I. Split-S case, NOM–ACC agreement

Case and agreement are often linked: result of the same operation [1], or one feeds the other [2]. Georgian poses a challenge for this view: it has TAM-based split ergativity [3], [4]...

(a) \text{bovs\text{\textbar}i} icinis
\text{child—NOM} laugh\text{PRES.3SG} \quad \text{man—NOM} sit\text{PRES.3SG}
‘The child laughs’ ‘The man sits’

(b) \text{bovs\text{\textbar}i} xedavs kac-s
\text{child—NOM} see\text{PRES.3SG} \quad \text{door—DAT}
‘The child sees the man’

…But consistent NOM–ACC verbal agreement.

II. The problem

We can’t straightforwardly use case to derive prefixal agreement alternations.

If... \(v_– \leftrightarrow \text{[SPKR] NOM}\) Then... \(*v\)–naxa ‘He saw me’

And there doesn’t seem to be person–based split ergativity [5], suggesting 1st & 2nd persons aren’t secretly always NOM–ACC.

(a) \text{me da kac-ma} vicinet
\text{1SG} and \text{man—ERG} laugh\text{AOR.1PL}
‘The man and I laughed.’

(b) \text{me sacq\text{\textbar}al mo}mvxexe iat\text{\textbar}ak-i
\text{1SG} wretched\text{ERG} scrub\text{AOR.1SG} floor—NOM
‘Poor me scrubbed the floor.’

III. A syntactic solution?

Béjar & Rezac [6] propose a Cyclic Agree–based analysis of Georgian agreement: \(v^0\) has \([UPART]\).

(a) \(\text{[vp s3} v^0 [vp V0 O1]]\)
\(\text{1} \rightarrow m\)
\(\text{2} \rightarrow v\)
\(\text{3} \text{ no [PART]}\)

But there are a few hurdles for this approach.

(b) 2>3>3 ditransitives → same as 2>3 trans?

\(\text{[vp s2} v^0 [vp IO3 [v V0 DO3]]}\)
\(\text{2} \rightarrow \emptyset\)
\(\text{1 fails} \quad \text{...but miscem, not *mi\text{\textbar}cem you will give it to him} (\text{cf. \text{\textbar}naxe you saw him})\)

(c) ‘Inverse agr’ [4], [7] → same as normal agr?

\(\text{[tp T\text{\textbar}perf} [vp s1} v^0 [vp V0 O3]]\)
\(\text{2} \rightarrow m\)
\(\text{1 fails} \quad \text{...but minaxavs, not \text{\textbar}naxavs \text{’I have seen him’}'}\)

IV. Proposal: licensing, not case

In Georgian, \([PART]\) requires licensing [8]. Both \(v^0\) and \(T^0\) can do this. Prefixal agreement tracks which probe is the licensor.

\(\text{[tp T^0 [vp DP1/2} v^0 [vp V0 DP2/1]]}\)

Prediction: PCC effects only in ditransitives, not DAT-subject constructions (cf. Basque [9]).

(a) \(\text{v–} \leftrightarrow \text{[SPKR] IT—LIC}\)
\(\text{b} \quad m– \leftrightarrow \text{[SPKR] L–V–LIC}\)

(10) a. *man mas me gamin\text{\textbar}cano
\text{3SG.ERG 3SG.DAT 1SG.(NOM) introduce:AOR.3SG>G1SG
Attempted: ‘She introduced me to him.’

\(\text{[tp T^0 [vp IO3} v^0 [vp IO3 [v V0 DO1]]]}\)

(b) mas me mov\text{\textbar}convan
\text{3SG.DAT 1SG.(NOM) like:PRES.3SG>G1SG
‘S/he likes me.’

\(\text{[tp T^0 [vp – v^0 [vp EX3 [v V0 Th1]]]}\)

References


Conclusion: Georgian provides further evidence for the claim that argument licensing should be distinguished from morphological case [10].