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Obsah

Case Theory Revisited: Nominative and Accusative Super Case

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1 Government and Binding case theory

1.1 Four approaches to morphological case

Many languages distinguish several syntactic and/or semantic roles of noun phrases within single clauses by means of different morphological markings on those phrases, called "case". However, the actual morphology of widely varying case systems, in particular many Indo-European (I-E) system(s), is rife with systemic asymmetries and unexplained subregularities, often called syncretisms. This study argues that I-E case syncretisms are almost entirely explained by a theory of syntax that is justified independently of bound morphology. These explanations need ***no concepts particular to morphology*** beyond minimally specified, uniformly formatted lexical entries for the case morphemes themselves.

In contrast to this approach, one or a combination of three other perspectives is usually assumed for treating these problems, for the most part without explicit statement.

(i) **Autonomous systems of morphological case**. On one view, inventories of morphological cases in languages such as Latin and Czech are taken as self-contained systems for distinguishing among noun phrases (NPs). These case systems presumably exhibit ***internal symmetry*** and to a significant extent are independent of surrounding syntactic configurations. Definitions of cases are made in terms of feature combinations, which then at least partially account for puzzling syncretisms and subregularities. Since this view implies that part of bound morphology is autonomous, analysts often conclude that all of it is, as do Lieber (1992) and Aronoff (1994).

This approach originates with the nineteenth century view of Sanskrit case developed in Whitney (1889), which for him constituted a fully autonomous system, only occasionally supplemented by less direct "adverbial" expressions such as prepositional phrases (PPs) for peripheral noun phrase roles such as those expressed by *without*, *instead of*, etc.

(ii) **A functional basis for morphological case**. From another perspective, what motivates different morphological indications (cases) on noun phrases with contrasting semantic roles in a clause (agent, patient, recipient, etc.) is a need to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding, especially in languages where free order of phrases predominates. In particular distinct morphological cases then serve to keep distinct the more frequently employed grammatical roles.

(iii) **Morphological case as obscuring syntactic "perfection"**. Especially Minimalist treatments since Chomsky (1995) take morphological detail as evidence of how actual languages can obscure deeper syntactic regularity. Although some grammatical case patterns are due to regular "Case-marking as feature checking", much word-internal morphology is treated as ***not-predictable from general principles***. Morphological case paradigms are thus unreliable indicators of syntactic structure, since a given pattern can reflect either syntactic regularity or whims of the Lexicon or Phonological Form (PF). This view, even when not endorsed in principle, has crept into otherwise insightful and influential analyses, such as those in Baker (1988) and Larson (1988).[1]

These different views on the relation between syntactic and morphological regularities share an underlying assumption:

(1) **Conventional wisdom on case**. Morphology itself, as an autonomous system or as a source of lexical irregularities, is the source of syncretism and asymmetry in case systems.

This conclusion seems to arise whether one views morphological case as partly regular (i)–(ii) or by nature irregular (iii). All three perspectives assume that asymmetries in morphological cases do not directly reflect deep properties of phrasal syntax. This essay argues the contrary position, namely:

1 These authors end up with highly stipulative case systems. For critiques, see Emonds (1993).

(2) **Syntactic basis of case asymmetries**. Universal principles of phrase structure theory explain the most notable syncretisms of Indo-European morphological case.

In line with (2), this study will focus on theoretically explaining the close but often glossed over ***links between I-E nominatives and accusatives***. The formalization is centered on ***explicit lexical entries for grammatical items***, as developed in Emonds (2000: Ch. 3–4), in particular for the bound morphemes expressing case.

1.2 Elegance of syntactic Case Assignment

Initial Government and Binding ("GB") proposals for a Case module made two insightful idealizations about case categories: cross-linguistically central cases always result from ***a characteristic case-assigning category in a local configuration***, and case-assigners are ***few in number***, namely the four Abstract Cases in Chomsky (1981: Ch. 3).[2]

(3) a. "Nominative" is assigned by a finite I to the NP/DP closest to it.
b. "Accusative" is assigned by a V to the NP/DP closest to it.
c. "Dative" or "Oblique" is assigned by a P to the NP/DP closest to it.
d. "Genitive" is assigned by some X^0 in N-projections, say Q, to the closest NP/DP.[3]

Early formulations of Case theory also incorporated an unperceptive lapse into traditional thinking that persists until this day. The ancient separate case names are retained as if they are somehow categories in their own right. Perhaps using these venerable terms gives the impression that generative grammar explains them, but in fact it has accepted them uncritically. Emonds (1985: Ch. 1) argues against the reality of

2 A determiner phrase (DP) is an "extended projection" of an NP which contains a "functional head" D (= Determiner) that is a sister to NP. Thus: [$_{DP}$ *all* [$_{D}$ *those*] [$_{NP}$ *young girls from here*]].

3 Veselovská (2001) argues that the genitive case assigner inside nominal projections is [N,±Q], where Q stands for (existential) quantifiers including (in Czech, high) numerals.

any special case categories.[4] Rather "nominative" is nothing other than the appearance of I as a feature in or index on nominal projections, and likewise for the other cases. Formally the essence of (3) is (4):

(4) **Case Assignment**. $+N^k$ stands for projections of N, D and Q. Then case-assignment consists of transferring features of X to a $+N^k$ sister or specifier of X in contexts defined by $+N^0$.
   a. Nominative: an informal term for transfer of [V, +I].
   b. Accusative: an informal term for transfer of [V, –I].
   c. Dative/Oblique: informal terms for transfer of [P, +F].
   d. Genitive: an informal term for transfer of [N, ±Q].

The following considerations show that these claims involve more than terminological parsimony, even though that alone would justify them.[5]

1.3 Structural, non-semantic basis of Cases

The claims (3)–(4) embody two sharp breaks with long-established practices. Traditional grammar standardly uses the terms nominative, accusative and dative for the morphological cases of respectively the subject, direct object and indirect object of simple three place predicates. That is, the cases are linked with the typical semantic roles of such NPs: respectively agent, patient and recipient. It furthermore assumes the three cases are entirely unrelated. The theoretical treatment just outlined discards these ideas, replacing them as follows:

4 GB moreover elaborates a venerable distinction between "structural" and "semantic" case. Semantic cases are assigned before object nominals move in passives, while structural cases are assigned after this. However, "bottom up" construction of trees in Minimalism removes the need for this case distinction, provided that ***once assigned, case cannot change*** (cf. also Emonds 1985: Ch. 2). DPs inside PPs receive case from P before these PPs merge into larger structures ("semantic case"), while DPs not in PPs ***merge in larger IP or DP domains without case and then receive it*** ("structural case"). Just as with semantic case, if DPs with structural case move again out of IP or DP (say by WH-movement), their case cannot change.

5 Reducing cases to features or indices as in (4) (i.e. an accusative is just an N projection with a V feature) opens the way to a structure-based analysis of how predicate attributes receive cases, illustrated for Czech in Emonds (2000: Ch. 8). For example, ***the case feature V on a direct object, not the head V itself, assigns accusative case*** to an adjacent secondary predicate attribute. Consequently, when a direct object is passivized (hence nominative), a secondary predicate cannot surface as accusative. This analysis cannot be expressed if case names are formally unrelated to case assigners.

(i) **Nominatives and accusatives**. "Nominative" and "accusative" NPs are associated in (3)–(4) with configurations connected with (governed by) the categories I and V. From this perspective, these cases have no relation to particular semantic roles such as agent or patient. Rather, the key factor in assigning both cases is ***the structural presence of V***, their difference being that the functional category I is also associated (only) with subjects of V.

As pointed out to me by Ludmila Veselovská, massive cross-linguistic syncretism between nominatives and accusatives throughout I-E suggests empirically that both must be ***subcases of some single more general case***. A generative theory of categories that relates I to V automatically implies this kind of close relation; each case must instantiate a single V-assigned "Super Case". Neither traditional nomenclature nor functionalist or autonomous theories of case have any way to capture this relation.

(ii) **Datives**. The traditional link between "dative" and indirect objects is highly misleading. And indeed, GB case theory (e.g. Chomsky 1981) never defines datives as the "case of indirect objects". Rather, the GB "dative" is the case associated with ***PP structure***, not with any semantic role of Goal or Recipient. Indeed, in many languages indirect objects and/or benefactive phrases productively surface in direct object position and are arguably accusative, sometimes by morphological as well as syntactic criteria (Baker 1988). In Modern Standard Arabic, indirect objects also appear as morphological accusatives, i.e. with the same case as direct objects.[6]

Pursuing this line, the "P-assigned case" in (3c) should be identified rather with expressing ***static locations*** of a verb's action or state. In Classical Greek, German, Icelandic and Old English, a single "dative case" happens to express locations as well as indirect objects. However, Latin expresses locations not with its dative but its ablative.[7] In Czech the basic P-assigned case for location, judging from how many locative Ps govern it, is neither what is called dative or locative, but actually the

6 There is cross-linguistic support for a universal underlying relation between indirect objects and PP structure (Czepluch 1982; Emonds 1993), but it is not a surface relation.

7 The Latin dative is clearly a variant on the ablative; for example, while the two can differ in singulars, plural datives and ablatives ***always have the same form***. The basic unity of Latin datives and ablations in argued for in Emonds (1985: Ch. 5).

instrumental.[8] Such are the names for the cases that express, in each of these languages, the Ps translating *behind*, *between*, *in front of*, *over*, *through*, *under* and *with*, when these indicate pure locations unassociated with Goals or Sources of movements or transitions.

(iii) **Other oblique cases**. With the exception of genitive NPs that modify nouns, GB treatments of Case do not analyse in any detail other so-called "semantic cases". It deals with them rather with a sort of slogan – unlike nominatives and accusatives, "they are correlated with theta-role assignment" (i.e. assigning semantic roles to object DPs). This is another lapse into traditional thinking, and few GB studies show interest in the actual correlations. The fact is, the basic features of introductory Ps (e.g. ±LOCATION, ±GOAL, ±SURFACE, ±TEMPORAL, etc.) combine to assign to their objects both (presumably universal) theta-roles and a variety of language-particular case morphologies. Since both the theta-roles and the cases have their source in the same set of P features, derivative language-particular "correlations" between the former sometimes emerge, but are an inadequate foundation for a theory.[9]

From this initial survey of GB's relation with traditional conceptions of Case, it appears that GB does best when it attributes Case to a few structural sources (proximity of V, I, P). However, its suggestions about more complex morphological systems have been more lip service to traditional grammar than actual advances in understanding.

2 Case as Alternative Realization

We now turn to specifying a formal mechanism that brings about the case feature transfers in (4). Can they be subsumed under some more general principle that spells out features of heads X^0 on DPs/NPs that are structurally "nearby"? Preferably we can avoid the ad hoc "case

8 The relations of Czech locative Ps to other cases are discussed in Emonds (2007). This present study limits treatment of Czech case morphology to its nominatives, accusatives and genitives (section 5).

9 Some of the "correlations" are in one direction (a given theta-role → a certain case), some in the other (a given case → a certain theta-role), and still others involve otherwise "structural" accusative case. In general, these "semantic case" correlations are (a) in themselves partial and often misleading, and (b) completely dependent on and better stated in terms of the universal features of the Ps that assign case.

module" of GB whose only task was to create case features more or less ex nihilo.

The framework of Distributed Morphology systematically employs an operation "***Merger***", which "***generally joins a head with the head of its complement XP***" (Halle – Marantz 1993: 116) and contrasts with transformational operations. For example, these authors use Merger to account for Chomsky's classic "affix movement" transformation in English. This step eliminates (i) transformational "lowering" of I to V (Halle – Marantz 1993: 134) and (ii) the restriction of affix movement to finite elements that are –MODAL.

If Merger is not itself to be an ad hoc solution to eliminating the lowering property of affix movement, there must be other instances of it, and in addition some general characterization of all possible Mergers. My proposal is (5).[10]

(5) **Generalized Merger / Alternative Realization** ("AR"). A syntactic feature F canonically interpretable on a category β can be alternatively realized ***in a closed class morpheme*** under γ, provided that some projections of β and γ are sisters.

AR covers the case feature transfers of (4) as well as many more phenomena than do related ideas in the grammatical literature, as argued at length in Emonds (2000: Ch. 4). The case-assigning categories correspond to the feature complexes [β, F] in (5), while the γ are the head Ns, Qs and Ds in their N^k or D^k sisters or specifiers.

AR/Merger is not transformational movement. It is rather a principle that sanctions a certain range of lexical entries. As seen in Table (6), when head movement is properly circumscribed, the two processes emerge as very different. For arguments for the following restrictions on head movement based on a range of constructions, see Emonds (2004).

10 Since Emonds (1985), I have used ***Alternative Realization*** for such configurations, where Marantz's work has used ***Merger***. The difference between the two is that AR is limited neither to "lowering" nor to affixation.

(6)

AR in lexical entries	Transformational Head Movement
AR is possible ***only for some least marked members*** of a category.	Head Movement affects ***all a category's members*** such as I, V or N.
Entries specify types of PF positions under X^0, such as ***adjoined*** prefixes and suffixes, and can bring about fission or fusion.	Head Movements (V to I; I to C; N to D) are always ***substitutions***. Later adjunction to moved stems can be effected by PF-insertion under AR.
AR positions features ***lower or higher*** than their canonical positions, which can be in another extended projection.	Head Movement always involves ***raising within single properly defined "extended projections"***.
AR is never sensitive to a root vs. embedded clause dichotomy.	Grammatical theory determines when a domain of head movement is limited to root clauses.
AR is defined only for ***closed class items***.	Head Movement can affect ***open classes***, such as French V-raising or Hebrew N to D movement.

Because of these several differences, the first one being an unambiguous indicator of which of these two non-overlapping mechanisms is at play, I conclude that ***lexical AR and transformational Head Movement co-exist in syntactic theory***.

3 Super Case: GB's unexpected dividend

The structure-based case assignment in Section 1 contains a kind of implicit bonus, leading to a very simple formalization of the central hypothesis of this study. Generally, GB cases are assigned to nominal projections by adjacent X^0 categories, which are themselves decomposable into further features. In particular, both the case assigner I for nominatives and V for accusatives share feature values of the category V.

(7) **Super Case**. Super Case is an informal term for the transferred features of V ***common to both nominative and accusative case***.

That is, while "nominative" is a name for the transferred features [V, +I] and "accusative" for those of [V, –I], if ±I is not specified, a syncretic "Super Case" emerges. Indeed empirically, extensive cross-linguistic

examples of nominative and accusative syncretism in I-E confirm that the two cases must indeed be variants of a single more basic one. Concretely, the very different systems of Czech, German, Latin and Romanian illustrate the significance of Super Case.

Neither a functionalist perspective nor an autonomous theory of morphological case expects these two cases to be syncretic; they lead to the opposite expectation, namely that nominatives and accusatives are maximally different and not syncretic at all.

3.1 Romanian Case is (only) Super Case

Romanian is the only Modern Romance language that appears to preserve morphological case distinctions outside of pronouns.[11] Though a drastic simplification of its Latin ancestor, Romanian case has several non-trivial properties. According to Oprina's (2007) study of its internal NP structure, based largely on *Gramatica Limbii Române* (2005), its nouns and articles strikingly exhibit ***a single overt case dichotomy***: between nominative and accusative on the one hand, and dative and genitive on the other. Because formal case-assignment (4) does not provide a natural way to combine the dative assigner [P, $+F_i$] with the genitive assigner [N, ±Q], the Romanian pattern suggests positing a single Super Case for nominatives/accusatives based on an assigner V, but indifferent to ±I. That is, Romanian turns out to employ ***no case assigner other than V***.

Further details of Romanian paradigms provide two additional independent arguments that the language uses only V as a case-assigner.

3.1.1 Regular feminine nouns

Romanian nouns exhibit two genders, masculine and feminine. There are thus four possible cross-classified forms based on ±V-assigned case and ±PLUR. For most feminine nouns, ***three of the four forms*** are the same. Only V-assigned Super Case forms in the singular are different:

11 This study abstracts away from more differentiated case realizations among pronouns, since they often do not directly reflect the case-assigning categories (Emonds 1985: Ch. 5).

(8) *mori* “mill”, singular oblique and both plural forms; *moară*, singular V-assigned case
mame “mother”, singular oblique and both plural forms; *mamă*, singular V-assigned case
băi “bath”, singular oblique and both plural forms; *băie*, singular V-assigned case
familii “family”, singular oblique and both plurals; *familie*, singular V-assigned case

With three of four forms identical, this is a classic “elsewhere distribution”. Following linguistic practice, the special form with particular features overrides a default or “elsewhere” situation that arises when these features are absent. Accordingly, Romanian nouns need only ***one rule for V-assigned case on feminine singulars***. No other case rules are needed, since masculine nouns exhibit no case differences in either singular or plural forms (Oprina 2007).

3.1.2 Indefinite articles

Romanian articles have distinct forms for cases, number and gender, with undifferentiated gender in the plural. This yields six different forms. The indefinite article is simpler to understand, since unlike the definite article it is not realized as an enclitic on a following noun or adjective.

Indefinite article	**Singular Masculine**	**Singular Feminine**	**Plural**
V-assigned case	*un*	*o*	*nişte*
Oblique case	*unui*	*unei*	*unor*

Thus, the Romanian grammatical lexicon stipulates indefinite nominative-accusative articles (*un*, *o*, *nişte*) as having V-assigned case, ***but mentions no case feature at all*** for the three oblique variants. From the patterns in both nouns and articles, I conclude that V-assigned case (= Super Case) is the sole Romanian case; the language’s morphology uses no other case feature.

3.2 Latin Super Case and the non-existence of "neuter gender"

Case suffixes on Latin nouns and on determiners and adjectives agreeing with them can be singular or plural and in one of five traditionally named "cases"; they have 10 possible forms, and generally these forms are obligatory.[12]

(9) **Latin obligatory case**. Head nouns must be overtly specified for case and number.

Moreover, traditional descriptions of Latin treat three grammatical genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, as independent. However, in any but nominative and accusative case, ***neuter nouns and noun modifiers invariably have the same form as masculines***, indicating that these two genders are not independent. The following properties hold the key to parsimoniously relating the two genders.

(10) **Nominative/accusative syncretism**
   a. Latin neuter V-marked (nominative/accusative) case forms are ***always identical***;
   b. Latin V-marked neuter singulars are the ***only Ns that lack a case/number suffix***.[13]

The generalizations (10a–b) constitute separate independent arguments for a unified Super Case. But (10) also suggests how to eliminate neuter gender entirely from Latin grammar.

First, the condition on neuters (10b) expresses the sole exception to the general word formation condition (9). Latin "neuter" noun stems are nothing more than a subset of masculine (inanimate) nouns whose only special characteristic is being lexically specified with ***an optional inherent V-case feature***. This feature appears in just those structural contexts that require V-case (i.e. head nouns of subject, object and

12 Latin vocative forms differ from nominatives only in singulars of *o*-stem nouns. Moreover, vocative noun phrases are not integrated into syntactic structures, but stand outside of them.

13 On non-neuter nouns, the Latin nominative singular suffix is *-s*, except after stem-final *n*, *r*, *l* and *a*, where it is *-Ø*. A few neuter nouns end in an *s* which is ***not a suffix*** but rather a stem-final consonant. This segment becomes intervocalic *r* in other cases, as other case inflections always begin with a vowel (the pattern *corpus*, *corpor-is*, *corpor-e*, *corpor-um*, etc.).

predicate nominative DPs/NPs). This stem feature, moreover, is the most economic way to satisfy (9), because it eliminates the need for a separate case suffix.[14]

(11) **Epiphenomenal Latin "neuter" gender**. Latin nouns have only two genders. A subset of masculine nouns, called neuters, has an optional lexical feature of inherent V-marked case.

The fact that an independently justified feature "V-marked case" allows dispensing entirely with a third gender in Latin, one that has no interpretively motivated LF distinction from "masculine inanimate", is further strong justification for Super Case.

The generalizations needed for Latin plural formation are also in terms of Super Case. The following algorithm crucially uses "V-assigned case" twice, marked in bold italics. Full details and formalized lexical entries are in Emonds (2010).

(12) **Latin plurals**. In an N with ***V-marked case*** (+V), spell out PLUR as follows:
   a. If a noun (N) has an inherent lexical feature "***V-marked case***", add the suffix *-a*: *cornua*, *nōmina*.
   b. In nominatives only, i.e. marked as [+V, +I], if N ends in a low vowel (*a* or *o*), add the suffix *-ī*.[15]
   c. Elsewhere, lengthen a stem-final vowel or epenthetic *e* and add the suffix *-s*.

Here are examples of "stem – (epenthetic *e*) – *s*" for V-marked cases as in (12c). The underlined forms are accusative only, since their stem-final Latin low vowels fall under (12b).

(13) **Latin syncretic V-assigned case forms (nominatives and accusatives) of plural nouns**:

14 As explained in more detail in Emonds (2010: section 4), the lexical case feature V on neuter nouns is formally analogous to the optional inherent feature PLURAL on English Ns such as *deer*, *offspring*, *salmon*, *sheep*, *sperm*, etc. These forms are plural just in contexts that license +PLURAL.

15 Independently justified rules of Latin phonology yield the nominative forms *equī*, *puerī*, *agrī* and *stellae*.

agrō-s "fields", *bov-ē-s* "cows", ***equō-s*** "horses", *hiem-ē-s* "winters", *labor-ē-s* "toils", *laud-ē-s* "praises", *lēg-ē-s* "laws", *ment-ē-s* "minds", *op-ē-s* "helps", *pac-ē-s* "peaces", *pleb-ē-s* "commoners", *portū-s* "ports", ***puerō-s*** "boy", *rātion-ē-s* "reasons", *rē-s* "things', *sōl-ē-s* "suns", ***stēllā-s*** "stars", *turrī-s* "towers", *virtūt- ē-s* "virtues"

I conclude that four generalizations in Latin phonology, (10a), (11), (12) and (12a), all require mention of "V-marked case", and thus furnish four arguments in favor of this new theoretical construct of case theory.

4 Evidence for Super Case in German Determiners

4.1 The locus of case inflections

A striking difference between German case and its counterparts in Latin and Czech (section 5) is that, while obligatory on German Determiners and Quantifiers, it is usually ***absent on lexical head nouns***.[16] The German cases themselves have uncontroversial feature contents, being the four archetypical GB cases introduced in section 1.2. The case inflections on D range over 3 genders in singulars with undifferentiated gender in the plural. The same case suffixes are also manifested on Qs raised to D (*ein* "a", *kein* "no", etc.).[17] The language-particular word formation requirement on D recalls the similar condition on Latin nouns (9).

(14) **German Determiner formation**. A morpheme of category D (e.g. *d-* "definite", *dies-* "this", *jed-* "each", *jen-* "that", *welch-* "which") must be overtly specified for case and number.

16 Today's Standard German Nouns exhibit case only in dative plurals (*-n*) and non-feminine genitive singulars (*-s*). There are also some animate nouns based on adjectival roots (e.g. *der Junge* "a youth") whose nominative singular, like agreeing adjectives, lacks the final *-n* of other forms. This inflectional peculiarity can be attributed to their word-internal adjective roots, and is unrelated to rules for the category N.

17 When a German DP has no initial D or Q but instead begins with an adjective, this A is also inflected like a D and hence probably also raises to the D position, as proposed in Milner – Milner (1972).

A typical case paradigm for D is illustrated in (15) with *der* "the" and *welcher* "which". The forms that realize Super Case are in bold italics. Default forms are in gray.

(15) **Case forms of German Ds**

Case-assigning category	**Masculines**		**Feminines**	**Plurals**
V (= V, +I) "nominative"	*d-er*, *welch-er*	***d-as***, ***welch-es*** (for Neuters)	***d-ie***, ***welch-e***	
V (= V, –I) "accusative"	*d-en*, *welch-en*			
P "dative/oblique"	*d-em*, *welch-em*		***d-er***, ***welch-er***	*d-en*, *welch-en*
N, ±Q "genitive"	*d-es*, *welch-es*		***d-er***, ***welch-er***	

Generalizing, masculine singular forms are the only area in all of German inflection where nominatives and accusatives are distinct; otherwise ***unified Super Case forms are the norm***.

(16) **German Gender/Case Syncretism**. Outside of first and second person pronouns, German nominatives and accusatives are distinct ***only for masculine singulars***.

The concept of Super Case makes possible a single simple lexical entry for essentially all feminine and plural forms in German, which implies that case "paradigms" have no formal status in the language. The right context in (17) represents an NP sister of D that is either +FEM or +PLUR.

(17) **Unified lexical entry for feminine and plural case inflections on D**

$$D\_\_\_N^{k}\{+FEM/+PLUR\}, \begin{Bmatrix} \text{V-case, } \textit{-ie/e} \\ \textit{-er} \end{Bmatrix}$$

In addition to (17), German has three or possibly four lexical entries for masculine singular case inflections and one for dative plurals. The lexical entry for the special dative plural inflection *-en* has to be more specified than the more general default (17) and therefore supersedes it.

In light of the previous sections on case morphology in Romanian and Latin, the conflation of nominatives and accusatives in German is

exactly the kind of paradigm predicted by the main hypothesis of this paper. The hypothesis of a Super Case for expressing this paradigm has moreover led ***to a single entry (17) for all German feminines and plurals***. No simplified and yet formalized system like this would be possible without two main tools: an explicit and restricted theory of lexical entries for grammatical items using AR, and Super Case assignment by the category V.

4.2 How Super Case explains German "Neuter Gender"

The display (15) emphasizes a characteristic seen earlier for Latin, namely that "masculine" and "neuter" gender are minor variants of ***the same feature specifications***. That is, German masculine nouns like (*der*) *Boden* "floor" and neuters like (*das*) *Kissen* "the pillow" are all –ANIM and –FEM. As for Latin, it is redundant to postulate a third gender whose only role is to diacritically distinguish two classes of masculine inanimates that for the most part behave alike.

A better solution is to derive the difference from two independently justified properties of German: (i) Since (15) requires only items in D position to be marked for case, German syntactic derivations ***do not specify case on lexical Ns or NPs***.[18] (ii) Nonetheless, a class of masculine inanimate nouns called "neuter", as in Latin, have an ***inherent lexical feature of V-assigned case***. Lexical entries for masculine inanimates and neuters thus contrast:

(18) *Boden* "floor", N, –ANIM, –FEM
Kissen "pillow", N, –ANIM, –FEM, V-case

Unlike in Latin, NP sisters to a German case-marked D generally ***lack case***, due to (i). However, NPs whose heads are "neuter" do have, as in Latin, ***inherent*** V-case (heads and phrases share features), due to lexical specification. Hence the D sisters to these neuter and non-neuter NPs are in distinct contexts, and by virtue of this can be specified for different case morphemes. A single lexical entry suffices for characterizing case on all neuter singular Ds:

18 German syntactic derivations never assign case to Nouns in nominative or accusative positions.

(19) **Lexical entry for German "neuter" singular inflection**[19]
D___[N^{k}, V-case], –PLUR, V-case, {*-as*, *-es*, *-Ø*}

The lexical specification of so-called "neuter nouns" for inherent V-case and the use of (19) for the modifiers that agree with them allow dispensing entirely with a German neuter gender that is different from masculine inanimate.

5 Super Case in Czech morphology

The previous sections show that Super Case is not an isolated peculiarity; in language after language, nominatives and accusatives exhibit notable syncretism and act like two aspects of a single case. If morphological case systems were functionally based or otherwise independent of surrounding syntax, the frequencies of subjects and objects would motivate nominative and accusative being the most separate of cases, ***but empirically the opposite holds***. As first suggested by Ludmila Veselovská, the complex case system of Czech amply supports their close relation.

5.1 The Czech gender system in terms of Super Case

A striking peculiarity of Czech is that its gender system for nominatives and accusatives is notably more complex than in its four other (non-vocative) cases, reminiscent of Latin and German. Table (20) shows these gender variations on noun inflections in V-marked cases. I here abstract away from the less differentiated set of endings that emerges with stems that end in palatal or palatalized, so-called "soft" consonants; for the systematic correspondences between nominal inflections after Czech "hard" and "soft" consonants, see Emonds (2009: section VI).

19 This study does not try to specify the distribution among these allomorphs.

TABLE (20) **CZECH NOMINATIVE AND ACCUSATIVE INFLECTIONS FOR NOUNS**

	Traditional gender names			
	Masc. inanim. termed neuter	**Masculine animate**	**Masc. inanim. termed masc.**	**Fem. animate & inanimate**
SINGULARS	–ANIM, –FEM	+ANIM, –FEM	–ANIM, –FEM	±ANIM, +FEM
NOM: +V, +I	*-o*	*Ø*	*Ø*	*-Ø*
ACC: +V, –I	*-o*	***-a***	*Ø*	***-u***, *-Ø*
PLURALS				
NOM:+V, +I	*-a*	***-i***, ***-ové***	*-y*	*-y*
ACC: +V, –I	*-a*	*-y*	*-y*	*-y*

In this table of 16 slots, only 3 case inflections (in bold) deviate from common default values of Super Case covering both nominatives and accusatives.

- Animate masculine nouns exhibit special nominative plural inflections, *-ové* or palatalizing *-i*, as opposed to the default non-neuter Super Case plural *-y*.[20]
- Nouns with stem-final *a* (whatever the gender) exhibit final *-u* in the accusative singular.
- All other animate masculine nouns exhibit *-a* in the accusative singular.

The fact that 5 of the 8 nominative/accusative pairs in Table (20) are identical cannot be accidental and strongly confirms the reality in Czech of a unified construct of Super Case.

The pervasive role of Super Case in Czech, i.e. the widespread identity of nominatives and accusatives, is equally evident in the different set of agreeing case suffixes that appear on noun modifiers, i.e. adjectives, determiners and some quantifiers. These endings differ phonetically, and sometimes phonologically (in the lexicon), from those in Table (20), but ***deviations from Super Case defaults occur only in***

20 The vowel Czech orthography represents as *y* is a high front vowel which, unlike the vowel written *i*, occurs only after hard (non-palatal and non-palatalized) consonants. Paradigms of hard and soft consonants suggest that *y* is an ***underlying low*** front vowel, since it patterns with the other low vowels *a* and *o*.

exactly the same slots, i.e. animate masculine plural nominatives have *-i*, feminine accusative singulars have *-ou* (instead of *-u*), and animate masculine singulars have *-ho*. In other words, the identity of Czech masculine and accusative inflections is as widespread on modifiers as on the nouns themselves.

Note that I analyze the final *-a* of feminine nouns as part of the stem and not as a nominative case inflection. Markéta Ziková (personal communication) suggests that this is problematic, since this *-a* only sporadically appears in morphologically derived forms based on these stems. However, at least four considerations militate against taking final *-a* to be a nominative singular suffix.[21]

- This *-a* cannot be predicted by feminine gender, since some inanimate feminine stems lack it (e.g. *noc* "night") and some animate masculine nouns require it, e.g. *předseda* "chairman".
- Broad one-way implications that predict gender of inanimate nouns are based on stem-final segments in Latin (Emonds 2010). Similarly for Czech: inanimate noun stems ending in *-a* are feminine, and with a few lexical exceptions, stems ending in consonants are masculine (including so-called neuters with the case inflection *-o*). Taking final *-a* as a case ending destroys these correlations and make Czech and Latin genders into very different systems.
- Bailyn – Nevins (2008) observe that analyses should avoid making one case form the basis for determining another. In line with this, Czech accusative singular *-u* should not depend on whether *-a* appears as a nominative suffix, but only on the form of a stem.
- Stem-final *-a* surfaces in oblique plural cases, ***unlike the inanimate masculine nominative suffix -o***. The so-called neuter stems have the oblique plural endings of masculines, with an epenthetic *e* that breaks up consonantal sequences. Thus neuter *ve měst-e-ch* "in towns" vs. feminine *v knihá-ch* "in books".

21 The question arises as to why stem-final *-a* also disappears in other singular cases, not only in derivational morphology. Plausibly, it is behaving like numerous stem-final segments in Latin, which appear only when they ***enhance consonant-vowel alternation***, e.g. the Latin stem *lau(d)* "praise" exhibits *d* before all vowel-initial inflections, but not in the nominative singular *lau-s*. Similarly, a typical Czech lexical representation can be *knih(a)* "book", where *knih-* precedes vowel-initial inflections (accusative singular *knih-u*; V-marked plural *knih-y*), while *kniha* precedes a lack of inflection (nominative singular) or consonant-initial inflections (instrumental plural *kniha-mi*; dative plural *knihá-m*). For more on such Latin stems, see Emonds (2010).

I thus conclude that a final *-a* is not a nominative singular inflection, but rather a stem-final segment.

Outside the V-marked cases, Czech case inflections are simpler because forms for masculine animates, masculine inanimates and neuters are essentially identical. Other than in V-marked case, they are distinguished only ***on some genitive nouns***, and never in agreement inflections. This notable contrast between an essentially four gender system for Super Case in Table (20), with four accusative singular forms, and a two gender system for other cases leads to further arguments for the reality of Super Case.

5.2 Further evidence of Super Case in Czech

There are three generalizations about Czech word formation which formally resemble the three statements (9) and (10a–b) for Latin. First, similar to (9):

(21) **Czech obligatory case**. Czech head Ns must be specified with lexical morphemes (possibly null) for all ***marked values*** of case and number.

In contrast to Latin nominative singular *-s*, Czech lacks a ***specifically nominative singular*** suffix (the unmarked values for case and number). Otherwise, Czech and Latin alike require inflectional case suffixes on all head nouns (non-head nouns in compounds are exempted). Additionally and unlike Latin, Czech oblique case suffixes include one ***null allomorph*** (which acts like an unpronounced vowel), namely for certain genitive plurals, to which we return in section 5.3.

(22) **Nominative/accusative syncretism**. Except for stems ending in *-a*, Czech inanimate V-marked (nominative/accusative) cases are ***always identical***.[22]

22 Statement (22) also applies to inanimate ***feminine*** noun stems that fail to end in *-a*: *noc* "night", *píseň* "song", *radost* "joy". Their nominative and accusative singulars have no case inflection.

Based on similarity with the Latin (10a–b), I propose that the Czech lexicon, like that of Latin, has no need for a "gender difference" between masculine inanimate and neuter nouns, since the relatively few contrasts between the two classes are predictable from whether or not a stem has ***an inherent V-marked case feature***.

(23) **Czech "neuter" gender**. Among masculine nouns, the Czech neuter pattern is the unmarked pattern for the feature –ANIM. But a subset of masculine nouns, ***traditionally termed "masculine inanimates"***, have an inherent lexical V-marked case feature.

There are however two "twists" in surface patterns that obscure the similarity of (11) and (23).
(i) Latin masculine inanimate nouns that lack lexical V-marking (e.g. *mundu-s* "world") uniformly have ***exactly the same case forms*** as do the masculine animates (*servu-s* "slave"). But clearly, neither the first nor third columns of Table (20) for Czech nouns have the forms of animate nouns in the second column. So neither column is "masculine" in the same sense as are certain Latin inanimate masculine nouns.
(ii) Latin neuter nouns are precisely the masculine inanimates that, counter to (9) lack overt V-marked singular case inflection. However, Czech "neuter nouns" are on the contrary the masculine inanimates ***which have*** V-marked inflections in nominative and accusative singulars, namely ***the suffix -o*** (which after stem-final soft consonants is predictably realized as *-e*). The counterparts to Latin neuters are thus not Czech neuters, but what are traditionally termed ***its masculine inanimates***. For it is these latter that ***lack V-marked singular case suffixes***, as seen in the third column in Table (20).[23] Using a lexical Super Case feature this way, Czech gender can be fully specified in terms of ±FEM and ±ANIM, with ***no need for a superfluous "neuter" gender***.

We turn now to Czech Super Case plurals. Since the Czech structural counterparts of the Latin neuters are the traditionally termed "masculine inanimate" nouns, the counterpart to the formally similar Latin V-marked plural rule (12) is the partly different (24).[24]

23 An argument confirming that the V-marked singular suffix *-o* is an inflection rather than part of stems is that, in contrast to the stem-final *-a* of feminine nouns, ***this final -o appears with no other case inflections***.

24 Similarities between these two developments from I-E are: both entries have 3 formally similar allomorphs that spell out plural inflections on V-marked Ns. One inserts *-a* after a class of

(24) **Czech plurals**. In an N with ***V-marked case*** (+V), spell out PLUR as follows:
   a. If N is [–ANIM, –FEM], realize [PLUR, ***V-case***] with the suffix *-a*.
   b. In nominatives only, i.e. marked as [+V, +I], if N is [+ANIM, –FEM], add the suffixes *-ové* or *-i*.
   c. Elsewhere, add the suffix *-y*.

Since the traditional "masculine inanimate" N stems have an inherent V-case feature, V-case cannot also appear in the suffix without violating economy (appearing twice under one N). Hence (24a) does not apply to this class but only to traditional "neuters". The default (24c) applies instead, since it does not mention the location of the V-case feature.

Since the proper generalizations for Czech nominative and accusative plurals thus crucially use V-case twice, in bold italics in (24), they provide further independent support for it.

5.3 Genitives of Czech Nouns

Unlike in Latin, Czech neuter nouns can differ from masculine inanimates in one of the oblique cases, the genitive case. However, there is no parallel between the differences observed for singular and plural genitive masculine nouns.[25]

5.3.1 Genitive plurals

A satisfying analysis of the null genitive plural allomorph of Czech and Russian nouns has been difficult to formulate; for an overview, see Bailyn – Nevins (2008). Descriptively, Czech masculines, both animate and inanimate, use the allomorph *-ū*, while traditionally termed neuter nouns pattern with feminines. Since this ***grouping occurs neither in other cases nor anywhere among agreement inflections***, the genitive

masculine inanimates; another inserts *-ī* in nominatives only after a subclass of animates, and the third is a context-free default.

25 These differences don't arise in the case agreement suffixes, where the genitive forms are always identical for neuters and masculine inanimates, as in all oblique cases.

plural of these two genders appears to be a default. It consists of *-ī* after stem-final soft consonants and *-Ø* after stem-final hard consonants.[26]

In earlier entries of Latin neuter nouns, a V-marked case feature is optional, thus appearing in derivations only in V-marked case contexts. In other contexts it would be superfluous with no role in either lexical form (LF) or phonological form (PF). But suppose that in Czech, the lexical V-marked case feature can be obligatory as in (25b):

(25) a. *aut* "car", N, –ANIM, –FEM
měst "town", N, –ANIM, –FEM
b. *hrad* "castle", N, –ANIM, –FEM, V-case
most "bridge", N, –ANIM, –FEM, V-case

Since the inherent V-marking on the lexical stems in (25b) is ***obligatory***, these nouns will have this feature even in oblique case contexts, though it has no role in expressing the case required by (21) or otherwise in LF interpretation. In these terms, masculine inanimate nouns with a lexical V-case feature, i.e. the "non-neuters", and animate masculines have the same genitive plural. Although the lexical entry for the three allomorphs is not simple, it uses only categories motivated in LF or PF.

(26) **Czech Genitive Plural**.

$$\text{N-Case, PLUR,} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} [\text{ –FEM, \{ +ANIM / V-case \}}]\_\_\_, \textit{-ū} \\ \text{...[+Palatal]}\_\_\_ \text{ , } \textbf{\textit{-ī}} \\ \textit{-Ø} \end{array} \right\}$$

5.3.2 Genitive singulars

In traditional nomenclature, the Czech genitive singular suffix *-a* appears on ***all*** masculine animates, on ***all*** "neuter" nouns, and on ***several dozen*** masculine inanimates such as *život* "life", *svět* "world", *les* "forest", *chléb* "bread", *dvůr* "farmstead", etc. We can thus conclude that *-a* is the default masculine singular genitive inflection.

26 Since its palatalized counterpart is *-ī* not *-e*, this *Ø* is apparently an unpronounced high or mid back vowel. Because of its status as a suffixal vowel, parenthesized final vowels in stems, e.g. *knih(a)*, *žen(a)*, are not inserted, yielding the genitive plurals *knih-Ø* "of books", *žen-Ø* "of women".

However for ***masculine inanimates only***, the most common genitive singular suffix is *-u*: *hradu* "of the castle", *stolu* "of the table", etc. Additionally, many masculine inanimate nouns permit, with variation across dialects and styles, both *-a* and *-u*: *večer* "evening", *jazyk* "language", *sýr* "cheese", *rok* "year", *kopeček* "small hill", *kostel* "church", etc. This alternation is irregular, unpredictable in terms of stem-final consonants, so how might lexical entries express this irregularity?

This masculine genitive singular calls for a lexical entry with two allomorphs. Using two word-internal subcategorization frames (Lieber 1980), (27) specifies that the formatives *-a* and *-u* are suffixes on Ns, and that *-u* furthermore requires that the preceding item (N) has an inherent V-case feature.

(27) **Czech Genitive Singular**.
[N, –FEM]__, N-case, –PLUR, {[V-case]___, *-u* / elsewhere *-a*}

The lexical feature "+V-case" here serves as a trigger for a marked ending, i.e. the genitive singular suffix *-u*.

I can also make a tentative suggestion for how to lexically represent masculine inanimate nouns that take ***either*** *-a* or *-u* in genitive singulars, namely parentheses around the stipulated inherent lexical feature +V-case. Compare (28) with (25b).[27]

(28) *jazyk* "language", N, –ANIM, –FEM, (V-case)
sýr "cheese", N, –ANIM, –FEM, (V-case)

Even though the inherent V-case feature is acting like a diacritic for capturing alternations in genitives, it nonetheless remains a feature that in nominative and accusative contexts plays a role in LF and in this sense is not arbitrary. Since it replaces an otherwise unmotivated third gender in Czech, it provides yet another argument for the existence of Super Case. So-called neuter nouns differ from masculine inanimates by lacking inherent marking for V-case, with no recourse to a purely morphological construct of "a third gender".

27 However, this notation still does not reflect the fact that genitive plurals of these nouns, which is always *-u*, ***requires*** use of the V-case feature, since they do not permit an alternative genitive plural inflection *-Ø*.

5.4 Conclusion

This final section has examined the case inflections of Czech in some detail, and has presented numerous arguments that the proper descriptive generalizations of this language's case morphology strongly support the existence of Super Case. This theoretical construct is a natural consequence of deriving case solely from independently justified syntactic category theory, with essentially no role for either functional motivations or for a theory of autonomous morphology. For four quite different systems of I-E morphological case, Czech, German, Latin and Romanian, the "Super Case" conflation of nominatives and accusatives (an undifferentiated case assigned by V, ±I) plays a crucial role in optimizing lexical statements that capture most of their sub-regularities and syncretisms in the area of morphological case inflection.

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Appendix on the variation *-u* vs. *-a* in Czech genitive singulars

It is not entirely clear what the parentheses in the lexical entries (28) imply in terms of syntactic derivations. In a generative grammar, formal devices like parentheses ("optional choice") do not represent hypotheses about co-existing speech communities, multiple styles in individual speakers, prescriptive annotations in a person's grammar, abilities to understand speakers of other dialects, etc. Rather, they are proposals about ***mental representations of an untutored native speaker***, once he/she has achieved competence in the area under scrutiny. So entries such as (25) and (28) are hypotheses about mental representations of, say, a five or six year old native speaking Czech child. An issue is, does such a speaker's competence, independently of the ability to understand speakers of other idiolects, permit one or two realizations of genitive singulars for e.g. *jazyk*, and *sýr*?

(i) If one realization, then the notation "(V-case)" in (28) means that this optional feature cannot be chosen unless required by some principle governing derivations, such as Czech obligatory case (21). In this eventuality, the forms for which a young speaker uses genitive singular *-u* will be marked for "V-case" obligatorily, and those for which he/she uses *-a* will be marked "(V-case)". As in Latin, this latter feature will then appear in derivations ***only in nominative and accusative contexts***, and never in genitive contexts. This child's competence then specifies ***either*** *-u* or *-a* for a given lexical item; any variation in production is due to ***extra-grammatical factors*** (prescriptive usage, prestige dialects, trying to make speakers of other idiolects understand, etc.).

(ii) On the other hand, suppose a young speaker's ***competence*** allows two realizations, and the choice is made either randomly or, as time goes on, influenced by school grammar, stylistic level, prestige dialects, etc. (this possibility suggested by Hana Strachoňová, personal communication). Then the lexical notation "(V-case)" means that the speaker can optionally choose to insert this feature in derivations, even in oblique case contexts. If the V-case feature is inserted, the entry (27) for masculine genitive singulars will generate *-u*, while if V-case is not inserted, the default masculine genitive singular *-a* will appear.

Thus, what is at issue is not so much the lexical formalism, which seems elegant and appropriate under either conception of dual case

marking, but a deeper issue of whether inflectional variation should be represented in individuals' grammars. This question goes beyond the scope of this study.

Case Theory Revisited: Nominative and Accusative Super Case

Indo-European morphological case systems exhibit considerably more syncretism between nominative and accusative cases than between other pairs of cases. This reflects the fact that the two case-assigning categories for nominative and accusative, namely the finiteness constituent I and the lexical verb, are facets of the same basic category, call it simply V. That is, I = V, +I and the verb = V, –I. Assuming further that case morphemes are simply "Alternative Realizations" of the case assigners, then a nominal projection with an alternatively realized V-feature that lacks further specification as either +I (nominative) or –I (accusative) has a neutralized case, called here "Super Case".

The paper analyses a range of morphological case regularities of Romanian, Latin, German and Czech and demonstrates show that an undifferentiated "V-case" plays a central role in these four quite different systems. Consequently, the four basic cases of Government and Binding research actually reduced to three, V-case (Super Case), N-case (genitives) and P-case (obliques, i.e. dative, ablative, instrumental, etc.).

Further, investigation shows that so-called neuter gender in Latin, German and Czech is a name for a subset of masculine inanimate nouns which have a special relation to V-case but are otherwise regular. Lexical entries of neuter noun stems in Latin and German have an inherent V-case feature, which makes suffixal case morphemes redundant on both Latin nouns and German singular determiners. The traditional classificatory terminology in Czech is reversed, in that its regular masculine inanimates are those traditionally terms neuters (*aut-* "car", *masl-* "butter"). While its masculine inanimate nouns that carry an inherent V-case feature, making redundant (similar to Latin neuters) any special V-case suffixes, are those called "masculine inanimates" (*hrad* "castle", *most* "bridge").