Russian case morphology and the syntactic categories
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1. Introduction

- **Case morphology:** Russian nouns, adjectives, numerals and demonstratives bear case suffixes. The shape of a given case suffix is determined by two factors:
  1. its **morphological environment** (properties of the stem to which the suffix attaches; e.g. declension class, gender, animacy, number); and
  2. its **syntactic environment**.

  The traditional cross-classification of case suffixes by declension-class and by case-name (nominative, genitive, etc.) reflects these two factors.

- **Specialness of the standard case names:** Traditionally, the cases are called by special names (*nominative, genitive*, etc.) not used outside the description of case systems. The specialness of case terminology reflects what looks like a complex relation between syntactic environment and choice of case suffix.

- **Eliminating the special case-names:** How we perceive the relation between case and syntactic environment depends not only on our view of the syntax-morphology relation, but also on our view of how the syntax itself works. In this paper, I offer two proposals about syntax offer an interesting simplification of the theory of morphological case.

  In particular, these proposals allow one to abandon some of the traditional case terminology, and instead distinguish several of the case suffixes as instances of familiar syntactic categories:

(1) Genitive = N  Accusative = V  Nominative = D  Obliques = P

A genitive-marked word is thus a stem to which a suffix of category N has been attached; a nominative-marked word is a stem with a suffix of category D; and an accusative bears a suffix of category V (with some caveats discussed below).

A dative, instrumental, prepositional or locative-marked word bears a suffix of category P. Only the distinctions among these last cases will fail to correspond to syntactic category distinctions, but may reflect the kinds of lexical differences that independently distinguish subcategories of overt prepositions.

¹ This paper arose in the context of ongoing joint work on undermerge and related issues with Esther Torrego (UMass/Boston), though responsibility for the Russian sections should be laid fully at the door of the present speaker. Thanks to Masha Polinsky, Esther Torrego and Morris Halle for discussion, and to John Bailyn and Andrew Nevins for useful remarks by e-mail.

- **Terminology:** I will use the abbreviations **Ngen**, **Dnom**, **Vacc**, **Pdat**, etc. to remind us of the traditional names for the cases whose actual nature is simply N, D, V, and (types of) P. The case-name suffixes to these designations are thus present merely for our convenience.

- **Genitive:** The most unusual aspect of the proposal will be the treatment of genitive as N -- with which I will begin the discussion in the next section.

- **Syntax:** The treatment of case as in (1) will depend on two ideas that are novel in the context of a syntax based on external and internal Merge, but are also revivals of well-known older proposals, as well as a third important concept:

  1. **Morphology assignment:**

     When α [or a projection of α] merges with β and α assigns an affix, the affix is copied onto β and realized on the (accessible) lexical items dominated by β.

     This proposal revives the notion of **case assignment** (Vergnaud (2006); Rouveret & Vergnaud (1980); Chomsky (1980; 1981)). Other properties of older notions of case assignment, however, continue to follow from the theory of **agreement** (Chomsky (2000; 2001); Pesetsky and Torrego (2007); and others). The integration of these two notions is work in progress.

  2. **Undermerge:**

     Internal Merge may create new **complements**, not just new specifiers. I will use the name **undermerge** for complement-forming Merge, and **overmerge** for specifier-forming Merge. The proposal generalizes to phrase-to-head movement an analysis more familiar in the domain of head-to-head movement (Travis (1984), Baker (1988); Pollock (1989), Chomsky (1991)). It also revives the proposal of **Raising to Object** (Rosenbaum (1967), Postal (1974)).

     **The relevance of points 1 and 2 to morphological case in Russian:** Undermerge of a new complement to a head that already has one bleeds morphology assignment to the previous complement.

  3. **Phases:** Also important will be the notion of syntactic **phase** as a Spell-out Domain.

     **The relevance of points 1 and 3 to morphological case in Russian:** Morphology assignment cannot affect the lexical items of a domain D after D is spelled out or linearized.

- **Undermerge and the spelling out of phases** thus serve as two brakes on an otherwise general process of Morphology Assignment. The value of these brakes to us is that they freeze for our inspection earlier stages of the derivation, allowing us to verify our theory of that derivation.
2. The hidden genitive in all Russian nouns

Key properties of compound nouns in English
(2) Terminology for endocentric compounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer repair</th>
<th>Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Property A. Dependent member is a bare NP (i.e. not a DP):
(3) Dependent member must not contain D...

a. the [bus stop] vs. *the [a bus] stop
b. a [computer repair] vs. *a [the computer] repair

even when the N requires it...

c. a [Bronx apartment] vs. *a [the Bronx] apartment
   (but: *I grew up in *(the) Bronx)

d. a [UN diplomat] vs. *a [the UN] diplomat
   (but: *I work for *(the) UN)

...but may be phrasal, allowing a prenominal modifier

- c. some [foreign car] rental vs. *[some [(the foreign car) rental]
- d. the [South Bronx] Expressway vs. *[the [the South Bronx] Expressway]
  [ok I live in the Bronx vs. *I live in Bronx]

Property B. Morphologically singular dependent member substitutes for expected plural:
(4) Morphologically singular dependent member may have plural interpretation...

a. computer repair (= repair of computers)
   vs. *some (repair of computer)
   b. car rental (= rental of cars)

(5) ...even allowing singular forms of pluralia tantum as the dependent member:

- a. pant leg
- b. scissor repair
- c. drug problem

**Strategy**: I will take property A as defining a type of construction (a "compound") whose dependent member is a bare NP. I use property B as an additional way of spotting compounds.

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**Counterparts to these compounds in French and Russian**
(6) French and Russian counterparts of Germanic compounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Russian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. l'arrêt de bus</td>
<td>ostanovka avtobusa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. station de métro</td>
<td>stanica (moskovskogo) metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. réparation d'ordinateur</td>
<td>remont komp'jutera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. location de voiture</td>
<td>arenda avtomashiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Palais de Culture</td>
<td>dvorec kul'tury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Maison de Livre</td>
<td>Dom Knigi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Maison d'étudiant</td>
<td>Dom studenta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. rue de Beethoven</td>
<td>ulica Betxovena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Fondation de France</td>
<td>fond Francii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. agence de voyages</td>
<td>bjuro putešestvij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. tanec života</td>
<td>dance belly-GEN.SG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conjecture:**
We are seeing the same construction in all three languages: a compound.

**Thus:** The English and French compounds teach us about Russian.

**Properties of dependent member in French, English and Russian:**
1. English, French: absence of D on the dependent member
2. Russian / French: genitive case² / de
3. English, Russian, French: singular form may have plural interpretation

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² I will not discuss Russian or French exocentric compounds that do not show GENitive, such as gorod-geroj / ville-héros 'hero city' (lit. 'city-hero'). In French the second member lacks an independent article, but this might reflect N-N coordination, rather than the subordination of an endocentric compound. Also not discussed here are the much-discussed agent and intrument compounds like French grille-pain 'toaster' (lit. 'grills-bread'), which Russian lacks, and Russian semi-counterparts like ledokol 'icebreaker' (M.Polinsky, p.c.) or ljudoed 'cannibal'.
(7) Syntax of dependent member of a compound
The dependent member of a compound is a bare NP in all three languages.³

• ... and genitive morphology is the sign of a bare NP.

The nature of Russian genitive morphology

• Observation: The Russian noun contains just one slot for pronunciation of an inflectional suffix.

• If this observation is a matter of pronunciation, as in (8)...

(8) The One-Suffix Rule (Russian Nouns)
Only the final overt inflectional suffix on a noun is pronounced

• ... then the One-Suffix Rule (8) allows the following characterization of genitive morphology:

(9) Genitive morphology is N
Each Russian noun enters the syntax with a suffix N, realized as genitive morphology. Attaching N to a stem categorizes it as a noun.

• The fact that nouns are not always morphologically genitive reflects situations in which other affixes are added outside genitive.

  Note: NGEN is not the "little n" of Marantz (1997), which merges in the syntax with a category-neutral phrase, creating an NP. It will be crucial shortly that nouns enter the syntax as nouns — with NGEN already affixed.

• The shape of NGEN is context-dependent: sensitive to noun-class and number on N. (See Nevins and Bailyn (2006) for a phonologically explicit proposal.). In its plural form, it is phonologically null on the surface, but is an underlying yer-vowel, indicated by -ъ:

(10) Realization of genitive (i.e. +N) on singular and plural nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stem</th>
<th>NGEN sg.</th>
<th>stem</th>
<th>NGEN pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. stol</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>b. stol</td>
<td>-ov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ stola</td>
<td>→ stolov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. lamp</td>
<td>-y</td>
<td>d. lamp</td>
<td>-ъ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ lampy</td>
<td>→ lamp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

³ The dependent member is thus a "small nominal", but in a very different sense from Pereltsvaig (2006).
arguments have the same general form:

(1) that a word with nominative case was born genitive and got "reassigned" nominative by D; or

(2) that a word with oblique (e.g. dative) case was also born genitive, spent some time as a nominative, and only later was "reassigned" oblique by P.

I offer two arguments in defense of the general proposal, which simultaneously support the association of the cases with the various syntactic categories. The arguments have the same general form:

If we can find a syntactic configuration which blocks the overwriting of an old case with a new case ending, we should find the old case surfacing in an environment where one otherwise expects the new case.4

Russian as a case stacking language

• If this proposal is correct, Russian is actually a "case stacking" language like Lardil—a view recently proposed by Richards (2007) (an important predecessor of this paper).

• Some aspects of our proposal need less argument than others. For example, the order Ngen-Dnom-Pobl reflects the way a PP is built...

...and the idea that bare Ns are genitive was argued for in section 2.

• But other aspects are not yet supported by evidence. In particular, why believe:

3. Argument 1 for the proposal: Phrases with paucal numerals

Step 1: Explain the number mismatch between adjective and noun in paucal numeral constructions.

(15) A nominative (or accusative) paucal numeral ('two', 'three', 'four') takes a GEN.SG noun...
   a. dva stol-
   b. tri dān-
   c. četyre stakan-
   
   two table-GEN.SG
   three day-GEN.SG
   four glass-GEN.SG

(16) ... but a modifying adjective following the paucal numeral is plural, even though the noun is singular.
   dva novyj pidZaka.
   three-GEN.SG coat--GEN.SG

• In general, when an attributive adjective merges with a projection of N, its morphological number is determined by the number of the N it modifies:

(17) a. francuzskij jazyk
    b. romanskie jazyki
    French-NOM.SG language-NOM.SG
    Romance-NOM.PL language-NOM.PL
    'French language'
    'Romance languages'

   c. moi ljubimye [syn i doč']
   my-NOM.PL beloved-NOM.PL son-NOM.SG and daughter-NOM.SG

• Proposal: The adjectives in (16) are no exception to the general rule. They are merging with and modifying a plural phrase. Though the noun is singular, the combination of noun and paucal numeral is plural.

Details: Number (Num) may be added to N either pre-syntactically (as morphology) or by syntactic Merge. The choice depends on the species of Num being added. A noun to which Num has not merged pre-syntactically bears singular morphology.

Plural Num — added pre-syntactically (as morphology):
A normal plural N is formed by lexically (i.e. pre-syntax) merging a noun with plural Num.

Paucal Num — added syntactic (by Merge that does create a word)
Numerals 2-4 are not numerals, but syntactically independent instances of Num. On the assumption that a noun may merge only once with Num, this accounts for the genitive singular morphology on N with the paucal numerals. It is 'two', 'three' or 'four' that pluralizes N by syntactically merging with it:

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4 Both arguments involve retention of genitive after assignment of nominative or oblique. I do not have a comparable argument showing retention of nominative in an oblique environment, though there are two instances of nominative following P in Russian that may be relevant.
Step 2: Explain the word order among adjective, noun and paucal numeral.

- The agreement mismatch between noun and adjective leads us to expect the order: "adjective-numeral-noun" instead of the actual unmarked order "numeral-adjective-noun" seen in (16).

Step 3: Explain the absence of nominative case on N and adjective.

- Nominative paucal, genitive N: The paucal numerals dva 'two', tri 'three', and četyre 'four' do have distinct genitive forms dvux, trëx and četyrëx. Why does the paucal numeral show nominative case morphology in nominative environments, while their noun (along with modifying adjectives) bears genitive?

- Effects of Num-to-D movement: If the movement shown in (20) obligatorily takes place, and if nominative case is D NOM, assigned by D, a generalization emerges.

In (20), D assigns its D NOM morphology only to the new complement formed by Num-to-D movement (the paucal numeral "Num"), leaving its former complement (the remnant NP) untouched and genitive.

"New Complement"?

In ongoing work with Esther Torrego, we argue that Travis-style head movement of the sort seen in (21) (Travis (1984)) is a real phenomenon and is directly produced by Merge — contrary to many recent counterproposals (Mahajan (2000); Koopman and Szabolcsi (2000); Fukui and Takano (1998); Toyoshima (2001); Matushansky (2006)).

We propose, furthermore, that such movement be understood as satisfying a "second complement" requirement of a head, just as EPP may be understood as a "second specifier" requirement — and call such movement undermerge (contrasted with specifier-forming overmerge).

Our work is focused on arguing that undermerge is not limited to head movement, and that phrasal undermerge is ubiquitous as well. Much of the evidence is old: arguments for raising-to-object in English (Rosenbaum (1967)) and the arguments for raising to object of P of McCloskey (1984). We believe that undermerge (in fact, raising to object of P) offers a solution to phrase structure paradoxes in Pesetsky (1995), and other issues posed in a variety of constructions.

This ongoing work is relevant to the present paper mainly to indicate the (claimed) existence of support for the structure of (21), and the status of the raised Num as a "new complement" of D.
Step 4: Oblique phrases with paucal numerals — Merge P with (21)

(22) A temporary proposal (to be replaced shortly)
A head such as D assigns its morphology (D NOM) under c-command (once DP is complete).

* The temporary proposal in (22) predicts the assignment of D NOM to the paucal numeral, and the retention of genitive (N GEN) on the lexical items of the rest of the NP.

In contrast to most other proposals (e.g. Pesetsky (1982b), Bailyn (2003)), genitive in the paucal numeral construction is thus not assigned by the numeral. It is instead "primeval genitive". The initial genitive morphology of the NP, not been overwritten by other morphology — because of the Num-to-D movement in (21).

* Further Prediction: If a P is merged with (21), it will c-command not only D + Num, but also the remnant NP. Consequently, the lexical items of the remnant NP, along with Num itself, will receive any morphology assigned by P.

(23) 

\[ P \rightarrow DP \rightarrow NP \rightarrow D + Num \rightarrow A ( ) N \]

...predicting correctly that oblique case, e.g. P DAT, will be found not only on the paucal numeral, but also on the lexical items of the remnant NP.

Step 5: Why are the oblique nouns in (24a-c) plural?

Suppose P bears unvalued, uninterpretable number (\(\alpha\text{Num}[ ]\)). This feature will probe to value its Num feature, and the closest Goal will be plural, as we have already seen. Consequently, the morphology assigned by P to DP will be the plural variant of the relevant oblique case, e.g. P DAT plural. This argues for the distinctness of Agree and morphology (case) assignment.

Interim summary

* The number mismatch between adjective and noun motivated a structure that predicted the order adjective-numeral-noun.
* Num-to-D movement explains the actual order order numeral-adjective-noun, and simultaneously suggests a structure in which the numeral is a sister to D, but not the remnant NP.
* This derived structure allows us to explain why only the numeral, and not the rest of the NP, is nominative — and why the rest of the NP is genitive...assuming our configurational proposal for case assignment and the "primeval" status of genitive on N.
* It is further predicted, correctly, that a higher assigner such as P will overwrite both nominative and genitive with whatever oblique morphology the P controls, e.g. P DAT, with number of the morphology dictated by the valuation of the number feature of P via Agree.

4. Q that does not raise to D

* DPs with non-paucal numerals and a variety of other quantificational elements behave like the paucals, except for the number mismatch.

* Analysis: What D actually attracts is a subclass of quantifiers that I will call +Q. Paucals are both Num and +Q, many instances of +Q are not Num:

(24) DPs with a paucal numeral in an oblique (dative) environment

a. dvum xorošim stolam   b. trēm xolodnym djam
two-DAT good-DAT.PL table-DAT.PL three-DAT cold-DAT.PL day-DAT.PL

c. četryr-ëm krasivym stakanam
dead-DAT beautiful-DAT.PL glass-DAT.PL

(25) Non-paucal +Q in nominative environments

a. mnogo krasivyx stolov
   many-NOM beautiful-GEN.PL table-GEN.PL

b. dostatočno tēploj vody
   enough-NOM warm-GEN.SG water-GEN.SG

c. šest staryx lamp -š
   six-NOM old-GEN.PL lamp-GEN.PL

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5 This is the so-called "homogeneous pattern" of Babby (1987). See also Babby (1980) and Pesetsky (1982a). For cross-Slavic variation, see especially Franks (1995).
(26)  **Non-paucal +Q in oblique (dative) environments**
a. mnogim  krasivym  stolam  
many-DAT.PL beautiful-DAT.PL table-DAT.PL  
b. dostatočný  těploj  vode  
Enough-FEM.DAT.SG warm-FEM.DAT.SG water-DAT.SG  
c. šesti  starym  lampam  
six-DAT.PL old-DAT.PL lamp-DAT.PL  

- Some quantifiers are not +Q, e.g. vse 'all', každyj 'each'. These are not attracted to D, and therefore do not deprive the rest of their NP of nominative assignment from D:

(27)  **Quantifiers that are not +Q, in nominative environments**
a. vse  krasivye  stoly  
all-NOM.PL beautiful-NOM.PL table-NOM.PL  
b. každaja  staraja  lampa  
each-FEM.NOM.SG old-FEM.NOM.SG lamp-NOM.SG  

(28)  **Quantifiers that are not +Q, in oblique (dative) environments**
a. vsem  krasivym  stolam  
all-DAT.PL beautiful-DAT.PL table-DAT.PL  
b. každoj  staroj  lampe  
each-FEM.DAT.SG old-FEM.DAT.SG lamp-DAT.SG  

(29)  **Paucal numerals may behave like vse and každy when feminine!**
a. dve  starye  ženščiny  
two-FEM.NOM old-NOM.PL women-NOM.PL  (GEN also OK)  
b. tri  Ivanovy  
three-NOM Ivanova-NOM.PL  

*Note:* It is usually said that the noun here is genitive singular, which shows syncretism with the nominative plural with these nouns – but as Franks (1995) and Isakadze (1998) note, the form Ivanovy is uniquely nominative plural, an irregularity in female names in -ova. The genitive would be Ivanovyj.

Stress, however, goes the other way. In cases where, due to lexical idiosyncracy, the plural of a feminine noun shows a different stress from the singular, the stress pattern with a paucal numeral is that of the genitive singular, rather than the nominative plural. I leave this problem open. A related problem might be the five masculine nouns that have end-stress with paucal numerals but stem-stress in other genitive environments (Rappaport (2002), Nevins and Bailyn (2006), among others).

5.  **Vacc**

- **Special accusative form 1:** In an animate DP, an accusative noun or adjective is **morphologically genitive** if (1) it belongs to Declension II (nouns), (2) is masculine (adjectives) or (3) is plural. We may view all of these as involving Declension II, on the grounds that plurals of all nouns and adjectives are the same regardless of declension class (with complications in the genitive) and that the masculine adjectives are arguably of Declension II (Halle and Matushansky (2006)).

(30)  **Genitive morphology on animate accusative nominals**
a. My videli nastojaščego lingvista.  
we saw real-MASC.GEN.SG linguist-gen.SG  
'we saw (the/a) real linguist.'  
b. My videli malen'kix  sobak-ı.  
we saw small-GEN.PL dog-GEN.PL  
'we saw (the/some) small dogs'

- **Special accusative form 2:** A noun with theme vowel -a or a feminine adjective shows a special accusative form in the singular, common to animates and inanimates. Since the feminine adjectives arguably also have theme vowel -a, we may assume that this special form is triggered by theme vowel -a in both nouns and adjectives.

(31)  **Acc morphology on nouns and adjectives with -a**
a. My videli nastojaščuju  sobaku/lampu.  
we saw real-FEM.ACC.SG dog-ACC/lamp-ACC  
'We saw (the/a) real dog/lamp.'  
b. My videli malen'k-o-go  mužčinu.  
we saw real-MASC.GEN.SG man-ACC  
'We saw (the/a) small man.'  

- **Otherwise...**there is no special accusative. Traditional grammar would say that there is an accusative identical to the nominative:
6. Morphology assignment not under c-command

- In a genitive NP, how does an attributive adjective acquire genitive?

(35) Modifier of N' with primeval genitive is genitive (= (11))

    remont stiral'n-oj mašin-y
    repair washing-fem.gen.sg machine-gen.sg
    'washing machine repair'

Preliminary answer:
Merge of α to any projection of an element with N_{gen} assigns N_{gen} to α.

- Likewise, Merge of α to any projection of D appears to assign D_{nom} (i.e. nominative) to α:

(36) Modifier of D' is nominative

    ēti poslednie dva krasivyx stola
    these-nom.pl last-nom.pl two-nom beautiful-gen.pl table-gen.sg

- Perhaps the following makes the same point in VP:

(37) Modifier of V' is accusative [?]

    ja čital knigu [celuju nedelju].
    I read book-acc.sg entire-acc.sg week-acc.sg

- But then why doesn't the remnant NP in (21) also receive nominative morphology from DP, despite Num-to-D (more accurately, Q-to-D) movement?

(38) Affix assignment

    If H has an affix to assign, it assigns this affix to each element with which it merges once its complementation requirements have been satisfied.

- D will not assign nominative until Q (Num) undermerges with it, since its complementation requirements are not satisfied until then. From that point on, it will assign nominative to each element with which it merges. Since the remnant NP was merged earlier, it does not receive nominative.
7. Argument 2 for the proposal: the possessive genitive and phases

- We might now explain the possessive genitive (and other adnominal genitive DPs) the same way as we explain the genitive adjective in (35).

The bracketed DP in (39), for example, receives N\textsubscript{GEN} morphology from \textit{dom} when it merges with it.

(39) **Possessive genitive inside a nominative DP**

  a. \textit{dom} [\textit{starogo soldata}]
  
  house-NOM.SG old-GEN.SG soldier-GEN.SG
  
  'the old soldier's house'

  b. *\textit{dom} [\textit{staryj soldat}]
  
  house-NOM.SG old-NOM.SG soldier-NOM.SG

**Possessor problem:** Why, however, does genitive on the possessor not get overwritten with D\textsubscript{NOM} when D is merged with \textit{dom starogo soldata}?

The answer cannot be an effect of undermerge, since — in contrast to the behavior of the remnant NP in the paucal numeral and other +Q constructions — even merging P with the DP in (39) has no effect on the morphology of the possessive genitive. P\textsubscript{DAT} morphology is impossible on the possessor:

(40) **Possessive genitive inside a DP in an oblique environment**

  a. k \textit{domu} [\textit{starogo soldata}]
  
  to house-DAT.SG old-GEN.SG soldier-GEN.SG
  
  'the old soldier's house'

  b. *k \textit{domu} [\textit{staromu soldatu}]
  
  to house-DAT.SG old-DAT.SG soldier-DAT.SG

**Conjecture:** The following is a related question:

**V\textsubscript{ACC} problem:** Why does V successfully assign special accusative to an animate complement, but not to the object of a complement PP?

(41) **Assignment of V\textsubscript{ACC} is not possible across a PP boundary**

  a. My \textit{videli nastojaščego lingvista}. (=30a)
  
  we saw real-MASC.GEN.SG linguist-GEN.SG
  
  'We saw (the/a) real linguist.'

  b. My \textit{podošli k nastojaščemu lingvistu}. / *nastojaščego lingvista
  
  we went-up-to to real-MASC.DAT.SG linguist-DAT.SG
  
  'We went up to (the/a) real linguist.'

Morphology assignment may certainly cross maximal projections elsewhere. For example, P may affect the morphology of elements of NP contained within DP, as may V.

There is clearly something special about DP... but morphology assignment may certainly effect DP, as when P\textsubscript{DAT} or V\textsubscript{ACC} is assigned.

Apparently, an element H may assign morphology that affects the lexical items dominated by a DP if H merged with the DP — but not if the DP is merely contained within a phrase that H merged with.

**Proposal:**

1. DP is a phase (but NP, PP, etc. are not) (Chomsky (2001)). The lexical items that a phase dominates are not accessible to morphology assignment once the phase is spelled out.

2. A phase is not spelled out until it undergoes Merge.

3. Morphology assignment by H precedes spell-out of the complement of H.

**Consequences:**

- for the V\textsubscript{ACC} problem: If the complement of V is a DP, V\textsubscript{ACC} will affect the lexical items of that DP. But if the complement is a PP whose object is a DP, V\textsubscript{ACC} will not affect the lexical items of DP. Consequently, the DP will retain the morphology assigned to it by P.

- for the possessor problem: A possessor will be assigned morphology by the N’ with which it merges, but this morphology will thereafter be frozen, since the DP is spelled out right after merger with N’.
References


