

A-related Edge features

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Issue. This paper explores Chomsky’s (2005) proposal that T inherits all its features from the Edge (i.e., from CP) by focusing on Case-licensing mechanisms in various Nominative-Accusative languages. I argue that while Tense saturation and Case potential are truly Edge properties (i.e., inherited by T from C), Case valuation is not. Specifically, I show that:

(i) cross-linguistically, only phasal domains are temporally deictic and Case granting regardless of whether T inherits any phi-features from C or not;

(ii) T does not inherit a Case value from C. Nominative or Accusative values are strictly correlated to the presence versus absence of phi-feature specifications on the probing domain;

(iii) null expletive *pro* is a parametrized UG primitive with a role in Case valuation.

Analysis. I provide arguments for (i) by illustrating failure of inflected T domains to license Case in the absence of the Edge (i.e., when unsaturated by C). For example, I show how TP subjunctives in Romanian, while inflected, cannot license a Nominative subject in addition to a stranded emphatic, while CP domains can. See (1).

- (1) a. Victor_i pare /încearcă [TP (*[CP ca] să facă (*e_i) pizza
Victor.NOM seem.3SG / try.3SG [TP that.SBJ SBJ make.3SG he.NOM pizza
[e_i însuși_i]].
[he.NOM himself]]
‘Victor seems to himself be making pizza.’
- b. Mihai_i regretă [CP că e_i nu poate veni [e_i însuși_k]]
Mihai.NOM regret.3SG [CP that.IND he.NOM NEG can come.3SG [he.NOM himself]]
‘Mihai regrets that he can’t himself come.’

In order to argue for (ii) and (iii), I focus on cross-linguistic occurrence and Case type of lexical subjects in uninflected phasal domains. These domains are relevant as they permit an investigation of agreement and its relationship to C and Case. It is well-known that null subject languages (henceforth, NSL) such as Romanian, Spanish or Greek (Ledgeway 1998, Sitaridou 2002) license Nominative subjects in various uninflected CP infinitive and gerund constructions. Consider the Romanian gerund in (2a) and the Spanish infinitive in (2b).

- (2) a. [CP Fiind noi gata cu toții], am pornit la drum.
[being.GER we.NOM ready with all] have started on way
‘Given that we were all ready, we started on our way.’
- b. Lo supimos [CP después de llegar él].
we found out [CP after of arrive.INF he.NOM]
‘We found out after he had arrived.’ (Ledgeway 1998: 5)

Given that lexical subjects are permitted in the absence of inflected but tensed T domains, I suggest that in (2a,b) C lends T Tense and Case properties but not phi-properties. However, in English, gerund temporal adjuncts are tensed but subjectless CP domains, as seen in (3a), while *for-to* CP infinitives allow for lexical Accusative but not Nominative subjects, as seen in (3b).

- (3) a. We left after (***them**/***he**) baking the pie.
b. For **him** / ***he** to listen to her talk was awkward.

If, as established by (i) and argued by Chomsky (2005), Edges, as phasal domains, are the locus of Case properties, why are lexical subjects not uniformly overt and Nominative in both (2) and (3)? I show that the variation can readily be accounted for in a system which views Case spell-out as intrinsically linked to the featural build up of the probing domain, as outlined in (4).

- (4) a. NOMINATIVE, *iff* the tensed domain is specified as [*i*T, *u*D, *u*φ]
b. ACCUSATIVE, *iff* the tensed domain is specified as [*i*T, *u*D]

Specifically, the presence or absence of phi-features allows for a Probe once [uD] has been satisfied, and determines the value for Case on the related Goal. In NSLs, a null expletive (*pro*) is available to Spec,TP to satisfy [uD] on T. With uninflected T, it is this bundle of [D, $u\phi$] that will further probe for a D Goal, thereby guaranteeing the relevant syntactic relationship needed in Case valuation and overt licensing of the subject as Nominative. In non-NSLs, like English, there is no expletive *pro*, so [uD] on uninflected T is satisfied internal to the derivation, either by gerund *-ing*, with nothing further to probe for the subject DP, which is thus constrained to silence (i.e., PRO status), or, with infinitives, by the DP subject itself, always spelled out as Accusative, as there is no [u ϕ] associated on the domain that probes. Consequently, *Case values are not primitives of the Edges (i.e., C or v)* but dependent on whether phi-specifications are available to the tensed domain - or not.

The validity of such an analysis finds support from various cross-dialectal empirical facts. For example, in varieties of English with null expletives (e.g., Newfoundland English, see (5) below), uninflected phasal infinitives license Nominative, as opposed to Accusative, subjects.

(5) For **he** to listen to that talk was awkward.

In addition, it predicts, at least in principle, that there are languages with identical Case values for both subject and object DPs. This is true at least of Khoekhoe (Central Khoisan, Namibia) interrogatives, where, in the absence of phi-features, both subject and object are morphologically marked with the *-a* morpheme (termed ‘oblique’ in the descriptive literature), see (6).

(6) axa-p-a ko !^xo ani-s-a ?
 child-M.SG-ACC RCT.PST catch bird-F.SG-ACC
 ‘Did the boy catch the bird?’ (Compton 2005:11)

Last but not least, the paper provides arguments for expletive *pro* as a UG primitive. Based on the behaviour of Dative interveners and binding facts in Romanian, I demonstrate that there is empirical evidence for expletive *pro* in this language, contra to various recent minimalist analyses of NSLs have eliminated *pro* altogether (e.g., Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou, 1998, Manzini & Savoia, 2002). Crucially, T must remove the Dative argument in (7) before it can target another DP to satisfy its [u ϕ].

(7) *(\hat{I}_k) plac t_k copiii.
 DAT.CL.3SG like.3PL t_k kids-the.NOM
 ‘She likes kids.’

However, with raising predicates, an embedded Dative fails to trigger clitic movement in the main clause, even though it obligatorily does so in the embedded clause (see (8)).

(8) *(\hat{I}_k) par a-*(i_k) place vampirului_k fetele.
 DAT.CL.3SG seem.3PL INF-DAT.CL.3SG like vampire.DAT girl.3PL-the.NOM
 ‘The vampire seems to like girls.’

In the absence of an expletive *pro* in Spec,TP of the embedded clause we could not explain: (i) why the embedded Dative is an intervener for embedded non-finite T, and (ii) why it is *not* an intervener for matrix T.

Conclusion. The proposed analysis has the benefit of correctly predicting the various empirical generalizations with respect to DP Case valuation. Theoretically, it argues for feature-checking but not feature-values as a property of the Edge, which, at least from the perspective of the Principle of Full Interpretation, is a conceptually sound conclusion.

Selected References

Alexiadou, A. & E. Anagnostopoulou. 1998. Parametrizing AGR: Word Order, V-Movement and EPP-Checking. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 16: 491-539. Chomsky, N. 2005. On Phases. Ms, MIT. Ledgeway, A. 1998. Variation in the Romance infinitive: the case of the Southern Calabrian inflected infinitive. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 96: 1-61.