

A configurational approach to case

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The goals for today

- Present the challenge that some Icelandic data pose to our first Case Theory
- Present another theory of case
 - **NB:** the goal is not to confuse students nor to replace one Case theory with another case theory.
 - Rather, I want to give you a glimpse of ongoing discussion about Case/case.
- Apply the new theory to ergative languages
- Look at some split ergativity data (without trying to account for them)

NB: this is very much a ‘fill in the gaps’ kind of handout, so get your pencils ready!

1 Further Icelandic challenges

A. More about Case in Icelandic

- On pset #6, we got a glimpse of NOM NPs in Icelandic.
 - (1) a. **Jón** kyssti Maríu.
John.NOM kissed Mary.ACC
‘John kissed Mary.’
b. **María** var kysst.
Mary.NOM was kissed
‘Mary was kissed.’
- But the distribution of NOM in Icelandic is not completely identical to that in e.g., English.
 - (2) Jóni líkuðu **Þessir sokkar**.
Jon.DAT like.PL these socks.NOM
‘Jon likes these socks.’
 - Given our theory of how NOM is assigned in English, what is surprising about the NOM that appears in this sentence?

B. Hypotheses about what's happening in (2)

- Hypothesis #1: NOM is uniformly assigned by a finite T.

C. Evaluation of Hypothesis #1

- According to Hypothesis #1, NOM is assigned by a dedicated head, namely finite T.
- Nonfinite T, on the other hand, is not able to assign NOM.
- As a consequence, some other head is called in to satisfy the Case Filter.
 - ⇒ Prediction that results from Hypothesis #1, *if the T in the clause is nonfinite*:

- More data from Icelandic

(3) Ég tel henni hafa alltaf þótt **Ólafur** leiðinlegur.
 I.NOM believe her.DAT to-have always thought Olaf.NOM boring.NOM
 'I believe her to have always considered Olaf boring.'

- In the face of this data, is Hypothesis #1 verified or falsified?

D. This motivates a new approach to case, Hypothesis #2.

- This is what we are going to do in the next sections
- Needless to say, our new theory has to account for the Icelandic data and, at the same time, maintain the empirical coverage of our current Case theory.

2 A configurational approach to case

A. What we need

- We saw in (1) that sometimes NOM in Icelandic behaves just as we expected (from an “English perspective”). Here is another example:

(4) Haraldur borðaði **fiskinn**.
 Harold.NOM ate fish-the.ACC
 'Harold ate the fish.'

- But then, as we also saw, there is an unexpected NOM sitting in the object position of a transitive verb.

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

- Notice that another difference between the two sentences above is that the subject has NOM in (4), but DAT in (5).
 - A possible conjecture: we have to know the case that another NP in the same sentence has in order to be able to determine the case of the object.

B. In a nutshell, we need a theory that is *sensitive to the case that other NPs in the same structure bear*.

- A **configurational approach to case** is exactly such theory.

- It builds on the *relationship between NPs* in the structure.

C. Components of the system

- Conception of case: morphological marking an NP shows up with depending on the surrounding *configuration*.
- In particular, what is relevant is the presence or absence of another NP that has not got any case yet.
 - Such NPs are called **case competitors**.
- Terminological sidenote: ‘case’ is sometimes spelled with a capital *C* and sometimes not.
 - This follows a convention in syntactic theory, which distinguishes between abstract **C** (as in our first Case theory) and morphological **case**.
 - It is not a big deal, but the notation does track different conceptions of Case/case.
- What determines which case an NP will show up is a **case hierarchy**.

(6) **Case hierarchy**
lexical case » *dependent case* » *unmarked case*

D. How the system works for a simple sentence like *Mary saw Sue*

1. There are predicates that assign some case to an argument of theirs, along with a θ -role.

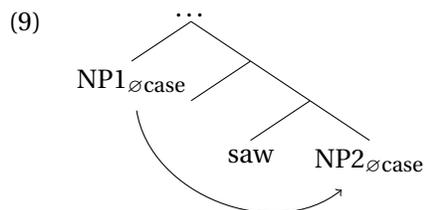
(7) *Icelandic is a NOM-ACC language*

- a. Haraldur borðaði fiskinn.
 Harold.NOM ate fish-the.ACC
 ‘Harold ate the fish.’
- b. Skipið sökk.
 ship-the.NOM sank
 ‘The ship sank.’

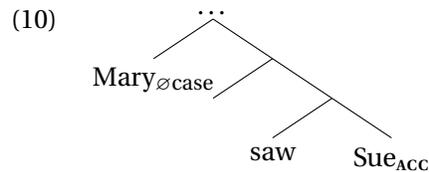
(8) *Lexical case in Icelandic*

- a. **Mig** dreymdi illa.
 me.ACC dreamt badly
 ‘I had a bad dream.’
- b. **Þeim** finnst Haraldur
 them.dat find Harold.NOM
 skemmtilegur.
 interesting.NOM
 ‘They find Harold interesting.’
- c. **Hennar** nýtur ekki við lengur.
 her.GEN enjoys not with longer
 ‘She is no longer here (to help).’

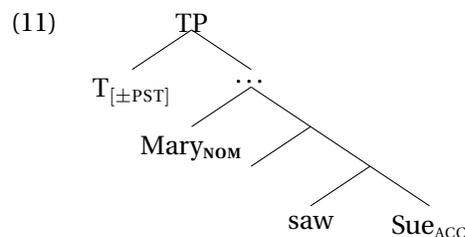
- This is a matter of lexical idiosyncrasy.
 - This type of case is **lexical case**. This is the first option of the hierarchy.
 - In our English example (*Mary saw Sue*) there is no lexical case.
 - We will see more of lexical case later on.
2. After we are done with lexical case, we move down in the hierarchy.
 - The next option is dependent case.
 - Take a pair of NPs that have not gotten case yet.
 - These NPs also have to be in an **asymmetrical c-command** relationship (represented by the arrow).



- In a language like English, Icelandic, Russian etc, the *c-commanded* NP gets dependent case.
 - In these languages, the dependent case is ACC.
 - This would be how we get an ACC object, as in *Mary saw Sue_{ACC}*.



- Another terminological sidenote: another name for this configurational theory of case is ‘dependent case theory’. I find the term ‘configurational’ clearer, so that’s why I’m using it here.
3. Finally, we move to the last option in the hierarchy, unmarked case.
- Any NP that has not been assigned case so far will get unmarked case.
 - What the unmarked case is depends on the configuration and on the language.
 - In a language like English, Icelandic, Russian etc, the unmarked case is NOM.
 - But this is only the unmarked case *within a finite clause*.
See the exercise *case in nominalizations* below.



E. A **stipulation** in the system is that, *once an NP gets case, it no longer counts for the calculus of case*.

- We will see below that, though stipulative, this buys us a couple of correct results.

2.1 Comparison between the two systems

A. What is responsible for the Case/case that shows up in an NP?

- In the first Case theory we saw in class:
- In a configurational approach to case:

B. Further points of comparison are left for you as an exercise.

Exercise: more points of comparison

1. In a configurational approach to case, there is no place for the Case Filter. Explain why.
2. So far, our first Case theory and our configurational approach to case are empirically identical. Consider now the following sentence:

(12) * John to have made bread.

- A. What does our first theory of Case predict about this sentence?
- B. Our configurational approach to case predicts this sentence to be grammatical, contrary to fact. Why is that? Can you think of a way to rule out this sentence independently?

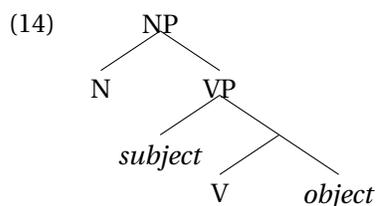
Exercise: case in nominalizations

Consider the following Turkish sentences:

- (13) a. Pelin [**sen-Ø** Timbuktu-ya git-ti-n diye] bil-iyor-muş.
 Pelin.NOM [you-NOM Timbuktu-DAT go-PAST-2SG that] know-PROG-PAST
 'Pelin thought that you went to Timbuktu.'
- b. Pelin dün [**Sinan-in** araba-yı vur-duğ-u-nu] duy-du.
 Pelin.NOM yesterday [Sinan-GEN car-ACC crash-NOML-3SG.POSS-ACC] hear-PAST
 'Pelin heard yesterday that Sinan had crashed the car.'

(13b) is an instance of a nominalized clause. The tell-tale signs of a nominalized clause in Turkish is the GEN in the subject and the nominal morphology in the verb. In Turkish, the latter is instantiated by the possessive (POSS) and ACC affixes on the verb (*vur* 'crash'). Notice also the designated nominalizing morpheme *duğ*.

- A. Contrast (13b) with (13a), where the embedded subject gets NOM (and not GEN), as we would expect. What is the visible difference between the clause where NOM shows up and the clause where GEN shows up?
- B. Given this contrast, formulate a rule within our configurational approach to case to capture how a given NP could show up with GEN. Assume that a nominalized clause has the following structure:



(Compare this structure with the finite clause structure in 11)

2.2 An explanation to the Icelandic puzzling NOM object

A. DAT in Icelandic

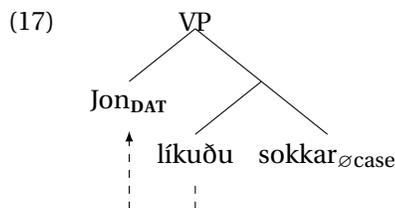
- It is idiosyncratically assigned by certain predicates along with a θ -role.
 - As we saw, this is an instance of *lexical case* (more precisely: *quirky case*, as we saw on pset#6).
- Verbs that have similar meaning may still differ in their ability to assign DAT.

(15) Sigurður *elskar* Jónínu.
 Sigurd.NOM loves Jonina.ACC
 ‘Sigurd loves Jonina.’

(16) **Jóni** *líkuðu* Þessir sokkar
 Jon.DAT like.PL these socks.NOM
 ‘Jon likes these socks.’

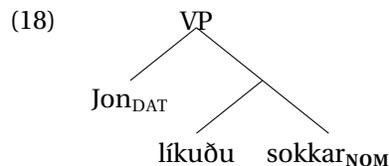
B. Applying the case hierarchy to a sentence with a DAT subject

- In our previous illustration, there was no lexical case. Now there is.



(The dashed arrow is supposed to represent the assignment of both the *liker* θ -role and DAT.)

- But there is still another NP in the sentence. Now we apply the hierarchy to *Þessir sokkar* ‘these socks’.
 - After lexical case, we move down in the hierarchy. The second option is dependent case.
 - *Jóni* asymmetrically c-commands *Þessir sokkar* in (17). But this is now irrelevant.
 - We can no longer rely on *Jóni* to help determine the case in *Þessir sokkar*. Why?
 - We are left with unmarked case.
 - Icelandic is a NOM–ACC language, just like English, so *Þessir sokkar* gets NOM.
 - This is so, even if *Þessir sokkar* is an object.



C. Notice how, in a configurational approach to case, NOM showing up in an object is not really surprising.

- To repeat, the case an NP shows up with depends on the presence or absence of other NPs inside the same configuration (e.g., a finite clause or a nominalization).
- Other crucial ingredient in the system is the case hierarchy in (6) and the stipulation that NPs that already got case no longer count for the calculus of case.
- In a sentence like (16), there is an NP that c-commands *these socks*. But it’s an NP that has already got DAT lexical case.

- As a consequence, dependent case is not an option for *these socks*.
- *These socks* then ends up with NOM, an instance of unmarked case.

D. Recall that our really problematic data was (3), repeated below.

(19) Ég tel henni hafa alltaf Þótt Ólafur leiðinlegur.
 I.NOM believe her.DAT to-have always thought Olaf.NOM boring.NOM
 ‘I believe her to have always considered Olaf boring.’

- The problem is that we are getting NOM in the absence of a head that assigns NOM.
 - In our first Case theory, Case has to come from a designated head (e.g., finite T, transitive V, P).
 - But there is no designated head that is able to assign NOM in (19).
- This kind of data is not a problem to our configurational theory though.
 - The reason is that in this theory, the case that an NP shows with depends on the presence or absence of other NPs in the same structure (e.g., finite clause or nominalization).
 - And the NPs and configuration are the same in our basic example (16) and in (19).

Exercise

Apply the case hierarchy to the sentence (15) and to (19).

3 Ergative–absolutive systems

A. Refresher: what an ERG–ABS system is

(20) A NOM–ACC system: *Icelandic*

- Haraldur borðaði fiskinn.
 Harold.NOM ate fish-the.ACC
 ‘Harold ate the fish.’
- Skipið sökk.
 ship-the.NOM sank
 ‘The ship sank.’

(22) *General schema for NOM–ACC*

(21) An ERG–ABS system: *Basque*

- Nekane-k Miren eta Jon ikusi
 Nekane-ERG Miren.ABS and Jon.ABS seen
 ditu.
 AUX.AGR
 ‘Nekane saw Miren and Jon.’
- Miren eta Jon etorri dira.
 Miren.ABS and Jon.ABS come AUX.AGR
 ‘Miren and Jon came.’

(23) *General schema for ERG–ABS*

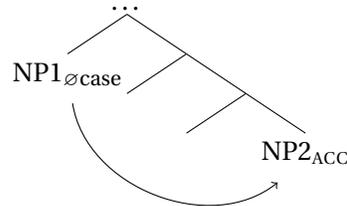
- Let’s see if we can apply our configurational approach to case to an ERG–ABS language.

B. Dependent case is language-sensitive.

- The second option in the hierarchy is dependent case.
- Dependent case is flexible enough to deal with differences across languages.
 - NOM–ACC languages: dependent case is ACC
 - ERG–ABS languages: dependent case is ERG
- We need to encode cross-linguistic case differences somewhere in the grammar anyway.

C. Another difference between languages is not just what the dependent case is, but also in *which of the case competitor NPs gets dependent case*.

- Recall that dependent case requires the presence of two NPs that have not yet gotten case.
- It also requires that the NPs be in an asymmetric c-command relationship.
 - ACC is assigned to the NP that **is c-commanded** by the other NP (as we saw in 9 and 10).
 - ERG is assigned to the NP that **c-commands** the other NP.

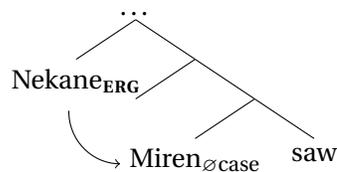
(24) *Dependent case: ACC*(25) *Dependent case: ERG*

D. An illustration from Basque

- (26) Nekane-k Miren ikusi ditu.
 Nekane-ERG Miren.ABS seen AUX.AGR
 ‘Nekane saw Miren.’

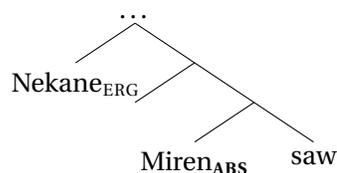
- The hierarchy for a language like Basque: *lexical case* \gg *dependent case*_{ERG} \gg *unmarked case*_{ABS}
- Sample case calculus:
 1. There is no lexical case, so we can go to the next level in the hierarchy.
 2. The next option is dependent case.
 - There are two NPs in (26) that have not gotten case yet. As such, they qualify as case competitors.

(27)

3. There remains one NP to get case, *Miren*.

- Dependent case is no longer an option. (Can you tell why?)
- We are left with unmarked case, which is ABS in a language like Basque.

(28)



Exercise: summary

1. In a configurational approach to case, what is the dependent case:
 - A. in a NOM-ACC language: _____
 - B. in an ERG-ABS language: _____
2. Also in this type of case theory, what is the directionality of *c-command* that matters?
 - A. in a NOM-ACC language: the NP that gets dependent case _____ the other case competitor.
 - B. in an ERG-ABS language: the NP that gets dependent case _____ the other case competitor.

3.1 ABS in Basque ECM

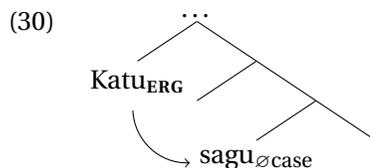
A. Consider the following ECM sentences in Basque:

- (29) a. [*Katu-ek sagu-ak harrapa-tu dituzte-la*] *ikusi dut.*
 [cat-ERG mouse.ABS caught AUX.AGR-that] seen AUX.1SG
 'I saw that the cats caught the mice.' *NOM subject in a finite complement*
- b. [*Katu-ek sagu-ak harrapa-tzen*] *ikusi dut.*
 [cat-ERG mouse.ABS catch-ing] seen AUX.1SG
 'I saw the cats catching the mice.' *ABS subject in ECM clauses*
- c. *Miren-k [temperatura gora egi-ten] ikusi zuen.*
 Miren-ERG [temperature.ABS up do-ing] seen AUX.AGR
 'Miren saw the temperature going up.' *lower NP see is part of the ECM clause*

- Notice that we are getting an ABS argument in the lower clause, regardless of the type of clause (finite, as ex. 29a, or nonfinite, as in exs. 29b and 29c).
- Just as Icelandic ECM, we're keeping the same cases, even though the type of clause changes!
- Let's see if we can get the cases right here.

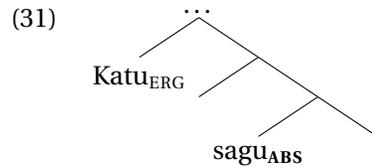
B. Calculus of case for embedded ECM clauses in Basque

1. As usual, the first option is lexical case. This doesn't apply here to any of the NPs in the sentence.
2. The second option is dependent case.



3. There still is another NP in the lower clause.

- *Katu* no longer counts as a case competitor. (Can you tell why?)
- There is no other case competitor, so the option left is unmarked case. As we saw, unmarked case in a language like Basque is ABS.



C. Summary

- In a configurational approach to case, ABS does not depend on the presence of a designated head that assigns ABS.
- Rather, it is the option that remains if there is no lexical case and if a c-commanding NP has just got dependent ERG.

Exercises: spot the problems

1. *A problem to our configurational approach to case*

We discussed ABS in (29), but not the ERG in the matrix subject. Open-ended question: ERG is not expected in the configurational approach to case, as it was presented here.

- Where does ERG fit in the case hierarchy?
- What else there must be in the structure for ERG to show up? Is this requirement fulfilled in this sentence?

2. *A problem to both theories of Case/case: raising in Basque*

So far we discussed ECM constructions. There is another environment where infinitival clauses occur, namely, raising sentences.

However, there is a further complication here, because a raised subject gets ERG in Basque.

- (32) Zazpi behi makal-ek etorri behar dute oraindik.
 seven cow feeble.ERG come must AUX.AGR still
 'Hard times must still be ahead.'

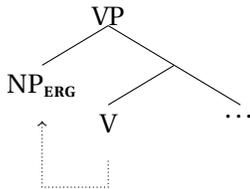
In (32), *behar* 'must' is a raising verb. There are some arguments for this claim, but notice that the idiomatic reading of *zazpi behi makal-ek etorri* 'hard times are ahead' (lit.: 'seven cows are coming') is preserved across *behar*.

This is actually a problem to both our first theory of Case *and* to our configurational approach to case. Your task in this exercise is to say why.

Exercise: how would our first theory of Case deal with ERG–ABS?

We should ask whether our first theory of Case can account for ERG–ABS languages. In order to do so, let's make the following proposal:

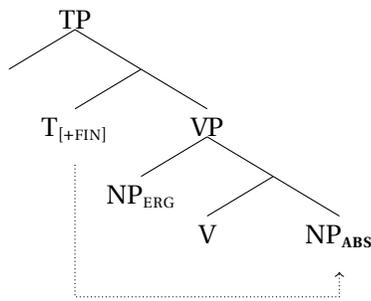
- (33) **Proposal:** ERG is assigned by a transitive verb to the NP in its Spec position



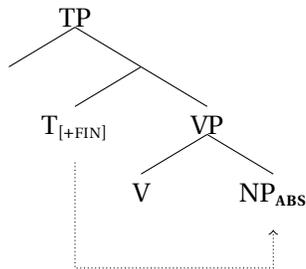
This is different from NOM–ACC languages, where the verb assigns _____ to its _____. But this is still an instance of canonical Case assignment, that is, not ECM. Can you tell why?

In order to incorporate ABS in the system, we could also make the following proposal:

- (34) **Proposal:** ABS is assigned by a finite T to anything that hasn't got Case yet.
 a. ABS to the object of a transitive verb



- b. ABS to the argument of an intransitive verb



There is something slightly unorthodox in (34): T ignores the closest NP and then assigns ABS to a more distant NP. Let's assume that this is allowed in order to satisfy the Case Filter. In any case, this is somewhat similar to ECM, where a more distant Case assigner assigns Case to an NP that cannot be assigned Case by any closer assigner.

- A. **Predictions for ECM:** the proposal is that ABS is assigned by finite T. If we replace finite T with nonfinite T, what is the prediction?
- B. Go back to the Basque data that we went through when discussing our configurational approach to case. What is the relevant data? Is the prediction borne out by facts?
- C. Describe what the problem is for the Case Theory outlined in (33, 34). Does it sound familiar?

4 What else is the hierarchy useful for?

A. What does agreement target?

- Consider the following paradigms for indicative present inflection in Portuguese:¹

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(35) a. Eu beij-o a Rosa.
I kiss-1SG the Rosa.
'I kiss Rosa.'</p> <p>b. Você beij-a a Rosa.
you kiss-2SG the Rosa
'You kiss Rosa.'</p> <p>c. A Maria beij-a a Rosa.
the Maria kiss-3SG the Rosa
'Maria kisses Rosa.'</p> <p>d. Nós beija-mos a Rosa.
we kiss-1PL the Rosa
'We kiss Rosa.'</p> <p>e. Vocês beija-m a Rosa.
you.PL kiss-2PL the Rosa
'You kiss Rosa.'</p> <p>f. Elas beija-m a Rosa.
they kiss-3PL the Rosa
'They kiss Rosa.'</p> | <p>(36) a. A Maria me beij-a.
the Maria me kiss-3SG
'Maria kisses me.'</p> <p>b. A Maria beij-a você.
the Maria kiss-3SG you.SG
'Maria kisses you.'</p> <p>c. A Maria a beij-a.
the Maria her kiss-3SG
'Maria kisses her.'</p> <p>d. A Maria nos beij-a.
the Maria 1PL kiss-3SG
'Maria kisses us.'</p> <p>e. A Maria beij-a vocês.
the Maria kiss-3SG 2PL
'Maria kisses you.'</p> <p>f. A Maria as beij-a.
the Maria them kiss-3SG
'Maria kisses them.'</p> |
|--|---|

⇒ Potential generalization: agreement targets _____,
but not _____.

- The generalization would work for other Romance languages (e.g., Spanish, Italian etc) and for English.

B. However, not all languages work like this.

- Tsez (ERG–ABS)
 - In Tsez, nouns are divided in classes. (This is represented below with Roman numerals.)
 - The verb agrees in noun class with an argument with _____ case.

- (37) a. eniy-ā ziya b-išer-si.
mother-ERG cow.III.ABS III.feed.PST
'The mother fed the cow.'
- b. ziya b-ik'i-s.
cow.III.ABS III-go-PST
'The cow left.'
- (38) enir [užā magalu bāc'ruḷi] b-iyxo.
mother [boy bread.III.ABS ate] III.know
'The mother knows the boy ate the bread.'

¹In some cases, the object pronoun precedes the verb, rather than following it, as we would expect in an SVO language like Portuguese. It's just because these pronouns are clitics and must append to the left of the verb. We can safely ignore this here.

- Icelandic (NOM–ACC)
 - The verb agrees with an argument with _____ case.

- (39) a. *María var kysst.*
 Mary.NOM be.3SG kissed
 ‘Mary was kissed.’
- b. *Jóni líkuðu Þessir sokkar*
 Jon.DAT like.PL these socks.NOM
 ‘Jon likes these socks.’

C. Can we make sense of this? What do ABS and NOM have in common?

- In our first Case system (see the exercise on p. 11):

- In our configurational approach to case:

D. It seems like the two Case/case theories fare equally with respect to the relationship between Case/case and agreement.

- But the two theories may be teased apart once we consider the agreement pattern in Nepali.

E. Consider the following Nepali sentences:

- (40) a. *ma yas pasal-mā patrikā kinchu.*
 1SG.NOM the store.LOC newspaper.NOM buy.1SG
 ‘I buy the newspaper in this store.’
- b. *maile yas pasal-mā patrikā kinē / *kinyo.*
 1.SG.ERG the store.LOC newspaper.NOM buy.1SG / buy.3SG
 ‘I buy the newspaper in this store.’
- c. *malāi timī man parchau / *parchu.*
 1.SG.DAT 2SG.NOM liking occur.2SG / occur.1SG
 ‘I like you.’

- Nepali is characterized by a preference to agree with a 1st person argument.
- As we can see in (40a, 40b), the 1st person-based preference takes precedence over case and *grammatical function*.
- But it also seems to be the case that, if the 1st person argument available in the sentence is DAT, agreement with another argument is possible. This is sentence (40c).
- In the data surveyed so far, we saw clear-cut instances of NOM–ACC and ERG–ABS languages.
- As we can see from the small sample above, there is both NOM and ERG in Nepali. Let’s make the following assumptions about the Nepali case system:
 - NOM is unmarked case
 - ERG is dependent case
 - DAT is lexical case
- Given what we saw so far, these assumptions don’t seem to be very outlandish.

- A possible way to account for this rather unusual agreement pattern is to say that there is a *hierarchy* of what a verb agrees with.
 - First, try to agree with something that has unmarked case (e.g., NOM, 40a).
 - If this is not possible, then try to agree with something with dependent case (e.g., ERG, 40b).
 - If this is still not possible, then try to agree with something with lexical case (didn't happen).
- Does this sound familiar?
 - It seems that we can divide the NPs that a verb can agree with in Nepali in a way that overlaps with the way that our configurational approach to case divides cases.

5 Split ergativity

To wrap things up, let's take a look at split ergativity. I'm not going to present any analysis, just some data. *Fair warning*: this is very partial; there is a lot more to split ergativity than I'm able to talk about...

A. What split ergativity is

- We saw that a way to distinguish languages is to take into consideration their **case alignment**.
- This gives us a basic distinction between NOM-ACC languages and ERG-ABS languages.
- But this distinction is actually a bit too crude.
- It can be the case that the same language displays mostly an ERG-ABS pattern, but a NOM-ACC pattern somewhere else.
 - This is called **split ergativity**.
 - For some phenomena or constructions, a given language groups together the object of a transitive verb and the only argument of an intransitive verb, to the exclusion of the transitive subject.
 - For others, that same language groups together the transitive subject and the intransitive subject, to the exclusion of the transitive object.

B. *Split ergativity in focus constructions*

- Mekéns is an ERG-ABS system:

<p>(41) a. o-er-at (ōt) 1SG-sleep-PST (I) 'I slept.'</p> <p>b. e-er-at (ēt) 2SG-sleep-PST (you) 'You slept.'</p> <p>c. se-er-at (sete) 3SG-sleep-PST (he) 'He slept.'</p> <p>d. ki-er-at (kise) 1PL-sleep-PST (we) 'We slept.'</p> <p>e. eyar-er-at (eyat) 2PL-sleep-PST (you) 'You slept.'</p> <p>f. se-er-at (seteyat) 3PL-sleep-PST (they) 'They slept.'</p>	<p>(42) a. o-so-at (sete) 1SG-see-PST (he) 'He saw me.'</p> <p>b. e-so-at (sete) 2SG-see-PST (he) 'He saw you.'</p> <p>c. i-so-at (sete) 3SG-see-PST (he) 'He saw him.'</p> <p>d. ki-so-at (sete) 1PL-see-PST (he) 'He saw us.'</p> <p>e. eyat-so-at (sete) 2PL-see-PST (he) 'He saw you.'</p> <p>f. teyar-so-at (sete) 3PL-see-PST (he) 'He saw them.'</p>
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- Intransitive verb: verb agrees with _____.
- Transitive verb: verb agrees with _____.
- But not in sentences where an object is *focalized*:
 - (43) a. arobēp te te ei-mi
 what truly FOC 2S-kill
 ‘What did you truly kill?’
 - b. sirap te oi-ko
 cassava FOC 1-eat
 ‘It was cassava that I ate.’
- Now, the transitive verb agrees with _____.

C. *Split ergativity depending on aspect*

- Georgian: the alignment of NPs regarding case depends on the aspect of the verb (in the examples: aorist vs. imperfective)
 - (44) ERG *in the aorist*
 - a. Nino-m surat-i da=xat-a.
 Nino-ERG picture-ABS PREV=draw-AOR.SG
 ‘Nino has drawn a picture.’
 - b. Bavšv-eb-i ga=brazd-nen.
 child-PL-ABS PREV=angry-AOR.PL
 ‘The children have gotten angry.’
 - (45) NOM-ACC *in the imperfective*
 - a. Nino surat-s xat-avs.
 Nino.NOM picture.ACC draw-IMPERF.SG
 ‘Nino draws a picture.’
 - b. Bavšv-i tiri-s.
 child.NOM cry-3SG
 ‘The child cries.’

Credits and disclaimers

Many thanks to David Pesetsky for discussion and guidance and most of all for the opportunity to teach this class!

To make the handout less cluttered, I omitted the references of the data and proposals presented here. The Icelandic data is from Marantz (2000); Woolford (2006); Thráinsson (2007). In fact, the main reference for a configurational approach to case is Marantz (2000). The exercise dubbed 'Going deeper in the comparison' is based on a pset by Prof. Sabine Iatridou for 24.951 (2015). The Turkish data is from Şener (2008). I simplified things a lot there. For a more recent and thorough take on Turkish nominalizations, see Colley & Davis (2015). The interesting Nepali data that we saw in (40) is from Bobaljik (2008). The Tsez data in (21) is from Polinsky & Potsdam (2001). The Basque data is from Rezac *et al.* (2014). The Mekéns data in (41, 42) is from Storto (2005). The Georgian data in (44, 45) is from Salanova (2007). If you're interested in ergativity, an excellent overview paper is Deal (2015).

I also simplified the data/gloss/translation when the morphological pieces were not directly relevant to the point being made. I take full responsibility for these simplifications.

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