Nominative Case can be sensitive to clause typing: on case marking in Khoekhoe

Philip Shushurin; HSE University

The paper argues that Nominative case marking *can be sensitive* to clause typing (formally, to properties of C), adding to (somewhat inconclusive) evidence in (Bidese, Tomaselli, Padovan (2016). **Data** Khoekhoe (Khoe; Namibia) is an SOV language where nominals appear in two morphological forms: NOM (unmarked) and marked with *-a* (Accusative). The Khoekhoe declarative clause has the following form (1a) (Hagman 1973), where the prefield position linearly precedes the illocutive force marker (exemplified with the declarative marker *ke*) followed by the Middlefield (roughly, non-fronted verbal dependents), followed by the verbal complex (*ko ‖ʔama* in (3a)). The Prefield can be occupied by the subject, with default IS, (3a) or another constituent (under different IS-conditions, such as topic, focus etc. see Hahn (2013)), as in (3b). In the latter case, the subject's phi-features are right-adjoined to the fronted constituent. I assume a ($\bar{A}$)-movement analysis of fronting of non-subject constituents to the prefield (2). The rules of case marking can be summarized as follows (i) NOM case is borne on subject DPs in the prefield position (3a); (b) if the prefield position is occupied by another constituent, all arguments (including subjects) must get Accusative marking (NOM marking impossible) (3b); (c) in interrogative clauses, all arguments must get Accusative marking (4-6);

(1) a. PREFIELD **KE** MIDDLEFIELD (T/ASP) V

b. SUBJECT$_{NOM}$ **KE** ARG1$_{ACC}$ ARG2$_{ACC}$… V

c. XP$_{(ACC)}$=ϕ **KE** SUBJECT$_{ACC}$ ARG$_{ACC}$… V

(2) PREFIELD:{ }=ϕ *ke* [SUBJECT..<XP>..]

(3) a. **Mataba-p(-*a)** ke |uri.ha-p*(-a) Namibia-p ⁿ!a ko ‖ʔama
M.-M DECL metal.horse-M-ACC Namibia-M in PST buy
'M. bought a bicycle in Namibia.'

b. [|uri.ha-p*(-a)]=s ke Mutani-s*(-a) Namibia-p ⁿ!a ko ‖ʔama
metal.horse-M-ACC=F DECL M.-F-ACC Namibia-M in PST buy
'=3a'

Question formation Polar questions are formed by fronting a focussed constituent, formed with the right-attached marker *-i* (4a), which, in the case of verum focus, can attach to the clausal structure (4b). As (4b) shows, the Q marker *i-* can be optionally dropped. For cases like (5) I assume that the TP, similarly to (4b), contains the null allomorph, with the TP string-vacuously moving to the Prefield (supposed SpecCP). That the TP is contained in the Prefield can be evidenced, among other things, by the presence of phi-doubling (=*p*). *Wh*-questions, similarly to polar questions, may either contain a fronted *wh*-constituent, or by retaining surface declarative syntax (6). Both (5) and (6) are supposed to have the structure in (7), where TP string-vacuously moves to SpecCP.

(4) a. ʔom-s-a ‖ʔamaxu i=(p) ko mutani-p-a Mataba-p ai ?
house-F-ACC sell Q-M PST Mutani-M-ACC Mataba-M for
'Did M. *sell his house* to Mataba?'

b. Mutani-p-a ‖ari Mataba-p ai ʔom-s-a ko ‖ʔamaxu (i=p)?
Mutani-M-ACC yesterday Mataba-M for house-F-ACC PST sell Q=M
'=4a'

(5) Mutani-s-*(a) |uriha-p-a ‖ko ʔama ?
Mutani-F-ACC bicycle-M-ACC PST buy
'Did M. buy a bicycle?'

(6) Mataba-p-*(a) map-a ko !ũũ ?
Mataba-M-ACC where-ACC PST go
'Where did M. go?'

(7) PREFIELD:{ } *C* <TP>

Analysis I analyze the Prefield position as SpecCP. I suggest that Accusative case in Khoekhoe is assigned by any verbal head within the extended projection of vP. The NOM case assignment is assigned at SpecCP (as well within the PP and NP). The C head has two allomorphs (or *can be of two types*), bearing either a D probe or a δ (Bossi and Diercks 2019) probe triggering A or $\bar{A}$ movement respectively ((van Urk 2015), (Lohninger 2022)). The complementarity of the two types of probes creates bottleneck effects which prevent both canonical subjects and A'-moved phrases from occuring together in the Prefield position. As a result, NOM case assignment is available only iff the prefield position is not occupied by $\bar{A}$-moved phrase. In questions, the Prefield is occupied by a A'-moved phrase (TP or a smaller phrase so the subject in (4-6) cannot get NOM)

(8) a. C_D – probes for DPs

b. C_δ – probes for XPs with a discourse feature (*wh*, *focus* etc.)

(9) PREFIELD:{ } C_D [<DP>...]$_{\text{TP}}$

(10) PREFIELD:{ } C_δ [(SUBJECT)..<PP_δ> ..]$_{\text{TP}}$