

1. Introduction

Current formal studies of Case assignment/licensing center around two main approaches: 1. Case assignment/valuation via Agree, or 2. Dependent Case, whereby a certain Case cannot be licensed (to a given NP/DP), unless a different Case has been licensed first (to another NP/DP), in a particular structural configuration within a particular local domain (first proposed by Marantz 1991, later applied by others, e.g. Baker & Vinokurova 2010). Some studies have suggested a mixed approach: Case licensing via Agree for subjects, but via dependent Case for DOs (and other elements, e.g. IOs)—see, again, Baker & Vinokurova (2010) for such a mixed approach. Here is an example of their treatment of non-subject Case in Sakha as a dependent Case:

“Our specific thesis is that this four-case system divides neatly in half. Accusative case and dative case are assigned by the Marantz-inspired configurational rules stated in (4).

(4) a. If there are two distinct argumental NPs in the same VP-phase such that NP1 c-commands NP2, then value the case feature of NP1 as dative unless NP2 has already been marked for case.

b. If there are two distinct argumental NPs in the same phase such that NP1 c-commands NP2, then value the case feature of NP2 as accusative unless NP1 has already been marked for case.” (Baker & Vinokurova 2010: 595)

Their treatment of subject Case (e.g. Nominative and Genitive) is the “traditional”, Chomskyan one, with the NP/DP in question placed in the specifier position of a functional projection and getting its Case licensed via Agree with the functional head, e.g. TP/IP.

However, even more recent work has suggested that a single approach is preferable to a mixed approach on conceptual grounds, proposing to re-analyze subject Case via a dependent Case approach, thus bringing subject Case into the fold of dependent Case as the only valid Case licensing mechanism in general (at least for structural Cases); see, e.g., Levin & Preminger (2015).

This paper proposes a new version of a conciliatory approach to Case, which is mixed homogeneously: In all instances of structural Case, i.e. for subject as well as DOs, Agree with a functional head is necessary. (This addresses the conceptual issue of one unique type of licensing mechanism, rather than two.) However, the functional licenser of the Case on DOs has to be itself licensed in this capacity (i.e. be activated). This is possible only when the subject Case has first been licensed via Agree. This results in the *appearance* of dependent Case, which is, this paper claims, an *indirect symptom* of dependent **Agree**.

In this paper, I will not compare these two types of approaches, each one of which is unified; the main point here is to take a first step towards showing that the “traditional”, Chomskyan approach is at least viable as a basis of a unified approach towards Case. Each instance of the configurational/dependent Case approach would need to be re-analyzed individually to see whether it can be understood within the rival unified approach.

2. Facts of Turkish with respect to differential case (marking)

This approach is illustrated here via an interaction of DOM with DSM, in Turkish.

The basic facts of DOM in Turkish are well known: Non-specific DOs can't be marked with the Accusative, specific DOs must be so marked. While Turkish has a productive system of agreement with the subject of TP/IP (and with the possessor in possessive DPs), it has no morphological agreement marking with the DO on the predicate; thus, Case and Agree appear to be dissociated for non-subject structural Case. Here, I will argue that against appearances, they are associated; this becomes clear, when DSM is taken into account, as well.

2. 1. Some examples for DOM in Turkish:

- (1a) (ben) *kitab-ı* oku -du -m (definite)
 I book-ACC read-PAST-1.SG
 'I read **the** book.'
- (1b) (ben) *bir kitap* oku-du -m (indef. non-spec.)
 I a book read-PAST-1.SG
 'I read **a** book.'
- (1c) (ben) *bir kitab-ı* oku -du -m (indef. spec.)
 I a book-ACC read-PAST-1.SG
 'I read **a certain** book.'

2. 2. Some examples for DSM in Turkish:

The DSM facts in Turkish are less well-known: Non-specific subjects of nominalized clauses don't bear Genitive marking, and typically show up left-adjacent to the verb. Agreement on the predicate has default (3.sg.) shape when such subjects are present; specific subjects of nominalized clauses must bear Genitive and can show up anywhere in the clause. The predicate agrees with such Genitive subjects, as well as with Nominative subjects in fully finite clauses.

- (2) [*bir haydut-un köy -ü bas-tığ -ın*]-ı duy-du-m
 a robber-GEN village-ACC raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 'I heard that a robber (specific for all speakers, and additional non-specific reading for some speakers) raided the village' (Will come back to the second reading)
- (3a) [*köy-ü bir haydut-un bas-tığ -ın*] -ı duy-du -m
 village-ACC a robber-GEN raid-FN -3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 'I heard that a (certain) robber raided the village' (specific for all speakers)

(3b) [köy -ü haydut bas-tığ -ın] -i duy-du -m
village -ACC robber raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
‘I heard that robbers raided the village’ (non-specific, generic reading as the only reading)

(4a) [yol -dan bir araba geç -tiğ -in]-i gör-dü -m.
road-ABL a car pass -FN -3.SG-ACC see-PAST-1.SG
‘I saw that *a car* (non-specific, non-referential) went by on the road.’ (The subject may be focused, but it does not have to be.)

(4b) [yol -dan bir araba -nın geç-tiğ -in] -i gör-dü-m.
road-ABL a car -GEN pass -FN-3.SG-ACC see-PAST-1.SG
‘I saw that *a car* (indefinite, but specific) went by on the road.’

(4c) [bir araba -nın yol -dan geç -tiğ -in] -i gör -dü -m.
a car -GEN road-ABL pass -FN-3.SG-ACC see -PAST-1.SG
‘I saw that *a car* (indefinite, and specific *or* non-specific) went by on the road.’

(4d) *[bir araba yol -dan geç -tiğ -in] -i gör -dü -m.
a car road-ABL PASS-FN-3.SG-ACC see -PAST-1.SG

Intended reading: ‘I saw that *a car* (indefinite and non-specific, non-referential) went by on the road.’ Note the contrast with the grammatical (4a).

(5a)[Garaj -da beş araba ol-duğ -un]-u bil -iyor -um
garage -LOC five car be-FN -3.SG-ACC know-PRPROG -1.SG
‘I know that there are five cars in the garage.’

(5b)*[Beş araba garaj -da ol-duğ -un]-u bil -iyor -um
five car garage -LOC be-FN-3.SG -ACC know-PRPROG-1.SG
Intended reading: ‘I know that there are five cars in the garage.’

The predicates of the embedded clauses in (4) and (5) are unaccusatives; one might therefore be tempted to treat their non-specific (and non-genitive marked) verb-adjacent subjects in exactly the same way as the morphologically bare DOs, e.g. claim that an abstract “object Case” is assigned to them by small-*v*. (A proposal essentially along those lines is found in Kennelly 1995).

However, the existence of examples such as those in (3), with transitive predicates, show that this claim is untenable.

Instead, I adopt essentially a “traditional”, Chomskyan view: bare direct objects get their structural Case feature checked by *v*, while bare subjects get their structural case feature checked by INFL (=Tense and/or Agreement as a bundle of phi-features) in situ, i.e. in their base-generated VP-internal position, under long-distance *Agree*.

Similar facts hold for tensed clauses with their nominative subjects; I have concentrated here on the genitive subjects of nominalized clauses, because of the clear distinction between the overt genitive morphology and the bare, case-morpheme-less subjects. The nominative in Turkish is a zero-morpheme. But if we are willing to distinguish between a zero-morpheme (which is present syntactically as well as morphologically, but which has

no phonological features) and total lack of morphological case, then we can use nominative subjects to make similar points as genitive ones: specific (and, in some instances, non-specific) subjects would be marked with nominative, expressed morphologically via a zero morpheme, and non-specific subjects in general would lack morphological case, i.e. those NP/DPs would be “bare”, just as their non-genitive counterparts in nominalized clauses.

2.3. Focusing on transitive predicates: How far do DOM and DSM interact?

Even less known are the facts concerning co-occurrence of non-specific subjects and non-specific DOs: At the current stage of Turkish, the non-specific subject must bear Genitive (whereby the non-specific reading becomes secondary, versus the specific reading being primary), and it must precede the bare, non-specific DO, as we have seen earlier (although word order is free in general, and **specific** subjects and DOs can be scrambled). There is only default subject agreement on the predicate when the subject is non-specific.

Importantly for this talk, when the subject is non-specific (although marked Genitive in a nominalized clause, or if it is nominative in a fully tensed clause) and precedes the DO, the DO can't bear Accusative marking.

First, examples in tensed clauses, with nominative subjects:

(6) Haydut(-lar) köy bas-ar.
Robber(-PL) village raid-AOR
'Robbers raid villages.'

(7) Çingene(-ler) çocuk kaçır-ır.
Gypsy(-PL) child kidnap-AOR
'Gypsies kidnap children.'

(8) *Köy haydut(-lar) basar.
Village robber(-PL) raid-AOR
Intended: 'Robbers raid villages; as for villages, robbers raid them.'

(9) *Çocuk çingene(-ler) kaçır-ır.
Child gypsy (-PL) kidnap-AOR
Intended: 'Gypsies kidnap children; as for children, gypsies kidnap them.'

(Bad under the relevant reading of çocuk 'child' as the object; OK if interpreted as the subject.)

i.e. the DO without morphological case must be V-adjacent. But the non-specific, non-referential subject can be non-adjacent, as long as (in a tensed clause) the tense is the *aorist*, i.e. aspectually habitual, Thus, the well-formed examples above are *ambiguous between a specific and non-specific reading for the subject*.

This ambiguity disappears when the DO is specific, and thus bears overt, i.e. morphological, accusative, and is verb-adjacent, i.e. is preceded by the subject:

- (10) Çingene(-ler) çocuğ-u kaçır-ır.
 Gypsy(-PL) child-ACC kidnap-AOR
 '(The) (specific) gypsy/gypsies kidnap(s) (the) (specific) child.'
- (11) Haydut-lar köy-ü bas-ar.
 Robber-PL village-ACC raid-AOR
 '(The) (specific) robber(s) raid(s) (the) (specific) village.'
- (12) Arı çocuğ-u sok-ar.
 Bee child-ACC sting-AOR
 '(The) (specific) bee(s) sting(s) (the) (specific) child.'

Here, the subject cannot be non-specific; it has to be specific, referential. (For some speakers, the non-specific reading for the subject in such word orders is possible, but nonetheless a weak possibility.) When the subject is singular, the effect is stronger, i.e. the subject preceding the overtly case-marked DO can't be non-specific; it has to be specific/referential; examples (10) through (12), in their respective versions for the singular subject, which I repeat for the reader's convenience:

- (10)' Çingene çocuğ-u kaçır-ır.
 Gypsy child-ACC kidnap-AOR
 '(The) (specific) gypsy kidnaps (the) (specific) child.'
- (11)' Haydut köy-ü bas-ar.
 Robber village-ACC raid-AOR
 '(The) (specific) robber raid(s) (the) (specific) village.'
- (12)' Arı çocuğ-u sok-ar.
 Bee child-ACC sting-AOR
 '(The) (specific) bee stings (the) (specific) child.'

On the other hand, when the DO is specific and bears morphological accusative, and has scrambled to the left of the subject, the verb-adjacent subject is, once again, ambiguous between a specific and non-specific reading, with the non-specific reading being the primary interpretation:

- (13) Çocuğ-u çingene(-ler) kaçır-ır.
 Child-ACC gypsy(-PL) kidnap-AOR
 '(the) gypsy/gypsies (specific, possibly non-spec.) kidnap the child'
- (14) Köy-ü haydut(-lar) bas-ar.
 Village-ACC robber(-PL) raid-AOR
 '(the) robber/robbers (spec., possibly non-spec.) raid the village.'

- (15) Çocuğ-u arı(-lar) sok-ar.
 Child-ACC bee(-PL) sting-AOR
 '(the) bee/bees (spec., poss. Non-spec) sting the child.'

We now turn to embedded, nominalized clauses. We have seen those earlier (e.g. the examples in (3)), and some of the examples will be a repetition.

When such clauses are embedded and thus get nominalized, we find DSM effects with respect to the genitive marking on the subject—i.e. the specific subject is genitive-marked and can be either before or after the DO, while the non-specific subject is bare and can show up only after the DO, adjacent to the verb:

- (16) [Köy-ü haydut bas-tığ-ın-ı] duy-du-m.
 village-ACC robber raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 'I heard that robbers (non-spec., bare) raided the village.'
- (17) *[Haydut köy-ü bas-tığ-ın-ı] duy-du-m.
- (18) [Köy-ü haydut-un bas-tığ-ın-ı] duy-du-m.
 village-ACC robber-GEN raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 'I heard that (the) (spec) robber raided the village.'
- (19) [Haydut-un köy-ü bas-tığ-ın-ı] duy-du-m.
 robber-GEN village-ACC raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 'I heard that (the) (spec) robber raided the village.'

When the DO is non-specific and thus is morphologically bare, the only possible well-formed combination is for the subject to precede the DO and to be marked with the genitive, as in (23):

- (20) *[Köy haydut bas-tığ-ın -ı] duy-du-m.
 village robber raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 Intended: 'I heard that some unspecified robber/robbers raided some unspecified village/villages.'
- (21) *[Haydut köy bas-tığ-ın-ı] duy-du-m.
 Intended: same as in (20).
- (22) *[Köy haydut -un bas-tığ-ın-ı] duy-du-m.
 village robber-GEN raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 Intended: 'I heard that (the) (specific) robber raided some unspecified village/villages.'
- (23) [Haydut-un köy bas-tığ -ın -ı] duy-du-m.
 robber-GEN village raid-FN-3.SG-ACC hear-PAST-1.SG
 'I heard that (the) (spec./ weakly: non-specific) robber raided (a) (non-specific) village/villages.'

In well-formed examples such as (23), the genitive subject is specific and even definite. However, there are speakers who report a weak, secondary, but nonetheless existing reading of generic, and thus non-specific, interpretation of the subject. (This non-specific reading seems to be easier to get, when the subject is plural.) This is interesting, as it makes it possible to have both a subject and a DO be non-specific—a possibility which is simply missing for the speakers who reject examples such as (23) under the non-specific reading for the subject.

Interestingly, too, examples such as (21) (i.e. where the subject is non-specific and morphologically bare, i.e. where the genitive is not realized morphologically, and where the subject precedes the bare DO) were possible until recently and are still found in some 20th century texts.

3. Tentative proposal for a unified, but conciliatory approach to Case:

I propose that the best, most insightful (if not the only) account of these facts treats DSM and DOM in parallel fashion: Not only DSM, but also DOM depends on a *Case* — *Agreement correlation*; only when the subject bears Case (Nominative or Genitive) and Agrees with the predicate, can agreement with the DO (located on the vP) be “activated” by that higher agreement and can thus license Accusative case on the DO. This results in the *appearance* of dependent Case, which is, this paper claims, an *indirect symptom* of dependent **Agree**.

This proposal owes its existence to two prior proposals: One is the “jumpstart” mechanism proposed by Keskin (2009), for rather different phenomena (having to do with verbal nouns which assign Case such as accusative and dative, but only when there is a “higher”, genitive-marked NP/DP, which crucially agrees with the verbal noun; however, the jumpstart mechanism has nothing to do with the idea of activating other functional heads, from high to low).

The second prior proposal is one of my own (Kornfilt 2003), also for rather different phenomena, namely for nominalized adjunct (adverbial) versus argument clauses. The specific proposal there was intended to differentiate non-genitive subjects in nominalized adjunct clauses from genitive subjects in nominalized argument clauses; in the latter, the agreement morphology on the argument clause’s predicate was claimed to get activated by the root clause’s predicate, while no such activation is possible in adjunct clauses.

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