Case and Caselessness in Moro [*]

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1 Introduction

- Moro (Kordofanian) [Sudan] provides new evidence for accusative as a dependent case (Marantz 1991; Baker 2015).
  - We demonstrate that accusative case occurs wherever a DP is c-commanded by another DP within a phase, regardless of whether it is local to vP.
  - Accusative case appears in vP phase on human nouns, which undergo object shift to [Spec, vP] where they are accessible for dependent case assignment.
  - Only proper nouns and kinship surface with accusative, a restriction we attribute to the morphological component.

Roadmap

2 Dependent vs. lexically governed case

- Standard analyses of structural case assume that it is assigned by a specific functional head under Agree with a local DP.
- Yet Baker (2015) argues that in many languages, case is dependent on the presence of another c-commanding DP in the same phase, following Marantz (1991).

  (1) Simplified case diagram here:

- For Baker, once c-command between DPs is established in a phase (=ϕ), case is assigned either 'up' or 'down' at Spell Out:

[*]We are very grateful to our Moro consultants Elyasir Julima and Angelo Nasser. We use the following abbreviations: SG = singular, PL = plural, IRR = irrealis, PROG = progressive, IMPF = imperfective, PFV = perfective, ACC = accusative, Q = polar question particle, 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person

(2) If there are two DPs in ϕ, and DP1 c-commands DP2,
   a. value DP1 as ergative. ="assignment up"
   b. value DP2 as accusative. ="assignment down"

- We propose the following Dependent Case Rule for Moro:

(3) **Moro Dependent Case Rule**
   If there are two DPs in ϕ, and DP1 c-commands DP2,
   (a) Value DP2 as accusative.
   (b) Where ϕ={CP, DP}

3 Evidence for Dependent Case in Moro

- We present five arguments in favor of Dependent Case in Moro:
  - Both internal arguments of a ditransitive verb show accusative case.
  - The lower argument shows accusative case marking when a ditransitive is passivized.
  - In a genitive construction, the lower noun shows accusative case.
  - When two DPs are coordinated, the lower one (the second conjunct) shows accusative case, even in subject position.
  - A-bar extraction bleeds accusative case.
- **Argument 1: Ditransitives**
  - Both objects of ditransitive verbs surface with accusative case:

(4) éga-nac-ó ŋállo-**ŋ** kója-**ŋ**
   1SG.RT-give-PFV Ngallo-ACC Koja-ACC
   'I gave Ngallo to Koja.' / 'I gave Koja to Ngallo.'

  - Multiple accusative case in double object constructions is predicted by the dependent case account, all three arguments are c-commanded by the subject DP.
  - While this could be modeled in a v account under Multiple Agree (Hiraiwa 2001), the combination of the five arguments presented in this section stand together in favor of a Dependent Case analysis of Moro.
- **Argument 2: Passives**
  - Accusative case is still assigned to internal arguments in passives:

(5) ŋállo gʌ-nac-ən-ú kója-**ŋ**
   Ngallo CLG.RT-give-PASS-PFV Koja-ACC
   'Ngallo was given to Koja' / 'Ngallo was given Koja'

- - If accusative case were assigned structurally by v_{active}, it should disappear in passive contexts

Argument 3: Focused objects

- A-bar movement of the object bleeds accusative case assignment:

(6) ŋw-Kúku-(*ŋ)-ki$_1$ n=égə́-bwáɲ-á t_1
FOC-Kuku-(ACC-REL.OP REL.COMP-1SG.DPC-like-IPFV
'It's Kuku that I like.'

- The highest copy of the object is not c-commanded by another DP, so we do not expect accusative case assignment on fronted objects.

- **Argument 4: Bare nominal complements**
  - 'Accusative' case markers also show up on inalienable possessors in the absence of possessor agreement:

(7) a. ləŋge Kúku-**ŋ**
mom Kuku-ACC
'Mom of Kuku'

b. ləŋg-en gə́-Kúku
mother-3.poss CLg.poss-Kuku
'Kuku's mom'

c. e̱t̪ə́ Kúku-**ŋ**
dad Kuku-ACC
'Dad of Kuku'

d. e̱t̪-en gə́-Kúku
father-3.poss CLg.poss-Kuku
'Kuku's dad'

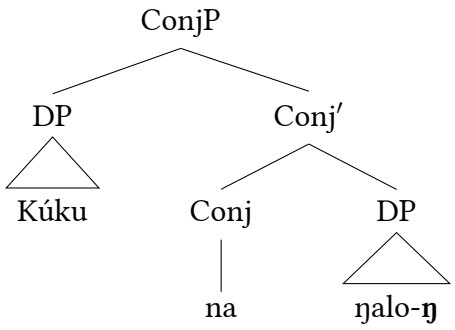
  - As there is no v to assign ACC inside the DP in (7), an Agree-based analysis of accusative case is untenable.
  - Instead, Kúku (6a,c) is the complement of 'mom' and 'dad', making it eligible for dependent case
  - In (6b,d), the possessors raise to [Spec, n] which assigns genitive case (cf. Dvorak 2011), blocking dependent case.

- **Argument 5: DP Coordination**
  - Coordination triggers accusative case on the second argument, even in subject position:

(8) Kúku na ŋalo-**ŋ** l-aŋer-á
Kuku-ACC and Ngalo-ACC CLl.RT-good-ADJ
'Kuku and Ngalo are nice.'

  - Accusative case on the first argument is ungrammatical.

(9) **Dependent case assignment in coordination**



4 Multiple [PERSON] object shift

- Moro objects show radically symmetrical behavior for case assignment, passivization, etc. (Ackerman et al. 2015)
- But human objects always precede non-human ones:

(10) a. éga-nac-ó kója-ŋ diə
1SG-give-PFV Koja-ACC cow
'I gave the cow to Koja/ Koja to the cow.'
b. * éga-nac-ó diə kója-ŋ

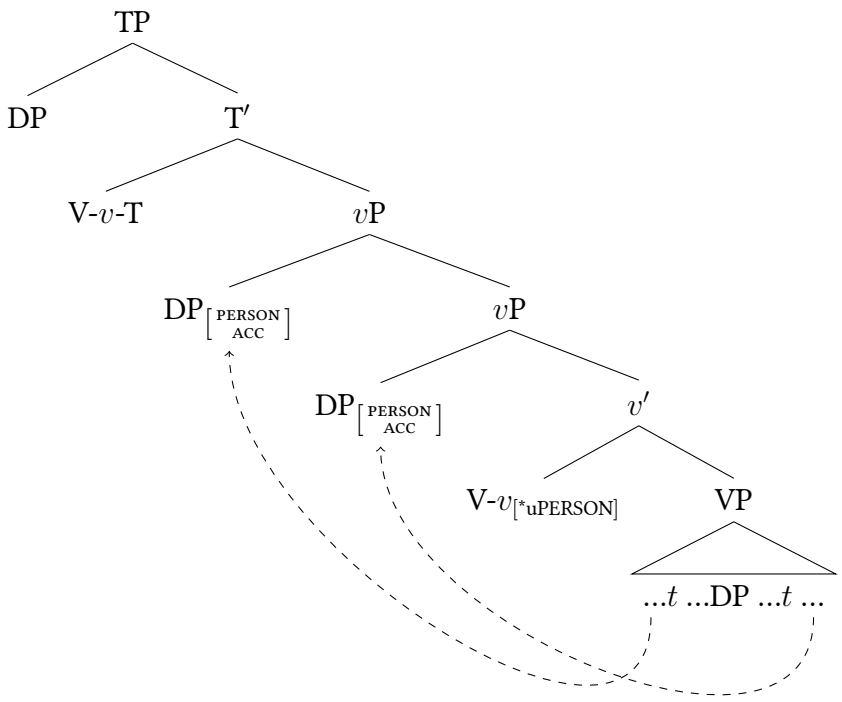
- Variable binding provides evidence for a structural asymmetry:

(11) ígʌ-sʌj-ʌc-ú lámmiə lənəlnəŋ é-nega dəŋgen
1SG-see-L.APPL-PFV boys each LOC-houses 3PL.POSS
'I saw each boy at his house.'

(12) * éga-dwʌj-iṭ́-ú leŋg-en-andá lemmia (ododo)
1SG-send-APPL-PFV mothers-3P-ASSOC.PL boys all
'I sent their mothers all the boys' (intended)

- Multiple [PERSON] shift to [Spec, vP]
  - - Human nouns are specified, [PERSON]
  - v has a strong, insatiable [uPERSON] probe

(13) **Objects specified [PERSON] undergo object shift**



- Evidence that v is fully articulated for person comes from person hierarchy effects among object clitics (Béjar and Rezac 2009).

(14) a. ga-nac-ə́-ɲə́-ŋo 1SG>3SG
CLg-give-PFV-1SG.OM-3SG.OM 'She gave him to me'
b. *g-a-nac-ə́-ŋə́-ɲe *3SG>1SG

- [PERSON]-valued objects in [Spec,vP] are accessible for dependent accusative case assignment in the CP phase.

5 [PROPER] morphological case

- Only names and kinship terms surface with overt accusative case in Moro:

(15) a. éga-nac-ó kója-**ŋ** ŋera(*-**ŋ**)
1SG-give-PFV Koja-ACC girl(-*ACC)
b. éga-nac-ó ŋera(*-**ŋ**) kója-**ŋ**
'I gave a girl to Koja/Koja to a girl.' (both exx.)

- Suppose these nouns share a feature [PROPER] (Matushansky 2006)

- A similar category ('Class 1a') has been noted to resist augments in Luganda (Hyman and Katamba 1991, 1993).

- Associative plurals are also restricted to [PROPER] nouns

(16) a. orn **lorlda-ñ-anda** n-ldə-ñ-ëbərəjëc-i ...
but brothers-1SG.POSS-ASSOC.PL COMP2-CLL.INF-1SG.OM-loose-CONS.PFV
'But my brothers let it go ...'

b. ... **Koja-ŋənda** l-a-f-o eg-al
Koja-ASSOC.PL CLL-RTC-be.loc-PFV LOC-place
y-i-b-ërn-ia Alufra
CLY-DPC-PROG-be.called-IPFV Alhufra
'And he told them that Koja's family was in Alhufra.'

- Last, 3P object clitics can only refer to [PROPER] antecedents:

(17) a. g-war-ó ŋalló na nəŋ-**ŋú**-bug-i
CLg-insult-PFV Nalo and 3SG.I-3SG.OM-punch-CPFV
'He yelled at Ngallo$_i$ and then punched him$_i$.'

b. kuku g-war-ó ŋera na nəŋə́-búg-í
kuku CLg-insult-PFV child and 3SG.I-punch-CPFV
'Kuku yelled at the child$_i$ and then punched him$_i$.'

(18) **Accusative case allomorphy**
i -*ŋ* ↔ [Acc]/[PROPER]__
ii -∅ ↔ [Acc]/elsewhere

6 Implications and Conclusions

- Moro case marking has implications for animacy-based case splits from a typological perspective.
  - The distribution of [Acc] in Moro resembles object marking in person split ergative languages.
    - In Diyari, only high-animacy objects, including names, receive accusative case.
    - Low animacy objects are unmarked/absolutive, despite being syntactically indistinguishable Baker (2015, 22-23).
    - With Legate (2008), Baker concludes that animacy-based splits occur in the morphology (*pace* Merchant 2006).
  - Moro demonstrates that animacy-based splits are not always morphological: one split based on [PERSON] is syntactic, but another split based on [+PROPER] is morphological.

    - Thus, we would not be surprised to find a Moro′ in which a animacy-based split arose due to different syntactic positions of objects.
    - **We predict both syntactic and morphological animacy-based case splits should be found across languages**.

- The Moro data provide novel support for accusative as a dependent case rather than a structural case valued by v (Marantz 1991; Baker 2015).
- The arguments for Dependent Case in Moro are found in the following domains:
    - The distribution of objects
    - The distribution of case morphology
- We have also shown that the distribution of overt accusative case is crucially dependent on the morphological component (Bobaljik 2008; Legate 2008).

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