Chapter 5: Categories involved in dependent case assignment

Over the course of the last two chapters, I have been fleshing out the schema for dependent case assignment in (1) and exploring its parametric possibilities for accounting for crosslinguistic variation in case assignment.

(1) If a category XP bears c-command relationship R to another category ZP in domain W, then assign Case C to XP.

So far we have investigated the range of relevant c-command relationships R, and the types of domains W, the latter being essentially the spell out domains implied by the theory of phases. The third major dimension to consider is what exactly must XP and ZP be in order for them to interact case theoretically. The core notion that I have assumed throughout is that XP and ZP are overt nominals—i.e. NPs or DPs. These are the quintessential arugmental categories in natural languages. Moreover, thinking in terms of Comrie’s (1978, 1981) notion of the discriminating role of structural case, they are the main things that there are often more than one of in a clause, such that it is useful to have morphological marks that distinguish them. It therefore stands to reason that case marking will apply to DPs and NPs in a language, if it applies to anything at all. But what exactly is a “nominal”, and is it the same thing in all languages? There is some vagueness here, and some room for crosslinguistic variation.

I already took one step in sharpening up our notion of what XP and ZP are in (1) at the end of the last chapter: they are categories that bear referential indices—nouns and their projections in the sense of Baker (2003). I also claimed that there is a slight asymmetry in the requirements on the two: the case receiver XP must be the maximal phrase that bears a particular index, whereas the case competitor ZP can be any phrase that bears an index distinct from XP’s. This captures what NP and DP have in common, and why when an NP is embedded in a DP it is often only the DP as a whole that is marked for case. It also predicts that one NP or DP will trigger dependent case on another one, but other categories like PP and CP typically will not, a prediction that I investigate more systematically here.

But if categories are (in part) collections of features, we might also expect other features of an NP or DP to be relevant to whether that NP or DP participates in dependent case assignment, and different languages might make different choices here. For example, overt NPs and DPs typically have phi-features (person, number, and gender) as well as a referential index, but certain covert nominals may not. I claim that what phi-features a nominal needs to have to count as XP or ZP for (1) can vary, explaining why certain empty categories (pro, PRO, implicit agents) trigger dependent case on their coarguments in some languages but not others. Furthermore, in Marantz’s original (1991) treatment an NP/DP that already had a case feature as a result of lexical case assignment did not trigger dependent case on another NP. In this chapter, I show that this also varies parametrically. Finally, I consider nominals that are not arguments to see if they participate in dependent case assignment or not, namely nominal adverbs (answer: sometimes) and predicate nominals (answer: no).

5.1 NP versus PP versus oblique NP

Let us begin this stage of the investigation by considering the sometimes-minimal contrast between PPs and NPs with inherent case (oblique NPs). We know from the generative tradition that it is often a

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1 The index in question may have the character of a numeration index, not merely a referential index, since the trace of an NP does not trigger dependent case on its antecedent, but an anaphor bound by an antecedent might well trigger dependent case on its antecedent (and vice versa), resulting in a structure like ‘The people-(ERG) praised themselves-(ACC).’
debateable matter in particular languages whether a given constituent counts as a PP or as an NP with an oblique case marker. For example, to+N is usually considered to be a PP in English, but a+N is often argued to be a dative case NP in Romance languages (REFs). Similarly of+N is sometimes considered to be a realization of an NP in genitive case in English, rather than a true PP (REFs). Moreover, whether a given phrase in a particular language is really a PP or an oblique NP could make an important difference to the dependent case rules: a PP presumably will not trigger dependent case on another NP in the clause, whereas an oblique NP might.

5.1.1 PPs are not case competitors

The fact that PPs do not count as case competitors is well-established, and can be seen in many languages, especially ergative ones. Transitive clauses in such a language have subjects in ergative case, but intransitive clauses do not. Furthermore, clauses that have a PP complement rather than an NP complement count as intransitive for these purposes. (2), for instance, gives examples of an NP with a PP where the NP subject is nominative, not ergative.

(2) a. Koshi-bo xaran-ra e-a yaká-ke. (Shipibo, Valenzuela p. 176)
   chief-PL among-PTL I-ABS sitting-position.I:MID-PERF
   ‘I am seated among the authorities.’

   b. Dasín há-e le hurúT-umo (Burushaski, Willson 1996:3)
      girl.ABS house-OBL in sit-PAST.FsS
      ‘The girl sat in the house.’

   c. Ahwmad suona ulul laatt. (Ingush, p. 401)
      Ahmed 1s.DAT next.to stand-PRES
      ‘Ahmed is standing next to me.’

It is harder to show that PP is not a case competitor in an accusative language, simply because PPs are rarely subjects, hence they rarely c-command objects such that they could trigger accusative case on them. However, inasmuch as accusative languages might have locative inversion structures like On the table stands a trophy in English and inasmuch as the theme argument of such structures is bare-nominative rather than accusative, that confirms that PP is not a case competitor in accusative languages either. See also section 3.1 for evidence that an affectee argument does not trigger accusative case on the theme argument when the affectee is a PP rather than an NP in Amharic (although the evidence is theory-internal in that the P is phonologically null).

Everyday examples like those in (2) tell us something else as well. Not only is the PP inside VP not a case competitor for the subject, but neither is the NP complement of the P. The subjects in (2) surely c-command the NPs inside PP, and the NPs are the case competitors par excellence. Therefore this is presumably another kind of domain effect: ‘I’ and ‘chiefs’ are not in the same spell out domain in (2a). Therefore, I assume that overt Ps are phase heads, so their complements are spelled out separately from the rest of the clause. This coheres with the fact that verbal functional heads cannot agree into PP with the object of P in most languages (see Baker 2008:xx), and with the fact that movement out of PP is bad or highly restricted in most languages (see, for example, van Riemsdijk 1978). This opacity of PP for dependent case assignment can also be seen in accusative languages, in
that the object of P is rarely accusative as triggered by the matrix subject. In Cuzco Quechua, for example, the objects of Ps are unmarked nominative case:\(^2\)

(3) Xwancha wasi ukhu-(pi) kawsa-n. (L&M: 133, 62)
Juan house inside-LOC live-3sS
‘Juan lives inside the house.’

Given that PP is a phase, the complement of PP is the only NP in PP when it is spelled out, and we expect to get default case, nominative rather than accusative.

Now in many languages NPs with semantic/inherent case are just like PPs in not triggering ergative case on the subject. (4) gives examples from the same languages used in (2).

(4) a. Jose-(*kan) ochiti-ki raket-ai. (Shipibo)
Jose-(*ERG) dog-DAT fear-IMPF
‘Jose fears the dog.’

Farmer.m/ABS water.y apply-INF-OBL for field.y-OBL-DAT go-3ms/PAST
‘The farmer went to the field to water (it).’ (Burushaski, Willson xx:36)

b. So zhwalegh qer. (Ingunsh, p. 416)
1s.ABS dog.LAT.pl fear
‘I am afraid of dogs.’

This is no surprise, since NPs with semantic case are just like PPs in other respects too: for example, they are usually not targets of agreement, they can appear as arguments or adjuncts of the same kinds of predicates, and so on. Like many generativists, I assume that these nominals with semantic case simply are PPs in the syntax; see section 1.2.1 and references cited there. On this assumption, the subjects in (4) are absolutive for exactly the same reasons that the subjects in (2) are.

5.1.2 PPs versus dative objects: Warlpiri and Burushaski

With this in mind, it becomes interesting that a certain class of exceptions can be observed in some languages, particularly with NPs in so-called dative case. Warlpiri, for example, has a number of verbs that take complements in dative case. Most of these verbs have absolutive subjects, as in (5a), but a small number have ergative subjects, as in (5b).

woman.ABS PRES-3pO child-PL-DAT talk-NPST
‘The woman is talking to the children.’


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\(^2\) See Baker and Vinokurova 2010:xx for an unusual exception to this, where Sakha has three Ps which are not phase heads. There is presumably a historical account for this exception, since these Ps developed from verbs.

In contrast, the null P heads that govern goal-experiencer arguments are often not phase heads, so that their complements can undergo accusative case when c-commanded by the subject (e.g. in Amharic; section 3.1xx) and they can trigger ergative case on the subject (e.g. in Shipibo; section 6.xx).
man-ERG    PRES-3DAT  boomerang-DAT  look.for-NPST
A man is seeking [looking for] a boomerang.

There are also a small number of ergative-dative constructions in Burushaski, including (6) (contrast (4b).

(6) 3sh-ERG  boy-OBL-DAT  talk.badly-NONPAST-3sf/PRES
    In-e  hilés-e-r    Garí-c-ubo.    Burushaski (p. 37)
    ‘She scolds the boy.’

See also Nichols (xxx:421) for some verbs that take ergative subjects and allative complements in Ingush.

Now these languages have no purely intransitive verbs whose sole argument is in ergative case.\(^3\) Therefore, we want to say that ergative in these languages is a dependent case, not an inherent case related to the agent thematic role (as Legate 2008 claims for Warlpiri; see Woolford 2006).

Therefore, we need there to be a case competitor for the ergative subject in (5b) and (6), and the dative complement is the almost inevitable choice. But the subject is not ergative in (5a) or (4b), so those subjects must not have a case competitor. In particular, the dative nominal in this sentence must not be case competitors. All this makes sense if the dative expressions in (5a) and (4b) are PP in the syntax, as usual, whereas the datives in (5b) and (6) are actually oblique NPs in the syntax. This is not an unreasonable distinction, since the dative has more obviously the directional meaning ‘to’ in (5a) than in (5b), where it expresses a kind of intentional object. Similarly, the internal argument is an affected animate NP in (6), whereas it is an inanimate location in (4b).\(^4\) Overall, then, I claim that Warlpiri, Burushaski, and Ingush seem to be like French, where “dative” á+NP can be NP or PP, where the difference can be seen in the sort of pronominal clitic that attaches to the verb (parle à Marie \(\rightarrow\) lui parle ‘speak to Marie/her’ versus pense á Marie \(\rightarrow\) y pense ‘think of Marie/her’).\(^5\) One the one hand, these minimal pairs confirm that PPs are not case competitors; on the other hand, they show that NPs can be case competitors even when they have inherent dative case (contrary to Marantz 1991:xx).

5.1.3 PPs versus dative subjects: Tamil

Essentially the same contrast between PP and oblique NP can be seen with dative subject constructions in the accusative language Tamil, I claim. Like many south Asian languages, Tamil has a set of verbs that seem to select for a dative subject. What is particularly interesting about Tamil for us here is that some of these so-called dative-subject verbs take nominative objects, as seen in (7), whereas others take accusative objects, as in (8) (Asher xxx; Sarma 1999, etc).

\(^3\) The one apparent exception to this in Warlpiri is some cognate object verbs like ‘dance’ and ‘sing’, in which the subject is ergative even if there is no overt cognate object (Simpson 1991:xx). But it is easy to say that some covert expression of the cognate object is still present syntactically with these verbs.

\(^4\) It is also noteworthy that some verbs which appear in an ERG-DAT clauses in Warlpiri also appear in ERG-ABS clauses (Simpson 1991:327-330), and some verbs that appear in ABS-DAT clauses also appear in ABS-ALL(ative) clauses, but Simpson lists no verbs that alternative between ERG-ABS and ABS-DAT frames. This suggests that Warlpiri verbs are consistent about whether they select NP or PP, absolutes are always NPs, allatives are always PPs, and datives can be either. Overall, Simpson’s distinction between dative case as an “argument relater” in some contexts and as an “argument-taker” in others (for which she provides some grammatical evidence) is approximately the same as my distinction between datives that are NPs and datives that are PPs.

\(^5\) Burushaski even has two verbs that have ergative subjects plus a complement in oblique case –tse ‘onto’, with malefactive meaning (Willson xx:39), suggesting that those can also be NPs with oblique case rather than PPs.
Informed by what we have seen in Warlpiri, I analyze this by claiming that the dative-accusative verbs are those that take an NP higher argument that with dative case (a goal-like experiencer), whereas in dative-nominative constructions the dative expression is an optional PP adjunct. An NP argument dative triggers accusative on its coargument, whereas the PP adjunct datives predictably do not. The two structures are compared in (9).

(9)  

a. DAT-ACC verb

b. DAT-NOM verb

The theme argument ‘book’ in (9b) is default nominative, not accusative, because ‘we’ does not c-command it; what does c-command it is a PP, not an NP (not the bearer of a referential index). We might also say that the experiencer argument ‘Baala’ in (9a) gets structural dative case because it c-commands another NP inside VP, as in Sakha (see section 4.2.1) (although this assumption is not crucial). If we say this, then we should also say that the reason the lower argument ‘lesson’ in VP gets accusative
case in Tamil but nominative in analogous sentences in Sakha is because dependent accusative case assignment applies on the VP cycle in Tamil as well as on the TP cycle, as in Amharic (see xx), whereas accusative applies only at the TP level in Sakha (see xx). Finally T in Tamil agrees only with the nominative theme argument in (9b), not with either argument in (9a), because Tamil has the case-sensitive type of agreement, as discussed in section 2.5.2.

Given that Tamil is a relatively accessible language with native speaker linguists, we can hope to find independent evidence for the structural distinctions in (9), which I take the case differences to depend on. I believe that in fact we can, and that this distinguishes my structural theory from descriptive treatments that simply list the case frames that a verb occurs with in the lexical entry of that verb, or early-minimalist style theories that stipulate that different verb roots and different instances of little v have different case properties (like Ura 2000, for example).

Previous literature on Tamil has admittedly not clearly recognized that there is a structural syntactic difference between these two classes of dative subject predicates (that I know of). However, Sarma 1999 gets us started by arguing that ordinary NOM-ACC verbs have a v node that licenses the subject, whereas both kinds of dative subject verbs lack a theta-marking v. Empirical support for this distinction is that passive is possible (in the literary register) for standard nominative-accusative verbs but not for either kind of dative subject verb:

(10) a. Maala veru-kka-ppaṭṭ-a.  (passive of NOM-ACC verb)
   Mala hate-INF-PASS-3fS
   ‘Mala is hated.’

b. *Valle-ppalam kede-kke-ppaṭṭ-om.  (passive of DAT-NOM verb)
   Banana-fruit get-INF-PASS-3nS
   ‘Bananas are obtained (at the market).’

c. ?*Anda paḍam puri-je-ppaṭṭ-utu.  (passive of DAT-ACC verb)
   This lesson understand-INF-PASS-3nS
   ‘This lesson is understood.’

Further confirmation for this assumption comes from passives of ditransitives. In languages like Amharic, where accusative is assigned at the VP level, the retained object is accusative, whereas in languages like Korean, where accusative is assigned at the TP level only, the retained object is nominative (see section 6.xx). Tamil is indeed like Amharic in this respect as shown by (i) (although a qualification here is that passive is really only a feature of the literary language in Tamil).

(i) Avan paris-e varanga-ppaṭṭ-udu.  (from xx, confirmed by Naga)
   He.NOM prize-ACC award-PASS-3nS
   ‘He was awarded a prize.’

I thank Nagarajan Selvanathan for discussion and invaluable help with this Tamil material. The judgments are his and his parents (Singaporean Tamil); the errors are mine.

For Ura (2000), the three classes of predicates in Tamil all have subjects theta-marked by v, but the v of NOM-ACC verbs does not assign lexical case to its subject and does assign accusative case, the v of DAT-ACC verbs assigns inherent dative to its specifier and also accusative to its complement, and the v of DAT-NOM verbs assigns inherent dative to its specifier, but does not assign accusative, leaving it to T to assign nominative to the object. This captures the basic patterns, but does not account for the correlation between the case and agreement differences among the different predicates and the syntactic differences that I enumerate here.
This is expected if passive is an alternative form of v, which replaces the agentive v of the active version and does not assign an agent thematic role. Both types of dative subject verbs come out as not having a theta-role assigning v by this criterion, consistent with (9). This is already significant for my project, because the fact that dative-accusative verbs do not have a theta-role assigning v node implies that the object of these verbs cannot be getting their accusative case by entering into Agree with that sort of v. We should hope, then, that the accusative on these objects can indeed be understood as an instance of dependent case.

When we go on then to look in a targeted way for evidence that the datives of ‘like’/’understand’ verbs are NP arguments and the datives of ‘need’/’get’ verbs are PP adjuncts, we find some. The first relevant fact is simply that the dative NP is optional with DAT-NOM verbs, as we expect adjuncts to be, whereas it is required with DAT-ACC verbs. Since Tamil is a language that allows null pronouns, the forms in (12) count as useable sentences, but they are understood as having a subject that refers to some definite individual known from the context. In contrast, no such reference is inferred from the examples in (11).

   Sugarcane juice here get-PRES-3nS-Q
   ‘Is sugarcane juice available here?’

   b. Taŋŋu i pooq u. ‘There is enough water.’
   c. Kasu teve. ‘Money is necessary.’
   d. Kasu mukijō. ‘Money is important.’

(12) a. Kasu pirikkidi. ‘X likes money’ (Not: ‘Money is liked/likeable’) (DAT-ACC verb)
    b. Anda paŋ am puridi. ‘X understands the lesson.’ (Not ‘The lesson is understandable.’)
    c. paŋ il terijo. ‘X knows the answer.’ (Not: the answer is known.)
    d. Kasu veeŋ ō. ‘X wants money.’ (??’Money is wanted/desirable.’)

This difference between the two types of predicates is even more striking when they are embedded under the control verb virumbu ‘want’. For DAT-NOM verbs, the nominative “object” can be the argument understood as controlled by the matrix subject, as in (13) (semantics permitting). The dative argument, however, resists being controlled, as in (14).

(13) a. Naan (Mala-kku) teveppattu virumb-an-een. (DAT-NOM verbs)
    I Mala-DAT need-INF want-PAST-1sS
    ‘I want to be needed (by Mala).’

    b. Naan (Mala-kku) mukijom-aa ili-kka virumb-an-een.
    I Mala-DAT important-ADV be-INF want-PAST-1sS
    ‘I like to be important (to Mala).’

(14) a. ??Naan valappalam keŋ e-kke virumb-an-een.
    I banana get-INF want-PAST-1sS
    ‘I like to get bananas.’

9 Similarly, the “reflexive voice” affix –kki- is found on NOM-ACC verbs that have a reflexive interpretation in Tamil (xx xxx), but not on dative subject verbs that have the same sort of interpretation like (16b) below (Selvanathan, p.c.).
In marked contrast, it is impossible for the non-dative argument of a DAT-ACC verb to be controlled by the matrix subject; only the dative experiencer argument can be controlled, as shown by the interpretations of the examples in (15).

(15)  

   a. Naan puri-ja virumb-an-een.  (DAT-ACC verbs)  
       I understand-INF want-PAST-1sS  
       I want to understand X.’  
       NOT: ‘I want to be understood.’

   b. Naan Maala-vel/Mala-kku piri-kka virumb-an-een.  
       I Mala-ACC/Mala-DAT like-INF want-PAST-1sS  
       I want to like Mala.’  
       NOT: ‘I want to be liked (by Mala)’

This is what we expect from the structures in (9) together with the generalization from the theory of control that only the highest NP argument in a nonfinite clause is subject to control. That argument is the dative experiencer for ‘like’/‘understand’ class verbs, but it is the nominative theme argument for ‘get’/‘need’ class verbs.

Another difference between the two classes is that the dative phrase of ‘need’/‘get’ verbs resists being the antecedent for an anaphoric theme argument ((16a)), whereas the dative subject of a ‘like’/‘understand’ verb can antecede the theme argument ((16b)). This is also what we expect if the one is a c-commanding NP argument, whereas the other is only a PP adjunct.10

(16)  

   a. *Bala-kku taan ke[⟨ɛ-tʃ -iʃʃ i⟩.  
      Bala-DAT self get-PAST-3nS  
      ‘Bala got himself’

      Bala-DAT self-ACC like-PRES-3nS  
      ‘Bala likes himself’

A final difference between the kinds of dative, discovered by Nagarajan Selvanathan, appears in cleft-type constructions. Selvanathan (2013) identifies two kinds of cleft, one in which only the subject or object NP of the clause can appear after the verb, and the other which targets any kind of constitutent. In the more restrictive kind, the postverbal constituent is unmarked for case, and the verb bears a pronoun-like suffix that agrees with it. (17) shows that the nominative subject of an ordinary clause can be clefted in this way, but a benefactive adjunct bearing dative case cannot be.

(17)  

   a. Mala Balan-ikki soor-e samec-aal.

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10 However, an alternative explanation for this contrast could be the anaphor agreement effect of Rizzi (xxx) and Woolford (xxx), given that T in Tamil agrees with the nominative theme of a DAT-NOM verb, but not with the ACC theme of a DAT-ACC verb.
With this as a baseline, we can try clefting the dative expression of both DAT-NOM verbs and DAT-ACC verbs. For DAT-ACC verbs, the cleft is possible ((18a)), but for DAT-NOM verbs it is not ((18b)). (In both constructions, the non-dative theme argument can be clefted, as expected.)

(18) a. Anda paDatt-e puri-nj-avan Baala.
    that lesson-ACC understand-PAST-he Bala
    "The one who understood this lesson is Baala.'

   b. *nalla purusen kedec-ave Maala.
    good husband get-she Mala
    'The one who got a good husband is Maala.'

This confirms that the dative in a DAT-NOM construction is a PP adjunct, comparable to a benefactive adjunct, whereas the dative in a DAT-ACC construction is an NP, comparable to a nominative subject. Overall, then, we have succeeded in finding rather robust evidence for the structural difference between datives qua NPs and datives qua PPs in Tamil. The case marking of the theme argument follows from this distinction: PPs do not count as case competitors, as expected, whereas NPs with oblique case can in Tamil, as in Warlpiri, Burushaski, and Ingush.

5.1.4 Parameterizing the status of oblique nominals

However, now we need to acknowledge the other side: that there are also languages in which NPs with oblique case apparently never trigger dependent case on a clausemate NP. Indeed, even closely related languages can vary in this respect. The Australian language Warlpiri has ERG-DAT verbs as well as ABS-DAT verbs, but the Australian language Diyari only has ABS-DAT verbs, with no lexical variation (none reported by Austin (1981), anyway). (19) in Diyari can be contrasted with (5b) in Warlpiri.

    3plS play-PART AUX-PRES stone-DAT
    They were playing for money.'

Similarly, the Dravidian language Tamil has DAT-ACC verbs as well as DAT-NOM verbs, but in the Dravidian language Kannada verbs that take dative subjects always have nominative objects:

\[11\]

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11 I thank Naga Selvanathan for discovering this difference, bringing it to my attention, and providing the data. [NOTE: I still need to go over the material from summer of 2012 for any changes. As I remember, it replicated and extended to some further verbs, BUT CHECK.]
The question thus arises as to what is the nature of this variation.

There are two natural ways to approach this. One option is to say that dative expressions are always PPs, never NPs in languages like Diyari and Kannada. Then the case differences follow from differences in the structure, and there is no need to parameterize the process of dependent case assignment per se. The second option is to say that both languages may have NPs with dative case, but they differ as to whether such NPs count as case competitors (ZPs) in the dependent case schema in (1).

The first option may well be correct in some situations. For example, there are other differences between the distribution of datives in Diyari and Warlpiri that might support a category difference: in particular, dative is used on the goal argument of ditransitive verbs in Warlpiri (Simpson 1991:339) but not in Diyari, which uses two absolutive/accusative NPs instead (Austin 1981:115). This is consistent with dative being a structural case on NPs in Warlpiri, but being a semantic case, not distinct from PP in Diyari. This would be the strongest version of the theory, in which all the differences in whether datives (and other obliques) count as case competitors reduces to the NP-PP distinction.\(^{12}\)

However, it seems quite unlikely that the case differences will always reduce to category differences in this way. In fact Marantz’s original assumption was that oblique NPs do not count as case competitors (see the phrase “not marked” in his (xx)). He assumed this for Icelandic in particular, where dyadic verbs with nominative subjects have accusative objects, but dyadic verbs with dative subjects always have nominative objects (see also Yip et al. for a similar analysis of the same patterns). However, in Icelandic there is famously particularly good evidence that the relevant dative expressions are subjects in every syntactic sense apart from case and agreement (Zaenen et al. 1985). DAT-NOM clauses in Icelandic are thus quite different from DAT-NOM clauses in Tamil in this respect, so we have every reason to believe that dative subjects in Icelandic really are NPs. Therefore, Marantz had good reason to say what he said, and what we learn from Tamil and Warlpiri is not that he was wrong in this, but that this is a point of parameterization.\(^{13}\) The parameter in question can be stated as follows:

\[(21) \text{In some languages, [NP Case:OBL] is a case competitor (Warlpiri, Tamil, Burushaski, Faroese?)}
\]

\[(21) \text{In some languages, only [NP Case: ____] is a case competitor (Icelandic, Diyari?, Kannada?)}
\]

This parameter is a special case of a theme that we will see again in this chapter: that some languages are more specific about what features a category must have in order to participate in case interactions than others are.

5.2 Embedded clauses with and without nominalization

Somewhat similar issues come up in constructions in which a verb seems to select for an embedded clause. Here too we might expect to find some case theoretic variation both within and across

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\(^{12}\) Book found with “Kannada dative subjects” search might argue this for Kannada too. (Check, and see if Tamil is indeed different in the relevant ways.)

\(^{13}\) Indeed, Marantz acknowledges (1991:25) that his assumption is “something of a stipulation as written”, so it is not too surprising that other languages would opt for the opposite stipulation. It is also worth noting that ERG-DAT structures and DAT-ACC structures are more of a problem for the Case in Tiers version of this idea, since these are structures in which what is taken to be the highest ranked case in the languages is not (apparently) assigned to any NP in the clause.
languages. In particular, we know that embedded “clauses” vary within and across languages in whether (or to what degree) they are nominalized. True CPs are categorically distinct from NP/DP, but superficially rather similar constructions that denote propositions or events but are headed by a gerund or verbal noun are not. We expect these distinctions to be important for how these clause-like constituents behave with respect to case theory. In this section, I show that this is true, but the theoretical issues are relatively straightforward, so I keep the discussion brief.

Without tinkering with the dependent case rule, we expect fully nominalized clauses to both undergo and trigger dependent case assignment, whereas true CPs should neither trigger dependent case nor undergo it. This can be seen internally to Sakha, for example. Sakha has two forms of clausal complementation: finite verbs use the complementizer dien, and participial verbs that bear possessive marking with their subjects and have no complementizer. The latter can be shown to be more nominal than the former in a cluster of ways that do not have to do with case theory directly. For example, the participial clauses can function as subjects and as complements of P as well as complements of V, whereas finite clauses with dien are only possible as complements of V; see Baker (2012) for data and other evidence. Correlated with this distinction, there is a clear difference with respect to case theory: participial clauses are marked accusative if there is a distinct thematic subject in the clause; dien clauses are not so marked.

(22) a. Sardaana [bügün Aisen kel-er dien] ihit-te. (CP)
Sardaana today Aisen(NOM) come-AOR.3sS that hear-PAST.3sS
‘Sardaana heard that Aisen is coming today.’ (NV:363)

b. Min [ehigi bügün kyaj-byk-kyt-yn] ihit-ti-m. (Participle phrase)
I you(NOM) today win-PTPL-2pP-ACC hear-PAST-1sS
‘I heard that you won today.’ (NV:361)

Furthermore, participial clauses trigger dependent dative case on a causee inside the same VP in a causative construction in Sakha, whereas dien clauses do not. (See B&V 10 and section 4.2.1 on dative being a dependent case in Sakha.)

(23) a. Sargy [Keskil-ge/*i [Aisen kel-er-in] eren-ner-de]. (Ptpl clause)
Sargy Keskil-DAT/*ACC Aisen come-AOR-3sP-ACC rely.on-CAUS-PAST.3sS
‘Sargy promised Keskil that Aisen will come.’

Sargy Keskil-ACC Aisen come-FUT.3sS that rely.on-CAUS-PAST.3sS
‘Sargy promised Keskil that Aisen will come.’

So we see that gerund-like constructions in Sakha function as both case undergoers and case competitors within the dependent case schema in (1), whereas true CPs play neither role.

A more subtle distinction is whether the complementizer head of CP is itself verbal in nature or nominal (see Webelhuth xx on this distinction in Germanic languages). Dien in Sakha is clearly on the verbal side: it is historically a converb form of the verb ‘say’, as is common in many languages. In contrast, Cuzco Quechua sometimes uses a demonstrative-like form chay ‘that’ as a complementizer

14 This example is also OK with Keskil marked dative (NV:367). I assume that in this situation dative is an inherent case, assigned by a null adposition (B&V xx) (probably because the verb is a lexicalized causative). The point is that the internal NP argument can be accusative if the theme argument is CP, but not if it is a participial clause.
Since this C head is nominal in nature, it gives something of its nominal character to the projection it heads. As a result, both gerund/participle-like constructions and CPs with a distinct C undergo dependent accusative case marking in Quechua:

(24) a. [Warmi hamu-sha-nchay-ta], riku-ni. (L&M: 13)
    woman come-PR-3 that-ACC see-1sS
    ‘I see that the woman is coming.’

b. [Xwan hamu-na-n-ta] yacha-ni. L&M p. 17
    Juan come-NOML-3-ACC know-1sS
    ‘I know that Juan is to come.’

So the case theoretic distinction between CP and NP seen in Sakha in (22) is neutralized because of the nominal nature of the C in Quechua.

As for ergative languages, what we expect to see is less whether the sentential complement itself is structurally case-marked depending on how nominal it is, but rather whether it triggers dependent ergative case on the subject. (This is because sentential complements are reasonably common, but sentential subjects of transitive verbs are less so, and forbidden in some languages.) In Shipibo, for example, Valenzuela (2003:xx) claims that nonfinite verbs—verbs that bear the suffix -ti—are nominalized, and she observes that all verbs that take these as complements are treated as transitive verbs. Included in this is the fact that such verbs take ergative subjects.15

    3-ERG-EV get.scared-INF:ABS know-NEG-CMPL
    ‘He never gets scared.’ (Lit. ‘He doesn’t know how to get scared.’)

    Jose-ERG Rosa call-INF think-PERF
    Jose thought to call Rosa.

There are, however, certain verbs in Shipibo which plausibly select for a complement marked by switch reference morphology (SSS –i) rather than by the infinitival marker –ti or the participle ending –ai. These verbs have absolutive case subjects, not ergative.

(26) E-a-ra teet-i peo-keo-ke.
    I-ABS-PRT work-SS.SIM start-MID-PERF
    ‘I started to work.’

So we can say that verbs bearing –ti are nominalized, but verbs bearing –I are not, and this difference is reflected in the case of the matrix subject.

Similar—perhaps even clearer—contrasts are found in Lezgain, where the case of the subject varies with the kind of nonfinite form that is used in the complement of the verb. So-called masdars

---

15 An apparent exception is keen ‘want’, the subject of which is absolutive, not ergative, in the presence of an infinitival complement. But this is a property of keen, not a property of its complement type, since the experiencer argument of keen is absolutive even when its internal argument is a simple NP (see Baker (to appear) and section 6.xx).
(verbal nouns, realis clauses) used as complements trigger ergative on the subject of the selecting verb, as shown in (27) (MH: 361, 362).


This kind of clause is also known to be nominal in that they can be inflected for (oblique) case themselves (MH: 363-364), and they can appear in any position that a simple NP can (MH: 153). In contrast, complements in which the verb is a so-called infinitives (irrealis clauses) do not in general trigger ergative on the subject (MH: 356); rather the subject is absolutive (or it has lexical case\textsuperscript{16}), as in (28).

(28) Nabisat-ni Cükwer [PRO [čeb derbentlu-jr-i-n pataw fi-da] luhu-z] gzaf alaq\textsuperscript{17}-na Nabisat-and Cükwer selves D-PL-GEN to go-FUT say-INF much try-AOR ‘Nabisat and Cükwer tried hard to say that they were going to the people from Derbent.’

This nonnominal case behavior goes along with the fact that Infinitives cannot bear case themselves (p. 359), and they are not used in the same positions as simple NPs, but are otherwise used only as adverbial clauses (HM: 156). In this language, as in Sakha, the same constituents are visible to case theory from both directions, both as undergoers of case marking and as triggers of dependent case marking.\textsuperscript{17}

As with oblique NPs and PPs, we can ask whether all the crosslinguistic variation we see in this domain is attributable to differences in what features particular clauses bear in particular languages, or whether there are also differences in what features dependent case assignment in the language is sensitive to. For example, Baker (2003) suggests that CPs are like NPs/DPs in having referential indices (allowing them to serve as arguments), but they are different from NPs/DPs in not having phi-features. Suppose then that finite clauses in a particular language did participate in dependent case assignment, as undergoers and/or as case competitors. Is this always because the CP has “extra” nominal features (as in Quechua), or is it sometimes because the language uses a lower standard of nominality for its dependent case rules, such that it is enough to have an index, and phi-features are not required? I do not have definitive evidence on this one way or another, but it is something to watch for in a typology of case marking.

5.3 Phonetically null NPs

I do, however, have good reason to say that whether a category has phi-features or not matters for case theory in another area: the domain of phonetically null nominals.

It is standard within the generative literature to say that the language faculty allows for different sorts of covert nominals which are part of the syntactic representation, at least at some levels, but not part of the phonological representation. For example, classical government-binding theory distinguished four kinds of empty categories: PRO, pro, NP-trace, wh-trace (Chomsky 1982). As a more

\textsuperscript{16} It so happens that many of the verbs that take an infinitival complement also take oblique subjects (dative with ‘want’, ‘know how to’; adelative with ‘be able to’). This lexical case preempts the structural case that the subject might otherwise have had.

\textsuperscript{17} See also Burushaski, where infinitival complements both undergo case marking (dative) and trigger dependent case (ergative) on a coargument (Willson xx:30).
recent example, Landau (xxx) distinguishes between “weak implicit arguments” and “strong implicit arguments”. Both kinds are present in the syntax and active to some degree: both can function as controllers, for example, and both trigger disjoint reference effects with pronouns and noun phrases in their domains. But strong implicit arguments are “stronger” than weak implicit arguments in that they can do more in the syntax: they can be subjects of predicates, for example, and antecedents for anaphors. Landau accounts for the difference by saying that strong implicit arguments have a fuller array of features than weak ones do. In this section, I show that similar distinctions are relevant to dependent case assignment, and that they can be analyzed in a similar way. For example, strong implicit arguments trigger dependent case on another NP in Finnish and Quechua, but weak implicit arguments do not. In contrast, even weak implicit arguments trigger dependent case in Sakha, whereas even strong implicit arguments fail to trigger dependent case in Coast Tsimshian.

More specifically, I argue for the following hierarchy of nominal expressions across languages:

(29) Overt NPs > pro > controlled > arbitrary > implicit agent of passive > PP, VP, etc.

The idea is that categories to the right on this scale have a subset of the nominal features that categories to their right on the scale have. Languages then vary as which of these features is minimally necessary to participate in dependent case in the language. Any language that has dependent case at all will include overt NPs in the class of expressions that trigger and undergo dependent case assignment, and all languages will exclude true PPs and VPs. But some rule out any covert NPs from being case competitors, some allow pro to be a case competitor but not PRO, some allow PRO but not the implicit agent in a passive, and so on. I will not fully implement this proposal here, in that I will not identify what all the features that underlie this scale are. However, the phi-features of person number and gender are clearly an important factor, since pro and controlled PRO clearly have these features and they are case competitors more often than not, whereas implicit agents arguably do not have these features are they are often not case competitors.

I begin exploring the hierarchy in (29) with my most tolerant language, namely Sakha. First, pro—the null subject of a finite clause, identified by agreement on the verb, triggers accusative on the object, as in most languages.

(30) Djie inn-in kyraaskalaa-ty-m. (NV: 170)
    house front-3.ACC paint-PAST-1sS
    ‘I painted the front of the house.’

So does PRO, the subject null subject of finite clauses, which is either controlled by a designated argument of the superordinate clause (Controlled PRO) or is given an indefinite arbitrary-generic reading (PRO-arb). Both kinds of PRO trigger accusative on the object in Sakha.

    Yellow flower-ACC pick-AOR good
    It is good to pick the yellow flower.

    Masha book-ACC read-AOR-3sP.ACC enjoy-AOR.3sS
    ‘Masha likes to read the book.’
But most distinctively, even the covert agent of a passive clause counts for determining accusative case on the theme argument in Sakha. That accounts for the example in (32) (as discussed in B&V, and mentioned in section xx above).

cup-ACC intentionally hammer-INST break-PASS-PAST.3sS
‘The cup was intentionally broken with a hammer.’ (* with caakky ‘cup(NOM’)

Another way that Sakha is especially tolerant is in allowing accusative case on the theme argument of a deverbal nominalization. This is possible for both event denoting nominals (which may be gerunds) and agent-denoting ones (which are otherwise as nominal as their English equivalents).

(33) a. terilte-ni salaj-yy event denoting nominal/gerund (B&V10:xx)
    company-ACC manage-EV.NOML
    ‘the management of the company’

b. Terilte-ni salaj-aaccy kel-le. Agent-denoting nominal
    company-ACC manage-AGNOML come-PASS.3sS
    ‘The manager of the company came.’

These nominalizations arguably have some kind of grammatical representation of the agent argument of the verb, but not one that has detectable phi-features. For example, the covert agent in the event nominal in (51a) does not trigger D-like agreement on the nominalized verb, whereas overt agents do trigger such agreement. If this is right, then it is not a coincidence that Sakha has accusative case in both the passive in (50) and the nominals in (51), whereas most other languages have accusative NPs in neither construction. This somewhat special fact about Sakha played an important role in opening my eyes to the value of a dependent case approach to accusative, especially for this language. However, it is not necessary that these constructions have accusative case for the dependent case hypothesis to be of value.

The ergative analog to Sakha might be Shipibo. A pro object triggers ergative case on the subject as expected in this language. (34) is an example.

(34) Apojo-ke-tian-ra, e-n oina iki. (Shipibo, dictionary intro)
    President come-PRF-DS-PRT I-ERG see AUX
    When the president came, I saw him.

But interestingly so does an indefinite, existentially bound null object of a verb like ‘eat’. These covert object arguments are usually interpreted with narrow scope existential quantification, rather like passive agents without an overt by-phrase are. Therefore, such objects are candidates for being phi-feature-less nominals in object position. And in fact verbs of this type always take ergative subjects in Shipibo, as shown in (35).

(35) a. José-kan-ra pi-ke. (compare: E-n-ra bimi koko-ke
    José-ERG-PTL eat-PRF I-ERG-PTL fruit eat-PRF

In this case, the covert agent may not be distinct from PRO, on which in Sakha see below.
José ate. ‘I ate fruit’

b. Rosa-n patsatai.
Rosa-ERG wash-IMPF.
‘(Every Monday), Rosa washes/does the washing.’

Therefore, I assume that Shipibo is the ergative equivalent of Sakha, where even featureless empty nominals trigger dependent case.

The next sort of language that (29) would allow for is a language in which the covert agent of a passive or nominal does not trigger accusative, but pro and both flavors of PRO do. This might be the most common, so least remarkable sort of language. Tamil and Amharic are cases in point among the accusative languages—and also Turkish, which is related to Sakha. I illustrate with Amharic. (xx) shows that pro triggers accusative in Amharic.

\[(36)\]
\[
\text{Bet-u-n} \quad \text{aj} \quad \text{hw-ot}
\]
\[
\text{house-DEF-ACC see-1sS-3mO}
\]
\[
‘I saw the house.’
\]

(37) gives examples of nonfinite verbs with PRO subjects where the object is accusative.

\[(37)\]
\[
\text{Bet-u-n} \quad \text{aj} \quad \text{hw-ot}
\]
\[
\text{house-DEF-ACC see-1sS-3mO}
\]
\[
‘I saw the house.’
\]

\[
\text{Bet-u-n} \quad \text{aj} \quad \text{hw-ot}
\]
\[
\text{house-DEF-ACC see-1sS-3mO}
\]
\[
‘I saw the house.’
\]

However, the theme argument of a passive sentence cannot be accusative in Amharic, as shown in (xx).

\[(38)\]
\[
\text{dinggay-u-(} \ast n \text{) tа-warəwwar-ə}
\]
\[
\text{stone-DEF-(} \ast \text{ACC) PASS-throw.PF-3mS}
\]
\[
‘The stone was thrown (by someone).’
\]

Here the difference between the covert NPs that do count for dependent case assignment and the ones that do not might be a difference in phi-features. Pro clearly has these, since T agrees with it in (for example) (37) and (30); indeed, this agreement in phi-features is commonly assumed to play a role in the licensing of pro in the first place. PRO also generally has phi-features in that it can trigger agreement in some languages, for example, in Balkan languages like Greek, where infinitives have been replaced by subjunctives (Terzi xxx, REFs), there is often phi-feature agreement between PRO and a

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20 Burushaski might differ from Shipibo in this regard, since xx (French grammar) report that ‘see’ used intransitively (‘X can see’, ‘X is not blind’) takes an absolutive subject but ‘see’ used transitively (‘X sees Y’) takes an ergative subject. Some other ergative languages seem not to allow null indefinite objects at all. For example, Nichols (p. 496-497) says that in Ingush “There is no antipassive and almost no object removal even in verbs such as ‘eat’, ‘cook’, ‘sew’, ‘read’, which crosslinguically are often used without objects as activity verbs.” (In these situations, Ingush uses a dummy object, often hama ‘soemthing’.) Similarly, Austin (p. 66-67) says for Diyari that “All main verb roots are strictly sub-categorized into one of three mutually exclusive classes according to their inherent transitivity” (i.e. intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive)
reflexive anaphor that depends on it (e.g. Mary wants PRO to find herself). In contrast, passive agents pretty clearly do not have phi-features, since T does not agree with the understood agent in a passive; rather, it agrees with the theme (in (38)), or shows up as a default form (in (32)). Nor do passive agents depend on agreement for licensing.

Cuzco Quechua illustrates a different profile. In this language, pro clearly does trigger accusative on the object.

(39) Runa-ta waki-n-ta riku-sha-ni (CQ, L&M 37)
Man-ACC some-3-ACC see-PR-1
‘I see some of the men.’

But PRO does not. That is true for both controlled PRO and arbitrary PRO, as shown in (40) and (41).

(40) *T’anta-ta ruwa-q hamu-ni (p. 250)
bread-ACC make-AG come-1sS
‘I come to make bread.’

(41) Papa-(*ta) mikhu-y allin-mi. (p. 120, 39)
Potato-(ACC) eat-NOM good-AF
‘Eating potatoes is good.’

There are examples that are superficially similar to (40) in Quechua, with matrix verbs like ‘want’ in which the object of the embedded verb is accusative, as in (41).

(42) *T’anta-ta ruwa-y-ta muna-ni (p. 250)
bread-ACC make-INF-ACC want-1sS
‘I want to make bread.’

But crucially L&M provide many arguments that examples like (42) are restructuring constructions; see section 4.1.3 for some examples and discussion. Following Wurmbrand’s (2001) theory of restructuring, those examples crucially do not have PRO, but only a VP complement. Schematic structures are in (43).

(43)

a. [TP I [VP [CP C [TP PRO [VP bread make ] INF ] come ]]]
b. [TP I [VP [VP bread make-INF want ]]]

If that is right, then (43) makes it clear that a pro like ‘I’ triggers ACC on ‘bread’ if that is the closest subject in the same spell out domain, but PRO does not if it is the subject in the same spell out domain (TP) as ‘bread’. (Recall from section 4.2.3 that v is a weak phase head in Quechua, so it has no crucial effect, and I have omitted the vs in (43) for simplicity. I do not know exactly what features distinguish pro from PRO, but presumably there must be some within any theory that maintains the distinction. Perhaps it makes a difference that pro has intrinsic phi-features, whereas PRO inherits them from its antecedent.

Finnish presents an interesting variant on the Quechua pattern: it draws the line between case competitor and non-case competitor roughly between the two kinds of PRO. Pro does trigger accusative, as shown in (xx) from Finnish (compare (38a) with an overt subject).

(44) Tuo-n karhu-n. Kiparsky p. 333
bring-1sS bear-ACC
‘I’ll bring the/a bear.’

Passive subjects do not trigger accusative on nonpronominal NPs:

(45)  näh-tiin-kö Matti Finnish Kiparsky p. 334
     see-PAST.PASS-Q Matti.NOM
     Was Matti seen?

There is, however, a difference between the two kinds of PRO. Uncontrolled PRO does not trigger accusative case on the object in Finnish, as shown in (55).

     see-INF Naples.NOM and die-INF
     ‘To see Naples and to die!’

The wrinkle is that controlled PRO does trigger accusative case on a nominal that it c-commands (this is a subcase of what Kiparsky calls Johanson’s Rule). (49) gives a minimal pair that drives this home. In (49a), the subject ‘we’ of ‘want’ controls the subject of ‘run’ (via the subject of ‘try’) and the NP ‘a kilometer’ is accusative. The structure of (49b) is the same, except that the matrix verb is an impersonal passive. As such, there is no controller in the matrix (alternatively, there is a null argument controller, but one that does not have phi-features), so the PRO subject of ‘run’ does not get phi-features from its controller, and ‘kilometer’ is in unmarked nominative case.

(47)  a. Halus-i-mme yrittää juos-ta kilometri-n kahde-ssa minuuti-ssa.
     Want-PAST-1sS try-INF run-INF kilometer-ACC two-INESS minute-INESS
     ‘We wanted to try to run a kilometer in two minutes.’ (Kiparsky 339)

     b. Halut-tiin yrittää juos-ta kilometri kahde-ssa minuuti-ssa.
     Want-PAST.PASS try-INF run-INF kilometer-(NOM) two-INESS minute-INESS
     ‘People (/we) wanted to try to run a kilometer in two minutes.’ (Kiparsky 339)

So here it seems that we want to draw a distinction in the feature content of a controlled PRO as opposed to uncontrolled PRO. A plausible view might be that PRO itself has no intrinsic phi-features, but it receives them in the course of the derivation, as part of the mechanism of control (compare Landau xxx). Indeed, some evidence for this from Sakha was visible back in the examples in (xx): when the PRO subject of the nonfinite verbs is controlled by the matrix subject, as in (xxb), the nonfinite verb shows agreement with it, but when the subject of the nonfinite verb is an uncontrolled PRO, as in (xxa), the nonfinite verb bears no agreement. This confirms that the former gets phi-features from its controller, while the latter lacks phi-features. Then we can relate the contrast in (49) in Finnish to the one between (46) and (47) by saying that having phi-features is the crucial factor for counting as a case competitor in Finnish. Controlled PRO gets phi-features from its controller, and does trigger accusative

21 Kiparsky shows that ‘a kilometer’ in sentences like this is not a direct object but a nominal adverb. However, he also shows that such adverbs undergo dependent case marking (Johannson’s Rule) in Finnish on a par with objects. See section 5.4 below and section 6.xx for discussion.

22 This raises a question however about Amharic and similar languages in which PROarb does trigger accusative case but passive agents do not: what is the feature difference there? I leave this open.
on the local object; uncontrolled PRO remains without phi-features, and does not trigger accusative on the local object.²³

Note that we cannot realistically hope to see if there are ergative languages that draw a distinction between pro and PRO, as Quechua does and Finnish does in part, or if they treat them together, as Amharic does. The reason is simply that to see if PRO counts as a case competitor in an ergative language, we would have to put it in the object position, and see if it triggers ergative case on the subject. But PRO cannot be licensed in object positions, according to standard theories of control. Therefore, the situation does not arise, for independent reasons. More generally, there seems to be a smaller range of covert nominals that are allowed in object position than in subject position, and this restricts our ability to explore the full scale of nominals in (29) in ergative languages. The main empty category that can be an object is: pro, and this usually does trigger ergative case on the subject in both ergative and tripartite languages. This holds for those that do have agreement with the object pro (Chukchi, Burushaski, Greenlandic, Nez Perce) and those that do not (Semelai, as well as Shipibo shown above). (xx) is a simple example from Chukchi.

²³ There is much more to say about Finnish than I can take up here. Kiparsky (2001), for example, mentions further complexities to Johansson’s rule. Kiparsky’s examples on p. 356 suggest that the object of a verb like ‘let’ or ‘force’ controls PRO and makes the object of the embedded verb accusative, but if the verb is passivized, resulting in a genitive subject, the embedded object is nominative. Also p. 350 shows that having an imperative subject allows a nominative embedded object even it is looks like object control. I will not pursue these intriguing details. (Kiparsky’s own interpretation is simply that the domain of Johansson’s rule is the finite clause, with PRO not counting. This is basically a kind of restructuring, making Finnish similar to Quechua. However, whereas the relevant matrix predicates in Quechua do look like normal restructuring predicates in other languages, and there is independent evidence of restructuring in that language, restructuring looks like a less obvious fit for the full range of Finnish data.)

Another interesting detail is that the null subject of an imperative does not trigger accusative on the object in Finnish. That suggests that the subject of an imperative might be roughly the same kind of thing as a PRO. I don’t know how common this might be across languages.

(i)     Tuo     karhu!  Kiparsky p. 333
         bring.IMPER  bear(Nom)
     Bring the/a bear!

Yet another interesting detail is that null subjects that do not trigger accusative case on ordinary NPs in Finnish do still trigger accusative case on object pronouns. This includes PRO-arb, imperative subjects, and passive agents. An example is (i).

(i)     Tuo     karhu!  Kiparsky p. 333
         bring.IMPER  bear(Nom)
     Bring the/a bear!

For this, I would tentatively like to say that there is a double relativization of features. Broadly pronominal empty categories have a feature in common with pronouns (something like [+pronominal]? ) that they do not have in common with common nouns and proper nouns. Because they have this feature in common, one counts as a case competitor for the other. In other words, what features ZP needs to be a case competitor in (1) may be relativized somewhat to what features XP has as the case undergoer, at least in this case. (There is a similarity with Richards’ (xx) notion of distinctness here, where a kind of dissimilation must apply to two categories that are too similar within the same domain.)

See Kiparsky (2001) for even more fascinating details, which I do not go into here!
There is an interesting contrast in CT between subject pronominals and object pronouns. Subject pronouns are pros licensed by agreement on T, whereas object pronouns are clitics, D heads that move to adjoin to the end of the verb in syntax. The simplest evidence for this distinction is that 3rd person subject agreement –t is present on the verbal complex even if an overt NP subject is present, as in (45a), whereas the third person object affix –t seen on the verb when there is no overt object in (45b) is not found on the verb in (45a) when there is an overt object.

(50)  a. Yagwa-t  t’uus-dit  Dzon-it  Meli. (p. 67, ACC, not abs with PN object)
     Pres-3sE  push-ERG.PN  John-ACC.PN  Mary
     John is pushing Mary. (not yagwa-t t’uus-t-(dijit))

     b. ALga  na-m-dm  dzagwa-t  ‘niidi?  (p. 79)
     NEG  past-2sE-FUT  kill-3ABS  PRT
     ‘You wouldn’t have killed it, would you?’

It may also be relevant that the subject affix attaches to the tense-aspect particle, whereas the object affix encliticizes onto the verb. The relevance of this subtle but real distinction for current purposes is that object pronouns cliticized to the verb do still trigger ergative case on the subject, as shown in (46).

(51)  Na-t  ‘niidz-n-t  Dzon.
     Past-3sE  see-2Obj-ERG.PN  John
     ‘John saw you.’ (Dunn 1995:63)

24 More info on CT morphosyntax here? That could depend on where the major discussion of CT ends up, in the discussion of split ergativity.
This is not primarily a subject-object asymmetry, since in special tense-aspects the subject can be absolutive in CT, and hence a clitic not a pro. The absolutive clitic representing the subject does triggers accusative on the object:

(52) Gun-deentg-ad-at nagwaat da n-dzoog-a aks. (Mulder p. 126)
    Toward-lead.by.hand-3ABS-ACC.PN father P.CN POSS-edge-ABS.CN water
    ‘He guided his father to the water’s edge.’

I conclude that the features CT requires a constituent to have beyond simple phi-features in order for it to count as a case-competitor, it is something that a clitic pronoun has but pro does not have—a phonological matrix, for example.

We now have completed our tour of the scale of nominality in (29). For each point in the scale, we have found one or more languages that use that point as a cut off for what features are minimally required to be a case competitor. The big picture is summarized in (53).

(53)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overt NP and clitics</th>
<th>Coast Tsimshian (always case competitors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>∨ Null referential pronouns (pro)</td>
<td>Cuzco Quechua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∨ Controlled PRO</td>
<td>Finnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∨ Uncontrolled PROarb</td>
<td>Amharic, Tamil, Turkish, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak implicit arguments: passive and nominal agents, null objects</td>
<td>Sakha, Shipibo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPs, VPs, etc.</td>
<td>NO NOMINAL FEATURES (never case competitors)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether a nominal category has phi-features or not seems to be a particularly significant dividing line, distinguishing the weak implicit arguments from the more pronominal empty categories in many languages, and perhaps distinguishing controlled PRO from uncontrolled PRO in Finnish. However, other features can play the crucial dividing role in other languages as well. Overall this coheres with the results of section 5.1, where we saw that what kind of case feature a nominal had also influences whether it counts as a case competitor in some languages but not others.

This general picture might be extended also to the possibility of expletive pronouns, such as those found in subject positions to fulfill EPP requirements in some languages in order, including English and French. In most languages that are even modestly pro-drop, such pronouns, if they exist at all, are phonologically null; they are evident if at all only in the 3rd singular subject agreement on the predicate, and even that might be default agreement. These expletive pronouns thus have a minimal feature set, lacking phonological features, referential features, and phi-features beyond perhaps the unmarked one. Therefore, given that being a case competitor depends on having more nominal features than a certain language-specific standard, we predict that expletive pronouns should rarely if ever trigger dependent case on another NP in the clause. This seems to be correct; I have found no instances of possible expletive subjects trigger accusative case in my sample. Consider, for example, the Sakha pair in (54). A quirk of a small number of postpositions in Sakha is that they are not phase heads (as most Ps are); therefore there complements can get dependent accusative case when c-commanded by a thematic
subject, as in (54a). However, when the same PP is found in a clause with a impersonal weather predicate, as in (54b), the object of the P cannot be accusative.

    cow-PL barn-(ACC) around graze-PAST-3PS
    ‘The cows grazed around the barn.’

b. [PP Ambaar-(*) tula ] itii.
    barn-(*ACC) around hot
    ‘It is hot around the barn.’

Now (54b) is the sort of predicate that one might expect to have an expletive pronoun to fill the SpecTP position, as its English translation clearly does. If there is an expletive subject in the Sakha version, then it must c-command the object of the PP, just as the thematic subject does in (54a), and there is (exceptionally) no phase boundary between them. The configuration then is right for dependent case assignment in (54b). However it does not happen, and the expletive’s lack of nominal features is presumably why. And recall from (53) that Sakha is the most tolerant of our languages with respect to what counts as a case competitor, so if Sakha does not allow expletive pronouns to be active for case theory in this way, it is possible that no language will. Other constructions that might have expletive subjects but do not have dependent case include ones in which the subject of an embedded clause in Sakha raises to the edge of the complement of an impersonal predicate but does not become accusative (B&V:xxx; see (xx) in section 2.1xx) and dyadic unaccusative constructions in Amharic in which the theme does not raise past the PP possessor into SpecTP (Baker 2012:xx; see (xx) in section 3.1). I have then encountered several structures in working with these languages which might have expletive pronouns, but none in which they trigger dependent accusative case. (And I acknowledge freely that I do not have compelling evidence that the structures in question do have expletive pronouns in the subject position; the theoretical alternative is to say that the EPP property is absent in the relevant clauses.)

The other broad category of covert NPs that was recognized in classical GB theory was traces of movement, including NP-traces and Wh-traces. These elements do consistently act as case competitors in language after language. For example, the trace of a raised subject triggers accusative case on the object of the clause it raised out of in Turkish (Moore xxx), the trace of a relativized subject triggers accusative case on the object of the relative clause in Sakha (xx:xxx), and the trace of a relativized object triggers ergative on the subject of the relative clause in Shipibo (xx:xx). There seems to be little or no crosslinguistic variation in these matters. In the current framework, in which “traces” are not a special sort of NP but rather copies of the moved NP itself, this is arguably exactly what we expect, and nothing special needs to be said. However, the topic of movement also brings up issues of timing, such as whether dependent case assignment applies before or after a given NP was moved. Therefore, I do not discuss this as a separate case here, and defer further discussion until section 6.3.25

25 We might also consider whether covert nominals of various kinds can undergo dependent case marking as well as trigger it. In many instances one might think that it would be impossible to tell, because any case marking associated with an unpronounced element is itself unpronounced, such that one cannot see what case it is, if any. However, certain languages have case-agreement phenomena that can reveal the case of a covert category indirectly. Many have argued that PRO in Icelandic, for example, receives nominative case (xxx). Similarly, see Baker (in press) for an argument that PRO in Shipibo can receive ergative case, based on the agreeing form of certain adverbs. That suggests that PRO does undergo dependent case assignment in Shipibo and default case assignment in Icelandic. Similar considerations would apply to pro.
5.4 Nominal Adverbs

Another area in which there is interesting crosslinguistic variation in what undergoes dependent case assignment is the area of adverbs, especially nominal adverbs. Some adverbs like ‘yesterday’ or ‘tomorrow’ rather clearly are (or at least can be) nouns, since they can be used as NPs in normal argument positions, as shown for English in (59).

(55)  
  a. Yesterday seemed to last forever. (Subject)  
  b. John spent yesterday at the beach. (Object)  
  c. After yesterday, how can we trust him? (object of P)  
  d. Yesterday’s lecture was rather dull. (possessor)

Nevertheless, yesterday can also be used freely as an adverb, where it has no evident theta-role assigner, as in (76).

(56)  
John went to the beach yesterday.

Certain other adverbs in English seem more adjectival than nominal—manner adverbs like quickly, for example (REFS, Emonds xxx?). However, there are many languages in which the distinction between nouns and adjectives is weak at best (Dixon 1972xx, etc.) and in those languages even manner adverbs may qualify as more or less nominal. The question then arises, do nominal adverbs participate in dependent case assignment?

For some languages, the answer is no. For example, in Baker and Vinokurova (2010) we observed that bare NP adverbs are not marked accusative in Sakha, even though they may be c-commanded by the subject, as shown in (61).

(57)  
     we yesterday jump.PAST.1pS  
     ‘We jumped yesterday.’

  b. Bihigi tya-qa sajyn-(y) kös-tü-büt  
     we countryside-DAT summer-(ACC) move-PAST.1pS  
     ‘We moved to the countryside in the summer.’

In contrast, (62) shows that the same lexical item as in (61b) must be marked accusative when it functions as the object of a transitive verb, confirming that it is (can be) a genuine NP.²⁶

(58)  
Masha sajyn-*(y) axt-ar.  
Masha summer-ACC miss-AOR.3sS  
‘Masha misses the summer.’

---

²⁶ Vinokurova (2005:395) shows that ‘two kilometers’ is marked accusative in a phrase like ‘run two kilometers’ in Sakha, but she gives independent evidence from causatives and passives that ‘two kilometers’ is a true direct object of the verb ‘run’, not an adverb.
Because of contrasts like this, we stipulated that only NPs functioning as arguments participate in dependent case assignment. Other accusative languages in which adverbs do not undergo accusative marking are Tamil and Amharic.

However, a broader perspective shows that this is a point of crosslinguistic variation. In a nontrivial range of languages adverbial NPs do undergo dependent case assignment. For example, they can be accusative in Korean (Maling 1989), Finnish (Maling 2009, Kiparsky 2001), and Quechua, among others. For Cuzco Quechua, L&M 1988 say that –ta “is found not only on direct objects but also on any constituent appearing in the verbal domain that is not inherently case marked.” This includes both the time adverb ‘tomorrow’ and the manner adverb ‘good, well’ in (63).

Evidence that this is structural accusative case in Quechua, not an inherent/semantic case, comes from the fact that it sensitive to the syntactic position: an adverb like ‘tomorrow’ must be accusative when it follows the subject, but need not be when it precedes the subject (L&M:50).

This fact makes sense if one combines a dependent case view with the idea that there is a certain (limited) range of variation in the position in which (certain) adverbs are generated (Jackendoff 1972xx). If the adverb is generated lower than the subject, it undergoes dependent accusative marking; if it is generated higher than the subject, then it predictably does not. The option of accusative in (64a) could be the result of the adverb being generated lower than the subject, undergoing case marking in that position, and then moving higher via topicalization or focus movement.

Further evidence for that accusative on adverbs is structural in Quechua comes from the fact that manner adverbs are like direct objects in not being marked accusative in embedded clauses. We saw above that the PRO subject of a nonfinite clause is not a case competitor according to CQ’s language-particular standard, so it does not trigger accusative on the object of the clause (see (40), (41)). This carries over also to possessive-subject-type gerund constructions, in which the genitive subject in SpecDP controls PRO inside the verbal complement of the nominalization head, as see in (65a), under the analysis in (65b).

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28 Maling also mentions Warumungu as allowing this, referring to Simpson (1991).
b.

Here PRO does not trigger accusative on ‘potato’ because it does not qualify as a case competitor in Quechua, and ‘Juan’ does not because Poss is a phase head, so ‘Juan’ and ‘potato’ are in different spell-out domains (see section 4.xx).²⁹ (66b) then shows that when a manner adverb is contained in this sort of gerund-like construction, it also fails to be accusative; compare (66b) with the simple matrix clause in (66a), where the manner adverb is accusative as usual.

(62)  

a. Paqarin usqay-ta Lima-man ri-saq .       (L&M:16)
     tomorrow fast-ACC Lima-to go-1sS.FUT
     ‘I will go to Lima fast tomorrow.’

     tomorrow fast(NOM) Lima-to go-NOML-2sP-ACC know-1sS
     ‘He knows that you are to go to Lima fast tomorrow.’

The adverb thus undergoes the same case alternation as objects do in Quechua, showing that they bear dependent case. The subject of the smallest clause-like constituent containing the adverb in (66b) is PRO, and that does not trigger accusative on the adverb, just as PRO does not trigger accusative on the object in (65).

Finnish is another language that has accusative case on certain kinds of adverbs. In Finnish it is clear that this accusative case is structural because these adverbs, like objects, follows Johnsson’s rule: if the subject is not a case competitor, then the adverb is not accusative (Kiparsky 2001, Maling 1993, 2009). For example, the duration adverb is accusative in (67a) but bare-nominative in (37b), an impersonal passive where the covert agent is not a case competitor.

(63)  

a. Opiskel-i-n vuode-n.       (Kiparsky 2001:323)
     Study-PAST-1sS year-ACC
     ‘I studied (for) a year.’

²⁹ For completeness, ‘Juan’ gets genitive case by agreement with Poss, as in Sakha, or as the default case in a nominal domain.
b. Opiskel-tiin vuosi. (Kiparsky 2001:323)
Study-PAST.PASS year(NOM)
‘People/we studied (for) a year.’

Similarly, when the subject has oblique case, an adverb inside the verb phrase is nominative rather than accusative, just as an object would be (Maling 2009:79) (note that NPs with oblique case are not case competitors in Finnish, like Icelandic (section 5.1)).

(64) Lapsen täyttyy lukea koko päivä-(*n).
child-GEN must read all day.NOM-(*ACC)
‘The child must read all day.’

Yet another accusative language that is known to have accusative adverbs is Korean (Wechsler and Lee xx; xxx and Sells xxx; Maling and xxx xxx). In this language, we know that the adverbs have structural accusative case because that case is unavailable in certain passive and unaccusative examples, where there is no external argument; see chapter 6 for some discussion.

Given the fundamental symmetry between accusative case and ergative case that is built into dependent case theory from the beginning, we expect that adverbs could also receive dependent ergative marking in some ergative languages. Indeed, this does appear to happen in, for example, the Australian languages Diyari and Warlpiri. Thus, the manner adverb ‘energetically’ has ergative case in (69b) from Diyari. We can recognize this as structural case because the adverb is ergative if and only if there is a direct object present, as in (69b) but not (69a). Thus adverbs in Diyari fall under the same principle of ergative case marking as subjects do, just as adverbs in Quechua and Finnish fall under the same principle of accusative marking as objects do.

(65) a. Wata yini parapara pit[i]-ya. (Austin 1981:108)
Not 2sgS energetic fart-IMP
‘Don’t fart loudly!’

3sgNFA person-ERG boomerang-ABS energetic-ERG throw-PRES
‘The man throws the boomerang energetically.’

Manner adverbs also behave this way in Warlpiri, including muurlpa ‘carefully’, yarju ‘quickly’, and wakurtrudu ‘loudly’ (Simpson 1991:200).

(66) a. Kalaka pali-mi yarju.
ADMON die-NPST quick
‘He might die soon.’

b. Yarju-ru-lupa-nyanu pu-ngka!
Transitive, ergative adverb
Quick-ERG-1pis-REFL fight-IMPER
‘Let’s hurry up and fight each other.’

Simpson (1991) treats these adverbs as being predicated of the subject, with the result that they undergo case concord with the subject, as predicated items do generally with the NP they are predicated of in Warlpiri. But it is less clear that this view is semantically justified to adverbs for ‘quickly’
than it is for ‘carefully’, since often it is the event that is quick, not necessarily the agent (Parsons 1990). And, strikingly, the ergative marking in Warlpiri extends to locative expressions, which can be predicated of the event as a whole, rather than the subject participant in that event (Simpson 1991:207), and to time adverbs like ‘today’, as in (71).

(67) Jalangu-rlu ka-lu-jana puluku turnu-ma-ni yapa-ngku (Simpson 1991:208)
    Today-ERG PRES-3ps-3po bullock muster-CAUS man-ERG
    ‘The people are mustering the cattle today.’

In (71) it is certainly not the people who take place today, but rather the mustering event. Therefore, it does not make much sense to say that this ergative marking is concord licensed by control or predication in the normal sense. My view that nominal adverbs can undergo dependent case marking does not require this dubious assumption about predication. According to me, ergative case is triggered on the adverb in (71) by the presence of the object ‘bullock’, just as ergative case on the subject ‘people’ is. Note also that the same type of time adverb that undergoes ergative marking in Warlpiri in (71) undergoes accusative marking in Quechua in (64b). It seems very odd to say that time adverbs are predicated of the subject in Warlpiri but of the object in Quechua, in the absence of any evident semantic difference. Rather, these adverbs simply undergo whichever dependent case rule a given language happens to have, structural factors and morphological paradigms permitting. Adverbs may also undergo ergative case marking in Shipibo (Baker xxx:xx; see Valenzuela (2003) on ‘participant agreement’), although they do not in XXX (Chukchi? Ingush? Burushaski? Greenlandic?)

What then can be said about which adverbs in particular undergo dependent case marking and which do not? This question has both within language and across language dimensions. Within languages, there has been discussion of the issue in the literature on Korean and Finnish, usually couched in semantic terms (e.g. Wechsler and Lee xxx, Sells and xxx xxx for Korean). I have little to add on this point, except to point out a prediction of the dependent case theory: it should be middle-to-high adverbs that get ergative case in ergative languages, whereas it should be low-to-middle adverbs that get accusative case in accusative languages. This follows because an adverb must be higher than the object to receive ergative, and that might not be true of the lowest adverbs. Conversely, an adverb must be lower than the subject to receive accusative, and that might not be true of the highest adverbs (see ‘tomorrow’ in Quechua in (64a)). Therefore, it is not surprising if time adverbs like ‘yesterday’ are common receivers of ergative case in ergative languages but not of accusative case in accusative languages, whereas duration and frequency adverbs are common receivers of accusative in accusative languages but not of ergative in ergative languages. Manner adverbs are plausibly in the middle field, between the subject and the object, hence liable to be ergative in an ergative language like Warlpiri and accusative in an accusative language like Quechua. It is possible, then, that some of what has been treated semantically in previous literature actually has a structural component, where the semantics of an adverb is related to where it appears in the clause, and its case properties are determined simply by its position. However, other factors will no doubt be relevant too, including lexical factors like whether the adverb in question has nominal category features or not, and morphological factors like whether the adverb bears some other inflection that is incompatible with the realization of a case affix (a semantic case perhaps) and what declension class the adverb belongs too. I leave the pursuit of these details to specialists in the relevant languages.

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30 An example of declension class being a factor is that manner adverbs do not bear accusative case in tripartite Diyari. This follows from the fact that they are common nouns that do not have feminine gender, and such nouns do not take overt accusative affixes in this language (Austin xxx:xx). See also Maling (2009), who remarks that some adverbs in Finnish always bear accusative –n and some never do, regardless of the structure (check:xx).
Some of the same factors might be relevant on the cross-linguistic dimension, concerning why adverbs get dependent case marking in some languages but not others. The most elegant solution would be to discover that the adverbs are NPs in some languages but not others. That could well be true for manner adverbs, for example, which are related to the category adjective in some languages (English, Emonds xxx) but to nouns in other languages, particularly those in which the N-A distinction is weak (Quechua, Warlpiri). But it is not so likely to account for the fact that ‘yesterday’ undergoes case marking in Quechua but not in Sakha, given the evidence that ‘yesterday’ is (can be) a noun in Sakha too, as shown by example like (62). I do not rule out the possibility that we might discover that ‘yesterday’ is really the complement of a null P head (say) in Sakha but not Quechua (cf. Larson xxx on bare NP adverbs as PP in English), this null P being a phase head that hides its complement from dependent case marking. But I do not have any positive evidence for this difference, nor is it obvious where to look for such evidence. The alternative would be simply to say that nouns used as adverbs are somehow less nominal than nouns used as arguments (have fewer nominal features), and they fall above the threshold for dependent case marking in some languages and below it in others—the style of analysis that was pursued for covert NPs in the previous section.\footnote{This line of analysis would imply that we have to distinguish different dimensions of nominality, because we know that Sakha is less stringent than Quechua and Finnish when it comes to empty categories triggering dependent case marking, but more stringent than Quechua and Finish when it comes to adverbs undergoing dependent case. Therefore we cannot put adverbs in a well-defined position along the single scale in (53). Rather, we would need to say that Sakha has a high standard of nominality along the adverb-noun dimension but a low standard along the phi-feature dimension. Obliqueness versus nonobliqueness is presumably a third dimension given section 5.1.} Which of these approaches is correct should be an empirical question, to be decided by matters like whether there are other differences in the syntax of the adverbs or not. But I have nothing else to bring to bear on this matter for now.

It is well worth noting, however, that while we have plenty of evidence that nominal adverbs can undergo dependent case marking in some languages, we have very little evidence that they can trigger dependent case marking on another NP. On the contrary, we have evidence that they cannot. So consider again the Quechua example in (64a), repeated here as (72).

\begin{verbatim}
(68) Paqarin Xwancha Lima-man ri-nqa. Tomorrow Juan Lima-to go-3FUT ‘Tomorrow Juan will go to Lima.’
\end{verbatim}

I claimed that ‘Juan’ does not trigger accusative on ‘tomorrow’ here because it does not c-command it, ‘tomorrow’ being very high in the clause. But then ‘tomorrow’ should c-command ‘Juan’. Why then doesn’t this make ‘Juan’ accusative? Similarly, we know that ‘forcefully’ receives ergative case in Diyari, but it does not trigger ergative case on the subject that (presumably) c-commands it in an example like (69a), repeated here as (73).

\begin{verbatim}
(69) Wata yini parapara pit\textsubscript{i}-ya. Not\textsubscript{2sg}5 energetic fart-IMP ‘Don’t fart loudly!’
\end{verbatim}

The subject does not trigger ergative on the adverb (although an object would) because it is higher than the adverb. But then why doesn’t the adverb trigger ergative on the subject? Here we see for only the second time some significant separation between what can be a case competitor and what can be a case
undergoer in the dependent case schema. And as far as I have seen this is quite general across languages; it is stated in (74).

(70)  Adjuncts can undergo dependent case but they cannot trigger it.

This generalization cries out to be explained in terms of general principles. I attempt to do so in section 6.xx in terms of the familiar idea that adjuncts enter into syntactic representations later than arguments do.

5.5 Predicate Nominals

Finally, I need to mention here one more relevant construction—one in which (perhaps surprisingly) there is very little crosslinguistic variation with respect to case assignment. This is the predicate nominal construction. This is unfortunately not a strength of my analysis, but something should be said about what the facts are, and where they might fit in.

Predicate nominal constructions generally have two nominal phrases in them: the predicate nominal itself and its subject. Despite this, it is striking that, in language after language, dependent case assignment does not apply in these constructions. Consider first ergative languages. Here we might have expected the predicate nominal to trigger ergative case on the subject. But it does not, in any of the languages I have investigated. Rather, the subject is consistently absolutive, as seen in the examples in (75).

(71)  A. Ino-ra onsá yoina iki.  (Shipibo, Valenzuela 2003:xx)
      jaguar:ABS-EV dangerous animal COP
      The jaguar is a dangerous animal.

     b. Zu buba Joxanes kešiš ja.  (Lezgian, Haspelmath xxx:311)
       I.GEN father Johannes prest COP
       ‘My father Johannes is a minister.’

Similarly, in accusative languages the predicate nominal is not accusative, even though it is c-commanded by the NP or DP subject. (76) gives some examples:32

(72)  a. Baaska byraas e-t-e          (Sakha, NV:xxx)
      Baaska doctor AUX-PAST-3sP
      ‘Baaska was a doctor.’

     b. œňña bala-nna mist nän.  (Amharic, Leslau 1995:271)
       we.NOM husband-and wife(NOM) be.1pS
       ‘We are husband and wife.’

     c. Juan-ka mayistru-mi (ka-rka).  (Cole, p. 67, Imbabura Quechua)
        Juan-TOP teacher-VALID be-PAST.3

32 The one language I know of that has accusative case on a predicate nominal is Classical Arabic, and even then the predicate nominal is only accusative if there is an overt copula (xxx:xx). One might plausibly say that it is like other languages with regard to dependent case assignment, but the copula (or some functional head associated with it) assigns accusative case in its c-command domain under Agree.
Juan is (was) a teacher.

Finally, in tripartite languages like Diyari or Nez Perce, neither the subject nor the predicate bears the relevant dependent case:

(73) a. ŋan puluka-yiŋa.  
1sgS cattle-HABIT  
‘I am a stockman.’

b. há:ma hí:wes qí:wn.  
man 3sS-be-ASP old.man  
‘The man is an old man.’

One of the professed virtues of the dependent case view is that it constrains where we can look for solutions to issues like these, since there are only so many ways that dependent case assignment can fail. My options, then, are these: saying the subject does not c-command the predicate, saying that the subject is not in the same spell out domain as the predicate, or saying that either the subject or the predicate is not (sufficiently) nominal. And the first of these, appealing to the c-command condition, looks like a non-starter. On all standard accounts, the subject c-commands the predicate, and this is confirmed by (for example) its ability to bind an anaphor inside the predicate, as in (78) from English.33

(74) a. John is a harsh critic of himself.  
b. Mary is not herself today.

Saying that the subject and the predicate are not in the same spell out domain is more tempting. We might try to achieve this by saying that Pred (in the sense of Baker 2003) is a phase head, like the similar external-argument introducing category v, so that it triggers the spell out of its complement in a schematic structure like (79a).

(75) a. [PredP That Pred [DP (a) [DP picture (of Paris)]]]  
b. [PossP John’s Poss [NP picture (of Paris)]]  

Indeed, I already said this in section 4.xx to explain why the complement of a noun (e.g., Paris in (79)) cannot get dependent accusative case in either a predicate nominal construction, just as it cannot in a possessive construction like (79a). But if the NP/DP complement of Pred is a spell out domain, it is one thing to say that a nominal properly contained inside it is invisible to the subject, but it is something else to say that the NP/DP predicate as a whole is invisible to the subject. That would not follow from the normal understanding of phase theory. Moreover, I want to make the opposite choice for the possessive nominal structure in (79b): ‘Paris’ here is invisible for dependent case assignment at the level of the possessed nominal as a whole, but ‘picture of Paris’ is not; rather ‘picture of Paris’ triggers ergative case on the possessor in a good number of ergative languages (see section 4.xx). Therefore, the spelled out domain as a whole is still visible on the next cycle. But then there is little that distinguishes (79a) and

33 For the special identificational copular sentences like ‘That man is John’, it is possible that the core of the sentence is simply two DPs merged together directly (Moro xxx:xx?). If so, then we might say that the two DPs are in a relationship of mutual c-command, whereas dependent case applies only if one DP asymmetrically c-commands the other. (Thanks to Mario Montalbetti (p.c.) for pointing out this possibility.) However, this account is unlikely to extend to predicational copular sentences, like those in (75)-(77).
from a structural viewpoint, to account for the fact that ergative appears on the possessor in (79b) in some languages, but never on the subject in (79a).  

The third possibility is to say that one or the other phrases in the predicate nominal construction is not really an NP or DP—at least not in the sense required by the dependent case schema. If it is not, then it will neither trigger nor undergo dependent case assignment. Of the two, it is presumably the predicate nominal that we should be taking a hard look at, since there is no reason to think that the subject of a predicate nominal construction is any different syntactically from the subject of any other clause type.

At this point some linguists might be happy to appeal to the NP-DP distinction, saying that it is DPs that participate in dependent case marking, whereas a predicate nominal is an NP. But I am not one of those linguists, for several reasons. First, I do not believe that all languages necessarily have DPs distinct from NPs; many articleless languages for example may not, as I assumed in Baker (2003), drawing on Chierchia (1998); see also Boskovic’s (xxx) DP-NP parameter. But in an articleless language like Sakha, object NPs become accusative and predicate nominals do not, and in an articleless language like Shipibo object NPs trigger ergative on the subject but predicate nominals do not. So if languages do in fact allow NP arguments, the NP-DP distinction will not work for this. Indeed, the NP-DP distinction look very promising even for a language with articles, like English, given that the complement of Pred in (79a) sure looks like a DP, since a is needed with a singular count noun, whereas the complement of Poss in (79b) is presumably an NP, since no article is possible here. Nevertheless, the later triggers ergative in relevant languages and the former does not. Maybe the predicate nominal is contained in something that affects its behavior with respect to case theory, but it is probably not DP that draws the distinction.  

With this possibility in mind, the way through the difficulties that I propose is as follows. I suggest that there is indeed an additional head other than D in the structure of predicate nominal constructions, between NP and Pred. This is symbolized as E in (80).

(76)  

\[
\text{[PredP That Pred [EP E [DP (a) [DP picture (of Paris) ]]]]}
\]

This extra head creates some distance between the phase head Pred and the NP/DP that constitutes the core of the predicate nominal for the predicate nominal to be contained in a different spell out domain from the subject of predication: Pred triggers the spell out of EP, and NP/DP properly contained in this EP is not visible to the outside world. I further assume that EP is not itself a nominal category, so it does

\[^{34}\] Note that in these terms it may not be enough to say that P is a phase head to explain why the subject ‘John’ does not get ergative case in a structure like [John arrived [np at the field]] (see, for example, (2) above). Even if P is a phase head, the NP node as a whole should still be visible on the larger cycle. Perhaps we need to say that the structure of PPs is more complex (cf. Koopman xxx, among others), and some higher head “p” is the phase head, spelling out PP, in which NP/DP is not visible. The rest of my analysis should be unaffected by this.

\[^{35}\] Another possibility to consider is whether predicate nominals need to undergo pseudo-noun incorporation (PNI) with the copular verb to form a predicate at LF. If so, that might explain why there is no accusative case on the predicate nominal, just as there is no accusative on PNIed objects in Tamil (Baker in Press). This could be part of the story in some languages—particularly those in which the predicate nominal needs to be linearly right-adjacent to the copula, like Sakha. But I doubt that this is enough to capture the case properties of predicate nominals in full generality, for two reasons. First, there are languages in which the predicate nominal does not need to be in a particular position next to the copula, but has some freedom to move around, and for those languages there is no obvious support for a PNI analysis (e.g., xxx, see xxx:xxx). Second, PNIed objects which lose their own case feature can still trigger dependent case on another NP. For example, PNIed themes in Sakha still trigger dative case on goals and causees that c-command them in VP (B&V:xxx). Given that this, we cannot explain why predicate nominals never trigger ergative on their subjects using PNI.
not count as something that should be involved in dependent case marking. In terms of section 4.4.xx (based on Baker (2003)), EP does not inherit the referential index of its NP/DP complement. Therefore, NP/DP inside EP is sheltered from case theory interactions with the outside world much as NP/DP inside PP; see section 5.1 for discussion.

So what is E? I am not entirely sure, but I think that I have seen them in the wild. I have not mentioned Tamil in this section yet. It is a typical accusative language in that it does not have accusative case on the predicate nominal. But it is somewhat special in that it has two visible elements in a predicative clause other than the subject and the predicate nominal: a normal looking verbal copula, but also the so-called adverbial suffix –aa. This is seen in (81).

(77) Avaru DisTrikt inspekTar-aa iru-nt-aaru. (Asher xx:71)
    He.NOM district inspector-ADV be-PAST-3sS.HON
    ‘He was a district inspector.’

This –aa is otherwise used to mark adverbs as distinct from adjectives; for example, the adjective nalla ‘good’ can be used as an adverb ‘well’ in the form nallaa. See also ‘quickly’ in (82).

(78) Maala veegam-aa anda pustagatt-e paqji-cc-aa. (Tamil)
    Mala quick-ADV the book-ACC read-PAST-3fS
    ‘Mala read the book quickly.’

This shows that –aa is not a realization of the Pred head, since Pred should not be involved in adverbial modification. Rather, it is something lower (closer to the noun); intuitively it might have the function of suppressing the NP’s referential index, so that it can be used nonreferentially, as a predicate.36 This –aa then could be a realization of the E head in (80), whereas the copula realizes the Pred head (directly or indirectly).37

Another language in which an extra bit of morphosyntax is visible in copular constructions is the ergative language Chukchi. As expected, the subject is (83) is absolutive, not ergative, even though there is another nominal in the clause. But in Chukchi, the predicate nominal is not in bare absolutive case; rather it is in a special “equative” case, dedicated to this purpose. This special noun form is typically used along with a copular verb, as in Tamil.38

(79) anqen jokwajo ipe ?iy-u n-it-qin. (Dunn p. 317)
    DEM.3s.ABS eider.duck.3s.ABS.truly wolf-EQU HAB-be-3sS
    ‘That duck was actually a wolf, ha ha!’

So this is equative morpheme –u is another possible realization of the E head—and indeed I chose the label E to invoke ‘equative’. Inasmuch as the predicate nominal looks rather like an oblique in (83), it is not too surprising that it does not trigger ergative case on the subject. Therefore, there is morphological

36 There is in fact a technical need for this within the framework of Baker (2003), so that predicate nominals do not violate the Noun Licensing Condition, assuming that Pred does not theta-mark its NP or AP complement.
37 An additional detail is that Tamil does not need to have an overt copula if the clause is interpreted as present tense. However, if the copular verb is not present, then the predicate nominal is not marked by –aa either (xxx:xx). This is good in the sense that it confirms that –aa and the copula act as a team, and one cannot appear without the other. However, it leaves open what the structure of copula-less predicate nominal clauses is in Tamil. 38 Also as in Tamil, copula-less predicate nominal constructions are possible in Chukchi in some (limited) circumstances, and when there is no copula the predicate nominal can be absolutive rather than equative (Dunn xxx:xx); compare note 38.
evidence of there being a bit of extra structure in predicate nominal constructions in at least a few
languages. My suggestion is that this is true below the surface in all languages, even though the E (and
the Pred head) can be null in many of them. This is what the special case theory properties of predicate
nominal constructions are due to, I claim. I leave the exact nature of this E head and its contribution to
the semantics of the clause open for now.

There are certainly no stunning successes for the dependent case theory to boast about here.
But neither do we have to abandon this view, which otherwise has much to commend it, in light of the
special properties of predicate nominal constructions. Hopefully future research into copular
constructions will either fill out what is sketchy here, or point toward some other account that is even
better.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered what kinds of phrases participate in dependent case marking, both as
the case undergoer and as the case competitor. The short answer is that overt NPs do, as distinct from
PPs (including those called NPs with inherent case), CPs, certain unpronounced NPs, and the special EPs
found in predicate nominal constructions. This helps to sharpen our sense of exactly what dependent
case marking is all about. We also see that there is some crosslinguistic variation in terms how many
nominal features a constituent must have for the rule of dependent case assignment to see it. Thus true
NPs with oblique case, covert NPs with fewer features (e.g., with no phi-features) and nominal adverbs
are opted out of dependent case interactions in some languages but not others.

39 This hypothesis should also work for languages with negative c-command conditions, like the marked
absolutive language Nias. In Nias, an NP gets marked absolutive case if and only if there is no NP in the
local domain that it c-commands (section 3.2.xx). Consider, then, how this applies to predicate nominal
constructions. If a predicate nominal counts, then the subject c-commands it and the subject should not
have marked absolutive case in Nias. But if the predicate nominal is not visible to the subject because it
is embedded in the nonnominal category EP, then the prediction is that the subject of a predicate
nominal in Nias will have marked absolutive case. This second prediction is the right one, as shown in (i).

(i) Te’ana ya’ia z=a=mira. (Brown 2005:xx)
   Neg him ABS:REL-IMPF-write
   ‘The writer is him.’

The fact that the predicate nominal does not get marked absolutive in Nias or marked nominative in
Choctaw, which plays a role in the discussion in section 3.2.xx, apparently shows that these rules do not
apply when EP is spelled out, but only when TP is.