

# Dependent case as Binding Theory

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## 1. Plan

- **The conference theme:** In contrast to the caricature of generative research on linguistic universals/diversity advanced in publications such as Evans & Levinson (2010), which portrays the existence of puzzles and unsolved questions in this domain as embarrassing signs of failure, actual research makes progress by embracing the discovery of interesting puzzles as a sign of success — and, of course, by attempting to solve the questions that they raise. This talk will be a conventional (hopefully useful) instantiation of these tactics in the domain of nominal case.
- **Goal:** To support the proposals of Yip, Maling and Jackendoff (1987), Marantz (1991) and others that ACC is a *dependent case* — by reducing the notion "dependent case" to Binding Theory.
- As a by-product, I will argue that REFLEXIVE is also, in effect, a dependent case — with the result that a central insight of Chomsky's (1980) *Nominative Island Condition* becomes available once again. Case and anaphora are deeply connected, much as Chomsky suggested.
- More speculatively, I will suggest that cross-linguistic variation in the distribution of dependent case arises because the semantic components of different languages are not equally resourceful in extracting information that they demand from the syntax.

## 2. Background: case stacking and overwriting

### Pesetsky (2010) on case morphology in Russian:

- Assignment of morphology as a concomitant of Merge (cf. Matushansky 2007, Caha 2009) explains apparent case agreement phenomena internal to DP and NP;
- Following Richards (2007) on Japanese, Russian and Lardil: overwriting of previously assigned case morphemes by the most recently assigned case morpheme accounts for the absence of overt case-stacking in these languages.

#### (1) Reduction of the Russian cases to part-of-speech categories

Genitive	=	N	Accusative	=	V
Nominative	=	D	Obliques	=	P

#### (2) Feature Assignment (FA): "you are what you assign"

- **Copying:** When  $\alpha$  merges with  $\beta$ , forming [ $_{\alpha}$   $\alpha$   $\beta$ ], (and certain other conditions hold) the grammatical features of  $\alpha$  are immediately copied onto  $\beta$ , ...
- **Realization:** ...and are realized as morphology on all lexical items dominated by  $\beta$  (that have not already been spelled out).

#### (3) The One-Suffix Rule

Delete all but the outermost case suffix.

e.g. [~~A~~-~~GEN~~-~~NOM~~-DAT N-~~GEN~~-~~NOM~~-DAT]

- N assigns GEN to all accessible terminal elements of an adnominal...

#### (4) N assigning GEN to terminal elements of phrases that merge with it

[<sub>N'</sub> uničtoženi-e [<sub>DP</sub> bol's-ogo gorod-a]]  
 destruction-NOM.SG big-M.GEN.SG city-GEN.SG  
 'the destruction of the big city'

- D assigns NOM to all the (accessible) elements of NP and other categories that merge with projections of D — and D itself bears nominative:

#### (5) D assigning NOM to terminal elements of phrases that merge with it

[<sub>DP</sub> èt-i [<sub>D'</sub> posledn-ie [<sub>D'</sub> D [<sub>NP</sub> krasiv-ye stol-y]]]]  
 these-NOM.PL last-NOM.PL beautiful-NOM.PL table-NOM.PL  
 'these last beautiful tables'

- A dative P (sometimes null) assigns DAT to all the terminal elements of its DP object:

#### (6) overt P assigning DAT to terminal elements of phrases that merge with it

[<sub>DP</sub> èt-im posledn-im krasiv-ym stol-am]  
 to these-DAT.PL last-DAT.PL beautiful-DAT.PL table-DAT.PL  
 'to these last beautiful tables'

#### (7) null P assigning DAT to terminal elements of phrases that merge with it

Vanja pomog [<sub>PP</sub>  $\emptyset_P$  [<sub>DP</sub> èt-im student-am]]  
 Vanja helped these-DAT.PL student-DAT.PL  
 'Vanja helped these students.'

- **Russian-internal argument for these ideas: complex case patterns in numeral constructions.**

## 3. Dependent case

- Pesetsky (2010) treated ACC as case assigned by V. The idea that ACC is *assigned* explains why we find ACC morphology on determiners and adjectives as well as nouns inside an ACC DP. Case spreads to all the accessible elements within the nominal:

(8) **ACC morphology uniform throughout the ACC-marked DP**

- a. My videli èt-u krasiv-uju lamp-u  
 we saw this.F.ACC.SG beautiful-F.ACC.SG lamp-ACC.SG (F)  
 'We saw this beautiful lamp.'
- b. My videli èt-ogo molod-ogo otc-a.  
 we saw this-M.ACC=GEN.SG young-M.ACC=GEN.SG father-ACC=GEN.SG (M)  
 'We saw this young father.'

- ...but there are good arguments in favor of an entirely different treatment of ACC!

- **Facts that made Icelandic famous: quirky case takes priority.**

(9) **NOM-ACC constructions**

- a. Jón kyssti Maríu.  
 John-NOM kissed Mary-ACC
- b. María var kysst  
 Mary-NOM was kissed
- c. Hann telur Jón hafa kysst Maríu.  
 he-NOM believes John-ACC to-have kissed Mary

(10) **Quirky oblique case takes priority over expected NOM and ACC**

(Andrews 1982)

*oblique instead of ACC*

- a. ðeir luku kirkjunni.  
 they finished the-church.DAT
- b. Hann telur mér bjóða við setningafræði.  
 He-NOM believes me-DAT to.be.nauseated at syntax

*oblique instead of NOM*

- c. Mér býður við setningafræði.  
 me.DAT is-nauseated at syntax
- d. Kirkjunni var lokið.  
 the-church.DAT wasfinished

- **Facts that made Icelandic even more famous:**

(11) **Quirky subject + nominative object in a finite clause**

- Jóni líkaði bókina ekki.  
 John.DAT liked the.book.NOM not

On the basis of (11), one might imagine that agreement or tense is responsible for NOM morphology on the object — but (12a-b) the presence of NOM has nothing to do with TNS (McFadden & Sundaresan 2011), but is somehow the result of the oblique subject:

(12) **Quirky subject + nominative object in ECM infinitival**

- a. Læknirinn telur  
 the.doctor-NOM believes  
 [barninu hafa batnað veikin ]  
 the.child-DAT to-have recovered.from the.disease-NOM
- b. Eg tel [henni hafa alltaf þótt [Olafur leiðinlegur]]  
 I believe her-DAT to-have always thought Olaf-NOM boring-NOM  
 (Yip, Maling and Jackendoff 1987, 241-2, Marantz 1991)

- **Marantz (1991): ACC is a dependent case** [cf. Yip, Maling and Jackendoff 1987]

(13) **Case realization disjunctive hierarchy**

*Assign case to all eligible nominals (within a relevant local domain) according to the following schedule of priorities:*

- a. lexically governed case (e.g. quirky DAT)  
**b. dependent case (ACC, ERG) — see (14) below**  
 c. unmarked case (NOM, ABS — may be environment-sensitive)  
 d. [assign default case]

(14) **Dependent Case [simplified]**

Assign dependent case (ACC) to a nominal that is locally c-commanded by [*or: c-commands, for ERG*] a distinct nominal that does not bear lexically governed case.

- Suppose ACC is indeed an instance of dependent case. The fact ACC morphology is also present on all accessible terminals of an ACC-marked DP in Icelandic suggests that there is a local assigner nonetheless:

(15) **ACC morphology found throughout the ACC DP in Icelandic (cf. (8) for Russian)**

- Ég sá gula hænuna.  
 I.NOM saw yellow-ACC hen-ACC (Thráinsson 2007, 2)

- **Solution:**

(16) **Dependent case is morphology on D that determines what case morphology D assigns to its complement NP**

A NOM D assigns NOM to the terminals of NP and other syntactic dependents by the rule in (2). An ACC D assigns ACC.

- (17) 
$$[DP \text{ D-ACC } \overbrace{[NP \text{ yellow- } \_ \text{ hen - } \_ ]}^{acc}] \rightarrow [DP \text{ D-ACC } [NP \text{ yellow- ACC hen - ACC}]]$$

#### 4. Dependent Case as Binding Theory

- But dependent case is a very odd concept!

*Worry #1:*

Why should the presence/absence of a c-commanding nominal dictate the morphology of a distinct nominal...?

*Worry #2:*

...and why should it matter that the c-commanding nominal not bear oblique case?

- *An approach to Worry #1*  
The notion that the morphology of a c-commanding nominal within a local domain  $\delta$  dictates the morphology of a distinct nominal is familiar from another domain...*Binding Theory* (cf. Chomsky's 1980 "On Binding").

- (18) **A first attempt at a Binding-Theoretic re-description of dependent case**  
Where  $\alpha$  is D heading a DP with Binding Domain  $\delta$ ...
- $\alpha$  bears ACC if it is disjoint in reference from a c-commanding DP in  $\delta$ .
  - $\alpha$  bears NOM if it is not disjoint in reference from any c-commanding DP in  $\delta$ .

- (19) *An example:*  
She<sub>1</sub>-NOM thinks [ <sub>$\delta$</sub>  that she<sub>2</sub>-NOM likes her<sub>3</sub>-ACC]

- In (19), ACC morphology on *her*<sub>3</sub> indicates that *her*<sub>3</sub> is disjoint from *she*<sub>2</sub>, which c-commands it within  $\delta$  — but leaves open the question of coreference between *her*<sub>3</sub> and *she*<sub>1</sub>, which lies outside  $\delta$ . (= **Principle B**)

NOM morphology appears on *she*<sub>1</sub> and *she*<sub>2</sub> because neither DP is c-commanded within its Binding Domain.

- (20) *But what about r-expressions, which may also bear ACC?*  
She<sub>1</sub>-NOM thinks [ <sub>$\delta$</sub>  that she<sub>2</sub>-NOM likes Mary<sub>3</sub>-ACC]

- In (20), ACC morphology on *Mary*<sub>3</sub> indicates that *Mary*<sub>3</sub> is disjoint from *she*<sub>2</sub>, which c-commands it within  $\delta$  — but once again leaves open the question of coreference with *she*<sub>1</sub>, which lies outside  $\delta$ .

This looks like a *wrong* result, since *Mary*<sub>3</sub> is disjoint from *she*<sub>1</sub> (**Principle C**).

- *Reinhartizing Principle C:* If one supposes that **BT(C) effects are the result of a different kind of principle** entirely (Reinhart 1983), we could equally well suppose that...

- (21) **Conjecture: R-expressions are vacuously subject to BT(B)**  
Both an r-expression and a pronoun signal with ACC morphology disjoint reference with a locally c-commanding DP.

- *An approach to Worry #2*

- (22) **Oblique nominals are PPs (with a null preposition)**  
An oblique subject in Icelandic is a PP (cf. the analysis of Russian obliques), and **therefore does not count as a c-commanding nominal** for the purposes of ACC assignment as in (18b).

- (23) **Illustrating (22)**
- |                                     |     |  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>non-oblique c-commander</b>      | vs. | <b>oblique c-commander</b>               |
| DP <sub>i</sub> ... DP <sub>j</sub> |     | [P DP <sub>1</sub> ] ... DP <sub>2</sub> |
| NOM ACC                             |     | DAT NOM                                  |

- And if D bears ACC, it also *assigns* ACC to the other accessible elements of DP (and if it bears NOM, it assigns NOM).

- (24) Ég sá [D-ACC gula hænna].  
I.NOM saw yellow-ACC hen-ACC
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**Why even give this proposal the time of day?**

- It is strange enough that the interpretation of every argument is restricted by the DPs that c-command it (Binding Theory).
- But it is *wildly* improbable that the language faculty should show two unconnected conditions (Binding Theory and Dependent Case) that both make reference to the set of DPs that c-command an argument — and make such reference within a locality-delimited domain.

- **The role of overwriting:** The priority of lexical case over NOM and ACC — so long as we maintain that oblique cases are assigned by P to an already built DP:

- (25) P [DP D-ACC [NP yellow-ACC hen-ACC]]  
→ P [DP D-ACC-DAT [NP yellow-ACC-DAT hen-ACC-DAT]]

## 5. "Reflexive case"

- **Reflexives:** Binding by a locally c-commanding nominal is marked (in an English-type language) by use of a special reflexive (REFL) form.

If we are viewing ACC as a marker of disjoint reference (DR) with a locally c-commanding nominal, and NOM as a marker of the absence of a locally c-commanding nominal...

...we must view reflexive morphology as the morphological exponent of binding by a locally c-commanding nominal. That is, REFL is a dependent case:

### (26) Second attempt at a Binding-Theoretic re-description of dependent case

- Where  $\alpha$  is a D heading a DP with Binding Domain  $\delta$ ,
- $\alpha$  bears REFL if it is bound by a c-commanding DP in  $\delta$ .
  - $\alpha$  bears ACC if it is disjoint from a c-commanding DP in  $\delta$ .
  - $\alpha$  bears NOM otherwise.

- If the morphology is applied to D in the order given in (27)...

### (27) A universal morphological template for D

[[[D NOM] ACC ] REFL]

- ... then by overwriting, REFL will prevail.

[[D-NOM] ACC ] REFL]

- The fact that REFL morphology is outermost reflects the fact that a nominal is reflexive if it is *bound by any nominal* within its local domain — *even if the domain also contains c-commanding DPs with which it is disjoint*.

Under such circumstances, the morphology *always* reflects the binding relation, not the disjointness relation:

### (28) Reflexive morphology wins

- John<sub>i</sub> told Bill about himself<sub>i</sub>. (*himself* disjoint from *Bill*)
- Sue<sub>i</sub> told her about herself<sub>i</sub>. (*herself* disjoint from *her*)

- **If REFL is a case, why don't we find reflexive morphology on r-expressions?**

Recall the crucial assumption that ACC is found on r-expressions as well as pronouns in languages like Icelandic because (in effect) r-expressions obey BT(B), i.e. register *local* DR — even though BT(C) effects redundantly account for the same facts for r-expressions.

But *something* accounts for BT(C) effects, which apply to all r-expressions (with Reinhart exceptions, perhaps), so...

- (29) **Excluded as a Principle C effect, but morphologically possible**  
\*John likes John's-self

### The proposal: full version

#### (30) Binding Theory

*Applies to licensed elements in a phase, when the phase is shipped to LF*

##### a. The "On Binding" principle (version 1)

A DP must be interpreted as either *disjoint in reference with* or else *bound by* every DP that c-commands it from an A-position; and...

- b. ... this interpretation depends on the presence of appropriate morphology.

#### (31) D-morphology relevant to (30b)

- ACC on D signals disjointness with a c-commander.
- REFL on D signals binding by a c-commander.

*And perhaps...*

- ERG on D signals disjointness with a c-commandee
- [but does morphology ever signal binding of a c-commandee?]

#### (32) Full interpretation

ACC, REFL etc. must contribute to interpretation.

## 6. The "Nominative Island Condition generalization"...

...as an argument for the overall proposal — including REFL case

- **Near-complementary distribution:** NOM, ACC and REFL carve up the space of possibilities within a BD, with no overlap.

[Actually, one sliver is left ineffable: local overlap in reference, Lasnik (1981, 1989).]

- **The notion of a form that is both NOM and REFL is thus a contradiction in terms.** And indeed, the positions where DPs normally bear NOM exclude REFL-forms (in many languages, at least) — and a pronoun marked NOM is free to co-refer with higher c-commanding nominals (because any such nominals must be outside the relevant local domain).

- This is the generalization behind Chomsky's (1980) the *Nominative Island Condition*.

#### (33) Ban on reflexives as subject of finite clause

\*They think that themselves bought the book.

#### (34) A coreferential pronoun is used wherever the reflexive is blocked.

- They<sub>i</sub> think that they<sub>i</sub> bought the book.
- \*They<sub>i</sub> believe them<sub>i</sub> to have bought the book.

that this NP behaves under all relevant respects like the subject of a tensed clause, and so it does." Rizzi (1981, 137)

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**A multitude of ideas about the generalization underlying (33)-(34):**

- **Morphological gap**  
No nominative form of the reflexive happens to exist.
- **Tense is relevant**  
(the "Tensed S condition"; Chomsky 1973, 1977b, 1977a)  
A reflexive may not be bound from outside a finite clause.
- **Agreement is relevant**  
(the "Anaphor-Agreement effect"; Rizzi 1990, Woolford 1999)  
A reflexive is illegal in a position of (subject) agreement.
- **NOM is relevant**  
(the "Nominative Island condition"; Chomsky 1980)  
A nominative reflexive is illegal.

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**Argument #1: Evidence from Italian for NOM as the relevant factor**

- **Infinitival AUX-to-COMP (Rizzi 1981, 1982):** In hyper-literary Italian, raising of AUX to COMP is possible in the infinitival complement to a verb of saying or believing — and licenses a nominative subject:

(35) **Very literary Italian infinitival AUX-to-C: nominative subject**  
Hanno sempre sostenuto [non esser io/\*me in grado di affrontare una simile situazione].  
AUX.3PL always asserted not be-INF I-NOM/\*ACC able to face such a situation  
'They have always asserted that I am not able to face such a situation.'

- **The Nominative Island Condition effect:**

(36) **Nominative subject of an infinitival in the AUX-to-COMP construction**  
a. Mario<sub>i</sub> ha sempre sostenuto [non esser lui<sub>i</sub> in grado di affrontare una simile situazione].  
Mario AUX always asserted not be-INF he able to face such a situation.  
'Mario has always asserted that he is not able to face such a situation.'

b. \*Mario ha sempre sostenuto [non esser se stesso in grado di affrontare ...].  
Mario AUX always asserted not be-INF REFL able to face....

"In [(36b)] a reflexive pronoun...has been inserted in subject position of the infinitival complement and the resulting structure is unacceptable. In [(36a)] the personal pronoun *lui*, subject of the infinitival complement, can be interpreted as anaphoric to the man subject: in other words, disjoint reference does not apply.

"These two facts are a problem for the [Tensed S Condition] approach, which predicts the acceptability of [(36b)] and the unacceptability of [(36a)] in the anaphoric reading; but they are predicted by the NIC approach which therefore receives strong empirical support. Given the morphological evidence in [(35) and similar examples] that the subject NP of this infinitival construction is marked nominative, the NIC predicts

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**Argument #2: Evidence from Icelandic (Everaert 1991) for NOM as the relevant factor**

(37) **Binding theoretic properties of positions locally c-commanded by a non-oblique**  
a. Jón<sub>i</sub> elskar sig<sub>i</sub>.  
John loves REFL  
b. \*Jón<sub>i</sub> elskar hann<sub>i</sub>  
John loves him

- **Which c-commanders count:**  
The Binding Theory in (30) cares about c-commanding *DP*s.

**Consequences for c-commanding obliques:**

- If we are correct to analyze obliques as PPs, then a DAT subject that c-commands an argument  $\alpha$  is not a commanding *DP*. Consequently, this DAT will be irrelevant to the Binding Principle (30a) as it applies to  $\alpha$ .
- This will simultaneously have a consequence that we are in the habit of thinking of as Case-theoretic — and a second consequence that we are in the habit of thinking of as Binding-theoretic.
- The **case-theoretic consequence** was already discussed:  $\alpha$ , if it is not c-commanded by another DP, will be NOM — and has **no option of bearing ACC**.
- The **binding-theoretic consequence**:  $\alpha$  will also have **no option of bearing REFL**.

(38) **\*NOM reflexive within reach of finite TNS:**  
*confirming the prediction, but not distinguishing the NIC generalization from the*

*Anaphor-Agreement generalization*  
[All data from Everaert (1991), except as indicated.]

- a. **as NOM object**  
\*Maríu<sub>i</sub> leiðist REFL<sub>i</sub>  
Maria.DAT finds.boring REFL.NOM  
'Maria finds herself boring.'
- b. **as NOM subject of small clause**  
\*Honum<sub>i</sub> finnst REFL<sub>i</sub> veikur  
him.DAT finds REFL.NOM sick  
'He considers himself sick'
- c. **as NOM subject of raising infinitive**  
\*Honum<sub>i</sub> syndist REFL<sub>i</sub> vera að tapa  
him.DAT seemed REFL.NOM be to lose  
'It seemed to him that he was losing.'

- (39) **The "famous construction":**  
 \*NOM reflexive as object of ECM clause, and not within reach of finite TNS  
*does distinguish the NIC generalization from the Anaphor-Agreement generalization*

- a. \*Ég tel Jóni<sub>i</sub> finnast REFL skráttinn  
 I believe John.DAT to.find REFL.NOM strange.NOM.M.SG
- b. \*María telur Jóni<sub>i</sub> finnast REFL<sub>i</sub> skráttinn  
 Mary believes John.DAT to.find REFL.NOM strange.NOM.M.SG  
 (Heimar Vidarsson and Halldor Sigurdsson, p.c.)

- (40) **NOM pronoun within reach of finite TNS shows no DR effect**  
*confirming the prediction, but not distinguishing the NIC generalization from the Anaphor-Agreement generalization*

- a. *as NOM object*  
 Maríu<sub>i</sub> leiðist [hún \*(sjálf)]<sub>i</sub>  
 Maria.DAT finds.boring she.NOM  
 'Maria finds herself boring.'
- b. *as NOM subject of small clause*  
 Honu<sub>i</sub> finnst [hann ?(sjálfur)]<sub>i</sub> skráttinn  
 him.DAT finds him.NOM self strange  
 'He considers himself sick'
- c. *as NOM subject of raising infinitive*  
 Honu<sub>i</sub> syndist hann (sjálfur)<sub>i</sub> vera að tapa  
 him.DAT seemed he.NOM to.be to lose  
 'It seemed to him that he was losing.'

- (41) **The "famous construction":**  
**NOM pronoun as object of ECM clause, and not within reach of finite TNS, also shows no DR effects**  
*does distinguish the NIC generalization from the Anaphor-Agreement generalization*

- a. Ég tel Jóni<sub>i</sub> finnast hann<sub>i</sub> (sjálfur) skráttinn.  
 I believe John-DAT find he.NOM strange.NOM.M.SG
- b. María telur Jóni<sub>i</sub> finnast hann<sub>i</sub> (sjálfur) skráttinn.  
 Mary believes John-DAT to.find he.NOM strange.NOM.M.SG  
 (Heimar Vidarsson and Halldor Sigurdsson, p.c.)

- Everaert's evidence that the NOM pronouns of (40) are not just "reflexives in disguise":

- (42) **The nominative pronouns of (40) may function as coreferent as well as bound pronouns**

Jóni<sub>i</sub> finnst hann<sub>i</sub> (sjálfur) vera skráttinn, og Harald<sub>j</sub> líka  
 John.DAT finds him.NOM self to.be strange, and Harald.DAT too  
 (ambig: Harald thinks Harald/John is strange)

- (43) **Emphatic pronoun *sjálfur* 'self' follows an ordinary pronoun, but precedes a reflexive**

- a. Haraldur rakaði hann sjálfan. 'Harald shaved him *emph*'  
 b. Haraldur rakaði sjálfan sig 'Harald shaved REFL *emph*'

## 7. What remains of the anaphor-agreement effect?

### Agreement

- **An argument advanced in favor of an *Anaphor-Agreement Effect*:**

- (44) **Woolford's (1999) argument**

Object agreement is incompatible with anaphors, unless the agreement is a special anaphoric form.

- **On the existence of a special anaphoric form:**

Not surprising that a language that distinguishes NOM agreement from ACC agreement should also show distinct REFL agreement, under the proposal advanced here

- **On the incompatibility of agreement with REFL in languages that otherwise show ACC agreement:**

- (45) **The Bobaljik agreement hierarchy**

a. The controller of agreement on the finite verbal complex (Infl+V) is the highest accessible NP in the [relevant domain].

- b. *Agreement accessibility hierarchy:*

Unmarked Case > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case

- (46) **Expansion of the Bobaljik agreement hierarchy:**

Unmarked Case (i.e. NOM) >

Dependent (DR) case (i.e. ACC) >

***Dependent (REFL) case >***

Lexical/Oblique Case

- The agreement hierarchy NOM>ACC>REFL mirrors the morphological hierarchy in (27) (repeated below) that we posited to explain an entirely different observation:

the fact that "REFL wins" when a nominal is DR with one locally c-commanding nominal, and bound by another:

(47) **A (universal?) morphological template for D**  
 [[[D NOM] ACC ] REFL]

- **A Rezacian explanation:** D bears valued  $\phi$ -features. Cross-linguistically, depending on the properties of NOM, ACC and REFL in a given language:  
 NOM may or may not inherit  $\phi$ -features from D by Agree;  
 ACC may or may not inherit  $\phi$ -features from NOM by Agree;  
 and REFL may or may not inherit  $\phi$ -features from ACC by Agree...

Absence of  $\phi$ -feature agreement at any point in the D-NOM-ACC-REFL sequence breaks the chain of agreement. We thus *expect* the languages with NOM agreement to be a proper superset of those with NOM & ACC agreement, and the languages with NOM & ACC agreement to be a superset of those with NOM, ACC & REFL agreement.

**Obliques as antecedents**

- Crucial to our account of oblique-subject NOM-object constructions was the generalization in (22), repeated below:
- (48) **Conjecture: Oblique subjects are PPs** [= (22)]  
 An oblique subject in Icelandic is a PP with a null P, and therefore does not count as a c-commanding nominal for the purposes of populating the DR-index set of any DPs that it c-commands.
- But obliques do interact binding-theoretically with other obliques:
- (49) **Icelandic quirky accusative subject of 'lack' (from a null ACC-assigning P)**  
 a. \*Henni<sub>j</sub> virðist hana<sub>j</sub> vanta peninga  
    Her.DAT seems her.ACC lack money  
 b. Henni<sub>j</sub> virðist sig<sub>j</sub> vanta peninga  
    Her.DAT seems REFL.ACC lack money  
    'She seems to herself to lack money.' (Everaert, quoting Thrainsson)
- (50) **Italian double-PP verb**  
 a. \*A loro<sub>i</sub> importa solo di loro<sub>i</sub>.  
    to them matters only of them  
 b. A loro importa solo di se stessi  
    to them matters only of themselves' (Rizzi 1990, 33 ex. (15a))
- (51) **The "On Binding" principle (version 2): a "distinctness" condition**  
 An argument of category  $\kappa$  must be interpreted as either *disjoint in reference with* or else *bound by* every  $\kappa$  that c-commands it from an A-position.

**How it works:** The P that introduces the accusative argument in (49), or *di* in (50) must bear REFL or ACC (perhaps DR becomes a better name) since it is c-commanded by another PP. This affects the morphology that the P assigns to its DP complement (just as it affects the morphology of D) resulting in a reflexive in the (b) sentences.

**Also:**

The PP/DP distinction might be neutralized in some languages, perhaps due to P bearing  $\phi$ -features, as argued by Rezac (2008).

Consequences: a higher OBL should license ACC on an argument that it c-commanded, which is attested in Sakha (Baker and Vinokurova 2010) and in Faroese for DAT subject constructions like those seen above in Icelandic (Jónsson 2009, building on Barnes 1986; agreement with DAT is also found, as Jónsson discusses; see also ). See also Asarina (2011):

- (52) **Faroese ACC object with DAT subject**  
 Mær dámar føroyskan tónleik.  
 I.DAT like.3S Faroese.ACC music.ACC  
 'I like Faroese music.'

**8. Return to Lectures on Government and Binding**

- It is not surprising that the domain in which an ACC pronoun must be DR is a domain relevant to its "accusativity" as well. In the proposal developed here, the dependent element must be no more than a BT-antecedent's length away from the element on which it depends — precisely because that element *is* a BT-antecedent.
- This recaptures an observation deemed important in *LGB* and related work — that a common factor ("government" in *LGB*) underlies the locality of case-assignment and the locality of Binding Theory.

**9. Variation in the resourcefulness and intelligence of the semantics**

- It is quite common cross-linguistically for ACC to be assigned in only a *proper subset* of the positions where ACC morphology is expected, given the discussion so far.
- (53) **The distribution of ACC in Russian**  
 ACC morphology is assigned to  $\alpha$  only if:  
 a.  $\alpha$  is [+pronominal]; or  
 b.  $\alpha$  is [+animate]; or  
 c.  $\alpha$  is [+feminine] and not plural.  
 Otherwise, a DP in an otherwise accusative position bears NOM.

- **Conjecture:** The semantics does demand from the syntax information about the referential relation between arguments and the elements that c-command them locally — just as the "On Binding" Principle states.

However it is not true that this information must always come from ACC and REFL morphology. *Instead: languages differ in how resourcefully and intelligently the semantics goes about acquiring this information.* Where the semantics acquires this information by alternative means, case morphology is superfluous and is thus absent.

#### Consequence for ACC: Differential Object Marking (Aissen 2003, Bossong 1985)

##### Lower-position intelligence:

- **BT(C):** Suppose LF knows about BT(C). Then only a pronominal D (which does not obey BT(C)) needs to register DR using ACC morphology.  
*Result:* Only pronouns will show a NOM/ACC distinction.
- **Novelty condition:** Suppose LF knows about the novelty condition on indefinites?  
*Result:* Only definites will show a NOM/ACC distinction.

##### (54) Hebrew: ACC only if definite

- a. Hu mexapes 'et-ha-rofe. (definite object: ACC)  
he is.looking ACC-the-doctor  
'He is looking for the doctor.'
- b. Hu mexapes (\*'et-) rofe 'exad. (indefinite object: no ACC)  
he is.looking (\*ACC-)doctor one even though specific)  
'He's looking for a certain doctor.' (Aissen 2003, 453)

- **Non-specific:** Suppose LF knows that a non-specific is always novel?  
*Result:* Only non-specifics will show a NOM/ACC distinction.

##### (55) Turkish: ACC only if specific

- a. Ali bir kitab-ı aldı (non-specific object)  
Ali one book-ACC bought  
'A book is such that Ali bought it.'
- b. Ali bir kitap aldı. (specific object)  
Ali one book bought  
'Ali bought some book or other.' (Enç 1991, 5, cited by Aissen)

##### Upper-position intelligence:

- **Expletive:** Suppose LF knows that an expletive cannot be an antecedent?  
*Result:* NOM on the associate of the expletive, rather than ACC.

#### Genderist, species-ist, declension-ist intelligence?

- **Animates:** Suppose LF assumes that an inanimate (or non-human) is DR with respect to all c-commanding nominals.  
*Result:* Animates (or humans) will show a NOM/ACC distinction, but inanimates (non-humans) will not.
- **Noun-class specific:** e.g. the assumption that inanimates are DR is suspended for feminine gender non-plural in Russian...

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##### Stem intelligence:

- **Stem is lexically a bound variable:** Suppose a language contains an NP whose meaning is "bound variable" (e.g. *zibun-zisin* or a body-part reflexive) ...

*Possible Result:* The language may lack REFL and ACC. The D-morphology that will be called *accusative on* is not ACC in the Icelandic sense — but signals only the presence of a c-commanding nominal to which LF must pay attention.

It is the content of the NP with which this accusative D merges that tells LF what referential relation exists between the so-called accusative nominal and its c-commander.

*A consequence:* No problem using such a nominal with NOM. Reflexive *case* is excluded from an environment in which there is no locally c-commanding nominal, but a reflexive NP is not:

##### (56) Japanese nominative reflexive

John-ga [zibun-zisin-ga Bill-o semeta to] itta  
John-NOM reflexive-NOM Bill-ACC blamed that said  
'John<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>j</sub> blamed Bill.'

The logic: interpret *-o* marked DP as DR from c-commanding nominal unless overridden by lexical property of NP.

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## 10. Appendix: some issues

- long-distance anaphora  
[...]
- ergative alignment and dependent case  
[...]

- **Why isn't REFL overwritten by assignment of oblique case by P** — in, say, Russian, which distinguishes GEN, DAT, INSTR etc. reflexive forms? (Similar issues arise in Icelandic, and no doubt in many other languages.)

(57) **Oblique case-marked reflexives in Russian**

- a. Maša dumala o s-eb-e.  
Masha thought about REFL-DAT.
- b. Vanja vzjal s s-ob-oj čemodan.  
Vanja took with REFL-INSTR suitcase

- **Possible answer:** Because REFL is a prefix (s-) and OBL is suffixal, REFL does not overwrite OBL.
- **Possible example of OBL overwriting REFL:** English reflexive possessives:

- (58) a. Mary likes pictures of her-self.  
b. Mary likes her-self's pictures.  
(cf. *Mary likes each other's pictures.*)

**Still...** There should be languages with rich Russian-like case systems in which the reflexive/pronoun distinction is neutralized in oblique positions...

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