

LINGUISTICS 105:

Morphology



October 17, 2012:
Case and Inflection Loose Ends

Describals

- HW 2 back at the end of class.
- HW 3 due Monday...
- ...as is reading the Zwicky and Pullum (1983) article.
- I lead a presentation in MRG next week, 7pm @ Poet & Patriot.
- About whether definiteness should be a φ -feature given some facts from Semitic.

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	/-∅/	/-∅/
2	/-∅/	/-∅/
3	/-z/	/-∅/

- 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	<i>portae</i>
GEN	<i>port-ae</i>	port-aarum
DAT	<i>port-ae</i>	<u>port-iis</u>
ACC	port-am	port-aas
ABL	port-aa	<u>port-iis</u>
VOC	port-a	<i>port-ae</i>

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 (\neq Morphological Case).
- *Observation*: Infinitivals don't have subjects or agreement:
Malcom doesn't seem (*he) to like Nicola.
Malcom doesn't seem to like(*s) Nicola.
- *Idea*: Nonfinite T does not assign nominative Case.
- THE CASE FILTER: A phonetically overt NP/DP can't 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 $/-\emptyset/$.
- 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?

Loose Ends

in Inflection

The Preponderance of Stem Allomorphy

- Especially in Romance languages, it is very common for both case and agreement endings to trigger *stem allomorphy*.
- It is also occasionally the case that one member of a paradigm is idiosyncratically missing (Think Russian from Halle, 1973).
- Famous nominal ex: **Latin Third Declension Nouns** (next slide).
- Verbal ex: **Sumerian verbal paradigm**.
- In these cases, it is an open question what the stem should be, so *make sure you define your stems explicitly and discuss how a particular stem is chosen*.

Latin Third Declension Nouns

OPUS "WORK"	SG	PL
NOM	opus	<i>opera</i>
GEN	<i>operis</i>	<i>operum</i>
DAT	<i>operi</i>	<i>operibus</i>
ACC	opus	<i>opera</i>
ABL	<i>opere</i>	<i>operibus</i>
VOC	opus	<i>opera</i>

⇒ /-us/ causes the stem to change to the irregular /op-/ instead of expected /oper-/

Sumerian Conjugation

/LƏVAR/, “TO GET UP”	SG	PL
1 PERSON	lév	ləvág n
2 PERSON	lévas	ləvéz
3 PERSON	léva	lévan

- Anderson (2008): this is not reduction of unstressed /e/ to schwa (let's trust him).
- Low sonority vowels: /i, u, ə/; others: /e, a/
- \implies unstressed syllables must be less sonorous; and so we choose the /ləv-/ allomorph when /e/ would end up unstressed.

Allomorphy and Elsewheres

- Both of these examples bring an intuitive concept into the foreground: The Elsewhere Condition.
- The Elsewhere Condition =def Where two morphemes may be inserted to realize some features, first try inserting the most specified of those forms, followed by those less specified (Kiparsky, Pāṇini).
- If desired, we can formalize this principle by including an “Elsewhere” condition in our VIs.
 - For Latin 3rd Declension:
 - /op-/ \longleftrightarrow [NOM], [ACC], [VOC]
 - /oper-/ \longleftrightarrow ELSEWHERE

Why Concord Is Different

- We haven't really talked about one kind of formal agreement: that between adjectives and nouns in the same DP:
 il ragazza italian-a il libro italian-o
 "The Italian girl." "The Italian book"

- This is usually called CONCORD.
- Analogous to instances of "negative concord":

"I ain't never been drunk before."

- Some reasons it is usually not mentioned in theories of agreement:
 - It acts differently: more than one target exists (multiple adjectives).
 - Affects targets of many categories (D,A, ...).
 - The features move in the *wrong* direction!