

On one example of case syncretism and what it might be about

In the talk, I propose an analysis of one type of syncretism in the Czech nominal and adjectival declension. The particular syncretisms I am concerned with are depicted in Table I.

Let me first assume the Syncretism Principle (1) of Alexiadou and Müller (2005).

(1) *Identity of forms implies identity of function.*

Consequently, I treat all the phonologically identical exponents as lexically identical. Let me further call the **-y** and **-ou** exponents (boldfaced) as general exponents. The generalisation observable from the table is that if the general exponent appears in nominative, it also appears in accusative. If it appears in accusative, it also appears in instrumental. These observations are inexpressible in terms of equipotent feature decomposition, a standard way how to treat case syncretism (for Slavic see e.g. Franks, 1995, Müller, 2004).

Therefore, following Starke (unpublished work), I claim that Case features are privative and they are hierarchically organised. Specifically, I propose the hierarchy (2). (2) encodes subset relations among the individual Cases, giving us first approximation on what underlies the system of syncretisms in Table I:

(2) [*INSTR* [*ACC* [*NOM* [*...* [*NP*]]]]]

The hierarchy (2) needs independent justification and I motivate it by case-shifting patterns that occur in Czech. I interpret these shifts, again following Starke, as an instance of the so-called peeling (5). In (5), the DP moves up in the tree and in each movement step it strands the highest case shell. Thereby INSTR shifts to ACC if the DP undergoes one movement step and it shifts further to NOM if it undergoes two such steps.

In (5a) I show that subjects in passive are in INSTR. I adopt the idea that the by-phrase originates in Spec-vP (Collins, 2004) and propose that it is born there as INSTR. In the ECM structure (5b), the NP bears ACC and I claim that it has undergone at least one movement step, peeling off the INSTR case shell. In the passive of an ECM verb (5c), there is a further movement step that peels off the ACC case shell.

Using (2) as the relevant structure, the initial observation can be generalised into (3).

(3) *If there is a general form F for functions f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n , where $f_1 \supset f_2 \supset \dots \supset f_n$, then F can spell out f_j , $1 < j \leq n$, only if it also spells-out functions f_1, \dots, f_{j-1} .*

Interestingly, the same generalisation holds for the distribution of the suffix *-ed* in English verbs. A body of work (e.g. Emonds, 2005, Embick, 2003 & 2004, Kratzer, 2000, Starke, unpublished work) has established at least the following hierarchy (4) where all the functions may be spelled out as *-ed*:

(4) [*PAST* [*PERFECT* [*PASSIVE* [*STATIVE* [*...* [*VP*]]]]]]]

The expectation expressed by (3) when applied to (4) is that if we find *-ed* in the stative participle, we find it all the way up. We may, however, find *-ed* in passive but not in stative, situation reported by Embick (2003). And again, if there is *-ed* in passive, we find it all the way up starting from there. There are also cases where only past has *-ed*, whereas all the other forms are different (Table II). Crucially, we never find an „irregular“ form for past, and *-ed* for other functions, a consequence of (3).

I argue that (3) can be explained in a realizational theory of morphology that allows to spell out non-terminal nodes. In such a theory, an affix can be lexically specified to spell out a non-terminal node (for such a system, see e.g. Neeleman & Szendrői, 2005) or rather a sequence of syntactic heads. A general affix is specified for the whole sequence, the less general affixes are specified for a subset thereof (7). I propose that distribution of suffixes (7) in Table I can be derived from (8), a version of Subset Principle.

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Kratzer, A. (2000): *Building Passives*. Ms., University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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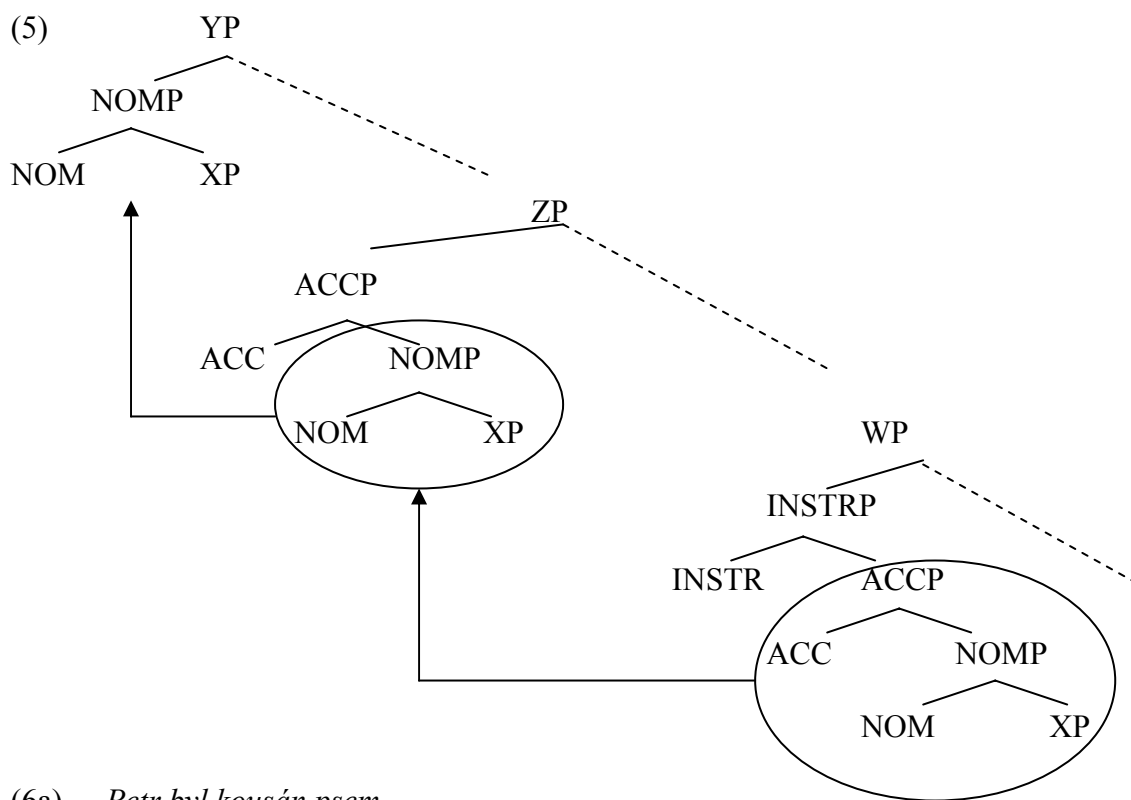
Neeleman, A. & Szendrői, K. (2005). Radical Pro-Drop and the Morphology of Pronouns. Ms. UCL/Utrecht.

Table I:

	paradigm <i>hrad</i> ,castle', plural	paradigm <i>pán</i> ,lord', plural	paradigm <i>kuře</i> ,chicken', plural	paradigm of feminine adjectives, singular	paradigm of <i>žena</i> ,woman', singular
NOMINATIVE	hrad-y	pán-i	kuřat-a	dobr-á	žen-a
ACCUSATIVE	hrad-y	pán-y	kuřat-a	dobr-ou	žen-u
INSTRUMENTAL	hrad-y	pán-y	kuřat-y	dobr-ou	žen-ou

TableII

	close	shave	prove
STATIVE	close-ed	shav-en	prov-en
PASSIVE	close-ed	shav-ed	prov-en
PERFECT	close-ed	shav-ed	prov-en
PAST	close-ed	shav-ed	prov-ed



- (6a) *Petr byl kousán psem*
Petr was bitten dog-**INSTR**
- (6b) *Karel viděl psa kousnout Petra*
Karel saw dog-**ACC** bite Peter
- (6c) *Pes byl viděn kousat Petra*
dog-**NOM** was seen bite Peter

- (7) $y \leftrightarrow [\text{INSTR} [\text{ACC} [\text{NOM}]]]$
 $i \leftrightarrow [\text{NOM}] / \text{masculine, animate}$
 $a \leftrightarrow [\text{ACC} [\text{NOM}]] / \text{neuter}$

- (8) An exponent may be inserted into a node if it is specified for every feature contained by the node. If more exponents satisfy the condition for insertion, the one which specifies less features is inserted.