Case and clause type - handout 1

moral lesson #1: Entertain the hypothesis that languages are the same until shown to be different.

1. Classical case theory: complements

Distribution of accusative case morphology in Latin

(1) **Complement to V**
[$_{VP}$ scripsit libr-um]
wrote book-**ACC**

(2) **Complement to P**
[$_{PP}$ ad Hispani-am]
to Spain-**ACC**

(3) **Complement to N**
a. [$_{NP}$ amor libertat-is]
love liberty-**GEN**
'love of liberty
b. *[$_{NP}$ amor libertat-em]
love liberty-ACC
c. [$_{NP}$ amor [$_{PP}$ in patriam]]
love into country
'love for one's country

(4) **Complement to A**
a. urbs [$_{AP}$ nuda praesidi-o (Att. 7.13)
city naked defense-**ABL**
'a city deprived of defense'
b. *urbs [$_{AP}$ nuda praesidi-um]
city naked defense-ACC

c. [$_{AP}$ liberi [$_{PP}$ a deliciis]] (Leg.Agr. 1.27)
free from luxuries
d. *[$_{AP}$ liberi delici-as]
free luxuries-ACC

(5) **Accusative case in Latin-type languages**
a. V and P assign accusative case to an NP complement.
b. N and A do not assign accusative case (to an NP complement).

Distribution of nominals in English

(6) **Facts about the availability of nominal complements in English**
a. V and P allow a nominal complement.
b. N and A do not allow an nominal complement.

(7) **Complement to V (nominal)**
[$_{VP}$ wrote the book]

(8) **Complement to P (nominal)**
[$_{PP}$ to Spain]

(9) **Complement to N** **(*nominal)**
a. [$_{NP}$ love of liberty] b. *[$_{NP}$ love liberty]
c. [$_{NP}$ love [$_{PP}$ for their country]]

(10) **Complement to A** **(*nominal)**
a. [$_{AP}$ free from luxuries] b. *[$_{AP}$ free luxuries]

(11) **Differences between English and Latin**
a. ***Morphological realization***
Case morphology in English is phonologically zero.

b. ***Repertoire of cases:***
English has accusative case, but does not have genitive, dative, ablative, unlike Latin.

(12) **Case Filter**
*[nominal, –case]

Morphological realization varies independently from repertoire of cases

- **Zero case morphology does not entail the absence of case**

(13) **Declinable vs. indeclinable nouns in Russian**
(not necessary for a Moscow audience, конечно — извиняюсь!)

a. [$_{VP}$ vidit mašin-*u*]
sees car-ACC
b. [$_{PP}$ v mašin-*u*]
into car-ACC
declinable

a'. [$_{VP}$ vidit kenguru]
sees kangaroo.ACC
b'. [$_{PP}$ v kenguru]
into kangaroo.ACC
indeclinable

c. [$_{NP}$ uničtoženie mašin-*y*]
destruction car-GEN
d. [$_{NP}$ ljubov' [$_{PP}$ k mašin-*e*]
love to car-DAT
declinable

c'. [$_{NP}$ uničtoženie kenguru]
destruction kangaroo.GEN
d'. [$_{NP}$ ljubov' [$_{PP}$ k kenguru]
love to kangaroo.DAT
indeclinable

e. [$_{AP}$ dovolen mašin-*oj*]
satisfied car-INSTR
f. [$_{AP}$ serdit [$_{PP}$ na mašin-*u*]]
angry at car-ACC
declinable

e'. [$_{AP}$ dovolen kenguru]
satisfied kangaroo.INSTR
f'. [$_{AP}$ serdit [$_{PP}$ na kenguru]]
angry at kangaroo.ACC
indeclinable

(14) **Case is present in NP even when N shows no case morphology**
a. uničtoženie èt-ogo glup-ogo kenguru
destruction this-M.GEN.SG stupid- M.GEN.SG kangaroo

b. dovolen èt-im glup-ym kenguru
satisfied this- M.INSTR.SG stupid- M.INSTR.SG kangaroo

Languages like English: *all nouns are kangaroos*
Distinctions important in classical case theory

- **Case neediness:**
  Some categories *need Case*; others do not.

  Needy: nominals
  Not needy: PP, CP, ...

- **Ability to assign case:**
  For each Case π, some categories *assign* π; others do not.

  Accusative assigners: V, P
  Nominative assigners: finite T (see below, and throughout this class)

  Assigners of no case (in English): N, A
  Assigners of oblique case (in Latin, Russian etc.) N, A

- **Evidence that PP and CP do not need case:**
  ability to occur as complement of N and A in English (see (9)-(10) for PP)

(15) a. **CP as complement to N**
her proof [$_{CP}$ that the world is round]
b. **CP as complement to A**
satisfied [$_{CP}$ that the world is round]

(16) **Accusative case assignment**
α assigns accusative case to β only if:
i. α is V or P (not N or A); and
ii. β is [structurally close to] α

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2. Classical case theory: non-complements

(17) **Nominative Case assignment (English)**
Finite T assigns nominative case to its specifier.

(18) **Only finite T assigns case to its specifier**
a. We were happy [that Mary won the prize].
b. We were happy [*(for) Mary to win the prize].
c. We believe/*are sure [Sue to have made some errors].

Concerning (18b-c):
a. English complementizer *for* assigns case to specifier of its complement.
b. English "Exceptional Case Marking" verbs also assign case to the specifier of their complements

A presupposition of the proposal **(to be much discussed later in the class):**
Infinitival clauses are built as such — so it is up to case theory to regulate the availability of nominal subjects in finite vs. non-finite clauses.

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3. Classical case theory: adjacency condition?

(19) **English requires adjacency between case assigner and assignee**
a. Mary read (*completely) the paper.
b. *Sue persuaded [that the world is round] John.
c. We were happy [for (*yesterday) Mary to win the prize].
d. We believe [(*recently) Sue to have made some errors].

objection: What would produce such orders in the first place?
- for (a), we would have to assume short verb movement
- for (b), we would have to assume that there is no semantically motivated order to the arguments (nor movement that could yield the order shown)
- but for (c) and (d), there is precedent from finite clauses:

(20) **Adverbs that we know should be able to occur clause-initially**
a. We were happy [that yesterday Mary won the prize].
b. We believe [that recently Sue has made some errors].

A presupposition of this discussion **(to be discussed later):**
The embedded subject has not left its clause in (c) or (d).

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4. Classical case theory: case forcing movement

- **If passive, unaccusative, and raising verbs fail to assign accusative case...**

(21) a. The book was put __ [under the desk].
b. Mary was persuaded __ [that the world was ending].
c. The door opened __ suddenly.

- **...the obligatoriness of *movement* of nominals (but not CPs or PPs) from the complement of such verbs falls together with the independent distinction between elements with case needs vs. elements without case needs:**

(22) a. The book was put __ under the table.
b. *It was put the book under the table.

(23) a. [That the world is round] was believed __ by the ancient Greeks.
b. It was believed by the ancient Greeks [that the world is round].

5. Some history

- **Surface Constraints: an innovation of Perlmutter's 1968 MIT dissertation and 1971 book *Deep and Surface Constraints in Syntax***
Certain generalizations hold of surface configurations of the form "unacceptable *if*..." or "unacceptable *unless*..." — no matter what combination of rules produced the relevant configuration.

- **Chomsky & Lasnik's "Filters and Control" (1977) take up Perlmutter's idea:**
"Our hypothesis, then, is that the consequences of ordering, obligatoriness, and contextual dependency can be captured in terms of surface filters, something that surely need not be the case in principle; and further, that these properties can be expressed in a natural way at this level."

- **Dissatisfaction with the following filter led to case theory:**

(24) **The *NP-to-VP* filter** (adapted from "Filters & Control" 460)
*[$_{\alpha}$ NP to VP], unless α is adjacent to and c-commanded by a verb or preposition.

- **PRO is not an instance of *NP* in (24), but is visible to the filter:**

(25) **NP vs. PRO**
a. *John persuaded Mary [Bill to leave].
b. John persuaded Mary [PRO to leave].
(*Mary to leave* does not count as NP-to-VP)

What about...

(26) *It seems [Mary to have left]

- The badness of "[NP to VP]" after V and A when NP does not raise attributed to an ***it*-insertion rule that applies only when the complement is a ±WH or *for* clause**, conspiring with a **filter that requires an overt subject**.

A letter from Jean-Roger Vergnaud to Noam Chomsky and Howard Lasnik:

Paris, April 17, 1977
Dear Howard, Dear Noam,

I got your paper, three weeks ago. It is quite exciting. I believe I have some ideas to communicate to you now...

Chomsky (1980) "On Binding" takes up Vergnaud's ideas

"Among the problems connected with the *NP-to-VP filter is the idiosyncratic character of the "'unless condition", which specifies the domain of verbs and prepositions. This seems a strange context for nonapplication of the filter. However, this configuration is natural elsewhere in grammar, namely, in the context of Case Assignment...**Suppose we think of Case as an abstract marking associated with certain constructions**, **a property that rarely has phonetic effects in English but must be assigned to every lexical NP**. "

"Suppose we assume the (partially idiosyncratic) property in question to be that **noncontrol verbs are permitted to govern objective Case across a clause boundary**. If, finally, we assume as a general principle that **all lexical NPs must have Case**, then it will follow that infinitives with lexical subjects will be excluded except as complements of noncontrol verbs."

(27) **Case assignment [(68)]**
a. NP is oblique when governed by P and certain marked verbs;
b. NP is objective when governed by V;
c. NP is nominative when governed by Tense.

(28) **Case Filter ([(68)]**
*N, where N has no Case. (holds at surface structure)

- Under (28), nominals that appear not to be subject to the Case Filter can be conjectured to be pure NPs, with no N.

(29) **Government ["On Binding" (69)]**
α is *governed* by β if α is c-commanded by β and no major category or major category boundary appears between α and β.

(30) **Exceptional Case Marking across a clause boundary if a "[+F]" case-assigner**
a. If [+Control] then [-F]. (exceptionless)
b. If [-Control] then [+F]. (exceptionful, cf. *allege* vs. *believe*)

(31) **Inherent Case**
"We take oblique Case to be assigned in the base, determined in part by lexical properties of the governing category."

- The **distribution of overt subjects in English infinitival relatives** was the *tour-de-force* that Chomsky presented to show the power of Case Theory.

  A filter ruling out overt *wh* + complementizer (known as the "Doubly Filled COMP Filter") interacted with Case to derive most of the paradigm:

(32) **Finite relative clauses**

a.	*a person [who that [Mary invited __]]	Doubly-Filled Comp Filter
b.	a person [who ~~that~~ [Mary invited __]]	**ok**
c.	a person [~~who~~ that [Mary invited __]]	ok
d.	a person [~~who that~~ [Mary invited __]]	ok
e.	*a person [with whom that [Mary spoke]]	Doubly-Filled Comp Filter
f.	a person [with whom ~~that~~ [Mary to speak]]	ok

(33) **Infinitival relatives with overt subjects**

a.	*a person [who for [Mary to invite __]]	Doubly-Filled Comp Filter
b.	*a person [who ~~for~~ [Mary to invite __]]	**Case Filter**
c.	a person [~~who~~ for [Mary to invite __]]	ok
d.	*a person [~~who for~~ [Mary to invite __]]	**Case Filter**
e.	*a person [with whom for [Mary to speak]]	Doubly-Filled Comp Filter
f.	*a person [with whom ~~for~~ [Mary to speak]]	**Case Filter**

Passive, Unaccusative Verbs, and Raising

- The idea that Case-licensing plays a role in A-movement is missing from early discussion of Case theory. This idea appears first in Chomsky's *Lectures on Government and Binding* (1981):

(34) **Properties of passive constructions** (*LGB* 124)
"What is usually called "passive" seems to have two crucial properties:
(I) [NP, S] does not receive a θ-role
(II) [NP,VP] does not receive Case within VP, for some choice of NP in VP

"...Suppose that the unique property of the passive morphology is that it in effect 'absorbs' Case: one NP in the VP with the passive verb as head is not assigned Case under government by this verb. Call this NP 'NP'. By the Case Filter, NP* must receive Case. By stipulation (II), now taken as the defining property of passive morphology, NP* must receive Case on the basis of some GF [Grammatical Function] it assumes outside of the VP."

- ...as do the set of problems that came to be called **Burzio's Generalization,** positing a correlation between a verb assigning an external θ-role (taking a "deep subject") and assigning accusative case.

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6. "little-*v*" and case-by-agreement

There are heads between V and T (unknown in 1981) — so are we sure that it is V itself that assigns ACC to the direct object?

⇒ **Evidence for heads between V and T:**

- V-movement to a position above VP-adverbs but below negation (hence below T) — in French (Pollock 1989) and elsewhere.

(35) **V-movement to a position lower than T**
a. [(Ne) **pas parler français**] est une tragédie.
not speak.INF French is a tragedy
'To not speak French is a tragedy.'

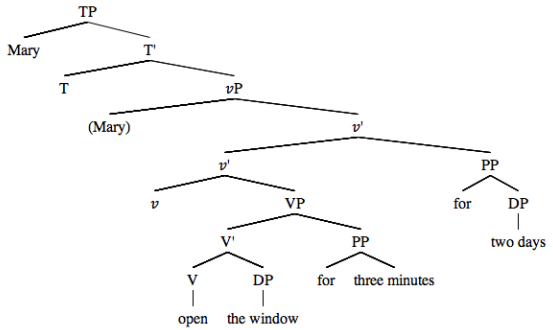
b. *[(Ne) **parler pas français**] est une tragédie.
speak.INF not French is a tragedy

- "Object shift" in Scandinavian moves a DP to a specifier position above VP-adverbs that is not Spec,TP (Holmberg 1986)

⇒ **Evidence that causation and end-state of an event involve different heads**

(36) Mary opened the window for three minutes. (*ambiguous*)
action took three minutes (or was repeated for three minutes) vs.
end-state lasted three minutes

(37) Mary opened the window for three minutes for two days.



(38) *vs.* #Mary opened the window for two days for three minutes.

- So the *v*-portion of the tree introduces the causer argument.

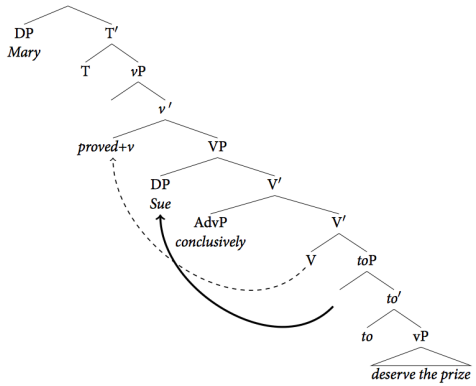
⇒ **The right analysis of English "exceptional case marking" (ECM) infinitives involves movement of the embedded subject to spec,*v*P and V movement to *v***

(39) **postverbal element behaves like embedded-clause subject ...**
  a. Mary judged there to be a good reason for the meeting.
  b. Bill believes the shit to have finally hit the fan. (*idiomatic reading*)

(40) **... but shares properties with higher-clause direct objects**
  a. Mary believed me$_{ACC}$ to have solved the problem.
  b. Sue$_i$ proved ✓herself/*her$_i$ to be a capable leader.

- In favor of movement into the higher verbal domain (vs. in-situ ECM):

(41)



(42) **Lower subject precedes higher-clause low VP-adverbs** (Postal (1974, 146-7)
  a. Mary proved Sue conclusively to deserve the prize.
  b. Alice believes Bill with all her heart to be the best candidate.

(43) **Lower subject c-commands low elements in the higher clause** (Lasnik & Saito 1991)
  Principle C:
  a. John believes that he$_i$ is a genius even more fervently than Bob$_i$'s mother does.
  b. *John believes him$_i$ to be a genius even more fervently than Bob$_i$'s mother does.
  Principle A:
  c. The prosecutor proved the defendants$_i$ to be guilty during each other$_i$'s trials.
  d. *The prosecutor proved [that the defendants$_i$ were guilty] during each other$_i$'s trials.

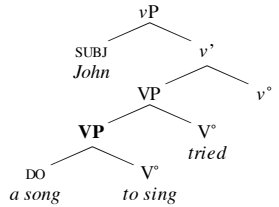
⇒ **Does *v* assign ACC case?**

Early tentative arguments:
- Burzio's connection links external argument with ACC case. Less surprising if both are properties of the same head.
- If *v* assigns ACC case, complementation is *never* an environment for case assignment, a unification of sorts.

(44) **NOM and ACC assignment under agreement**
  a. T bears a φ-probe which assigns NOM to the nominal closest to it in the tree — as a by-product of subject agreement (sometimes invisible).
  b. *v* bears a φ-probe which assigns ACC to the nominal closest to it in the tree — as a by-product of object agreement (sometimes invisible).

- **Wurmbrand's discovery (1998; 2002):**
  if a clause lacks *v*P, it also lacks a clause-internal licenser of ACC

(45) **Basic structure of restructuring infinitival clauses (German)**



If v hosts both the external argument (and possibly all subject arguments) and assigns ACC case...

... what this entails about *control*: **(skipped in this class)**

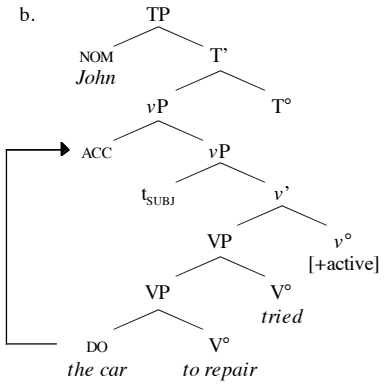
- There must be a way to understand the agent of the embedded VP as identical to the external argument of the higher verb without the presence of an actual controlled PRO in the embedded clause.
- This does not entail that all instances of control should be analyzed without PRO.

...what this entails about case:

(46) **ACC assignment in a restructuring infinitival clause comes from the higher *v*, since the lower VP has no case assigner of its own**

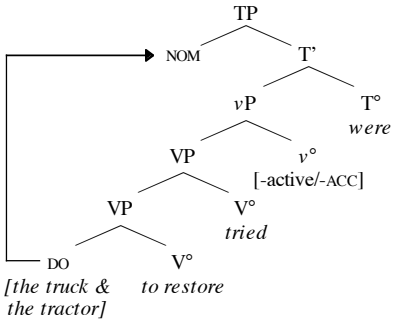
a. weil Hans den Wagen zu reparieren versuchte
since John [the car]-ACC to repair tried
'since John tried to repair the car'

b.



(47) ***Long Passive*:**
passivize the upstairs verb, and it's the downstairs object that must move
weil [der Lastwagen und der Traktor] zu reparieren versucht wurden/*wurde
since [*the truck and the tractor*]-NOM to repair tried were/*was
meaning: 'since somebody tried to repair the truck and the tractor'
but literally: 'since the truck and the tractor were tried to repair'

(48) **Long Passive structure**



- Supporting evidence: when long passive takes place ...
  - the embedded clause cannot have its own tense semantics
  - the embedded clause cannot has its own negation
    (see Wurmbrand's work for data)

... so it is **so small that it lacks tense, negation, and the ability to assign ACC** — ***but not so small that it lacks the verb itself.***

7. The leading alternative theory: dependent and unmarked case

- Agreement plays no role in the assignment either ACC or NOM.
- The connection between agreement and case is the other way around: case determines agreement.

Icelandic evidence for ACC as dependent case and NOM as a kind of default

- **Facts that made Icelandic famous in the 1970s:**

(49) **NOM-ACC constructions**
a. Jón kyssti Maríu.
John-NOM kissed Mary-ACC

b. María var kysst
Mary-NOM was kissed

c. Hann telur Jón hafa kysst Maríu.
he-NOM believes John-ACC to-have kissed Mary

(50) **Quirky oblique case takes priority over expected NOM and ACC**
(Andrews 1982)

oblique instead of ACC
a. Đeir luku kirkjunni.
they finished the-church.DAT

b. Hann telur **mér** bjóða við setningafræði.
He-NOM believes **me-DAT** to.be.nauseated at syntax

oblique instead of NOM
c. Mér býður við setningafræði.
me.DAT is-nauseated at syntax

d. Kirkjunni var lokið.
the-church.DAT wasfinished

- **Facts that made Icelandic even more famous in the 1980s:**

(51) **Quirky subject + nominative object in a finite clause**
Jóni líkaði bókin ekki.
John.DAT liked the.book.NOM not

On the basis of (51), one might imagine that agreement or tense is responsible for NOM morphology on the object — but (52a-b) the presence of NOM has nothing to do with TNS (McFadden & Sundaresan 2011), but is somehow the result of the oblique subject:

(52) **Quirky subject + nominative object *in ECM infinitival***
a. Læknirinn telur
the.doctor-NOM believes
[barninu hafa batnað veikin]
the.child-DAT to-have recovered.from the.disease-NOM

b. Eg tel [henni hafa alltaf þótt [Olafur leiðinlegur]]
I believe her-DAT to-have always thought Olaf-NOM boring-NOM
(Yip, Maling and Jackendoff 1987, 241-2, Marantz 1991)

- **Marantz (1991): ACC is a *dependent case*** [cf. Yip, Maling and Jackendoff 1987]

(53) **Morphological Case Rules for NOM and ACC (simplified version)**
a. **Unmarked case:** NOM is the morphology found on the highest [available] nominal in a clause in which V has entered a relationship with T.
b. **Dependent case:** ACC case is the morphology found on a nominal within a domain in which there is a c-commanding higher nominal that does not bear quirky case.

(54) **Case realization disjunctive hierarchy**
Assign case to all eligible nominals within a relevant domain in the following order:
a. assign lexically governed case (e.g. quirky dative)
b. assign "dependent" case (accusative, ergative)
c. assign unmarked case (nominative, absolutive -- may be environment-sensitive)
d. [assign default case]

(55) **How dependent Case works given (54) [simplified]**
Assign dependent case to a nominal that {is c-commanded by (ACC) / c-commands (ERG)} a distinct nominal that does not bear case already.

(56) **Yip, Maling and Jackendoff's (1987) "Case in Tiers"**
Syntactic case consists of a linearly ordered NOM - ACC tier, associated one-to-one with an NP tier. Association is usually L-to-R, but is R-to-L in ergative languages. Excess cases are not realized; but excess NP's must receive case, or else the output will be ill-formed

- **There is no Case Filter:**
  - Movement in passive and raising is a consequences of the requirement that sentences must have subjects (EPP), interacting with a preference for movement over use of an expletive.
  - The differing complementation patterns, behavior of English *for*-infinitives, etc. are unaccounted for.

- **Bobaljik on the relation between case and agreement:**
  - Subject agreement does not trigger NOM case. NOM case triggers subject agreement.

(57) **Accessability condition on agreement**
The controller of agreement on the finite verbal complex is the ***highest accessible*** nominal in the *domain* of thast complex.

(58) **Central thesis concerning "accessibility"**
"*Accessibility* is defined in terms of morphological case (**m-case**), rather than abstract case, grammatical function (GF), or other syntactic relation."

(59) **Bobaljik's universal agreement hierarchy**
Unmarked case > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case

- ***How it all works:***
  a. A language designates its dependent case in a language may be ACC or ERG.
  b. A language designates one or more adjacent cases on the hierarchy as "accessible" to agreement (from left to right), i.e. unmarked, unmarked & dependent, or all three.
  c. The ***structurally highest* among the accessible arguments** in a clause controls agreement. [*Note the relevance of structure in addition to accessibility*!]

Consequences for a Nominative-Accusative system (Icelandic)

Dependent: ACC
Accessible: unmarked

(60) **Only NOM controls agreement, no matter what**
Nominative controls agreement, even when a direct object
a. **Jóni** líkuðu þessir sokkar
Jon.DAT like.PL these socks.NOM
'Jon likes these socks.' (JGJ, 143)

b. Það líkuðu **einhverjum** þessir sokkar
EXPL liked.PL **someone.DAT** these socks.NOM
'Someone liked these socks.' (JGJ, 153)

c. 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.' (ZMT, 112)

Dative never controls agreement, even when a subject
d. **Þeim** var hjálpað.
them.DAT was.SG helped
'They were helped.' (ZMT, 97)

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

Consequences for Ergative-Absolutive systems

- **Subjecthood:** In ERG-ABS systems , A & S show subjecthood properties, in opposition to O, just as in NOM-ACC systems.

- **Agreement facts cross-linguistically**

(61) **Agreement patterns**

Attested	*Unattested*
a. no agreement (Dyirbal, Lezgian)	e. *ERG only
b. ABS only (Tsez, Hindi)	f. *ERG DAT, not ABS
c. ABS ERG (Eskimo-Inuit, Mayan)	g. *DAT only
d. ABS ERG DAT (Basque, Abkhaz)	h. (*ABS DAT, not ERG)

- **Bobaljik:** Why should we suppose that NOM-ACC languages obey a GF-based hierarchy with SUBJ>OBJ, while ERG-ABS obey a case-based hierarchy with ABS>ERG?

(62) **The facts *per* Bobaljik...**(63)
a. Absolutive > Ergative > Dative
b. Nominative > Accusative > Dative

- ...which amounts to: *Unmarked Case > Dependent Case > Lexical/Oblique Case*

A typological prediction about ergative systems

A language with ERG dependent case and only one kind of agreement ...
- ... will show agreement with the structurally highest nominal (a "nominative-accusative" agreement system) if both dependent and unmarked case are potential agreement targets, ...
- ... or will show agreement with ABS even if it is not the highest nominal (an "ergative-abolutive" agreement system) if only unmarked case is an agreement target, ...

But a language with ACC dependent case and only one kind of agreement will only show a "nominative-accusative" agreement system, since structurally highest argument and unmarked case will always align.

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8. What is right?

discussion coming...