Marked default via feature overspecification: oblique themes in Kazym Khanty

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1. Introduction

- 2. Data
- 3. Analysis
- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

- Default case is a morphological case marking used "to spell out nominal expressions (e.g., DPs) that are not associated with any case feature assigned or otherwise determined by syntactic mechanisms." (Schütze 2001, p.206)
- (1) Default case on hanging topics
 - a. Der/*Den Hans, an den erinnere ich mich nicht. the.NOM/*ACC Hans of him.ACC remember I myself not 'Hans, I don't remember him.' (Schütze 2001, p.223)
 - b. Me/*I, I like beans. (Schütze 2001, p.210)

Which marker is used as default:

- Any (structural) case, language specific (Schütze 2001; Pesetsky 2013), e.g. nominative in German, accusative in English and Italian, genitive in Russian.
- Always the <u>least marked</u> case or <u>absence</u> of morphological case marker (Legate 2008; McFadden & Sundaresan 2011; Weisser 2017; Caha 2023 etc.), i.e. default = nominative/absolutive

Arguments against accusative and genitive as default in Bošković (2006); Weisser (2017); Caha (2023)

• This talk: The most marked case in the case hierarchy can be used as default.

Background on Kazym Khanty

- Kazym dialect < Northern Khanty < Ob-Ugric < Uralic
- Head-final, SOV language, free word order
- NOM-ACC alignment in case and agreement;
- Obligatory agreement with subject in person and number; Agreement in number with topical objects (e.g. Nikolaeva 1999; É. Kiss 2021, in Kazym Khanty also sensitive to aspect Kozlov 2022)
- Four morphological cases: nominative, accusative, dative, locative/instrumental
- NOM and ACC are syncretic (\varnothing) on nouns, but differ on personal pronouns
- Locative/instrumental form is available only for nouns

1. Introduction

2. Data

3. Analysis

- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

Indirective-secundative alternation

- Ditransitive and low applicative clauses: alternate between indirective and secundative alignment (Malchukov et al. 2010)
- (2) a. Indirective alignment

Kašəŋ xujat $\lambda \Theta \chi s \cdot \partial \lambda \cdot a$ lipətmă-sEvery person.[NOM] friend-POSS.3SG-DAT flower.[ACC] give-PST.[3SG]'Everyone gave a flower/flowers to his friend.'

b. Secundative alignment

Kašəŋ xujat $\lambda \Theta \chi s$ - $\partial \lambda$ lipət-ənmă-s- λe Every person.[NOM] friend-POSS.3SG.[ACC] flower-LOC give-PST-3SG>SG'Everyone gave a flower/flowers to his friend.'

- Secundative alignment is used, when IO is a secondary topic (Nikolaeva 1999; Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011; Bíró & Sipőcz 2017; Sipőcz 2015; Sosa 2017; Virtanen 2012, 2013, 2014)
- Rest of this talk: theme in secundative alignment
- (3) Kašəŋ χ ujat $\lambda \Theta \chi s$ - $\partial \lambda$ lipət-ən mă-s- λe Every person.[NOM] friend-POSS.3SG.[ACC] flower-LOC give-PST-3SG>SG 'Everyone gave a flower/flowers to his friend.'
 - Secundative theme is marked with an oblique case (locative/instrumental) <u>Novel observation:</u>
 - Secundative theme lacks DP-layer

Size of the theme in secundative alignment I



Structure of the Khanty DP (after Dékány 2011, 2021 for Hungarian).

Novel fieldwork data: DP-level modifiers are ungrammatical on theme in secundative alignment.

Size of the theme in secundative alignment II

${\rm O}\,$ No demonstratives on DO-loc

- (5) *Toxtər-en mešəŋ ut-λ tăm purteŋ-ən mă-s-λe. doctor.[NOM] ill something-POSS.3SG.[ACC] this medicine-LOC give-PST-3SG>SG Intend.: 'Doctor gave the patient this medicine.'
 - O No universal quantifier on DO-loc ($\chi u \lambda / \chi u \lambda i j e wa$ 'all')
- (6) *Toxtər-en mešəŋ ut-λ χuλ purteŋ-ən mă-s-λe.
 doctor.[NOM] ill something-POSS.3SG.[ACC] all medicine-LOC give-PST-3SG>SG
 Intend.: 'Doctor gave the patient all medicine.'
 - ${\rm O}\,$ No possessive markers on DO-loc
- (7) *Vasja-jen λθχs-θλ χot-εm-θn wanλta-s-λe.
 Vasya-POSS.2SG.[NOM] friend-POSS.3SG.[ACC] house-POSS.1SG-LOC show-PST-3SG>SG
 Intend.: 'Vasya showed my house to his friend.'

Size of the theme in secundative alignment III

- O Note that it is a structural restriction, and not a pure semantic restriction on definiteness:
- even indefinite themes with possessive marker are ungrammatical in secundative alignment possessive marker occupies $D^\circ =>$ secundative alignment is ungrammatical
- (8) *Vasja-jen aŋk-e λ mu λ sər an- $\partial\lambda$ - ∂ n mă-s- λ e Vasya-POSS.2SG.[NOM] mother-POSS.3SG.[ACC] some cup-POSS.3SG-LOC give-PST-3SG>SG 'Vasya gave his mother one of his cups.'
 - But note that unique entities (situationally and generally) are illicit as secundative themes as well => silent article in D°
- (9) *Iśńi χop sɛm karti-jən ăλ pun-a. window boat.[ACC] eye iron-LOC PROH put-IMP 'Don't put the glasses on a window.'

Referentiality-based definiteness requires strong articles, identical to possessive markers (Mikhailov 2023 for the data, Schwarz 2013 for two kinds of definiteness)

1. Introduction

2. Data

3. Analysis

- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

- Nominals in argument positions require additional licensing in syntax
- Nominal licensing is connected to Case (e.g. Sheehan & Van der Wal 2018; van der Wal 2022)
- Every DP must be licensed; NPs can be both licensed and unlicensed (e.g. Lyutikova & Pereltsvaig 2015; Kalin 2018)
- If an NP is not case-licensed, it is marked with a repair default case

Derivation: Secundative alignment

(10)



 Voice° assigns case to $\mathsf{IO}\to\mathsf{IO}$ is marked with accusative case

There is no head that can assign case to DO. DO is not Case-licensed and DPs cannot survive. => DO is marked with a default case.

1. Introduction

2. Data

3. Analysis

- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

Alternative I: Lexical case



- First alternative: A last resort probe on LowAppl^o assigns lexical case to the theme
- Pro: case value is straightforward
- Contra: lexical case is never accompanied by a DP-restriction

Alternative II: PP





- Second alternative: Secundative theme is a PP, where P selects for an NP
- Pro: such Ps exist (e.g. in Ossetic, Erschler 2019)
- Contra: next slide

Contra

- i. LOC does not have the DP-restriction in any other environment
- (13) Lexical Case

Ar jo χ tăm woš-ən wə λ - λ -ət. many people this town-LOC be-NPST-3PL 'There live many people in this village/town.'

(14) Passive agent

Maw-λ-amMaša-jen-ənńawrɛm-ɛm-amă-s-i-jət.candy-PL-POSS.1SG.[NOM]Masha-POSS.2SG-LOC child-POSS.1SG-DAT give-PST-PASS-3PL'My candy was given by Masha to my kid.'(Colley & Privoznov 2020)

Contra

- ii. Topicalization:
 - LOC on secundative theme is overwritten by NOM/ACC (Van Urk 2015 for mixed A/A' properties)
 - DP-restriction is removed => not a selectional property
- (15) śit aj wεr_i, ma năŋ-ti t_i wεr-λ-εm
 this small business I you.ACC do-NPST.1SG>SG
 'This small business I do for you.' [Western Khanty Corpus]

Note that secundative theme can never be pro-dropped =>

the theme is moved and not a bound pro.

1. Introduction

- 2. Data
- 3. Analysis
- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

Theory of Case

Proposed analysis:

- Licensing = case-assignment
- DP-restriction on secundative theme is due to lack of licensing
- Oblique marking = default case

Case valuation approaches (e.g. Bárány 2017; Irimia 2022; Deal 2023 etc.):

- Unvalued case feature on the noun and valued on the assigning head (Voice°, T° , P° etc.)
- Case-assignment = copying of a case value to the nominal
- Unlicensed nouns must lack case value => are zero-marked (e.g. Legate 2008; McFadden & Sundaresan 2011; Weisser 2017; Caha 2023)
- Problem: Secundative theme is unlicesned, but marked with an oblique case

- (16) Case hierarchy in Kazym Khanty NOM > ACC > DAT > LOC/INSTR

 [A]
 [A,B]
 [A,B,C]
 [A,B,C,D,(E)]
 (Case Contiguity Hypothesis: McFadden 2004; Caha 2009, 2013, 2023; Bárány 2017, 2018; Irimia 2023)
 - NB! The default case in Khanty is the <u>most marked case</u> in the hierarchy Contra current approach, where default case = absence of case value, i.e. the least marked case (see esp. Legate 2008 and Caha 2023)

Case overspecification and case checking

Proposal:

- nominal arguments have an inherent uninterpretable [uCase] overspecified for case values.
- A valued interpretable [iCase] on a functional head (Pesetsky & Torrego 2007) checks the uninterpretable and overspecified case feature on the argument.
- DPs must have [uCase] checked, while NPs can survive the derivation unchecked.
- (17) Case-assignment to a DP



- Unmarked objects in DOM languages obey size restriction, but are not overspecified for case (e.g. Danon 2006; Ormazabal & Romero 2013; Lyutikova & Pereltsvaig 2015; Irimia 2022; Driemel 2023)
 - **Solution 1:** case overspecification is language specific **Solution 2:** case is inherently overspecified not on N, but on another projection (e.g. KP or AnimacyP). Unmarked DOM objects are smaller than KP => they cannot receive case-marking at all.
- II. The most canonical environment whithout case assignment is left dislocation (hanging topics). But hanging topics never show size restrictions and case overspecification
 Solution: case-overspecification and licensing-requirement is only active in argument positions

1. Introduction

- 2. Data
- 3. Analysis
- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

- Theme in secundative alignment obeys DP-restriction => it is unlicensed, i.e. not assigned case in syntax
- The oblique marking of the secundative theme is a default case-marking => the most marked case in the hierarchy can be a default
- Oblique (most marked) default case can be derived via inherent feature overspecification
- DP-restriction on theme in secundative alignment excludes analyses of loc as lexical case/PP



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1. Introduction

- 2. Data
- 3. Analysis
- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion

7. Appendix I

- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

Some recent work breaks Agree into two distinct operation: a syntactic Agree-Link, which creates a pointer from a functional head to a nearby DP, and a postsyntactic Agree-Copy, which transfers phi-features from the goal to the probe and deletes the pointer (Arregi & Nevins 2012; Bhatt & Walkow 2013; Marušič et al. 2015; Atlamaz 2019; Baker & Camargo Souza 2020; Lyskawa 2021).

I suggest to replace Agree-Copy with Agree-Match, as in (18)

(18) Agree-Match:

The value of the uninterpretable feature must match with the value of the interpretable feature (via copy or impoverishment). The pointer is deleted.

1. Introduction

- 2. Data
- 3. Analysis
- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

Complications for Dependent Case theory I

- (19) Dependent Case (Baker & Vinokurova 2010)
 - 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.

Complications for Dependent Case theory II

(20) Case in the higher phase



Dependent Case theory correctly predicts the accusative marking on IO, as long as it raises to the higher phase.

It seems to be borne out.

Complications for Dependent Case theory III



Problems:

- Dependent Case theory predicts that in situ theme does not receive a structural case. Hence, the theme is expected to be nominative-/Ø-marked.
- 2. Dependent Case theory does not make any reference to the size of arguments.

New rule:

• An NP, located inside a VP-phase and c-commanded by an acc-marked DP in the next phase is assigned oblique case.

This rule overgenerates. It predicts oblique dependent case in Voice-restructuring contexts.

1. Introduction

- 2. Data
- 3. Analysis
- 4. Alternative analyses
- 5. Deriving marked default
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. Appendix I
- 8. Appendix II
- 9. Appendix III

Derivation: Indirective alignment I

(22)



HighApplP is the source of Dative case. When it is merged => IndAl (22)

HighAppl^o agrees with IO, attracts it to SpecHighApplP and assigns Dative to it.

Voice^o can skip the IO now. Voice^o agrees with DO and assigns Accusative case to it.