# Case competition in headless relatives

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# List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | first person |
| 3 | third person |
| ABS | absolutive |
| ACC | accusative |
| AN | animate |
| AUX | auxiliary |
| COMP | complementizer |
| DAT | dative |
| DEF | definite |
| ERG | ergative |
| EXT | external case |
| F | feminine |
| GEN | genitive |
| INAN | inanimate |
| INT | internal case |
| M | masculine |
| MG | Modern German |
| N | neuter |
| NOM | nominative |
| OBJ | object |

OHG    Old High German

PL      plural

PRES    present tense

PROG    progressive

REL     relative

SG      singular

SUBJ    subject

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

This dissertation is about case competition, a situation in which two cases are assigned but only one of them surfaces. One of the constructions in which case competition appears is relative clauses that lack a head, i.e. headless relatives.

I show that one aspect about case competition in headless relatives holds for all languages (under discussion here at least). That is, there is a fixed order which decides which case wins the competition. I let this follow from what we observe in morphology. Another aspect of case competition in headless relatives differs per language. That is, whether the competition takes place to begin with. I connect this variable to the morphology of the language in question.

Case competition in headless relatives has been described as some special property of a few special languages. Therefore, language-specific rules have been postulated to account for the data. My goal is to show that this phenomenon can be captured with 'normal' syntactic processes, like ellipsis, c-command. The account makes predictions about how a language behaves based on the shape of its relative pronouns. And we see that case competition in headless relatives is actually more wide-spread than what has been assumed.

In this introduction I first introduce what I mean exactly with case competition in headless relatives. Then I introduce the topics I discuss in this dissertation.

## 1.1   Introducing the title

Languages can use case to mark the grammatical role of a noun phrase in a clause (cf.
Moravcsik, 2009). Consider the two Modern German sentences in (1). The what can
descriptively be called subject of the predicate *mag* 'likes' is marked as nominative.
The what can be described as object of *mag* 'likes' is marked as accusative. The
case marking of the noun phrases is reflected on the determiner in the noun phrase.
In (1a), *der* in *der Lehrer* 'the teacher' appears in nominative case, because it is the
descriptive subject in the clause. *Den* in *den Schüler* 'the pupil' appears in accusative
case, because it is a descriptive object of *mag* 'likes'. In (1b), the grammatical roles
are reversed: *der* in *der Schüler* 'the pupil' appears in nominative case, because it
is the descriptive subject in the clause. *Den* in *den Lehrer* 'the teacher' appears in
accusative case, because it is the descriptive object of *mag* 'likes'.

(1)  a.  Der      Lehrer mag den      Schüler.
         the.NOM teacher likes the.ACC student
         'The teacher likes the pupil.'
     b.  Der      Schüler mag den      Lehrer.
         the.NOM student likes the.ACC teacher
         'The pupil likes the teacher.'

Not only full noun phrases, but also other elements can be marked for case, such
as relative pronouns. Modern German marks relative pronouns, just like full noun
phrases, for the grammatical role they have in the clause. Consider the two sen-
tences in (2). These two sentences both contain a main clause that is modified by a
relative clause. In (2a), the relative clause *der nach draußen guckt* 'that looks out-
side' modifies *den Schüler* 'the pupil'. *Schüler* 'pupil' is called the head (noun) or
the antecedent of the relative clause. *Den* in *den Schüler* 'the pupil' appears in ac-
cusative case, because it is the descriptive object of *mag* 'likes' in the main clause.
The relative pronoun *der* 'REL.NOM.SG.M' appears in nominative case, because it is
the descriptive subject of in the relative clause.

    In (2b), the relative clause *den er beim Versteckspiel sucht* 'that he is searching
for playing hide-and-seek' modifies *den Schüler* 'the pupil'. *Den* in *den Schüler* 'the
pupil' appears again in accusative, because it is the descriptive object of *mag* 'likes'

in the main clause. The relative pronoun *den* 'REL.ACC.SG.M' appears in accusative case, because it is the descriptive object of *sucht* 'searches' in the relative clause.

(2)  a.  Der        Lehrer  mag   den      Schüler, der              nach draußen
         the.NOM  teacher  likes  the.ACC  student   REL.NOM.SG.M  to      outside
         guckt.
         looks
         'The teacher likes the pupil that is looking outside.'
     b.  Der        Lehrer  mag   den      Schüler, den              er   beim
         the.NOM  teacher  likes  the.ACC  student   REL.ACC.SG.M  he   at the
         Versteckspiel       sucht.
         hide-and-seek game  searches
         'The teacher likes the pupil that he is searching for playing hide-and-seek.'

Compare the two sentences in (2). In both sentences the head is marked as accusative because it is the descriptive object in the main clause. The case of the relative pronoun in (2b) is also accusative, because it is the descriptive object in the relative clause. The case of the relative pronoun in (2a) is nominative, because it is the descriptive subject in the relative clause. So, the case of the relative pronoun in (2a) differs from the case of the head.

The focus of this dissertation lies on headless relatives. As the name suggests, this type of relative clause lacks a head.[1] Even though Modern German also has case competition in headless relatives, I turn to Gothic now. The first part of the dissertation can be illustrated best with Gothic, and not with the Modern German, in which the pattern differs slightly.

I give an example of a headless relative in Gothic in (3). There is no head that this relative clause modifies, because it is a headless relative. This is different from the examples from German I gave above, which each had a head. The predicate *arma*

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[1]This 'missing noun' has been interpreted in two different ways. Some researchers argue that the noun is truly missing, it is absent, cf. Citko 2005; Van Riemsdijk 2006. Others claim that there is actually a head, but it is phonologically zero, Bresnan and Grimshaw 1978; Groos and van Riemsdijk 1981; Grosu 2003. At this point in the discussion this distinction is not relevant. I return to the issue in Chapter 5.

'pity' takes accusative objects, as indicated by the subscript on the gloss of the verb. The predicate *gaarma* 'pity' also takes accusative objects, indicated again by the subscript. The relative pronoun *þan(a)* 'REL.ACC.M' appears in accusative case.[2]

(3)     gaarma þan          -ei     arma
        pity$_{[Acc]}$ REL.ACC.SG.M -COMP pity$_{[Acc]}$
        'I will pity (him) whom I pity'

                                    (Gothic, Rom. 9:15, adapted from Harbert 1978: 339)

Where does this accusative case come from? Logically speaking, there are two possible sources: the predicate in the main clause *gaarma* 'pity', the predicate in the relative clause *arma* 'pity' or both predicates. From now on, I use the terms internal and external case to refer to these two possible case sources.

Internal case refers to the case associated with the relative pronoun internal to the relative clause. More precisely, it is the case, which is associated with the grammatical role that the relative pronoun has internal to the relative clause. In (3), the relative pronoun is the descriptive object of *arma* 'pity'. The predicate *arma* 'pity' takes accusative objects. So, the internal case is accusative.

External case refers to the case associated with the missing head in the main clause, which is external to the relative clause. Concretely, it is the case which is associated with the grammatical role that the missing head has external to the relative clause. In (3), the missing head is the descriptive object of *gaarma* 'pity'. The predicate *gaarma* 'pity' takes accusative objects. In (3), the external case is accusative.

Now I return to the question where *þan(a)* in (3) got its case from. In the remainder of this section I show evidence for the claim that the relative pronoun is sensitive to both the internal and the external case. This is easy to imagine for the internal case: the internal case reflects the grammatical role of the relative clause. It is a bit more complicated for the external case. The external case is associated with the grammatical role of the missing head in the main clause. The idea is going to be that the external case cannot be reflected on a non-existing head. Indirectly,

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[2]The relative pronoun without the complementizer *-ei* is *þana*. Therefore, I refer to the relative pronoun as *þan(a)*.

it appears on the relative pronoun.[3] This means that the internal and external case come together on the relative pronoun. In other words, there is case competition going on in headless relatives. (3) is indeed the first example I gave of case competition in a headless relative. It is an uninteresting one, because the two competing cases are identical.

Consider the example in (4), in which the internal case is dative and the external case is accusative. The internal case is dative. The preposition *ana* 'on' takes dative objects, as indicated by the subscript on the preposition. The external case is accusative. The predicate *ushafjands* 'picking up' takes accusative objects, indicated by the subscript on the predicate. The relative pronoun *þamm(a)* 'REL.DAT.SG.N' appears in dative. This dative can only come from the preposition *ana* 'on', which is the internal case here. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just as the relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause.

(4)    ushafjands    **ana**    **þamm**    **-ei**    **lag**
      picking up$_{[ACC]}$ on$_{[DAT]}$ REL.DAT.SG.N -COMP lay
      'picking up (that) on which he lay'

                                 (Gothic, Luke 5:25, adapted from Harbert 1978: 343)

The conclusion that follows is that the relative pronoun can take the internal case. At this point it remains unclear what happened to the external accusative case.

Now consider the example in (5), in which the internal case is accusative and the external case is dative. The internal case is accusative. The predicate *jains* 'sent' takes accusative objects, as indicated by the subscript on the predicate. The external case is dative. The predicate *galaubjaiþ* 'believe' takes dative objects, as indicated by the subscript on the predicate. The relative pronoun *þamm(a)* 'REL.DAT.SG.M' appears in the dative case. This dative can only come from the predicate *taujau* 'do', which is the external case here. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just as the relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause.

(5)    ei    galaubjaiþ    þamm      **-ei**    **insandida jains**
      that believe$_{[DAT]}$ REL.DAT.M.SG COMP sent$_{[ACC]}$    he
      'that you believe on (him) whom he has sent'

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[3]Later on I will argue that this indirect process is ellipsis.

(Gothic, John 6:29, my translation)

The conclusion that follows is that the relative pronoun can take the external case. At this point it remains unclear what happened to the internal accusative case.

The examples in (4) and (5) have shown that the relative pronoun in headless relatives can take either the internal or the external case. In the examples, the predicates (or preposition) take accusative and dative, and in both cases, the relative pronoun appeared in dative case. In other words, there was a competition between accusative and dative, and dative won.

In the next section, I discuss the content of this dissertation. Before that, I comment on two notational conventions I use throughout this dissertation. First, I place subscripts on the glosses of the predicates. They indicate what the internal or external case is. The subscript on the predicate in the relative clause indicates the internal case. The subscript on the predicate in the main clause indicates the external case. This subscript can mean different things. For *ushafjands* 'picking up' (3) the subscript indicates which case the complement of the verb appears in. The subscript on *taujau* 'do' (5) in refers to the case of the indirect object of the predicate. Another possibility is that the subscript is placed on a preposition and refers to the case the preposition combines with, as for *ana* 'on' in (4). A last possibility is that the subscript is [NOM] and refers to the case the descriptive subject appears in, of which examples will emerge in the next chapter. In other words, the subscript can refer several elements: a subject, object or indirect object of a predicate. There is no overarching theoretical notion that the subscript makes reference to. The subscript simply indicates which case is required within the (main or relative) clause.

Second, I write the relative clause in bold. When the relative pronoun takes the internal case, I mark it in bold as well, as shown in (4). When the relative pronoun takes the external case, I leave it black, indicating it patterns with the main clause. An example of that is (5).

## 1.2   The content of this dissertation

In the previous section I introduced the notion of case competition, and I illustrated how it appears in headless relatives. This dissertation discusses two question re-

garding this phenomenon. The first one is which case is going to win the case competition, i.e. which case surfaces. I discuss this in Part I. The second question is whether both competitors are able to compete in the competition, i.e. whether one of the cases is surfacing or both are ungrammatical. I discuss this in Part II. For both I will show that morphology is leading. What we observe in syntax is a reflex of the morphology.

In Part I I discuss the pattern observed in headless relatives in Gothic. This pattern has also been described for German, Greek, etc. etc. references references. The pattern that arises in headless relatives is not restricted to headless relatives. It can also be observed in another syntactic phenomenon: the accessiblity hierarchy. This is.. Lastly: the pattern we observe in these two syntactic phenomena is what we know from morphology. I discuss patterns in morphology: formal containment, syncretism patterns, suppletion patterns.

In Part I I discuss an aspect of headless relatives that differs per language. That is, not all languages act like Gothic.

(6)  Modern German

    a.   accusative dative

       ''

    b.   dative accusative

       ''

(7)  Old High German

    a.   accusative dative

       ''

    b.   dative accusative

       ''

(8)  Italian

    a.    accusative dative

        ''

    b.    dative accusative

        ''

So far people said.. I connect this crosslinguistic variation to morphology.. so i reduce it to differences in the lexicon

In Part III I show how all of this can be derived in derivations.

# Part I

# The constant winner

# Chapter 2

# A recurring pattern

This chapter introduces the pattern that forms the focus of the first part of the dissertation. In Section 2.1 I show that case competition in headless relatives adheres to the case scale in (1).

(1)     NOM < ACC < DAT

Then I show that this pattern is not unique to headless relatives. It appears in more syntactic and morphological phenomena. Section 2.2 discusses two implicational hierarchies that show the same case ordering. The hierarchies concern agreement and relativization across languages. Section 2.3 shows that the case scale also shows up in morphological patterns. It can be observed in patterns of syncretism and in morphological containment.

## 2.1   In headless relatives

As the name suggests, headless relatives are relative clauses that lack an (overt) head. The internal case, the case from the relative clause, and the external case, the case from the main clause, compete to surface on the relative pronoun. It has been argued in the literature that the two competing cases always adhere a to particular case scale (cf. Harbert, 1978; Pittner, 1995; Vogel, 2001; Grosu, 2003; Bergsma, 2019; Caha, 2019). This is the scale I gave in the introduction, repeated here in (2).

Elements more to the right on this scale win over elements more to the left on this scale.[1]

(2)     NOM < ACC < DAT

This can be reformulated as follows. In a competition, dative wins over accusative, and dative wins over nominative. Additionally, accusative wins over nominative. In this section I illustrate this scale with examples. When two cases compete, the relative pronoun always appears in the case more to the right on the case scale. It does not matter whether it is the internal or the external case. I illustrate this with examples from headless relatives in Gothic (Harbert, 1978).

I start with the competition between dative and accusative. Following the case scale in (2), the relative pronoun appears in dative case and never in accusative.

Consider the example in (3), repeated from the introduction. In this example, the internal case is dative and the external case is accusative. The internal case is dative. The preposition *ana* 'on' takes dative complements. The external case is accusative. The predicate *ushafjands* 'picking up' takes accusative objects. The relative pronoun *þamm(a)* 'REL.DAT.N.SG' appears in the internal case: the dative. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just like as the relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause. Examples in which the internal case is dative, the external case is accusative and the relative pronoun appears in accusative case are unattested.

(3)     ushafjands        **ana    þamm       -ei     lag**
        picking up$_{[ACC]}$ on$_{[DAT]}$ REL.DAT.N.SG -COMP lay
        'picking up (that) on which he lay'

                                        (Gothic, Luke 5:25, adapted from Harbert 1978: 343)

Consider the example in (4), repeated from the introduction. In this example, the internal case is accusative and the external case is dative. The internal case is ac-

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[1]In the literature about headless relatives, the genitive is often discussed together with the nominative, accusative and dative (cf. Harbert, 1978; Pittner, 1995). In this dissertation I do not discuss the genitive. The reason is that I restrict myself to cases that appear in all possible case competition combinations. As the genitive does not fulfill that requirement, it is therefore excluded. In Chapter 7 I briefly return to the issue.

cusative. The predicate *jains* 'sent' takes accusative objects. The external case is dative. The predicate *galaubjaiþ* 'believe' takes dative objects. The relative pronoun *þamm(a)* 'REL.DAT.M.SG' appears in the external case: the dative. The relative pronoun is not marked in bold, just like as the main clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the main clause. Examples in which the internal case is accusative, the external case is dative and the relative pronoun appears in accusative case are unattested.

(4)  ei   galaubjaiþ þamm    **-ei    insandida jains**
     that believe[DAT] REL.DAT.M.SG sent[ACC] he
     'that you believe on (him) whom he has sent'

                                        (Gothic, John 6:29, my translation)

I continue with the competition between dative and nominative. Following the case scale in (2), the relative pronoun appears in dative case and never in nominative.

Consider the example in (5), in which the internal case is dative and the external case is nominative. The internal case is dative. The predicate *fraletada* 'is forgiven' takes dative objects. The external case is nominative. The predicate *frijod* 'loves' takes nominative subjects. The relative pronoun *þamm(a)* 'REL.DAT.M.SG' appears in the internal case: the dative. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just as the relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause. Examples in which the internal case is dative, the external case is nominative and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case are unattested.

(5)  iþ **þamm   -ei   leitil fraletada**   leitil frijod
     but REL.DAT.M.SG -COMP little  is forgiven[DAT] little loves[NOM]
     'but the one whom little is forgiven loves little'
                              (Gothic, Luke 7:47, adapted from Harbert 1978: 342)

Consider the example in (6), in which the internal case is nominative and the external case is dative. The internal case is nominative. The predicate *sind fraþjaiþ* 'are above' takes a nominative subject. The external case is dative. The predicate *fraþjaiþ* 'think on' takes dative indirect objects. The relative pronoun *þaim* 'REL.DAT.PL.N' appears in the external case: the dative. The relative pronoun is not marked in bold,

just like as the main clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the main clause. Examples in which the internal case is nominative, the external case is dative and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case are unattested.

(6)  þaim          **-ei    iupa sind**    fraþjaiþ
     REL.DAT.PL.N -COMP above are[NOM] think on[DAT]
     'set your mind on those which are above'
                                   (Gothic, Col. 3:2, adapted from Harbert 1978: 339)

I end with the competition between accusative and nominative. Following the case scale in (2), the relative pronoun appears in accusative case and never in nominative.

Consider the example in (7), in which the internal case is accusative and the external case is nominative. The internal case is accusative. The predicate *frijos* 'love' takes accusative objects. The external case is nominative. The predicate *siuks ist* 'is sick' takes nominative subjects. The relative pronoun *þan(a)* 'REL.ACC.M.SG' appears in the internal case: the accusative. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just like as the relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause. Examples in which the internal case is accusative, the external case is nominative and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case are unattested.

(7)  **þan          -ei    frijos**    siuks ist
     REL.ACC.M.SG -COMP love[ACC] sick   is[NOM]
     'the one whom you love is sick'
                                   (Gothic, John 11:3, adapted from Harbert 1978: 342)

Consider the example in (8), in which the internal case is nominative and the external case is accusative. The internal case is nominative. The predicate *ist us Laudeikaion* 'is from Laodicea' takes nominative subjects. The external case is accusative. The predicate *ussiggwaid* 'read' takes accusative objects. The relative pronoun *þo* 'REL.ACC.N.SG' appears in the external case: the accusative. The relative pronoun is not marked in bold, just like as the main clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the main clause. Examples in which the internal case is nominative, the external case is accusative and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case are unattested.

(8)     jah  þo        **-ei**     **ist**    **us**   **Laudeikaion** jus  ussiggwaid

          and REL.ACC.N.SG -COMP is[NOM] from Laodicea       you read[ACC]

          'and read that which is from Laodicea'

                           (Gothic, Col. 4:16, adapted from Harbert 1978: 357)

A summary of the Gothic data as a whole is given in Table 2.1. The left column shows the internal case between square brackets. The upper row shows the external case between square brackets. The other cells indicate the case of the relative pronoun. The diagonal is left blank, because these are instances in which the internal and external case match. The remaining six cells show instances where the internal and external case differ. Within the cells, two cases are given. The case in the lower left corner stands for the relative pronoun in the internal case. The case in the upper right corner stands for the relative pronoun in the external case. The grammatical examples are marked in gray. The unattested examples are marked with an asterix and are unmarked.[2]

Table 2.1: Case competition in Gothic headless relatives

| EXT<br>INT | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|---|---|---|---|
| [NOM] |  | ACC<br>*NOM | DAT<br>*NOM |
| [ACC] | *NOM<br>ACC |  | DAT<br>*ACC |
| [DAT] | *NOM<br>DAT | *ACC<br>DAT |  |

The three instances in the lower left corner correspond to the examples (7), (5) and (4). In the attested examples, the relative pronoun appears in the internal case.

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[2]Throughout this dissertation * stands for 'not found in natural language'. For extinct languages this means that there are no attested examples. For modern languages it means that the examples are ungrammatical.

The three instances in the upper right corner correspond to the examples in (8), (6) and (3). In the attested examples, the relative pronoun appears in the external case.

Table 2.2: Summary of Gothic matching headless relative data

| INT \\ EXT | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|---|---|---|---|
| [NOM] |  | ACC | DAT |
| [ACC] | ACC |  | DAT |
| [DAT] | DAT | DAT |  |

To sum up, case competition in headless relative is subject to the case scale, repeated in (9).

(9)      NOM < ACC < DAT

If two cases compete, dative wins over accusative and nominative, and accusative wins over nominative. In this section I gave examples from Gothic that illustrate this. As I mentioned in the introduction of this section, this case scale is not specific for Gothic, but it holds across languages (cf. see Pittner 1995 for Modern, Middle High and Old High German, Grosu 2003 for Ancient Greek and Daskalaki 2011 for Modern Greek).[3]

In the remainder of this chapter I show that headless relatives are not the only place where the case scale shows up. Instead, it appears with more syntactic phenomena. Moreover, exactly this scale is also reflected in morphology.

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[3]These languages differ from Gothic in that they are subject to an additional constraint. That is, they only allow either the internal or the external case to win case competitions. If the other case is more to the right on the case scale (9), the result is ungrammatical. Old High German is an example of a language that only allows the external case to win the case competition. If the internal case is more to the right on the case scale, the headless relative is ungrammatical. Modern German is an example of a language that only allows the internal case to win the case competition. If the external case is more to the right on the case scale, the headless relative is ungrammatical. This topic is the main focus of Part I of this dissertation.

## 2.2 In syntax

In this section I discuss two additional syntactic phenomena that reflect the NOM < ACC < DAT scale. The first one is an implicational hierarchy that concerns agreement. The second one is an implicational hierarchy about relativization.

### 2.2.1 Agreement

Agreement can be seen as "a systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another" (Steel, 1978). Put differently, the shape of one element changes according to some properties of an element it relates to. In this section I discuss the agreement between a predicate and its arguments.

It differs per language with how many of its arguments a predicate agrees. However, it is not random with which agreement takes place. Instead, there is an implicational hierarchy that is identical to the one observed for headless relatives: NOM < ACC < DAT.

Moravcsik (1978) formulated the implicational hierarchy in terms of grammatical functions subject, direct object and indirect object.[4] The hierarchy is schematically represented in Figure 2.1. It should be read as follows: if a language allows the predicate to agree with the argument in a particular circle, it also allows the predicate to agree with the argument in the circle around it.

Then, there are four types of languages possible: first, a language that does not show any agreement; second, a language that shows agreement only with the subject and not with the direct and indirect object; third, a language that shows agreement with the subject and direct object but not with the indirect object; and fourth, a language that shows agreement with the subject, the direct object and the indirect object.

The implicational hierarchy holds for languages, not for sentences. That is, it is not the case that in a language of a particular type all instances of the grammatical function show agreement. To be more precise, in a language of the second type,

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[4]Moravcsik (1978) also included adverbs on the lowest end of the hierarchy. I leave them out here, because they are not relevant for the discussion.
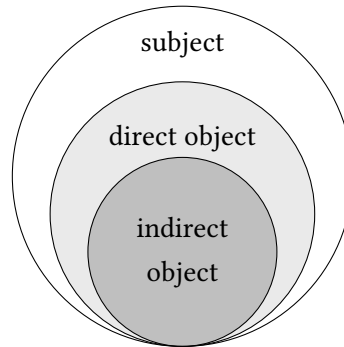
Figure 2.1: Moravcsik's 1978 schema

that only shows agreement with the subject, not all subjects have to show agreement. Particular types of subject, such as experiencer subjects often do not show any agreement.

Japanese is an example of a language that does not show any agreement on the predicate. An example is given in (10). The predicate *okutta* 'sent' does not agree with the subject *Tarooga* 'Taro', with the direct object *nimotuo* 'package' or with the indirect object *Hanakoni* 'Hanako'.

(10)    Taroo-ga  Hanako-ni    nimotu-o     okutta.
        Taro-NOM Hanako-DAT package-ACC sent
        'Taro sent Hanako a package.'    (Japanese, Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004: 5)

German is an example of a language that shows agreement with the subject of the clause. An example is given in (11). The predicate *gibst* 'give' contains the morpheme *-st*, marked in bold. This morpheme is the agreement morpheme for second person singular subjects (in the present tense). The predicate *gibst* 'give' agrees in person and number with the subject *du* 'you'. There is no agreement with the direct object *das Buch* 'the book' or the indirect object *mir* 'me'.

(11)    Du  gib  **-st**       mir das Buch.
        you give -2SG.PRES me  the book
        'You give me the book.'                                          (German)

Hungarian is an example of a language that shows agreement with the subject and the direct object of a clause. An example is given in (12). The predicate *adom* 'give' contains the morpheme *-om*, marked in bold. This is a portmonteau morpheme for a first person singular subject and a third person object agreement. The predicate *adom* 'give' agrees with the subject *én* 'I' and the direct object *a könyvet* 'the book'. There is no agreement with the indirect object *neked* 'you'. Agreement with the the first person singular subject *én* 'I' and second person singular indirect object *neked* 'you.DAT.SG' is ungrammatical, as indicated by the ungrammaticality of *-lak*.

(12)   (Én) neked      ad  **-om**/        *-lak        a  könyv -et
       I    you.DAT.SG give -1SG.SUBJ>3.OBJ -1SG.SUBJ>2.OBJ the book   -ACC
       'I give you the book.'                  (Hungarian, András Bárány p.c.)

Basque is an example of a language that shows agreement with the subject, the direct object and the indirect object. Basque is an ergative-absolutive language, so in transitive clauses subjects are marked as ergative and objects are marked as absolutive. An example from the Bizkaian dialect is given in (13). The stem of the auxiliary *aus* combines with the morphemes *d-*, *-ta* and *-zu*, marked in bold. The morpheme *d-* is the agreement morpheme for third person singular as direct objects, which is here *liburua* 'the book'. The morpheme *-ta* is the agreement morpheme for first person singular indirect objects, which is here *niri* 'me'. The morpheme *-zu* is the agreement morpheme for second person singular ergative subjects, which is here *zuk* 'you'.

(13)   Zu-k    ni-ri   liburu-a      emon **d**     -aus **-ta**    **-zu**.
       you-ERG me-DAT book-DEF.ABS given ABS.3SG -AUX -DAT.1SG -ERG.2SG
       'You gave me the book.'
              (Bizkaian Basque, adapted from Arregi and Molina-Azaola 2004: 45)

Putting the languages in Moravcsik's (1978) figure gives the following result.

Gilligan (1987) performed a typological study among 100 genetically and areally diverse languages, which confirms the picture. The results are shown in Table 2.3. There are 23 languages that do not show any agreement, like Japanese. There are 31 languages that show agreement only with the subject and not with the direct
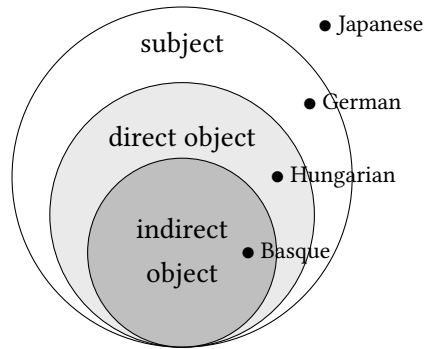
Figure 2.2: Moravcsik's 1978 schema with languages

and indirect object, like German. There are 25 languages that show agreement with the subject and direct object but not with the indirect object, like Hungarian. There are 23 languages that show agreement with the subject, the direct object and the indirect object, like Basque.

Table 2.3: Agreement accessibility

| | agreement with | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| subject | direct object | indirect object | number of languages | example |
| * | * | * | 23 | Japanese |
| ✓ | * | * | 31 | German |
| ✓ | ✓ | * | 25 | Hungarian |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 23 | Basque |
| ✓ | * | ✓ | (1) | - |
| * | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | - |
| * | x | * | 0 | - |
| * | * | ✓ | 0 | - |

It is often the case that subjects appear in nominative case, and that direct objects appear in accusative. However, this is not always the case. Subjects can be non-nominative and direct objects can be non-accusative. Bobaljik (2006) argues that the implicational hierarchy is more accurate if it is stated in terms of case rather than grammatical function. Bobaljik gives examples of two types of situations in which grammatical function and morphological case do not match: non-nominative subjects in Icelandic and ergative-absolutive languages. In these situations, case seem to capture the facts for the implicational hierarchy, and grammatical function does not.

Icelandic is a language that has dative subjects. If agreement takes place with the grammatical subject, it is expected that the dative subject agrees with the predicate. This is not what happens, as illustrated in (14). The dative subject *morgum studentum* 'many students' is plural. The sentence is ungrammatical with the predicate *líka* 'like' inflecting for plural as well. So, the dative subject does not agree in number with the predicate. In other words, it is not the grammatical subject that shows agreement.

(14)    *Morgum studentum    líka    verkið.
        many    students.DAT like.PL job.NOM
        'Many students like the job.'                    (Harley 1995: 208)

Instead, it is the nominative object that agrees with the verb. This is illustrated in (15). The dative subject *konunginum* 'the king' is singular. The nominative object *ambáttir* 'slaves' is plural. The predicate *voru* 'were' is inflected for plural, agreeing with the nominative object. This is expected if morphological case determines agreement: it is the nominative that shows agreement. The grammatical role, the fact that this nominative is an object, does not influence agreement.

(15)    Um veturinn    voru    konunginum gefnar ambáttir
        In   the.winter were.PL the.king.DAT given  slaves.NOM
        'In the winter, the king was given (female) slaves.'
                            (Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson 1985: 112)

The second type of evidence that Bobaljik gives comes from ergative-absolutive lan-

guages. In these languages, absolutive marks the object of a transitive clause and it marks the subject in an intransitive clause.

Reformulating Figure 2.1 in terms of case instead of grammatical function gives the schema in Figure (15). Default case can be nominative or absolutive case (in transitive clauses), and dependent case can be accusative and ergative case.
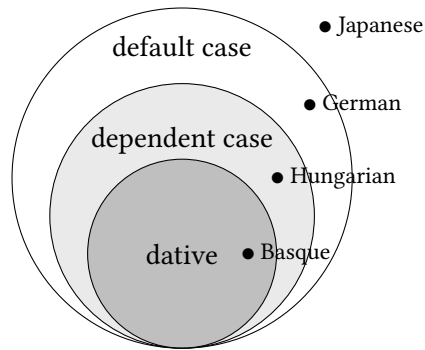


Figure 2.3: Bobaljik's 2006 actual schema

First, Japanese is a language that does not show any agreement, as shown in (10). There is no agreement with the default case (here the nominative), not with the dependent case (here the accusative) and not with the dative case. Second, German is a language that shows agreement only with the default case, as shown in (11). The morpheme *-st* on the predicate agrees with the element in default nominative case *du* 'you'. There is no agreement with the dependent accusative case or with the dative case. Third, Hungarian is a language that shows agreement with the default and the dependent case, as shown in (12). The portmanteau morpheme *-om* on the predicates agrees with the element in default nominative case *én* 'I' and the element in dependent accusative case *a könyvet* 'the book'. Last, Basque is a language that shows agreement with the default, the dependent and the dative case, as shown in (13). The morpheme *-zu* on the auxiliary agrees with the element in default ergative case *zuk* 'you'. The morpheme *d-* on the auxiliary agrees with the element in dependent absolutive case *liburua* 'the book'. The morpheme *-ta* on the auxiliary agrees with the element in dative case *niri* 'me'.

In the languages I discuss in this dissertation, I focus on languages that have

nominative as default case and accusative as dependent case, so Figure (15) suffices.
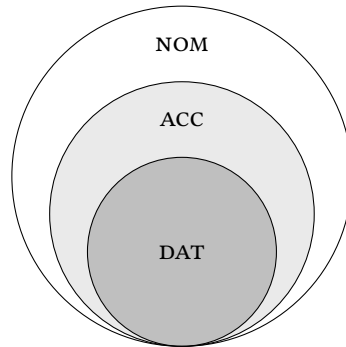


Figure 2.4: Bobaljik's 2006 simplified schema

In sum, this section has shown that agreement follows the same implicational hierarchy as the case scale in headless relatives: NOM < ACC < DAT.

### 2.2.2 Relativization

Relativization refers to the process in which a relative clause is derived from a non-relative clause. An example of the non-relative clause is given in (16a). The relative clause derived from that is shown in (16b). The head of the relative clause is *woman* and precedes the clause. The relative pronoun follows the head. The head of the head does not appear in the relative clause anymore.

(16)     a.     You like the woman.
         b.     **the woman**, who you like

In (16b), it is the object of the clause that is relativized. It differs per language which elements can be relativized with a particular strategy. Just like the distribution was not random for agreement, it is not random which elements can be relativized. Instead, there is an implicational hierarchy that is identical to the one observed for the case scale: NOM < ACC < DAT.

Keenan and Comrie (1977) formulated the implicational hierarchy in terms of the grammatical functions subject, direct object and indirect object.[5] The impli-

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[5]Keenan and Comrie (1977) also included obliques, possessives and objects of comparison on the

cational hierarchy is schematically represented in Figure 2.5. It should be read as
follows: if a language allows a particular relativization strategy of the grammatical
function in a particular circle, it also allows this relativization strategy of the gram-
matical function of the circle around it. The languages in the figure give examples
of the circles they are in.
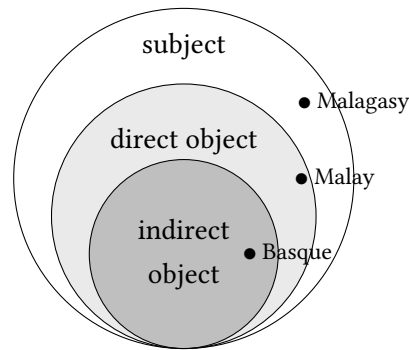


Figure 2.5: Schema for relativization

There are four types of languages possible: first, a language that allows only the
subject to be relativized with a particular strategy and not the direct and indirect
object; second, a language that allows the subject and direct object to be relativized
with a particular strategy but not the indirect object; and third, a language that
allows the subject, the direct object and the indirect object to be relativized with a
particular strategy.

Malagasy is an example of a language that allows subjects to be relativized using
a particular strategy, but not direct and indirect objects. (17) is an example of a
declarative sentence in Malagasy. It is a transitive sentence that contains the subject
*ny mpianatra* 'the student' and the direct object *ny vehivavy* 'the woman'.

(17)    Nahita ny  vehivavy ny  mpianatra.
        saw      the woman    the student
        'The student saw the woman.'      (Malagasy, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 70)

In (18), the subject from the declarative sentence, marked in bold, is relativized. The

lowest end of the hierarchy. I leave them out here, because they are not relevant for the discussion.

subject *ny mpianatra* 'the student' appears in the first position of the clause. It is followed by the invariable relativizer *izay* 'that'. After that, the rest of the relative clause follows, in this case *nahita ny vehivavy* 'saw the woman'.

(18)  **ny mpianatra** izay nahita ny  vehivavy
      the student      that saw      the woman
      'the student that saw the woman'
                           (Malagasy, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 70, my boldfacing)

The object of (17) cannot be relativized in the same way, as shown in (19). Here the object *ny vehivavy* 'the woman', marked in bold, appears in the first position of the clause. It is again followed by the relativizer *izay* 'that' and the rest of the relative clause, which is here *nahita ny mpianatra* 'saw the student'. This example is ungrammatical.

(19)  *__ny vehivavy__ izay nahita ny  mpianatra
      the woman      that saw      the student
      'the woman that the student saw'
                           (Malagasy, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 70, my boldfacing)

Later in this section I draw the parallel between subject and nominative, direct object and accusative and indirect object and dative (after Caha, 2009). As Malagasy does not have any overt morphological system, it does not hold that the subject corresponds to the nominative in this case. German is another example of a language that allows subjects to be relativized using a particular strategy, but not direct and indirect object. This strategy is the participle construction (Keenan and Comrie, 1977). This strategy is a secondary strategy that exist besides the main strategy that can be used to relativize direct and indirect objects. (20) is an example of a declarative sentence in German. It is a transitive sentence that contains the subject *die Frau* 'the woman' and the object *der Mann* 'the man'.

(20)  Die Frau      küsst  den Mann.
      the woman kisses the  man
      'The woman is kissing the man.'                              (German)

The subject from the declarative in (20), sentence *die Frau* 'the woman', is relativized in (21). The predicate from the declarative clause *küsst* 'kisses' is turned in into the participle *küssende* 'kissing'. The participle appears at the end of the reduced relative clause *den Mann küssende* 'the man kissing'. The reduced relative clause directly precedes the noun of the subject, creating distance between the determiner *die* 'the' and *Frau* 'woman', which are both marked in bold.

(21)    **die** den Mann küssende **Frau**
        the the man   kissing   woman
        'the woman who is kissing the man'                              (German)

The object from the declarative sentence in (20), *den Mann* 'the man', cannot be relativized like the subject, as shown in (22). Again, the predicate from the declarative clause *küsst* 'kisses' is turned in into the participle *küssende* 'kissing'. The participle appears at the end of the relative clause *die Frau küssende* 'the woman kissing'. The reduced relative clause directly precedes the noun of the object, creating distance between the determiner *der* 'the' and *Mann* 'man', which are both marked in bold. This example is ungrammatical.

(22)    *__den__ die Frau     küssende **Mann**
         the   the woman kissing    man
         intended: 'the man that the woman is kissing'                 (German)

Malay is an example of a language that has a relativization strategy for subjects and direct objects, but not for indirect objects. (23) shows an example in which the object is relativized. The object here is *ayam* 'chicken', marked in bold. It is followed by the relativizer *yang* 'that'. After that, the rest of the relative clause *Aminah sedang memakan* 'Aminah is eating' follows. The same strategy works to relativize subjects, which is not illustrated with an example.

(23)    Ali bunoh **ayam**   yang Aminah sedang memakan.
        Ali kill     chicken that  Aminah PROG   eat
        'Ali killed the chicken that Aminah is eating.'
                                      (Malay, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 71, my boldfacing)

Indirect objects cannot be relativized using the same strategy. (24) is an example of a ditransitive sentence in Malay. The indirect object *kapada perempuan itu* 'to the woman' cannot be relativized using *yang*.

(24)  Ali beri ubi kentang itu  kapada perempuan itu.
      Ali give potato    the to      woman      the
      'Ali gave the potato to the woman.'   (Malay, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 71)

This is illustrated by the examples in (25). In (25a), the direct object *perempuan kapada* 'to the woman', marked in bold, appears in the first position of the clause. It is followed by the relativizer *yang* 'that' and the rest of the relative clause *Ali beri ubi kentang itu kapada* 'Ali gave the potato to'. This example in ungrammatical. The example in (25b) differs from (25a) in that the preposition *kapada* 'to' has been moved such that it precedes the relativizer *yang* 'that'. This example is ungrammatical as well, indicating this was not the reason for the ungrammaticality.

(25)  a.  *__perempuan__ yang Ali beri ubi kentang itu  kapada
          woman       that  Ali give potato      the to

      b.  *__perempuan kapada__ yang Ali beri ubi kentang itu
          woman       to        who  Ali give potato      that
                      (Malay, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 71, my boldfacing)

Basque is an example of a language that has a particular relativization strategy for subjects, direct objects and indirect objects. (26) is an example of a declarative ditransitive sentence in Basque. The sentence contains the subject *gizonak* 'the man', the direct object *liburua* 'the book' and the indirect object *emakumeari* 'the woman'.

(26)  Gizon-a-k    emakume-a-ri  liburu-a      eman dio.
      man-DEF-ERG woman-DEF-DAT book-DEF.ABS give   has
      'The man has given the book to the woman.'
                                        (Basque, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 72)

A relative clause in Basque appears in the prenominal position and it is marked by the invariable marker *-n*.[6] (27a) shows the three relativizations that are derived

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[6]Additionally, the relativized positions do not appear in verbal agreement anymore, but this not

from (26). In (27a), the ergative subject *gizonak* 'the man' from (26) is relativized. The head *gizona* 'the man', marked in bold, has lost its ergative marker *-k*, and follows the relative clause *makumeari liburua eman dio* 'who has given the book to the woman'. The suffix *-n* is attached to the relative clause. In (27b), the absolutive direct object *liburua* 'the book' from (26) is relativized. The head *liburua* 'the book', marked in bold, follows the relative clause *gizonak emakumeari eman dion* 'that the man has given to the woman'.[7] The suffix *-n* is attached to the relative clause. In (27c), the dative indirect object *emakumeari* 'the woman' from (26) is relativized. The head *emakumea* 'the man', marked in bold, has lost its dative marker *-ri*, and follows the relative clause *gizonak liburua eman dion* 'that the man has given the book to'. The suffix *-n* is attached to the relative clause.

(27)   a.   emakume-a-ri      liburu-a          eman dio-n   **gizon-a**
             woman-DEF-DAT book-DEF.ABS give   has-REL man-DEF
             'the man who has given the book to the woman'

       b.   gizon-a-k         emakume-a-ri     eman dio-n   **liburu-a**
             man-DEF-ERG woman-DEF-DAT give   has-REL book-DEF
             'the book that the man has given to the woman'

       c.   gizon-a-k         liburu-a          eman dio-n   **emakume-a**
             man-DEF-ERG book-DEF.ABS give   has-REL woman-DEF
             'the woman that the man has given the book to'

                                   (Basque, Keenan and Comrie 1977: 72, my boldfacing)

Caha (2009) restates the implicational hierarchy in terms of case. Subject corresponds to nominative, direct object corresponds to accusative, and indirect object corresponds to dative.

   Again, the case scale NOM < ACC < DAT can be observed.

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visible in the example, because they are all phonologically zero.

   [7]The absolutive direct object *liburua* 'the book' does not have an additional overt absolutive marker, so this difference cannot be observed when it is relativized.
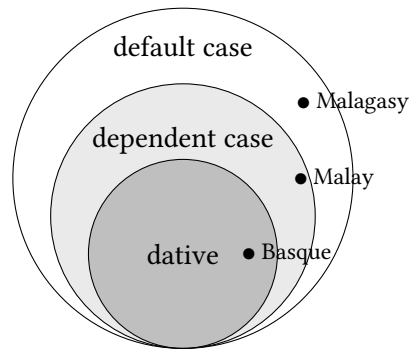
Figure 2.6: Schema for relativization
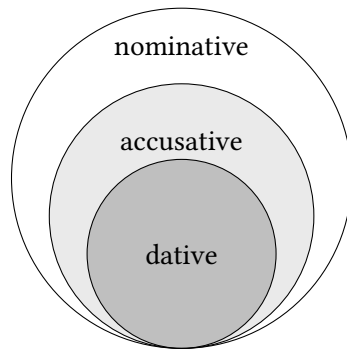


Figure 2.7: Schema for relativization

## 2.3 In morphology

In the two previous sections I showed that the case scale NOM < ACC < DAT can be observed in three syntactic phenomena. First, it shows up in case competition in headless relatives. Second, the case scale forms the basis for the implicational hierarchy observed in agreement across languages. Third, the identical implicational holds for relativization strategies cross-linguistically.

In this section, I show that this same case scale also shows up in morphology. First, syncretism only targets continuous regions on the case scale. Second, several languages show formal containment that mirrors the case scale.

### 2.3.1   Syncretism

Syncretism refers to the phenomenon whereby two or more different functions are fulfilled by a single form (cf. Baerman, Brown, and Corbett, 2002). In this section I discuss literature that shows that syncretism patterns among nominative, accusative and dative are not random. Instead, they pattern along the case scale NOM < ACC < DAT.

It has widely been observed that syncretism is restricted by the linear sequence NOM — ACC — DAT (Baerman, Brown, and Corbett, 2005; Caha, 2009; Zompì, 2017) (and see McFadden 2018; Smith et al. 2019 for similar claims concerning root suppletion). That is, if one orders cases in this linear sequence, only contiguous regions in the sequence turn out to be syncretic. Following that, four possible patterns are attested crosslinguistically. First, all three cases are syncretic. Second, nominative and accusative are syncretic and the dative is not. Third, the accusative and the dative are syncretic and the nominative is not. Fourth, all cases are non-syncretic.

There is one pattern that is not attested crosslinguistically. This pattern does not target continuous regions, but non-contiguous ones: nominative and dative are syncretic and accusative is not. In other words, there is no ABA pattern (in which a form B intervenes between the two identically formed As) (Bobaljik, 2012).

Table 2.4 shows examples for each of these possible patterns. I give an example from a syncretism between nominative, accusative and dative from Dutch. The second person plural pronoun is *jullie* 'you.PL' is syncretic between nominative, accusative and dative. I give an example from a syncretism between nominative and accusative but not dative from German. The third person singular feminine *sie* 'she/her' is syncretic between nominative and accusative. The dative has a separate form: *ihr* 'her'. I give an example from a syncretism between accusative and dative but not nominative from Icelandic. The first person singular plural is *okkur* 'us' is syncretic between accusative and dative. The nominative has a separate form: *við* 'we' (Einarsson 1949: 68). I give an example from three distinct forms from Faroese. The second person singular is *tú* 'you' for nominative, *teg* 'you' for accusative and *tær* 'you' for dative (Lockwood 1977: 70). Crucially, to the best of my knowledge, there is no language in which the nominative and the dative are syncretic but the accusative is not.

Table 2.4:

| pattern | | | NOM | ACC | DAT | translation | language |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | A | A | jullie | jullie | jullie | 2PL | Dutch |
| A | A | B | sie | sie | ihr | 3SG.F | German |
| A | B | B | við | okkur | okkur | 1PL | Icelandic |
| A | B | C | tú | teg | tær | 2SG | Faroese |
| A | B | A | | | | | not attested |

In sum, case syncretism follows the ordering of the case scale in headless relatives: NOM < ACC < DAT.

### 2.3.2   Formal containment

This section shows a second way in which NOM < ACC < DAT is reflected in morphology: formal containment (cf. Caha, 2010; Zompì, 2017; Smith et al., 2019). In some languages, the form that is used for the accusative literally contains the form that is used for the nominative. In turn, the forms for the dative contains the form for the accusative. I illustrate this phenomenon with examples from Khanty.

Khanty (or Ostyak) shows formal containment in some of its pronouns (Nikolaeva 1999: 16 after Smith et al. 2019). Three examples are given in Table 2.5.

The nominative form for the first person singular is *ma* 'I.NOM'. The form for the accusative is *ma:ne:m* 'me'. This is the form for the nominative *ma* plus the accusative marker *-ne:m*. The form for the dative is *ma:ne:mna* 'me'. This is the form for the accusative *ma:ne:m* plus the dative marker *-na*. So, dative formally contains the accusative, and the accusative formally contains the nominative.

The third person singular and first person plural show the same pattern. The accusative forms *luwe:l* 'him/her' and *muŋe:w* 'us' contain the nominative forms *luw* and the *muŋ* plus the accusative marker *-e:l* or *-e:w*. The dative forms *luwe:lna* 'him/her' and *muŋe:wna* 'us' contain the accusative forms *luwe:l* and *muŋe:w* plus the dative marker *-na*. Again, the dative formally contains the accusative, which in turn contains the nominative.

Table 2.5: Case containment in Khanty

|       | 1SG          | 3SG         | 1PL         |
|-------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| NOM   | ma           | luw         | muŋ         |
| ACC   | ma:-**ne:m** | luw-**e:l** | muŋ-**e:w** |
| DAT   | ma:-**ne:m**-na | luw-**e:l**-na | muŋ-**e:w**-na |

Other languages that show this phenomenon are West Tocharian (Gippert, 1987) and Vlakh and Kalderaš Romani (respectively Friedman 1991 and Boretzky 1994).

In sum, some languages morphologically look like NOM-ACC-DAT. This exactly reflects the case scale NOM < ACC < DAT.

## 2.4   Summary

Case competition in headless relatives adheres to the case scale in (28). If the internal and external case differ, cases more on the right of the scale win over cases more to the left on the case.

(28)     NOM < ACC < DAT

This case scale is not only found in case competition in headless relatives. Implicational hierarchies regarding two syntactic phenomena appear across languages. The first one concerns agreement. If a language shows agreement with datives, it also shows agreement with accusatives and nominatives. If a language shows agreement with accusatives, it also shows agreement with nominatives. The second implicational hierarchy concerns relativization. If a dative in a language can be relativized with a particular strategy, an accusative and a nominative can be too using the same strategy. If an accusative can be relativized with a particular strategy, so can a nominative with this strategy.

The case scale also shows up in morphological patterns. First, if the cases are ordered according to the case scale, syncretism only target continuous forms, no ABA pattern appears. Second, some languages show how the dative formally contains

accusative, and how the accusative formally contains the nominative.

These phenomena show that the pattern observed in headless relatives is not something that stands on itself. The scale is a pattern that recurs across languages and across different phenomena. Therefore, it should not be treated as an special process with its own stipulated rule. Instead, it is something general that should also follow from general processes in languages.

The next chapter shows how features of the nominative, accusative and dative are organized. All facts presented in this chapter can be derived from the organization of these features.

# Chapter 3

# Case decomposition

At the beginning of the previous chapter I showed that the case scale NOM < ACC < DAT appears in headless relatives. In most accounts for headless relatives (cf. Harbert 1978; Pittner 1995; Vogel 2001; Grosu 2003, an exception to this is Himmelreich 2017) the case scale is stipulated. Headless relatives simply obey to that hierarchy. Pittner (1995: 201:fn.4) makes this explicit: "One of the reviewers notes that an explanation in terms of a Case hierarchy is rather stipulative. However, as far as I know, nobody has suggested a nonstipulative explanation for these facts."

What I showed as well in the previous chapter is the case scale NOM < ACC < DAT is a wide-spread phenomenon: it recurs. The scale can be observed in at least two more syntactic phenomena: agreement en relativization.[1] The case scale also appears within morphology in syncretism patterns and formal containment. Pittner (1995: 201:fn.4) makes this link to morphology as well: "Furthermore, the Case hierarchies receive some independent support by morphology as shown by the various inflectional paradigms."

I am not after a theory in which the case hierarchy is not something construction specific, and syntax and morphology both have their own case hierarchy. I argue that there is a single trigger that is responsible for the case scale in different subparts of language (cf. Caha, 2019, on numeral constructions). Specifically, I show that the observed case scale naturally follows on the assumption that the case hierarchy is

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[1] In this dissertation I do not work out accounts for these two syntactic phenomena. They merely serve as an illustration that the pattern is reflected in other syntactic phenomena as well.

deeply anchored in syntax. The case scale in morphology and syntax are merely reflexes of how case is organized in language.[2]

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I introduce a specific case decomposition (Caha, 2009). In the next two sections, I show how this case decomposition is able to derive the syncretism and formal containment facts from the previous chapter. I make this concrete in the framework Nanosyntax (Starke, 2009). Finally, I show how the case decomposition translates to the case scale observed in headless relatives.

## 3.1   The basic idea

Caha (2009, 2013) (followed by cf. Starke 2009; Bobaljik 2012; McFadden 2018; Van Baal and Don 2018; Smith et al. 2019) has extensively argued that case should be decomposed into privative features. Specifically, the decomposition is cumulative: each case has a different number of case features, and the number grows monotonically. This is illustrated in Table 3.1. Accusative has all the features that nominative has (here F1) plus one extra (here F2). Dative has all the features accusative has (F and F2) plus one extra (F3).

Table 3.1: Case decomposed

| case | features |
|------|----------|
| NOM  | F1 |
| ACC  | F1, F2 |
| DAT  | F1, F2, F3 |

So, the case scale, repeated in (1), actually indicates containment. Dative corresponds to F1, F2 and F3, accusative corresponds to F1 and F2, and nominative corresponds to F1. Nominative corresponds to a set of features (namely F1) that is contained in the set of features accusative and dative corresponds to (which is re-

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[2]Himmelreich (2017) works this intuition out in a different way.

spectively F1 and F2 vs. F1, F2 and F3). Accusative corresponds to a set of features (F1 and F2) that is contained in the set of features of dative (F1, F2 and F3).

(1)   NOM < ACC < DAT

The decomposition in Table 3.1 forms the basis to derive the case scale effects observed in the previous chapter. The next section shows how case containment and syncretism effects follow naturally. Later in this chapter I show how the decomposition also derives the case competition facts in headless relatives.

## 3.2   Deriving syncretism

Start with the observation in terms of the case scale: NOM < ACC < DAT

In this section I show how case syncretism patterns can be derived from the case decomposition in Table 3.1. I repeat an example that shows the possible and impossible syncretism patterns in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Syncretism pattern

| pattern | | | NOM | ACC | DAT | translation | language |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | A | A | jullie | jullie | jullie | 2PL | Dutch |
| A | A | B | sie | sie | ihr | 3SG.F | German |
| A | B | B | við | okkur | okkur | 1PL | Icelandic |
| A | B | C | tú | teg | tær | 2SG | Faroese |
| A | B | A | | | | | not attested |

The intuition is the following.

The proposal in this dissertation is worked out in Nanosyntax. I provide background assumptions on the framework whenever necessary to follow the discussion as I proceed. At this point I discuss the general architecture of Nanosyntax, its lexicon, phrasal spellout and matching between syntax and the lexicon.

The architecture of Nanosyntax is schematically shown in Figure 3.1 (from Caha, 2019; Vanden Wyngaerd et al., 2020). In Nanosyntax, syntax starts with atomic

features, and it builds complex syntactic trees. Specifically, there are no 'feature bundles' that enter the syntax. The only way complex feature structures come to exist is a a result of merge. After syntax (actually, each instance of merge), the syntactic structure is matched against the lexicon for pronunciation. The lexicon 'translates' between syntactic representations on the one hand and phonology (PF) and concepts (CF) on the other hand. So, Nanosyntax is a late insertion model: (lexical) insertion takes place late, namely after syntax.

Syntax

Lexicon

PF          CF
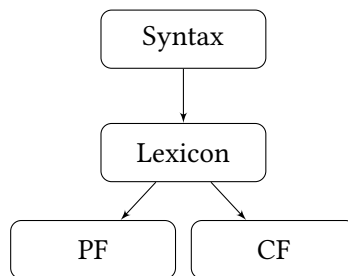
Figure 3.1: Nanosyntactic model of grammar

In Nanosyntax, the lexicon is nothing but links between syntactic representations, phonological representations and conceptual representations (Starke, 2014).[3] I leave the conceptual representation out of discussion for now, as it not relevant for the discussion here. The fact that only syntax can create complex feature structures also has a consequence for the content of the lexicon. Syntactic structures are constrained by certain principles, such that only well-formed syntactic structures exist. Since the lexical items from the lexicon link syntactic representation to phonological and conceptual representation, these syntactic representations are constrained by the same principles as syntactic trees are. As a result, the lexicon only contains well-formed syntactic structures. The lexicon does not contain unstructured 'feature bundles', because they could never be created by syntax.

---

[3]The syntactic representation does not have to correspond to both a phonological and a conceptual representation. Syntactic representation that only correspond to a conceptual representations and not to phonological representations are (phrasal or clausal) idioms. Syntactic representations that only correspond to phonological representations but not to conceptual representations are for instance irregular plurals.

Following this logic, the syntactic representation for a lexical entry as in (2) cannot exist. The feature bundle cannot have entered syntax, because syntax starts with atomic features. It can also not be created by syntax, because complex structures can only be created with merge.

(2)     [ F1, F2, F3 ]

Instead, a possible syntactic representation for a lexical entry looks as in (3). The features are merged one by one in a binary syntactic structure.

(3)       DATP
         ╱    ╲
       F3      ACCP
              ╱    ╲
            F2       F1
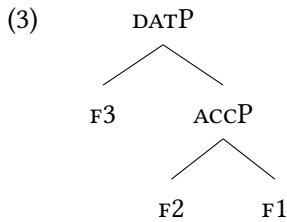
This structure leads to the concept of phrasal spellout. Phrasal spellout is that not terminals but multiple syntactic heads (phrases) are realized with a single piece of phonology (i.e. a single morpheme). A necessary requirement is that these multiple syntactic heads form a constituent.

Let me illustrate all of the above with the Faroese pronouns from Table 3.2. I simplify the situation in two respects. First, I do not show the internal complexity of the pronouns, including person and number features. Instead, I give a triangle, indicating that this is a complex syntactic structure. Second, in this simplified representation I consider the Faroese pronouns to be monomorphemic. I ignore the fact that all three pronouns clearly have the stem *t* with a suffix on it.

The lexical entry for *tú* '3SG.NOM' is given in (4). The syntactic representation consists of the complex syntactic structure that corresponds to the third person singular pronoun, and F1, making it a NOMP. The phonological representation that is linked to the syntactic representation in *tú*.

(4)            NOMP ⟺ *tú*

           F1        3SGP
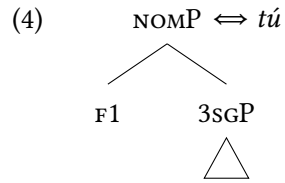
The lexical entry for *teg* '3SG.ACC' is given in (5). The syntactic representation con-
tains all the features of the syntactic structure in (4), plus F2, making it an ACCP. The
linked phonological representation is *teg*.

(5)            ACCP ⟺ *teg*

           F2        NOMP

                  F1        3SGP
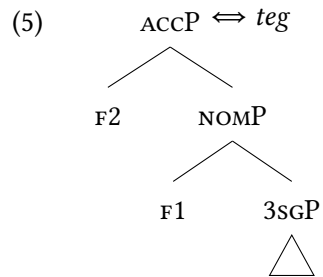
The lexical entry for *tær* '3SG.DAT' is given in (6). The syntactic representation con-
tains all the features of the syntactic structure in (5), plus F3, making it an DATP.
The linked phonological representation is *tær*.

(6)            DATP ⟺ *tær*

           F3        ACCP

                  F2        NOMP

                        F1        3SGP
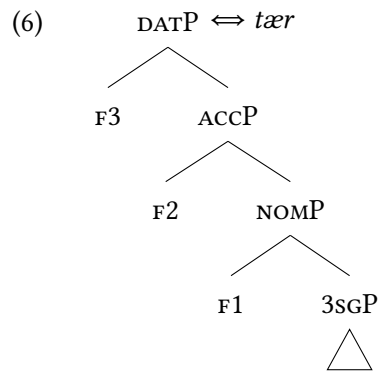
This brings me to the part of the discussion about matching. The syntactic structures

and their phonological counterparts I gave in (4) to (6) are lexical entries. These are matched against the actual syntactic structure that is to be realized. Examples of syntactic structures are given in (7) to (9). The syntactic structure in (7) matches the syntactic structure of the lexical entry in (4). Therefore, this syntactic structure is spelled out as *tu*. Throughout this dissertation I circle the part of the structure that corresponds to a particular lexical entry, and I place corresponding the phonology next to it.

(7)



*tú*
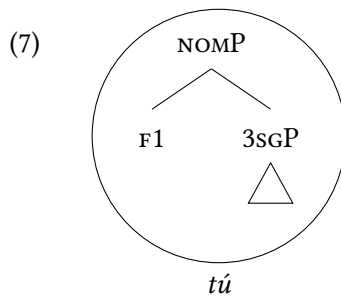
(8) matches the syntactic structure of the lexical entry in (5), and it is spelled out as *teg*.

(8)



*teg*
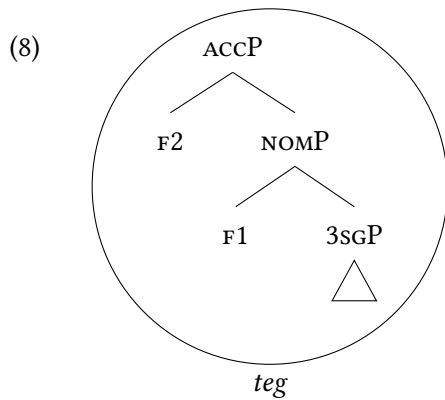
(9) matches the syntactic structure of the lexical entry in (6), and it is spelled out as *tær*.

(9)

DATP

F3    ACCP

F2    NOMP

F1    3SGP

△

*tær*
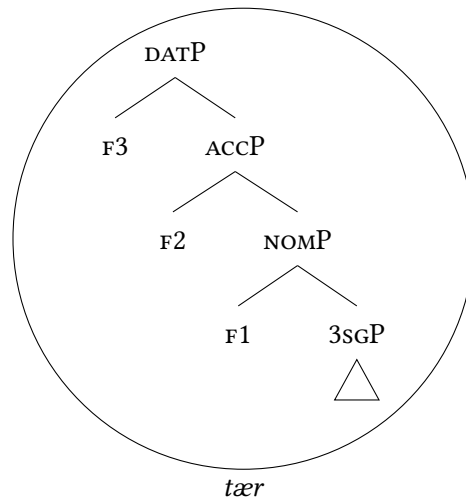
In the Faroese examples above, the syntactic structure in the syntax always exactly matched the syntactic structure of the lexical entry. However, to be a successful match, identity is not a necessary requirement. Instead, matching relies on a containment relation. A lexical entry applies when it contains all features. This is formalized as in (10).

(10)   **The Superset Principle** Starke (2009):
       A lexically stored tree matches a syntactic node iff the lexically stored tree contains the syntactic node.

Let me illustrate this with the Dutch second person plural pronoun from Table 3.2. This pronoun is syncretic between between the nominative, accusative and dative. The lexicon only contains a single lexical entry, namely (11). The nominative, the accusative and the dative can all be spelled out with this lexical entry.

(11)       DATP ⟺ *jullie*

         F3      ACCP

              F2       NOMP

                   F1        2PLP
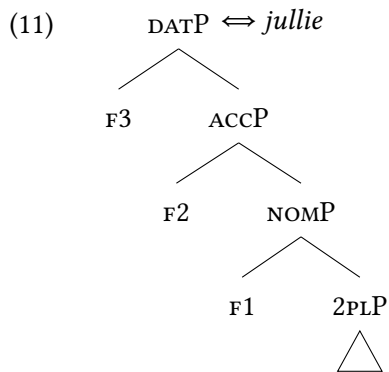
The syntactic structure of the dative, given in (12), is the least exciting of the three. It is an exact match to the syntactic structure in the lexical entry (11), and therefore, spelled out as *jullie*.

(12)

DATP

F3      ACCP

     F2       NOMP

          F1        2PLP

*jullie*
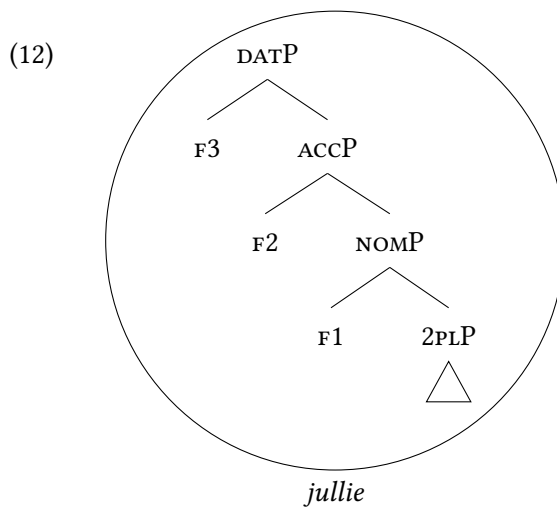
The syntactic structure of the accusative second person plural is given in (14). This syntactic structure does not exactly match the syntactic structure in the lexical entry in (11). However, the syntactic structure in the lexical entry contains the syntactic structure of the accusative. I repeated the lexical entry for *jullie* in (13), marking the subpart of the tree that matches the syntactic structure in gray.

(13)         DATP ⟺ *jullie*

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DATP} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{F3} \quad \text{ACCP} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{F2} \quad \text{NOMP} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{F1} \quad \text{2PLP} \\
\triangle
\end{array}
$$
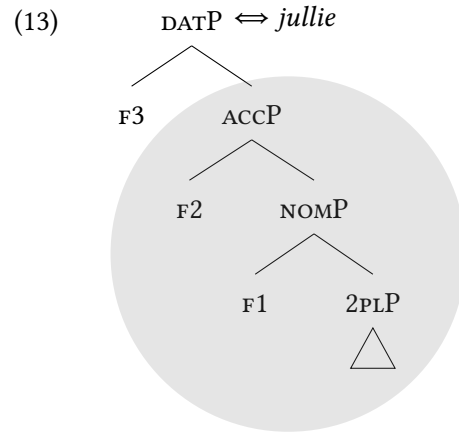
As a result, the accusative is spelled out as *jullie*, shown in (14).

(14)
$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ACCP} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{F2} \quad \text{NOMP} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{F1} \quad \text{2PLP} \\
\triangle
\end{array}
$$
                *jullie*
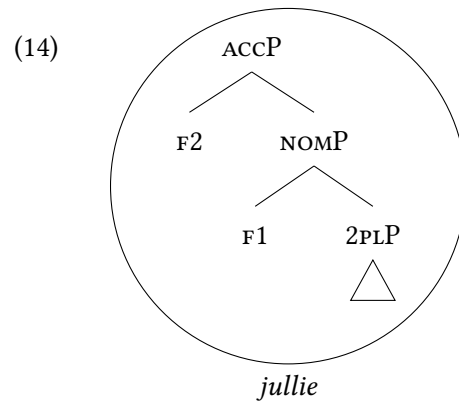
The same holds for the nominative second person plural. The syntactic struc-
ture is given in (14). This syntactic structure does not exactly match the syntactic
structure in the lexical entry in (11). However, again, the syntactic structure in the
lexical entry contains the syntactic structure of the nominative. I repeated the lexi-
cal entry for *jullie* in (15), marking the subpart of the tree that matches the syntactic
structure in gray.

(15)    DATP ⟺ *jullie*

F3    ACCP

F2    NOMP

F1    2PLP
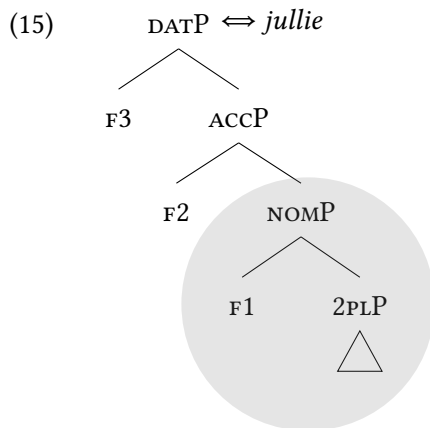
As a result, the nominative is spelled out as *jullie*, as shown in (16).

(16)    NOMP

F1    2PLP

*jullie*
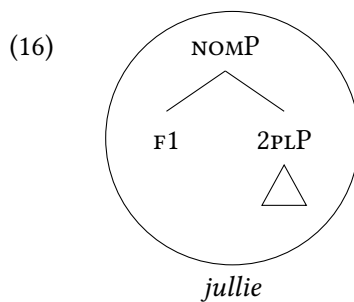
A question arises at this point. Why is the accusative and nominative in Faroese not spelled out by the lexical entry for the dative (and why is the nominative not spelled out by the lexical entry for the accusative)? These syntactic structures are namely contained in the lexical entry for the dative (and the accusative). The reason for that comes from how competition between lexical entries is regulated. When two lexical entries compete, the best fit wins. The best fit is the lexical entry with the least unused features. This is formalized as in (17).

(17)    **The Elsewhere Condition** (Kiparsky 1973, formulated as in **caha2020a**):
When two entries can spell out a given node, the more specific entry wins. Under the Superset Principle governed insertion, the more specific entry is the one which has fewer unused features.

Let me come back to the Faroese examples. Consider first again the syntactic struc-

ture in (7). All the Faroese lexical entries (4), (5) and (6) contain the syntactic struc-
ture for it. (6) has two unused features: F2 and F3. (5) has one unused feature: F2.
Only (4) does not have any unused features, hence is wins the competition over the
other two.

Regarding the syntactic structure (8), the lexical entries (5) and (6) contain the
syntactic structure. (4) is not even a candidate here, because it does not contain the
syntactic structure (it lacks F2.) Only (6) does not have any unused features, and it
is inserted.

The Table in 3.2 contains two more attested patterns: the ABB in Icelandic and
the AAB in German. In the remainder of this section I show how these two patterns
are derived. I also how the system is unable to derive an ABA, which is a pattern
unattested crosslinguistically.

Let us first consider the Icelanic pattern. For the first person plural, Icelandic has
*við* for the nominative and *okkur* for the accusative and dative. Two lexical entries
are needed for that. The first one in (18a) contain pronominal syntactic structure
and F1, and corresponds to the phonology *við*. The second one is given in (18b). It
contains in addition to what (18a) the features F2 and F3.

(18)    a.        NOMP ⟺ *við*

                 F1        1PLP

    b.        DATP ⟺ *okkur*

          F3        ACCP

              F2        NOMP

                  F1        1PLP
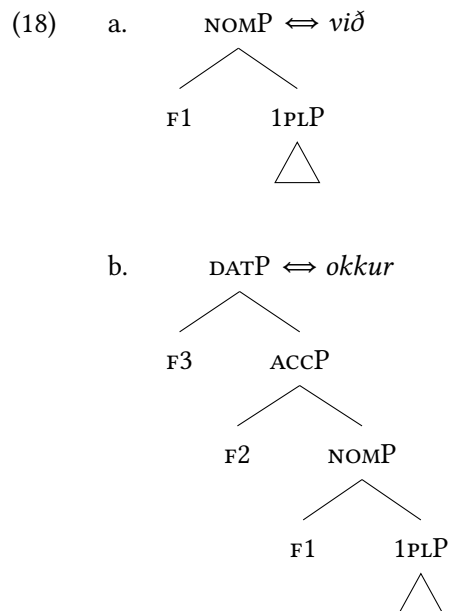
The syntactic structure in (19) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (18b), and therefore, spelled out as *okkur*.
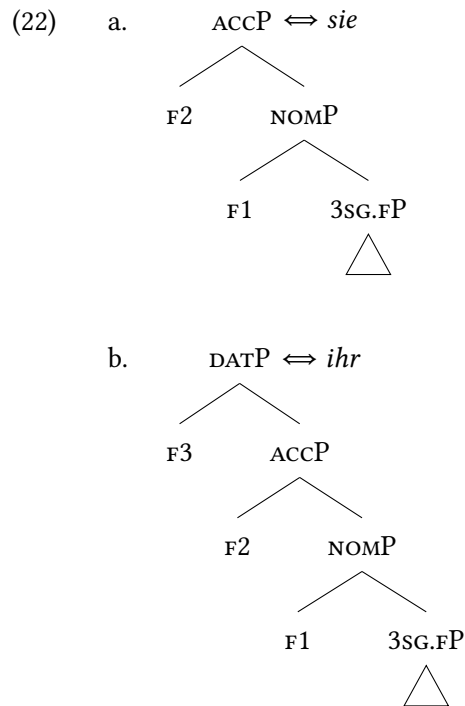
(19)

```
        DATP
       /    \
     F3    ACCP
          /    \
        F2    NOMP
             /    \
           F1    3SGP
                  △
```
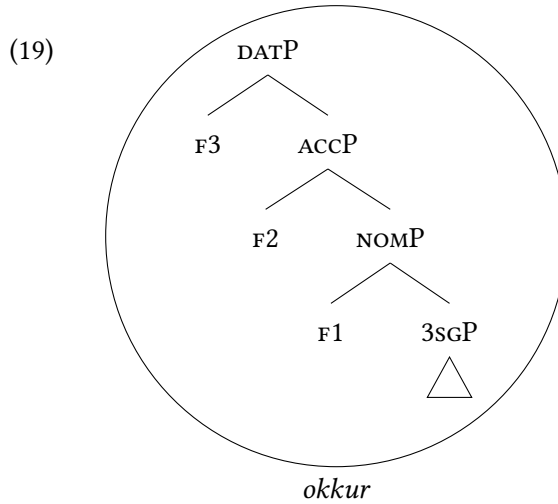
*okkur*

The syntactic structure in (20) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (18b), and therefore, spelled out as *okkur*.

(20)

```
        ACCP
       /    \
     F2    NOMP
          /    \
        F1    3SGP
               △
```

*okkur*
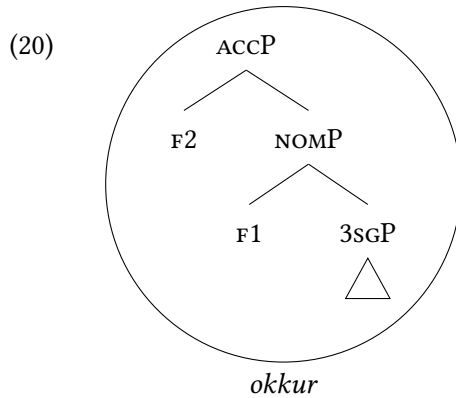
The syntactic structure in (21) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (18a) and in (18b). The former, (18a), has no unused features. The latter, (18b), has two unused features: F2 and F3. Therefore, (18b) wins the competition, and the syntactic structure is spelled out as *við*.

(21)

NOMP
├─ F1
└─ 3SGP
        △

*við*
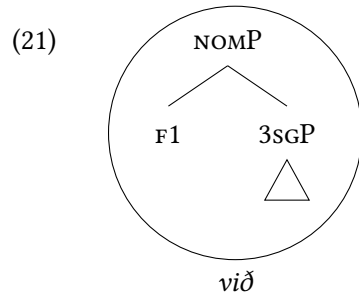
For the third person singular feminine, German uses *sie* for nominative and accusative, and *ihr* for dative. Two lexical entries are needed for that. The first one in (22a) contains pronominal syntactic structure, F1 and F2, and corresponds to the phonology *sie*. The second one is given in (22b). It contains in addition to what (22a) the feature F3.

(22)    a.        ACCP ⟺ *sie*
                 ╱    ╲
               F2    NOMP
                    ╱    ╲
                  F1    3SG.FP
                           △

        b.       DATP ⟺ *ihr*
                ╱    ╲
              F3    ACCP
                   ╱    ╲
                 F2    NOMP
                      ╱    ╲
                    F1    3SG.FP
                             △

The syntactic structure in (23) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (22b), and therefore, spelled out as *ihr*.

(23)



*ihr*
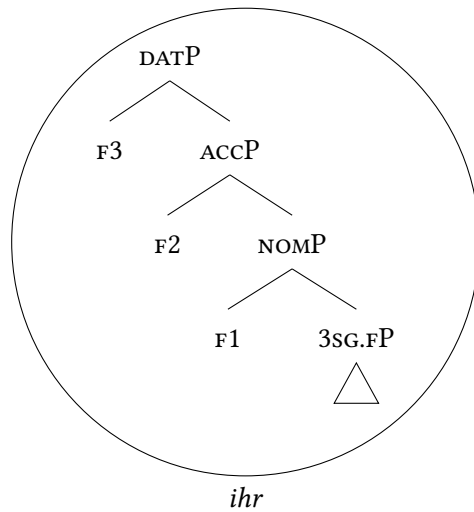
The syntactic structure in (24) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (22a) and in (22b). The former, (22a), has one no unused features. The latter, (22b), has one unused feature: F3. Therefore, (22a) wins the competition, and the syntactic structurer is spelled out as *sie*.

(24)



*sie*
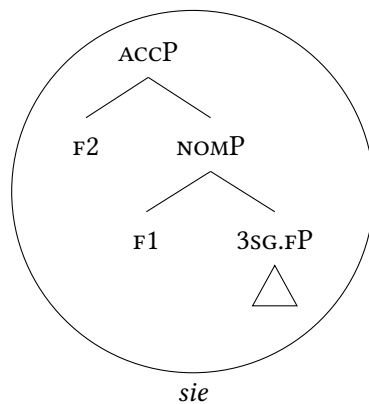
The syntactic structure in (25) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (22a) and in (22b). The former, (22a), has one unused feature: F2. The latter, (22b), has two unused features: F2 and F3. Therefore, (22a) wins the competition, and the syntactic structurer is spelled out as *sie*.

(25)

NOMP

F1    3SG.FP

$\triangle$

*sie*
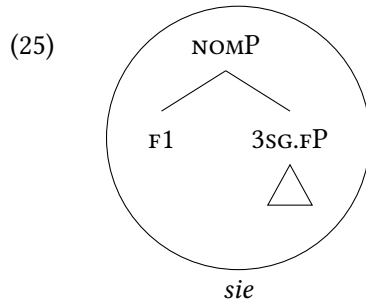
This last example also illustrates that the laid out system is unable to derive an ABA pattern. The unability of the system to derive such a pattern is a welcome one, since the pattern is unattested cross-linguistically. In an ABA pattern, the nominative and the dative are syncretic, to the exclusion of the accusative. Staying close to the German example, in this hypothetical example, the dative would be *ihr*, the accusative *sie*, and the nominative *ihr* again. This result could never be derived with the lexical entries given in (22a) and (22b). *Ihr* is inserted for the dative and the cases contained in it (so accusative and nominative), unless a more specific lexical entry is found. *Sie* is the more specific lexical entry that is found from the accusative on. From the accusative on, *sie* will be inserted until a more specific entry is found. If no entry is specified for nominative, *sie* will surface. *Ihr* will not resurface, because the lexical entry for *sie* will remain to be more specific.

## 3.3   Deriving case containment

Start with the observation in terms of the case scale: NOM < ACC < DAT

In this section I show how morphological case containment can be derived from the case decomposition in Table 3.1. I repeat an example that shows morphological case containment in Table 2.5 (Nikolaeva 1999: 16).

The intuition is the following. The morphological form of the pronouns mirror the cumulative feature decomposition given in Table 3.1. That is, the accusative has the morphology that the nominative has (*luw*) plus something extra (*-e:l*). The dative has the morphology that the accusative has (*luw-e:l*) plus something extra (*luw-e:l*-na). In what follows I make it concrete how syntactic features translate to morphological form.

Table 3.3: Containment in 3sg in Khanty

|      | 3sg         |
| ---- | ----------- |
| NOM  | luw         |
| ACC  | luw-**e:l**     |
| DAT  | luw-**e:l**-na |

First, I give the lexical entry for the nominative third person singular. It contains pronominal syntactic structure and the feature F1. The lexical entry is given in (26).

(26)    NOMP ⟺ *luw*

F1    3sgP
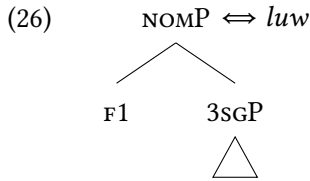
The syntactic structure in (27) is contained in the syntactic structure of the lexical entry (27). The nominative is spelled out as *luw*.

(27)

NOMP

F1    3sgP

*luw*
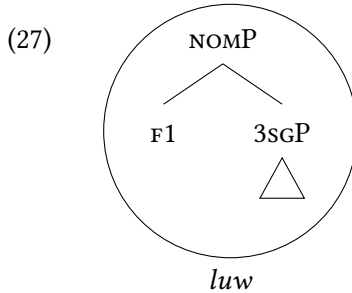
In the previous section I only gave examples in which the forms were syncretic or suppletive (i.e. formally unrelated). The examples from Khanty are different. The accusative pronoun formally contains the nominative pronoun. This can be modeled by letting NOMP still be realized by the lexical entry for the nominative, and giving the accusative its own realization.[4]

---

[4]Note that it is crucial here to have a theory in which the accusative contains the nominative. If

Accordingly, I give the lexical entry for the accusative marker *-e:l* in (28).

(28)      ACCP  ⟺  *-e:l*
          │

          F2

So, *luw-e:l* consists of two morphemes that both correspond to their own piece of syntactic structure: *luw* and *e:l*. But how do these two morphemes combine? This brings me to another detour into the Nanosyntactic theory, which is about spellout driven movement.

Spellout in Nanosyntax only targets constituents. So, it is impossible to let ACCP spell out as *e:l* while it contains NOMP.[5]

(29)



*luw*
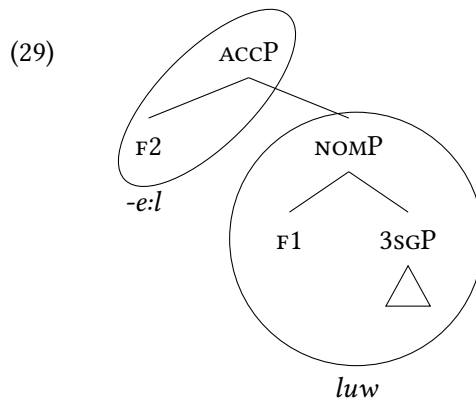
The lexical entry in (28) can only be a match for the syntactic structure if NOMP moves away, leaving the ACCP containing F2 behind. In other words, the complement of F2 needs to be moved away.
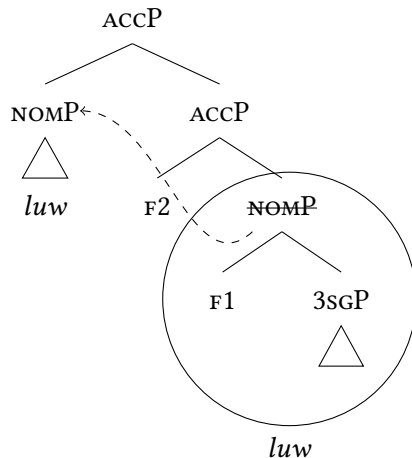
Exactly this movement is one of the two so-called 'evacuation movements' that is part of the spellout procedure in Nanosyntax. As I illustrated in Section 3.2, lexical entries are matched using the Superset Principle and the Elsewhere Condition. However, if there is no match in the lexicon for a particular syntactic structure, two types of movement can take place, in a fixed order. The movement types change

---

not, it would be a surprise that the nominative is contained in the accusative.

[5]Notice that this would also have given the incorrect order of the morphemes: *e:l-luw* instead of *luw-e:l*.

the syntactic structure in such a way that they generate new constituents that are possible matches for spellout.[6] For the discussion in this section, only the second type of movement is relevant: complement movement. In this type of movement, the complement or a particular feature moves to the specifier of that same particular feature.

This is exactly the type of movement I described necessary for the Khanty pronoun. The movement is displayed in (29). The complement of F2, the NOMP, the lower right circled portion in the structure, moves to the specifier of ACCP. The strikethrough of the lower NOMP indicates that the complement of F2 disappears.

```
                    AccP
            ┌────────┴────────┐
        NOMP←-~..          ACCP
          △         ┌───────┴───────┐
         luw       F2\    ~~NOMP~~
                     ┌────────┴────────┐
                    F1              3SGP
                                     △
                             luw
```

The result of the movement is given in (30). Now the syntactic structre in (28) matches the syntactic structure, and ACCP is spelled out as *e:l*.
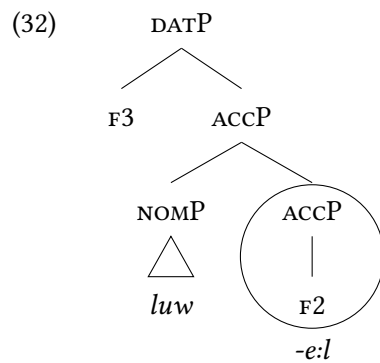
(30)
```
              AccP
       ┌───────┴───────┐
     NOMP           AccP
      △              │
     luw            F2
                   -e:l
```
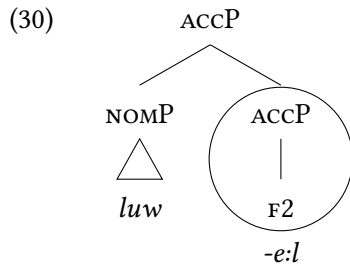
Just as the accusative, the dative also has its own realization. The lexical entry for

---

[6]This type of movement is different from syntactic movement. It is driven by spellout, it does not have any interpretational effects, and it does not leave any traces. In Section XX I discuss 'regular' syntactic movement in Nanosyntax.
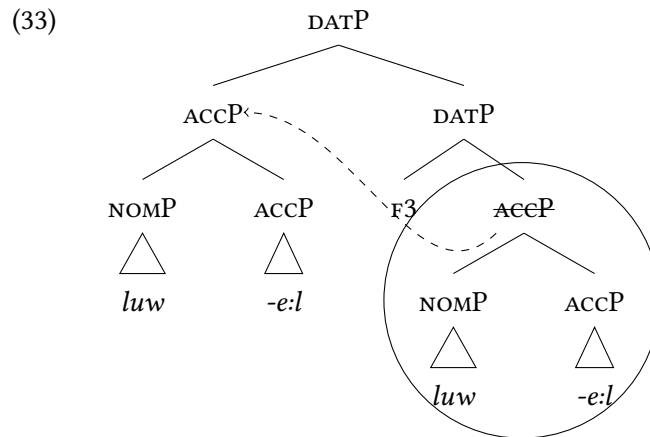
*-na* is given in (31).

(31)     DATP ⟺ *-na*
              |
         F3
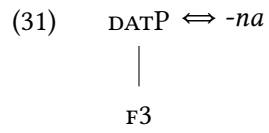
Again, because the spellout only targets constituents, it cannot be spelled out right after it has been merged, shown in **??**.
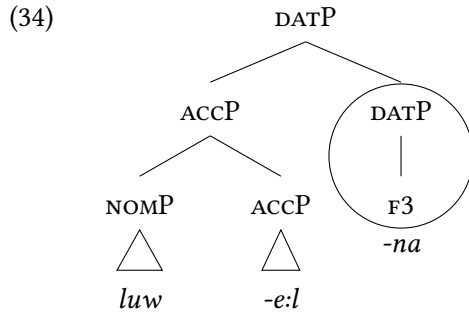
(32)            DATP
           ╱        ╲
        F3          ACCP
                  ╱      ╲
              NOMP        ACCP
              △            |
             *luw*        F2
                         *-e:l*

so we are going to do the movement again

(33)                      DATP
                    ╱            ╲
              ACCP‹- -           DATP
           ╱      ╲      ╲       ╱    ╲
       NOMP       ACCP    F3   ~~ACCP~~
       △          △           ╱      ╲
      *luw*       *-e:l*    NOMP      ACCP
                           △          △
                          *luw*      *-e:l*

tada! it fits!

   Instead, the whole complement needs to be moved out of the DATP. Now the lexical entry can be inserted.

(34)



## 3.4  Deriving the case scale in headless relatives

Start with the observation in terms of the case scale: NOM < ACC < DAT

In this section I show how case competition in headless relatives can be derived from the case decomposition in Table 3.1. I repeat the summary of the data pattern in Gothic in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Summary of Gothic matching headless relative data

| INT ＼ EXT | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|---|---|---|---|
| [NOM] |  | ACC | DAT |
| [ACC] | ACC |  | DAT |
| [DAT] | DAT | DAT |  |

(35)



(36)



(37)
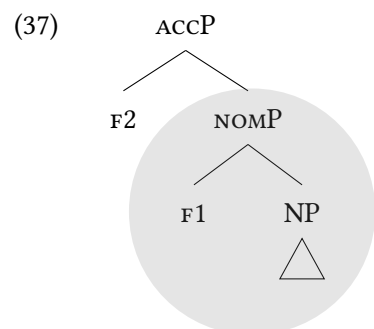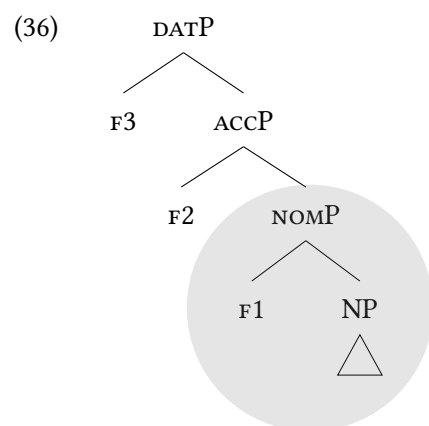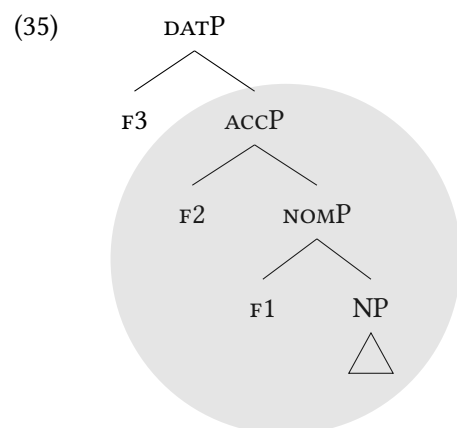


so one can delete the other

Table 3.5: DATP deletes ACCP
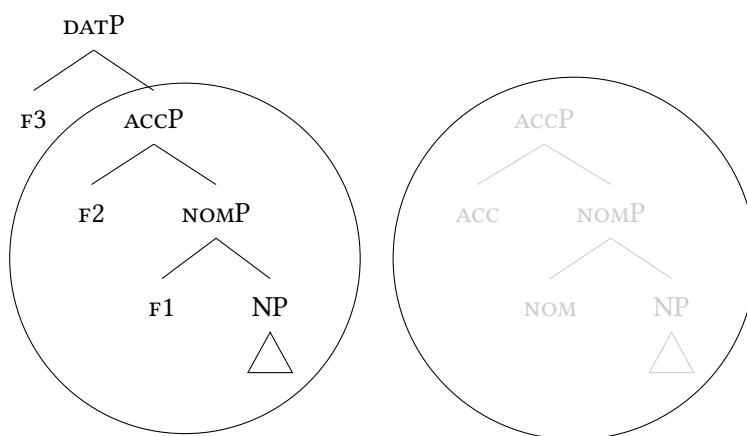


Table 3.6: DATP deletes NOMP
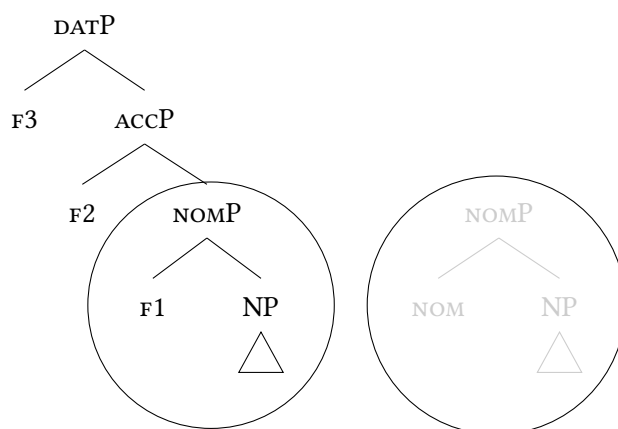
Table 3.7: ACCP deletes NOMP
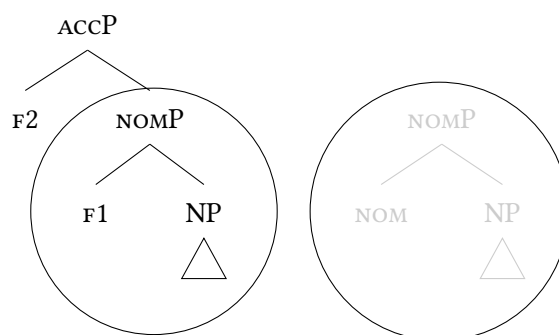


## 3.5   Summary

Case can be decomposed as cumulatively. Then in a nanosyntax fashion: each feature is a syntactic head. This can derive syncretism facts and formal containment fact. Also: case scale in headless relatives: a case more to the right on the scale contains the case more to the left on the scale, and it can be licensed in that way. The question: is it deleted or was it there never to begin with will be addressed later.

# Part II

# The varying participants

# Chapter 4

# The variation

## 4.1 OHG and MG have the same winner

### 4.1.1 MG

let me show that the claim I made for Gothic holds for MG as well: DAT wins over
ACC wins over NOM.

Examples in which the internal case is dative, the external case is accusative and
the relative pronoun appears in accusative case is ungrammatical.

(1)  *Ich lade ein   wen          **auch Maria vertraut**.
     I    invite[ACC] REL.ACC.AN also   Maria  trusts[DAT].
     'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.'                    (Vogel 2001: 344)

Examples in which the internal case is dative, the external case is accusative and
the relative pronoun appears in accusative case is ungrammatical.

(2)  *Uns besucht    wer          **Maria vertraut**.
     us   visits[NOM] REL.NOM.AN Maria  trusts[DAT]
     'Who visits us, Maria trusts.'                           (Vogel 2001: 343)

Examples in which the internal case is accusative, the external case is nominative
and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case is ungrammatical.

(3)     *Uns besucht    wer         **Maria        mag**.
        Us   visits[NOM] REL.NOM.AN Maria.NOM likes[ACC]
        'Who visits us likes Maria likes.'                              (Vogel 2001: 343)

Examples in which the internal case is accusative, the external case is dative and
the relative pronoun appears in accusative case is ungrammatical.

(4)     *Ich vertraue **wen         auch Maria mag**.
        I    trust[DAT] REL.ACC.AN also   Maria  likes[ACC].
        'I trust whoever Maria also likes.'                             (Vogel 2001: 345)

Examples in which the internal case is nominative, the external case is dative and
the relative pronoun appears in nominative case is ungrammatical.

(5)     *Ich vertraue, **wer         Hitchcock mag**.
        I    trust[DAT] REL.NOM.AN Hitchcock   likes[NOM]
        'I trust who likes Hitchcock.'                                  (Vogel 2001: 345)

Examples in which the internal case is nominative, the external case is accusative
and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case is ungrammatical.

(6)     *Ich lade ein,  **wer         mir sympathisch ist**.
        I    invite[ACC] REL.NOM.AN me   nice             is[NOM]
        'I invite who I like.'                                          (Vogel 2001: 344)

### 4.1.2   OHG

same holds for OHG but you just can't give the ungrammatical examples. but they
are not attested.

## 4.2   The different patterns

In Gothic, the more complex case wins. In OHG, the more complex case wins, only
if it is external. In MG, the more complex case wins, only if it is internal. In Italian,
case mismatch is not allowed.

Table 4.1: Variation

|      | INT>EXT | EXT>INT |
|------|---------|---------|
| MG   | ✓       | *       |
| OHG  | *       | ✓       |
| Gothic | ✓     | ✓       |

### 4.2.1 Both: Gothic

| INT \ EXT | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| [NOM]     |       | ACC   | DAT   |
| [ACC]     | ACC   |       | DAT   |
| [DAT]     | DAT   | DAT   |       |

### 4.2.2 Only from internal: Modern German

#### 4.2.2.1 external case = ungrammatical

INT:NOM, EXT:ACC

(7)  *Ich lade ein,  wen       **mir sympathisch ist**.
     I    invite[ACC] REL.ACC.AN me  nice          is[NOM]
     'I invite who I like.'                              (Vogel 2001: 344)

INT:NOM, EXT:DAT

(8)  *Ich vertraue, wem     **Hitchcock mag**.
     I    trust[DAT] REL.DAT.AN Hitchcock  likes[NOM]
     'I trust who likes Hitchcock.'                      (Vogel 2001: 345)

INT:ACC, EXT:DAT

(9)    *Ich vertraue wem        **auch Maria mag**.
       I    trust[DAT] REL.DAT.AN also   Maria  likes[ACC].
       'I trust whoever Maria also likes.'                        (Vogel 2001: 345)

### 4.2.2.2   internal case = grammatical

Consider the example in (10). In this example, the internal case is dative and the
external case is accusative. The internal case is dative. The predicate *vertraut* 'trusts'
takes dative objects. The external case is accusative. The predicate *lade ein* 'invite'
takes accusative objects. The relative pronoun *wem* 'REL.DAT.AN' appears in the
internal case: the dative. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just like as the
relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause.

(10)    Ich lade ein   **wem        auch Maria vertraut**.
        I    invite[ACC] REL.DAT.AN also   Maria  trusts[DAT].
        'I invite whoever Maria also trusts.'                     (Vogel 2001: 344)

Consider the example in (11). In this example, the internal case is dative and the ex-
ternal case is nominative. The internal case is dative. The predicate *vertraut* 'trusts'
takes dative objects. The external case is nominative. The predicate *besucht* 'visits'
takes nominative subjects. The relative pronoun *wem* 'REL.DAT.AN' appears in the
internal case: the dative. The relative pronoun is marked in bold, just like as the
relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the relative clause.

(11)    Uns besucht   **wem        Maria vertraut**.
        us    visits[NOM] REL.DAT.AN Maria  trusts[DAT]
        'Who visits us, Maria trusts.'                            (Vogel 2001: 343)

Consider the example in (12). In this example, the internal case is accusative and
the external case is nominative. The internal case is accusative. The predicate *mag*
'likes' takes accusative objects. The external case is nominative. The predicate *be-
sucht* 'visits' takes nominative subjects. The relative pronoun *wen* 'REL.ACC.AN' ap-
pears in the internal case: the accusative. The relative pronoun is marked in bold,
just like as the relative clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the
relative clause.

(12) Uns besucht **wen** **Maria** **mag**.

Us   visits$_{[NOM]}$ REL.ACC.AN Maria.NOM likes$_{[ACC]}$

'Who visits us likes Maria likes.' (Vogel 2001: 343)

Table 4.2: Summary of MG matching headless relative data

| INT ᴱˣᵀ | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|---|---|---|---|
| [NOM] | | | |
| [ACC] | ACC | | |
| [DAT] | DAT | DAT | |

### 4.2.3   Only from external: Old High German

#### 4.2.3.1   external is grammatical

Consider the example in (14). In this example, the internal case is accusative and the external case is dative. The internal case is nominative. The predicate *zalta* 'named' takes accusative objects. The external case is dative. The predicate *furira* 'superior' takes dative objects. The relative pronoun *thên* 'REL.DAT.PL' appears in the external case: the dative. The relative pronoun is not marked in bold, just like as the main clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the main clause. Examples in which the internal case is accusative, the external case is dative and the relative pronoun appears in accusative case are unattested.

(13)  istû    furira      Abrâhame, ouh thên     **man hiar nû**

are you superior$_{[DAT]}$ to Abraham also REL.DAT.PL one  here now

**zalta**?

named$_{[ACC]}$

'are you superior to Abraham to those which they just mentioned?'

(OHG, Otfrid III 18:33, Behaghel 1923-1932: 761)

Consider the example in (14). In this example, the internal case is nominative and

the external case is dative. The internal case is nominative. The predicate *sprah* 'spoke' takes nominative subjects. The external case is dative. The predicate *antuurta* 'replied' takes dative objects. The relative pronoun *demo* 'REL.DAT.M.SG' appears in the external case: the dative. The relative pronoun is not marked in bold, just like as the main clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the main clause. Examples in which the internal case is nominative, the external case is dative and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case are unattested.

(14)    aer antuurta    demo        **zaimo sprah**
        he  replied_[DAT]  REL.DAT.M.SG to him spoke_[NOM]
        'he replied to the one who spoke to him'
                    (OHG, Mons. 7:24, Behaghel 1923-1932: 761, after Pittner 1995: 199)

Consider the example in (15). In this example, the internal case is nominative and the external case is accusative. The internal case is nominative. The predicate *chisetzit* 'pull through' takes nominative subjects. The external case is accusative. The predicate *bibringu* 'educate' takes accusative objects. The relative pronoun *dhen* 'REL.ACC.M.SG' appears in the external case: the accusative. The relative pronoun is not marked in bold, just like as the main clause, showing that the relative pronoun patterns with the main clause. Examples in which the internal case is nominative, the external case is accusative and the relative pronoun appears in nominative case are unattested.

(15)    ih bibringu    fona  Juda dhen        **mina berga**
        I   educate_[ACC] about Juda REL.ACC.M.SG my     mountains
        **chisetzit**
        through pull_[NOM]
        'I educate the one who wanders through my mountains about Judas'
                                    (OHG, Isid. 34:3, Behaghel 1923-1932: 761)

(16)    gaat uz diu halt za dem iz forchaufent

        ''                  (OHG, Monsee Fragments 20,14, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

(17)    thia laz ih themo iz lisit thar

''                                        (OHG, Otfrid I,19,25, Behaghel 1923-1932, p. 761)

#### 4.2.3.2   internal is ungrammatical

(18)    INT:ACC, EXT:NOM

    a.    ACC not attested

    b.    NOM not attested

(19)    INT:DAT, EXT:NOM

    a.    DAT not attested

    b.    NOM not attested

(20)    INT:DAT, EXT:ACC

    a.    DAT not attested

    b.    ACC not attested

Don't know:

So, to sum up:

Table 4.3: Summary of OHG matching headless relative data

| INT ᴱˣᵀ | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| [NOM]   |       | ACC   | DAT   |
| [ACC]   |       |       | DAT   |
| [DAT]   |       |       |       |

## 4.3    Shape of relative pronoun

Table 4.4: Shape of relative pronoun per language

|        | rel pron in headless rel | rel prons in light-headed rel |
|--------|:---:|:---:|
| Gothic | A +C | A + A + C |
| OHG    | A | A + A |
| MG     | B | A + A |

### 4.3.1    Gothic

#### 4.3.1.1    Headless relatives

D + COMP

Table 4.5: Relative pronouns in headless relatives in Gothic

|        | N.SG | M.SG | F.SG |
|--------|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| NOM | þ-at-ei | s-a-ei | s-ō-ei |
| ACC | þ-at-ei | þ-an-ei | þ-ō-ei |
| DAT | þ-amm-ei | þ-amm-ei | þ-izái-ei |
|        | **N.PL** | **M.PL** | **F.PL** |
| NOM | þ-ō-ei | þ-ái-ei | þ-ōz-ei |
| ACC | þ-ō-ei | þ-anz-ei | þ-ōz-ei |
| DAT | þ-áim-ei | þ-áim-ei | þ-áim-ei |

#### 4.3.1.2    Light-headed relatives

D, D + COMP

### 4.3.2 Old High German

#### 4.3.2.1 Headless relatives

D

Table 4.6: Relative pronouns in headless relatives in OHG

|  | N.SG | M.SG | F.SG |
|---|---|---|---|
| NOM | d-aʐ | d-ër | d-iu |
| ACC | d-aʐ | d-ën | d-ea/-ia/(-ie) |
| DAT | d-ëmu/-ëmo | d-ëmu/-ëmo | d-ëru/-ëro |
|  | N.PL | M.PL | F.PL |
| NOM | d-iu/-ei | d-ē/-ea/-ia/-ie | d-eo/-io |
| ACC | d-iu/-ei | d-ē/-ea/-ia/-ie | d-eo/-io |
| DAT | d-ēm/-ēn | d-ēm/-ēn | d-ēm/-ēn |

#### 4.3.2.2 Light-headed relatives

D, D

Wouldn't we now not expect that Modern German patterns with Old High German wrt attraction in headed constructions. Yes, we would. And yes, this is exactly what we see. Paper by Bader on case attraction.

### 4.3.3 Modern German

#### 4.3.3.1 Headless relatives

WH

Table 4.7: Relative pronouns in headless relatives in MG

|       | INAN  | AN    |
|-------|-------|-------|
| NOM   | w-as  | w-er  |
| ACC   | w-as  | w-en  |
| DAT   | -     | w-em  |

### 4.3.3.2  Light-headed relatives

Pattern in light-headed relatives: D, D

## 4.4  Bringing this together

Table 4.8: Variation and relative pronoun shape

|        | rel pron in headless rel | rel prons in light-headed rel | INT>EXT | EXT>INT |
|--------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Gothic | A +C                     | A + A + C                     | ✓       | ✓       |
| OHG    | A                        | A + A                         | *       | ✓       |
| MG     | B                        | A + A                         | ✓       | *       |

And how can we now derive this?

## 4.5  Two points: all or nothing

### 4.5.1  No matches work

Italian doesnt allow any of them, because it has *d, wh* as light headed relative?

### 4.5.2 All allow for matching ones (and syncretic ones! whuut)

First, I discuss the matching headless relatives, in which the internal and external case match.

Consider the example in (21), repeated from the introduction. In this example, the internal case and the external case are accusative. The relative clause, including the relative pronoun, is marked in gray. The internal case is accusative. The predicate *arma* 'pity' takes accusative objects. The external case is accusative as well. Here the predicate *gaarma* 'pity' takes accusative objects. The relative pronoun *þan(a)* 'who.ACC' appears in the accusative.

(21)  gaarma þan    -ei   arma
      pity[Acc] who.ACC -COMP pity[Acc]
      'I will pity (him) whom I pity'  (Gothic, Rom. 9:15, after Harbert 1978: 339)

Consider the example in (22), in which the internal case and the external case are nominative. The relative clause, including the relative pronoun, is marked in gray. The internal case is nominative. The predicate *matjai* 'eats' takes nominative subjects. The external case is nominative as well. Here the predicate *gadauþnai* 'die' takes nominative subjects. The relative pronoun *sa* 'who.NOM' appears in the nominative.

(22)  ei   sa      -ei   þis   matjai,  ni  gadauþnai
      that who.NOM -COMP of this eats[NOM] not die[NOM]
      'that (he) who eats of this may not die'
                                         (Gothic, John 6:50, after Harbert 1978: 337)

Consider the examples in (23), in which the internal case and the external case are dative. The relative clauses, including the relative pronoun, is marked in gray. The internal case is dative. The predicates *gabaur* 'tribute', *mota* 'custom', *agis* 'fear' and *sweriþa* 'honour' takes dative objects. The external case is dative as well. The same predicates as in the relative clause take dative objects. The relative pronouns *þamm(a)* 'who.DAT' appear in the dative.

(23)   a.   þamm   -ei   gabaur        gabaur
            who.DAT -COMP tribute$_{[DAT]}$ tribute$_{[DAT]}$
            'tribute to (him) whom tribute is due'

       b.   þamm   -ei   mota          mota
            who.DAT -COMP custom$_{[DAT]}$ custom$_{[DAT]}$
            'custom to (him) whom custom is due'

       c.   þamm   -ei   agis          agis
            who.DAT -COMP fear$_{[DAT]}$ fear$_{[DAT]}$
            'fear (him) whom fear is due'

       d.   þamm   -ei   sweriþa       sweriþa
            who.DAT -COMP honour$_{[DAT]}$ honour$_{[DAT]}$
            'honour (him) whom honour is due'

                                  (Gothic, Rom. 13:7, after Harbert 1978: 339)

So far only the diagonal line is filled. These are the matching examples, the examples in which the internal case matches the external case. The relative pronoun appears in the case which is the internal and external case. The nominative is given in (22), the accusative in (21), and the dative in (23).

Table 4.9: Summary of Gothic matching headless relative data

| EXT / INT | [NOM] | [ACC] | [DAT] |
|---|---|---|---|
| [NOM] | NOM | | |
| [ACC] | | ACC | |
| [DAT] | | | DAT |

# Chapter 5

# Connecting morphology and syntax

## 5.1 Background: relative clause theory

Standard raising, probably Cinque's double-headed structures

## 5.2 Analysis

### 5.2.1 Old High German

In OHG, proper attraction in headless relatives can be derived from headed relatives. The relative pronoun is the determiner from the main clause. Under a double-headed Cinque-analysis, it is the internal DP that is deleted.

(1)     DAT instead of ?

    a.    was  allon them ando, them  thar  quamun at erist tuo
            what all    d.DAT do to d.DAT there x        as first do?
            ''

than is im so them salte them (the M) man bi seuues Stade oido teuuirpit, 1370.
Hon them erlscipie them thar inne uuas, 2768.
allon them ando them thar quamun at erist tuo, 3435.

fon them herrosten them thes hnses giuueld, 3344 C.

sagda them alat them (the M) thar all giscaop, 4636. —

(2)      ACC instead of NOM

    a.   unde ne   wolden níet besên den mort          den        dô     was
         and   not  wanted not  see     the  murder.ACC that.ACC there had

         geschên
         happened
         'and they didn't want to see the murder that had happened.'
            (MHG, Nib. 1391,14, Behaghel 1923-1932: 756, after Pittner 1995: 198)

### 5.2.2   Modern German

In German, inverse attraction in headed relatives can be shown to be very different from inverse attraction in headless relatives. I am not set on an analysis yet. Under a double-headed Cinque-analysis, it is the external DP that is deleted. Grafting is also still an option.

### 5.2.3   Gothic

In Gothic, ?

# Part III

# Details

# Chapter 6

# Technical implementation

## 6.1  Deletion operation

What is the nature of this deletion? morphological deletion? doesn't have much to do with ellipsis

it is not optional

## 6.2  Background

(1)  **Spellout Algorithm:**
Merge F and

    a.    Spell out FP.
    b.    If (a) fails, attempt movement of the spec of the complement of F, and retry (a).
    c.    If (b) fails, move the complement of F, and retry (a).

When a new match is found, it overrides previous spellouts.

(2)  **Cyclic Override** (Starke, 2018):
Lexicalisation at a node XP overrides any previous match at a phrase contained in XP.

If the spellout procedure in (1) fails, backtracking takes place.

(3)     **Backtracking** (Starke, 2018):
        When spellout fails, go back to the previous cycle, and try the next option
        for that cycle.

If backtracking also does not help, a specifier is constructed.

(4)     **Spec Formation** (Starke, 2018):
        If Merge F has failed to spell out (even after backtracking), try to spawn
        a new derivation providing the feature F and merge that with the current
        derivation, projecting the feature F at the top node.

## 6.3   Gothic relative pronouns

adjectives

    so, these things are suffixes, they have to be
    following that.. blablabla

Table 6.1: Relative pronouns in headless relatives in Gothic

|       | N.SG     | M.SG     | F.SG      |
|-------|----------|----------|-----------|
| NOM   | þ-at-ei  | s-a-ei   | s-ō-ei    |
| ACC   | þ-at-ei  | þ-an-ei  | þ-ō-ei    |
| DAT   | þ-amm-ei | þ-amm-ei | þ-izái-ei |
|       | **N.PL** | **M.PL** | **F.PL**  |
| NOM   | þ-ō-ei   | þ-ái-ei  | þ-ōz-ei   |
| ACC   | þ-ō-ei   | þ-anz-ei | þ-ōz-ei   |
| DAT   | þ-áim-ei | þ-áim-ei | þ-áim-ei  |

Gothic relative pronouns are built from the demonstratives plus the comple-
mentizer *ei*. Under *ei*, two phonological processes take place. First, *s* changes into

*z*, e.g. in *þ-ōs* to *þ-ōz-ei.* Second, on bisyllabic elements, final vowels disappear e.g.
*þ-ata* to *þ-at-ei.*

Table 6.2: Gothic demonstratives

|  | N.SG | M.SG | F.SG |
|---|---|---|---|
| NOM | þ-ata | sa | sō |
| ACC | þ-ata | þ-ana | þ-ō |
| DAT | þ-amma | þ-amma | þ-i-z-ái |
|  | N.PL | M.PL | F.PL |
| NOM | þ-ō | þ-ái | þ-ōs |
| ACC | þ-ō | þ-ans | þ-ōs |
| DAT | þ-áim | þ-áim | þ-áim |

The suffixes that appear on demonstratives are also found on 3SG pronouns. The
only difference is that the demonstratives attach to a *þ(a?)*-stem and the pronouns
attach to an *i*-stem. This does not hold for all forms, some seem to be suppletive.

Table 6.3: Gothic 3SG pronouns

|  | N.SG | M.SG | F.SG |
|---|---|---|---|
| NOM | i-ta | i-s | si |
| ACC | i-ta | i-na | i-ja |
| DAT | i-mma | i-mma | i-z-ái |
|  | N.PL | M.PL | F.PL |
| NOM | i-ja | eis | i-jōs |
| ACC | i-ja | i-ns | i-jōs |
| DAT | i-m | i-m | i-m |

Table 6.4: Gothic *giba* 'gift' (F)

|       | SG      |
|-------|---------|
| NOM   | gib-a   |
| ACC   | gib-a   |
| DAT   | gib-ái  |

|       | PL      |
|-------|---------|
| NOM   | gib-ōs  |
| ACC   | gib-ōs  |
| DAT   | gib-ōm  |

Table 6.5: Gothic *dags* 'day' (M)

|       | SG       |
|-------|----------|
| NOM   | dag-s    |
| ACC   | dag-∅    |
| DAT   | dag-a    |

|       | PL       |
|-------|----------|
| NOM   | dag-ōs   |
| ACC   | dag-ans  |
| DAT   | dag-am   |

## 6.4   Derivations

# Chapter 7

# Conclusion

## 7.1   Coming back to the genitive

In Gothic headless relatives, there is data available of the genitive in case competition with the accusative. The genitive wins in this competition. I give an example in which the internal case is accusative and the external case is genitive in (1). The relative clause is marked in bold, the relative pronoun is not. The internal case is accusative. The predicate *gasehvun* 'saw' takes accusative objects. The external case is genitive. The noun *waiht* 'thing' combines with a genitive. The relative pronoun *þiz(e)* 'what.GEN' appears in the external case: the genitive.

(1)   ni    waiht     þiz      **-ei    gasehvun**
       not thing$_{[GEN]}$ what.GEN -COMP saw$_{[ACC]}$
       'not any of (that) which they saw'
                                    (Gothic, Luke 9:36, adapted from Harbert 1978: 340)

If the internal case is genitive and the external case is accusative, the genitive wins as well. Crucially, there are no attested examples in Gothic of genitives in case competition with nominatives or datives.

The same holds for the two other main languages discussed in this thesis: Modern German and Old High German. In Modern German, case competitions have been reported between all possible case combinations, so also between genitives and nominatives, between genitives and accusatives, and between genitives and

datives (cf. Vogel, 2001). The genitive wins over the nominative and the accusative. In a competition between the genitive and the dative neither of them gives a grammatical result. Old High German might show some examples of case competition between genitives and accusatives and genitives and nominative. In these cases, the genitive always wins. No examples of datives against genitives are attested (Behaghel, 1923-1932). In sum, the genitive does not appear in all possible case competition combinations in all three languages, and is therefore excluded.

What do I predict for the genitive? Starke: S-acc — S-dat — gen — B-acc — B-dat

hierarchies for each language individually. Gothic syncretisms: acc-dat, acc-nom, nom-gen(!). Modern German: nom-acc-dat-gen? Old High German: ?

then the predictions would be..

The genitive differs from the other cases in a particular way. That is, nominative, accusative and dative are dependents of the verb (or prepositions). Genitives can be dependents of verbs, or they can be dependents of nouns, as possessors or partitives. Consider the example in (1). The genitive relative pronoun *þiz(e)* 'what.GEN' is a dependent of the noun *waiht* 'thing'. Most of the examples in headless relatives contain genitives that depend on nouns and not those that depend on verbs. The (genitive) possessor is also placed far away from the other three cases in Keenan and Comrie's (1977) relativization hiearchy.

I leave it for future research..

## 7.2   Diachronic part

First, German only had the d-pronoun and attraction. The pattern of attraction that came with that pronoun is ext only. At some point, German invented the wh-pronoun. Helmut showed how it emerged. With that came the other pattern: int only. Some people lost the attraction (but everybody kept the d-pronoun) and with that the pattern disappeared. So the patterns in headless relatives follow from the relative pronouns in the language.

# Primary texts

Col.    Colossians, New Testament

Isid.    Der althochdeutsche Isidor

John    John, New Testament

Luke    Luke, New Testament

Mons.    The Monsee fragments

Nib.    Das Nibelungenlied

Otfrid    Otfrid's Evangelienbuch

Rom.    Romans, New Testament

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