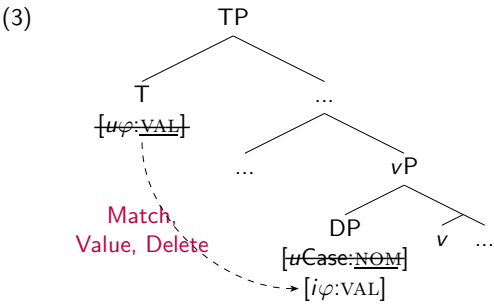- New research

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Early Minimalism

Early Minimalism

Early Minimalist model of nominal licensing:

(2) All nominals need...
  a. **Abstract Case** → because they bear an uninterpretable Case feature
  b. **Theta role** → because semantics

Early Minimalism

Successful agreement and Case-valuation:

(3)

Early Minimalism

Already in early Minimalism, there is a crucial separation between **matching** and **valuing**.

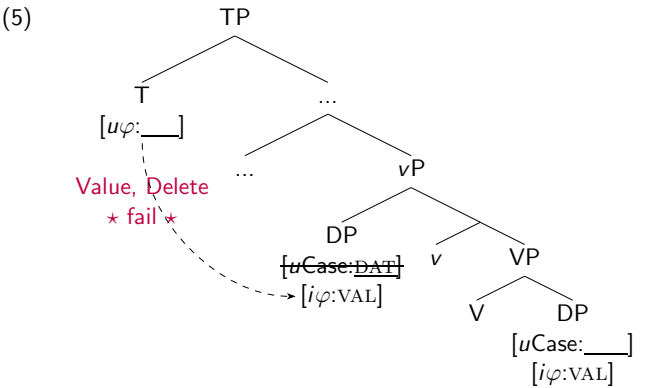AGREE allows **matching** to happen fairly freely (under feature identity). But...

(4) a. If a goal is **active** (itself bears uF), then **value**/delete of uF can take place on the probe.

  b. If the goal is **inactive**, then uF on the probe is not **valued**/deleted.

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Defective intervention:
(e.g., Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions; Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2003)

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Ok, so we have an operation, AGREE, that is responsible for φ-agreement and Case-licensing (which may be overtly spelled out as case), all taking place in the narrow syntax.

In flux (alongside and following early Minimalism):

- New tools (Distributed Morphology; dependent case)
- New data (licensing $\neq$ case $\neq$ agreement)

What are these new tools, what new questions have they enabled us to ask, and what new phenomena have they enabled us to model?

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Some of the famous problematic data from Icelandic (Zaenen et al. 1985, Jónsson 1996, Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir 2003, *i.a.*):

(6)   a.   Jóni   líkuðu þessir sokkar.
          Jon.DAT like.PL these socks.NOM
          'Jon likes these socks.'

      b.   Jón   vonast til [að ____   líka þessi
          Jon.NOM hope.SG for   to PRO(DAT) like this
          bók   ].
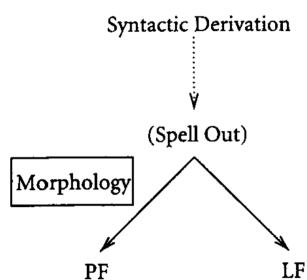   book.NOM
          'Jon hopes to like this book.'

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Distributed Morphology

Halle and Marantz (1993), Embick and Noyer (2007), *i.a.*:

- What enters into syntax is not words, but rather (functional) morphemes—bundles of features—and (lexical) roots.
- Syntax assembles all complex objects—words, phrases, etc.
- Morphology interprets syntax.
- Vocabulary insertion (choice of phonological exponent) is "late" and obeys the subset principle.

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Syntactic Derivation

(Spell Out)

Morphology

PF   LF

Default situation: morphology = syntax

But... maybe morphology can add to/alter syntactic input (hence, "exceptions" to Baker's Mirror Principle).

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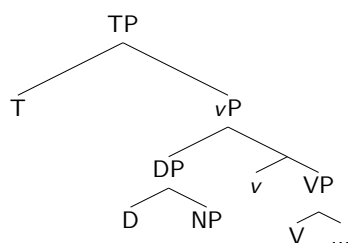
Case and agreement in (classic) DM:

- Not semantic, so plausibly absent from narrow syntax
- Arise due to language-specific well-formedness conditions; "ornamental"
- Added in the post-syntax; "dissociated"

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Narrow syntax:

(7)

TP
├─ T
└─ vP
   ├─ DP
   │ ├─ D
   │ └─ NP
   └─ v
      └─ VP
         └─ V ...

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Post-syntax:

(8)

TP
├─ T
│ ├─ T
│ └─ **Agr**
└─ vP
   ├─ DP
   │ ├─ D
   │ └─ NP
   │   **[Case]**
   └─ v
      └─ VP
         └─ V ...
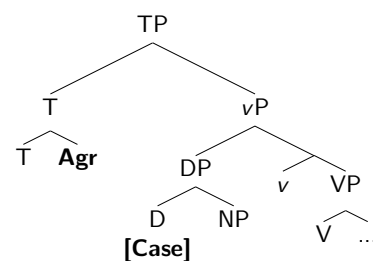
...Ok, but then how do we know what case features go where, and what features get copied to Agr?
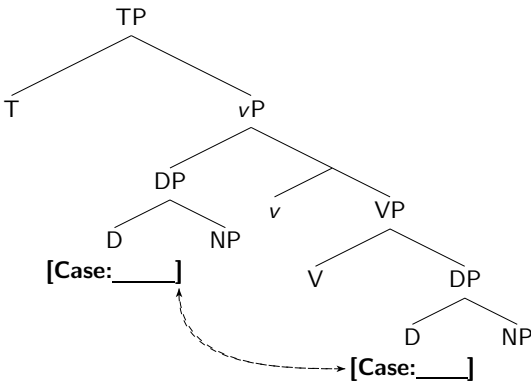
Dependent case and case-discriminating Agree

Dependent case and case-discriminating Agree

Marantz (1991):

(9) Case realization disjunctive hierarchy
   a. lexically governed case (quirky DAT, LOC, ...)
   b. dependent case (ACC, ERG)
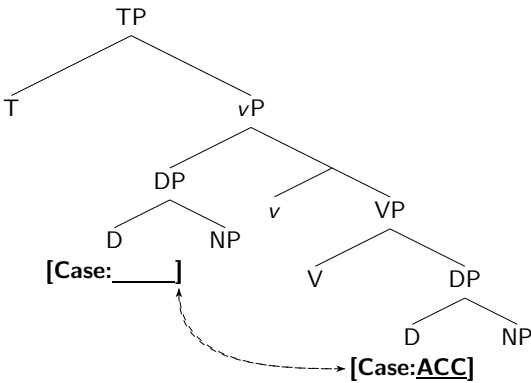   c. unmarked case (NOM/ABS)
   d. default case

Dependent case and case-discriminating Agree
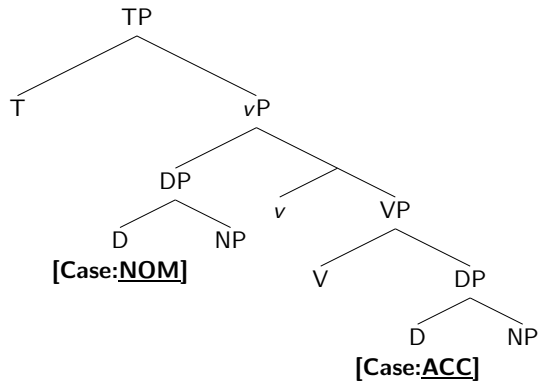
(10)

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(10)

```
            TP
          /    \
         T      vP
              /    \
            DP      \
           /  \    v   VP
          D    NP      /  \
      [Case:NOM]      V    DP
                          /  \
                         D    NP
                      [Case:ACC]
```

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Bobaljik (2008):

Agreement crucially follows case-assignment, in a probe-goal fashion, and is picky not only about agreeing with the *closest* DP (syntactic layer), but also about the **morphological case** of the DP it agrees with (morphological layer).

(11)   Revised Moravcsik (1978) hierarchy:
        unmarked case > dependent > lexical case

...And since case is post-syntactic, then agreement must be too.

...And maybe there's no nominal licensing at all (beyond nominals needing a theta role).

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Interim summary

Where we started: Case = case = agreement

Where we are now: ~~Case~~ ≠ case ≠ agreement

Now what??!

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- Preminger (2011, 2014): Bobaljik and Marantz are right but... dependent case and agreement happen in syntax.
  - *Failed agreement and defective intervention in Kaqchikel, Icelandic, and French*
- Bhatt and Walkow (2013): Chomsky is basically right but... Match and Value are crucially separated, we need a post-syntactic module, and Value can take place in the post-syntax.
  - *Closest conjunct agreement in Hindi*
- Arregi and Nevins (2012): Match ("Agree-Link") takes place in the syntax, and Value ("Agree-Copy") in the post-syntax, potentially fed by morphological operations.
  - *Basque auxiliary*

Mix and match

Insight from Neo-Aramaic languages

- Kalin (2014): In defense of nominal licensing
  - *Differential Object Marking in Senaya (and other languages)*
- Kalin (2015): Match is delayed until the end of the phase; operations deploy simultaneously
  - *Agreement reversal in Amadiya*
- Kalin (2016): Value is in the post-syntax; operations deploy sequentially
  - *Progressives in Senaya*

Mix and match

Reversal in Amadiya (Hoberman 1989):

(12) ʔe baxta gɨ-mpaḷṭ-*a*-**lu**   ʔanna
     this woman IND-remove.IMPF-*S.3FS*-**L.3pl** these
     gure.
     men
     '*This woman* removes **these men**.' (p. 98)

(13) ʔe baxta mpuḷṭ-**i**-*la*   ʔanna gure.
     this woman remove.PFV-**S.3pl**-*L.3FS* these men
     '*This woman* removed **these men**.'

Mix and match

What's next?

A unified system that has predictive/restrictive power while capturing the variation we've found (and are continuing to find)!

...Ask me again at the 100th anniversary.

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Inspiring me syntactically and contributing to this discussion from/at UCLA:

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