

## SPECIAL CASES

Starting with Chomsky 1981, 1986, Case Theory has distinguished structural Cases, assigned (checked, licensed) by functional heads in particular configurations, from lexical and inherent Cases. In practice, this means that specific mechanisms have been proposed for the former but not for the latter and most work on Case as a syntactic phenomenon has been based on the investigation of the core structural cases, nominative and accusative. It is easy to demonstrate that this approach faces a number of questions, among which are the following:

- What is Case?
- How does Case assignment to predicates work?
- What is the relation between syntactic Case and morphological cases?
- Why do structural, inherent and lexical cases coincide, i.e., why can accusative be assigned not only by  $v^0$ , but also by prepositions or to some adverbials?
- What is the relation between Case and prepositions?

In this talk I will explore an alternative Case Theory, based on the following assumptions:

- (i) There are no special Case features. Instead, Case corresponds to uninterpretable counterparts of interpretable features (cf. Pesetsky and Torrego 2001, 2004, 2007, Bailyn 2004)
- (ii) Structural Case is assigned by a head to its sister and percolates down (cf. Stowell 1981). An xNP can thus have more than one Case (cf. Merchant 2006, Caha 2007 and Richards 2007)
- (iii) The resulting bundles of uninterpretable features are spelled out by Vocabulary Insertion rules and thus characterized by such standard effects as impoverishment and underspecification

I will first discuss cross-linguistic behavior of predicate Case and argue that it is difficult or impossible to account for it without assuming multiple Case assignment. I will show how the proposed system accounts for Case-assignment to predicates in specific languages and argue that it deals correctly with nominative and accusative assignment. Then I will turn to lexical and inherent Cases and ergative-absolutive languages, as well as some other patterns of Case variation in function of the environment. Finally, I will demonstrate that the other questions discussed above can also be satisfactorily dealt with in the proposed approach.

## References

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