LINGUISTICS 105:
Morphology

October 15, 2012:
Case and Agreement

Transmittals

- HW 2 returned Friday.
- HW 3 due on Monday (Swahili).
- Reading for next week: Zwicky & Pullum (1983).
- Stage your final project should be at:
  - Know which language
  - Start thinking about resources (grammars, articles, etc.)
  - More coming in a couple weeks.

Modeling Agreement: Syntax

- Traditionally, agreement has been modeled syntactically.
- *Idea:* There is some relation to a verb (in a tree) which a nominal can bear; when it bears that relation, agreement takes place.
  - *Cf.*, Form rules that say "pronounce a verb with a 3.sg subject with the ending /-s/."
- We will survey two different ways:
  1. SPECIFIER-HEAD AGREEMENT.
  2. AGREE under C-COMMAND.
- **(A very good) Question:** Why does syntax need to care about agreement?

An Agreement Asymmetry

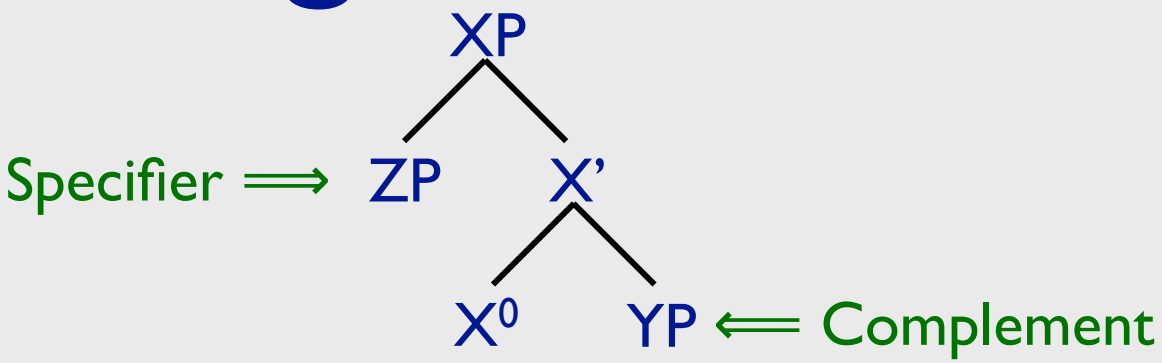
(9)a. Qadim-**at**/*qadim-**ataa** al-bint-aani.
came-**3.FEM.SG**/*came-**3.FEM.DUAL** the-girl-DUAL
"The two girls came."

b. ʔal-bint-aani qadim-**ataa**/*qadim-**at**.
the-girl-DUAL came-**3.FEM.DUAL**/*came-**3.FEM.SG**
"The two girls came."

- SV $\Longrightarrow$ Full agreement.
- VS $\Longrightarrow$ Partial agreement (*number agreement)

Spec-Head Agreement

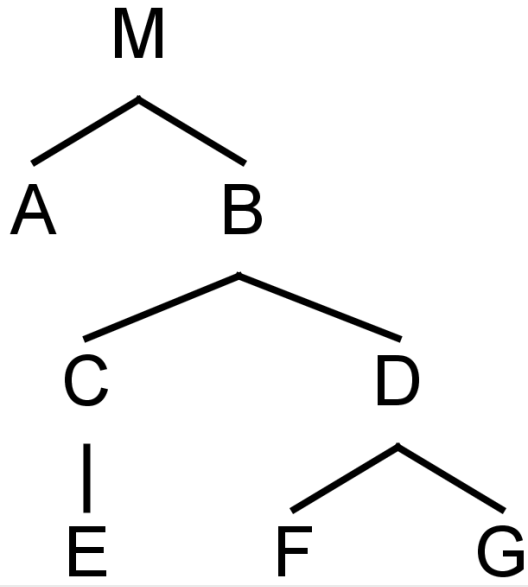
- Recall X-bar Theory:



- *Idea:* Agreement takes place between a controller and some target head when the noun is in a specifier relationship with that head.
  - In some languages, this appears as morphology on the head (*i.e.*, verb).
  - But in all languages, features of the noun controller are copied to the head.
- One empirical problem for this approach: when a specifier-head relationship cannot be motivated, yet agreement maintains: There are bastards out there.

Excursus: C-Command

- C-COMMAND $=_{def}$ A node α *c-commands* a node β iff:
  1. α does not DOMINATE β.
  2. β does not dominate α.
  3. The first branching node which dominates α also dominates β.
- **Question**: What c-commands what in this tree?



AGREE

- AGREE $=_{def}$ A possible target α AGREES with a controller β iff:
  1. α c-commands β.
  2. β has the kind of features α needs.
  3. There is no node γ such that α > γ > β and γ has the ability to AGREE.
- This is the modern approach, and is very useful for:
  - V-initial languages (VSO, VOS)
  - Existential Constructions
  - Non-subjects which control subject agreement.
- **Question:** what kind of data is this definition not that great for?

Modeling Agreement: Morphology

- All these syntactic mechanisms do is copy features around, and features ≠ morphemes!
- *Idea:* Write vocabulary insertion/form rules which reference the features copied in the syntax.
- Morphemes are then *inserted* to *realize* these features.
- Agreement is therefore *morphosyntactic* in character: we can't describe the phenomenon without both modules of grammar.

An Example

(8) Italian (Nonstandard):

a. A loro piacc-io io.
to 3.PL.DAT please-1.SG I.NOM
"They like me."

b. *Mi piacc-io me stesso.
me please-1.SG myself
"*Intended:* I like myself."

c. ?Mi piac-e me stesso.
me please-3.SG myself
"I like myself."

Case-Marking

Marking Relations on Nouns

Grammatical Relations

- GRAMMATICAL RELATION $=_{def}$ A functional/semantic relation borne by a constituent in relation to some other constituent in a clause.
- Commonly mentioned GR's:
  1. Subject
  2. Direct/Indirect object
  3. Possessor
- In syntactic theory, these concepts are usually defined configurationally:
  1. Subject = [Spec, TP]
  2. Direct Object = [Comp, V]
  3. Possessor = [Spec, D/NP]

Case Preliminaries

- CASE MORPHOLOGY $=_{def}$ Morphology appearing on a (non-verbal) constituent which marks a relation it holds to another constituent.
- In English, we have very impoverished case-marking; it only occurs on pronouns:

  She/*her loved Buster.

  His/*he/*him seal bit Buster.

  Buster loved her/*she.
- "Case" can often mean a conflation of two things:
  - GRAMMATICAL CASE $=_{def}$ where case is used to mark a grammatical function a argument nominal bears.
  - OBLIQUE CASE $=_{def}$ where case is used to mark a semantic relation on a non-argument or optional argument (usually direction or location).

Grammatical Case

- Grammatical case is usually thought of as syntactically assigned/computed.
- *Main argument:* Syntactic operations like passive affect changes in grammatical case (next slide).
  - Notice that we could talk about grammatical case of non-pronouns in English, but each case would be marked by /-ø/.
- Common grammatical cases:
  - NOMINATIVE = subject case
  - ACCUSATIVE = object case
  - DATIVE = indirect object case
  - GENITIVE = possessor case

Examples: G-Case

(1)a. She saw him.

b. He was seen (by him).

(2) Latin:

a. Agricol-a puell-am videt.
Farmer-NOM girl-ACC sees
"The farmer sees the girl."

b. Puell-a videt agricol-am.
girl-NOM sees farmer-ACC
"The girl sees the farmer."

c. Amīc-us agricol-ae pecūni-am rēg-ī dat.
friend-NOM farmer-GEN money-ACC king-DAT gives.
"The friend of the farmer gives money to the king."

Oblique Case

- Oblique cases are more semantically oriented than grammatical cases.
- In a lot of languages (English), many/all oblique cases are represented by {pre-, post-}positions.
  - In these languages, we could say that the oblique case is *assigned* by the preposition, but /-ø/.
- Other languages have prepositions, but then still mark the object of the P with a case that looks grammatical.
- Common oblique cases:
  - VOCATIVE = case of direct address. (Yo, Adrian!)
  - INSTRUMENTAL = case of an object used in order to effect the action of the verb.
  - COMITATIVE = case of object which accompanies the action of the verb.

Examples O-Case

(3)a. Malcom goes to work by bus.

b. Polish (Slavic; Poland):
Ewa jeździ do pracy autobus-em.
Ewa goes to work bus-INSTR
"Ewa goes to work by bus."

c. German (Germanic; Germany):
Fährst du mit dem Auto zur Uni?
going you with the.DAT car to university
"Are you going by car to Uni?"

Syncretism and Case

- SYNCRETISM $=_{def}$ when two forms in a paradigm have the same morphological expression.
- Recall syncretism in the English verbal paradigm:

	SG	PL
1	/-ø/	/-ø/
2	/-ø/	/-ø/
3	/-z/	/-ø/

- Case paradigms also often appear with syncretism.
  - Cf., Latin first declension nouns/adjectives (next slide)
- Syncretic cases are often treated as distinct at some other level of representation (say, syntax).

Example: Latin Declension

PORTA, "GATE"	SG	PL
NOM	**port-a**	*portae*
GEN	*port-ae*	port-aarum
DAT	*port-ae*	port-iis
ACC	port-am	port-aas
ABL	**port-aa**	port-iis
VOC	**port-a**	*port-ae*

Case in Syntax

- Notice that both case and agreement morphologically mark a relation between a noun and a verb (sometimes another noun).
- *Idea:* When agreement takes place, the verb gets **agreement features** from the controller and, if applicable, the controller gets **case features** from the target.
  - This is often described as CASE ASSIGNMENT.
  - This can be implemented for both Spec-Head agreement and AGREE.
- This also captures generalizations like "agree with the nominative."

Case in the Morphology

- Again, saying that case features are transmitted via agreement does very little to ensure the proper morphology gets on the nouns in question.
- *Idea:* Write vocabulary insertion/form rules which reference the features copied in the syntax.
- Morphemes are then *inserted* to *realize* these features.
- Case is therefore *morphosyntactic* in character: we can't describe the phenomenon without both modules of grammar.

Case as Licensing

Ensuring You Have the Right Number of Nouns Around

Case and Licensing

- So far we've only worried about how case is assigned to nominals to get the morphology right.
- *An idea* (Vergnaud): think of the assignment of (ABSTRACT) CASE as *licensing* the nominal's presence in a clause (≠ Morphological Case).
- *Observation*: Infinitivals don't have subjects *or* agreement:

  Malcom doesn't (*he) seem to like Nicola.

  Malcom doesn't seem(*s) to like Nicola.

  - *Idea*: Nonfinite T does not assign nominative Case.
- THE CASE FILTER: A phonetically overt NP/DP can appear in a clause without Case.

Case and Licensing, II

- Many transformations in syntax can be re-defined to operate **because** of a nominal's need to get Case:
  - **Passive**: object raises to get nominative b/c accusative "absorbed" by the passive.
  - **Raising**: NP/DP raises to get nominative case because nonfinite T cannot assign case.
  - **Control**: NP/DP is not phonetically realized (PRO).
- Two kinds of case in this theory:
  - ABSTRACT **CASE** (= assigned by syntax)
  - MORPHOLOGICAL **CASE** (= actual morphology)
- **Question:** what about oblique cases?

Inherent Case

- *Idea:* Think of the oblique cases as *assigned* by a P head, which might happen to be /-ø/.
  - Many of these cases are semantic in nature and associated with individual prepositions.
- INHERENT CASE $=_{def}$ Case which is only assigned to nominals bearing a particular θ-role.
- Inherent case is often thought of as lexical in nature, insofar as a particular lexical entry (the P) has to be around.
- **Question:** what about the *by* of English passives?

Structural Case

- The remaining Cases in a licensing theory of Case are usually tied to particular heads – an argument must agree with this head to receive the case in question.
- Commonly mentioned Case-assigners:
  - Finite T → NOM to [Spec, TP]
  - Transitive V → ACC to [Comp, VP]
  - Possessive D → GEN to [Spec, DP] (or NP)
- **Question**: what assigns the case of indirect objects for languages (like German) which mark them with dative case morphology and no adposition?