
Subject vs Non-Subject Asymmetries of Case Drop as Domain Effects of Context-Sensitive Spell-Out

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Claim: Recent work on context-sensitive spell-out (i.e. allomorphy and suppletion) has shown that locality domains such as phases play a crucial role in determining whether the realization of a head X can be sensitive to the features of a head Y. In this paper, I argue that certain asymmetries wrt. case marker alternations can and should be derived using the same mechanisms. In the case study at hand, the case of internal arguments in Tamil is deleted iff the verb is contained in the same locality domain.

Argumentation: Direct objects in the Dravidian language Tamil, which usually bear accusative, can drop the case marker in the presence of the verb (1a). Subjects of unaccusatives can drop (zero) nominative and then no longer control agreement on the verb (1b).

- (1) a. Kumaar [kar-(**aik**)] keeṭ-ṭ-aan. ‘Kumaar asked for a car.’
kumaar car-ACC ask.PAST-3M.SG
- b. Mala-kku kolande-nge keḍe-cc-icci. ‘Mala got some children.’
Mala-DAT child-PL get-PAST-3SG Baker (2014)

This pattern is called to as Pseudo-Noun Incorporation and a number of syntactic accounts have been developed to capture the distribution of caseless nouns (see e.g. Massam 2001, Dayal 2011, Baker 2014). In this talk, three arguments are proposed that a morphological account in terms of context-sensitive spell-out is more adequate: (i) Many syntactic accounts cannot derive the requirement of case marker to be adjacent to the verb. (ii) Syntactic accounts cannot derive that different case markers can occur on different conjuncts in coordination (cf. Kalin & Weisser 2017). (iii) Syntactic accounts are not flexible enough to account for the parametric variation we find wrt. the syntactic position of the case-dropping noun.

Literatur: • Baker, M. 2014: Pseudo-Noun Incorporation as Covert Noun Incorporation: Linearization and Crosslinguistic Variation. *Language & Linguistics* 15 • Dayal, V. 2011: Hindi Pseudo-Noun Incorporation. *NLLT* 29 • Kalin, L. & Weisser, P. 2017: Asymmetric DOM in coordination and its implications. To appear in *LI Squibs* • Massam, D. 2001: Pseudo-Noun Incorporation in Niuean. *NLLT* 19