

On the Symmetry of Case in Conjunction

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Background: In recent years, a great of number of cases of so-called *Closest Conjunct Agreement* (CCA) have been reported (see Aoun et al 1994, Bošković 1997, 2009, Munn 1999, Citko 2004, van Koppen 2007, Benmamoun et al 2009, Bhatt & Walkow 2012 and many more). Given that the standard theory usually ties case assignment and ϕ -agreement together to a single process (or views them at least as closely related), we might wonder whether we find instances of *Closest Conjunct Case* - a situation where only the closest conjunct of nominal coordination receives a certain case. In fact, the literature contains several claims that such a phenomenon is attested (see McCloskey 1986, Johannessen 1998, Walkow 2013). However, an in-depth study of an instance of Closest Conjunct Case has not been done so far.

Claim: On the basis of 15 case studies about apparent counterexamples, I show that these claims cannot be maintained and that the hypothetical phenomenon of Closest Conjunct Case does not exist. Counterexamples are refuted either due to a misanalysis of the underlying syntactic structure or to the application of a superficial morphological operations such as ellipsis or allomorphy. To be more precise, I claim that the generalization in (1) holds crosslinguistically:

(1) **Symmetry of Case in Conjunction (SOCIC):**

Case is always evenly distributed amongst all of the conjuncts in nominal conjunction.

(1) has immediate consequences for the existing theories of case and ϕ -agreement. As I show, this corollary allows us to distinguish between different accounts of case assignment as it can be derived easily under some accounts such as an Upward Agree Approach or a Dependent Case Approach. If case enters the derivation as a reflex of ϕ -agreement in Chomsky (1995, 2001) however, (1) cannot be derived.

Apparent Counterexamples fall into three classes: (i) *Phrasal Clitics*: What seems to be a case marker of one conjunct, is in fact a marker attaching to the whole conjunction phrase (&P). Examples are found in Estonian, Udmurt, Hungarian, Welsh, etc. In Estonian, the terminative case seems to cliticize to the last conjunct only. However, adjectival agreement shows that the marker attaches to the whole conjunction and that every conjunct bears genitive (cf. (2)).

(2) Ta jook-sis [jõe ja suu-re puu]-ni.

3SG run-3SG [river.GEN and big-GEN tree.GEN]-TERM

‘He went to the river and the big tree.’

Estonian: Triinu Viilukas (p.c.)

(ii) *Suspended Affixation*: (SA) In some languages affixes of non-final conjuncts are elided under identity with affixes of the final conjunct. The systematic nature of SA and the fact that other affixes (like plural or possessive affixes) are affected as well, strongly suggests that case-marking applies symmetrically and the seemingly asymmetric pattern is due to a superficial ellipsis operation. (cf also Ershler (2012), Guseva & Weisser (2015)). Examples of SA languages are: Turkish, Japanese, Korean, Armenian, Mari and many more.

(3) köy, kasaba ve kent-ler-imiz-den

village town and city-PL-1PL.POSS-ABL

‘from our villages, towns, cities.’

Turkish: Göksel & Kerslake (2005)

(iii) *Allomorphy*: In some languages, certain pronouns use special forms when adjacent to the conjunction. For English, Emonds (1986), Sobin (1997), Parrott (2009) have argued that conjoined pronouns regularly bear default object case. Only in some arbitrary contexts, e.g. a 1SG pronoun right-adjacent to the conjunction *and*, the subject form can be used (*‘Tom and I’*). In Italian, the 2SG pronoun *tu* uses the object form when right-adjacent to the conjunction *‘Io e te’*. In Irish, a similar phenomenon arises since a special form of 3SG/PL pronouns are used when

