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Introduction

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Introduction

Helen de Hoop, Olaf Koeneman, Iris Mulders, Fred Weerman[☆]

Effects of morphological case that go beyond its mere phonological characteristics are the subject of this special issue. In the GB model of the eighties, morphological case was considered a spell-out of abstract case. While abstract case is present in all languages, the spell-out is only in a subset. In such a view, the presence of morphological case may help to uncover more abstract features, but in itself it does not have syntactic or semantic effects. Traditional as well as new observations, however, show that the presence or absence of morphological case correlates with the presence or absence of certain syntactic or semantic properties.

How do we account, for instance, for the classical observation that there is a relation between free word order of arguments and case marking? *Denis Bouchard* explains this correlation on highly principled grounds: the parametric choice between word order and case marking follows from inherent properties of the human sensory and motor apparatus which are motivated on grounds independent from language. On the other hand, the reductionist approach that assumes a universal form of coding the relation between syntax and semantics results in unexplanatory kinds of parameters to account for language variation, and it would induce less efficient processing. Bouchard illustrates the differences between reductionist and non-reductionist approaches by comparing different analyses of certain phenomena in Japanese.

Eric Haeberli proposes an explanation of the correlation between word order and morphological case within the Minimalist framework. First, he argues that the UG concept of abstract case can be derived from the interaction of the categorial feature matrices of the elements contained within a clause. Secondly, he proposes that syntactically represented case features only occur in languages with a rich morphological case system and that these features are the source of the syntactic phenomena that have traditionally been related to morphological case.

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When the presence of morphological case affects interpretation, either directly or indirectly via phonology, then this might help to analyze the relation between abstract and morphological case. *Paul Kiparsky* takes the position that the theory of case belongs both to morphology and to syntax. It must draw on syntactic principles to account for the relation of abstract case to phrase structure and thematic structure. And it must develop a constrained theory of the interface between morphological case categories and the abstract case categories defined in the syntax. Kiparsky combines his own approach to morphological and abstract case to the Optimality Theoretic Correspondence Theory to derive Finnish clause structure by the interaction of general constraints. Kiparsky's analysis shows that abstract cases are to a great extent predictable from thematic structure.

Another Optimality Theoretic approach is advocated by *Dieter Wunderlich* and *Renate Lakämper*. They describe instances of double object constructions where structural case and semantic case compete with each other. They consider the existence of two conflicting constraints, one that favours structural case, and another one that excludes the occurrence of two arguments of one predicate bearing the same structural case. The two possible rankings of these constraints are used to analyze the different options for structural versus semantic case in the dialects of Quechua.

The mapping between syntax and semantics is also examined by *Joan Maling*. Maling focuses on the dative as a place where the mapping between the morphosyntax and semantics is often assumed to be particularly regular. Evidence is provided from English, German and Icelandic, which shows that these mappings are more heterogeneous than is generally acknowledged. Since the objects of transitive verbs do not all behave alike, theme cannot be treated as the default theta-role on verbal objects, and lexical rules may need to refer to the content of theta-roles and not just to their relative position in a verb's theta-grid.

A paper that focuses on dative case, too, but from a processing point of view, is the paper by *Josef Bayer*, *Markus Bader*, and *Michael Meng*. The authors argue in favour of an extra structural layer for NPs bearing oblique case. This would not only explain a cluster of syntactic properties associated with dative arguments but also explain several experimental findings with respect to on-line sentence understanding, including the facts that dative case is dispreferred in situations of local syntactic ambiguity and that dative case may erroneously override structural case during sentence comprehension but not vice versa.

The present issue seeks answers for divergent questions that center around the effects of morphological case. Theoretical and empirical considerations are brought together. The languages discussed include languages such as English, Finnish, German, Icelandic, and Japanese, but also Quecha, Serbo-Croatian, and Kashmiri, among others. *Lynn Nichols* investigates Kashmiri (with morphological case) and Northern Tiwa (without case) in an attempt to gain a general understanding of how referential hierarchy phenomena work morphosyntactically. Two factors appear to be crucial: a structural association between referential features of clitics, agreement and inflection on the one hand, and the competing demands on inflectional structure from nominative agreement and high ranking referential features on the other. The conclusion of Nichols is that hierarchy phenomena are not

really all that exotic and that they do have an important bearing on theories of clause structure in general.

In fact, we think that each of the papers in this special issue has important implications for the study of universal grammar, although the theoretical perspectives may vary. *Wechsler* and *Zlatic* apply a Head Driven Phrase Structure approach to account for a phenomenon from Serbo-Croatian case. Regardless of whether they are inflected or not, Serbo-Croatian nouns transmit their case to their modifiers. The distribution of certain undeclined nouns is rather unusual: they appear in all verb-, noun- or preposition-governed positions except where dative or instrumental case is assigned. This is explained by the condition that dative or instrumental case to an NP must be morphologically realized by some element within the NP. An uninflected noun cannot fulfil this condition, but when it is combined with an inflected adjective, the construction becomes grammatical again. Serbo-Croatian differs from Choctaw where the case suffixes are optional. Yet, both languages are governed by the requirement that case be expressed somewhere, which allows one to factor out universal, functionally motivated principles from diverse grammars.

The papers in this issue share the ultimate goal to uncover the effects of one of the major realizations of the relation between form and meaning, morphological case. We are therefore convinced that a broad audience of linguists concerned with the production and comprehension of natural language, will welcome this special issue.