Unifying structural and lexical case assignment in Dependent Case Theory
Gereon Müller and Zorica Puškar (Universität Leipzig)

**Background:** Dependent Case Theory (DCT) (Marantz 1991,McFadden 2004,Bobaljik 2008,Baker 2015) assumes Marantz’ (1991:24) case hierarchy: lexically governed case>dependent case>unmarked case>default case. NPs selected by lexical items (Vs, Ps) that idiosyncratically assign certain case, receive their case feature from the lexical head upon c-selection. Pairs of caseless NPs in asymmetric c-command relationship compete for dept. case. In NOM-ACC system, dependent case is assigned to the lower DP (ACC), in ERG-ABS system, dept. case is assigned to the higher DP (ERG). Other NPs that have not received case, get the unmarked case (NOM or ABS). The way it stands, DCT is not completely configurational since it still utilizes case assignment by a lexical head for lexical case assignment and hence it needs two different mechanisms for the two case types.

**Claim:** Based on similarities between structural and lexical datives in Serbian, I argue that they can receive the same treatment, as dept. case. While structural DAT is assigned as a high dept. case in the VP in competition with the lower (later ACC) DP, lexical DAT is assigned in the same configuration, in the VP, in competition with another silent or overt argument DP.

**Structural dative in Serbian:** The unmarked word orders of ACC and DAT objects:

1. Slavica je dala Marku knjigu. (2) Slavica je dala knjigu Marku.
   Slavica.NOM is gave Marko.DAT book.ACC Slavica.NOM is given book.ACC Marko.DAT
   ‘Slavica gave a book to Marko.’ V>DAT>ACC ‘Slavica gave a book to Marko.’ V>ACC>DAT

Tests such as quantifier scope (Aoun et al. 1989, Bruening 2001) reveal that the dative might be base-merged higher than the accusative.

(3) a. Slavica je dala [DAT jednoj drugarici] [ACC svaku knjigu].
   Slavica.NOM is given one.DAT friend.DAT every.ACC book.ACC
   ‘Slavica gave one friend every book.’ \( \exists > \forall, *\forall > \exists \)

b. Slavica je dala [ACC jednu knjigu] [DAT svakoj drugarici].
   Slavica.NOM is given every.ACC book.ACC every.DAT friend.DAT
   ‘Slavica gave a book to every friend.’ \( \exists > \forall, \forall > \exists \)

With (3a) only one reading is possible, while (3b) allows both. Assuming that DAT>ACC is the base structure, a Double-Object Construction (DOC)(Larson 1988), (3b) can be taken to be derived by movement of the ACC above the DAT (\( \forall > \exists \) interpretation is possible due to reconstruction of ACC to its base position). Gračanin-Yüksek (2006), Stegovec (2016) also point out that the movement of the ACC system, dept. case is assigned in the same configuration, in the VP, in competition with another silent or overt argument DP.

**Lexical datives:** Four types of lexical dative can be identified in Serbian:

(4) a. Marko je bio dato *(svoja) knjigu.
   Marko.DAT is been.MSG given.MSG self book.NOM
   ‘Marko was given his book.’ (DAT is not a subject, cf. Zaenen et al.)

   Marko.NOM is been MSG given.MSG book.ACC
   ‘Marko was given a book.’ (DAT does not alternate with NOM)

**Lexical datives:** Four types of lexical dative can be identified in Serbian:

(5) a. Ljubica je pomogla Ani.
   Ljubica.NOM is helped Ana.DAT
   ‘Ljubica helped Ana.’

b. Ana se prilagodila grupi.
   Ana.NOM se adjusted.FSG group.DAT
   ‘Ana adjusted to the group.’

(6) a. Kapa pripada Ani.
   cap.NOM belongs Ana.DAT
   ‘The cap belongs to Ana.’

b. Ana se sviđa Bojan.
   Ana.DAT se appeals.MSG Bojan.NOM
   ‘Ana likes Bojan.’
while those in (6) correspond to unaccusatives. DAT in (6a) usually has a benefactive/recipient/goal \( \theta \)-role, while NOM is usually the agent. Another ACC object can be added to such sentences (e.g. \textit{Ljubica je pomogla Ani školovanje}; Ljubica.NOM helped Ani.DAT schooling,ACC) and they can be passivated with DAT having the same properties as the one in (4). DAT in (5b) is largely similar. If the overt ACC argument is added, the reflexive se morpheme disappears (e.g. \textit{Ana.NOM se adjusted group.DAT. vs. Ana.NOM *(se) adjusted behaviour;ACC group.DAT.}). The complementary distribution of se and ACC suggests that se is absorbing ACC case (cf. Franks 1995). In contrast, (6a-b) cannot have another overt ACC argument, or be passivised; their NOM argument is a theme, suggesting that their structure is the one of unaccusatives.

**Proposal:** Dependent case is assigned in narrow syntax (Baker & Vinokurova 2010, Baker 2015, Preminger 2014). I adopt case feature notations from Lexical Decomposition Grammar (Wunderlich & Joppen 1995, Wunderlich 1997, Stiebels 2002): ACC: [+hr] ‘there is a higher role’; DAT: [+lr] ‘there is a lower role’; ERG: [+lr] ‘there is a lower role’; NOM/ABS: [ ] no case features \( \rightarrow \) default. The features [+hr] and [+lr] are assigned incrementally to argument DPs via the operation Agree. By Downward Agree (\( \downarrow \text{AGR} \downarrow \)), the higher of the two DPs in an asymmetric c-command relation receives the [+hr] from the lower one, and by Upward Agree (\( \uparrow \text{AGR} \uparrow \)), the lower DP receives its case feature from the higher one. \( \downarrow \text{AGR} \downarrow \) always precedes \( \uparrow \text{AGR} \uparrow \). In principle, one DP can receive more than one case feature. Important principle: case valuation cannot take place if the goal DP already has a valued case feature. **Structural case:** In DOCs, the direct object DP is a complement of the verb, while the indirect object is in Spec-V. Both DPs are unvalued for case. At the VP level, \( \downarrow \text{AGR} \downarrow \) values the higher DP’s feature as [+lr] (7). The lower DP remains unvalued because after \( \downarrow \text{AGR} \downarrow \) has applied, the higher DP has received a case value, so it cannot value the lower DP’s feature any more. Case assignment proceeds as the external argument is merged in the Spec-v. I assume a restriction in Serbian – the DP in Spec-v cannot be case valued (as this is a NOM-ACC system). \( \downarrow \text{AGR} \downarrow \) will then fail (8). \( \uparrow \text{AGR} \uparrow \) applies as the next operation between the external DP and between the two lower ones. \( \uparrow \text{AGR} \uparrow \) values the case feature of the lower DP as [+hr], additionally assigning this feature to the middle, dative argument too.

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(7) [v \text{DP} [+hr] [v' \text{V DP}_2]]
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(8) [v \text{DP} [+lr] [v' \text{V DP}_2 [+hr]]]
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Such incremental approach to dependent case correctly captures Burzio’s generalisation: only the DP in Spec-v can case-value the direct object. The same system will apply even if the direct object is scrambled above the indirect one, as in (2). **Lexical dative** is assigned in the same configurations as structural DAT. Sentences such as (5) involve a silent DP as a case competitor for dative (cf. Wood 2016). The silent DP at first enables the higher DP in the VP to get the [+lr] feature. Afterwards, it itself receives the [+hr] feature and remains unrealised (but sometimes can be overt, or realised as a reflexive se) (9). Sentences such as (6) also contain a DP as a competitor for DAT and this DP is merged as the complement of the verb, while the indirect object is merged in Spec-V. The higher DP receives [+lr] via \( \downarrow \text{AGR} \downarrow \) from the lower DP, but since no external argument is merged, the lower DP remains unmarked for case, and becomes realised as NOM (10). Note that the result of such derivation is only [+lr] on the argument that gets realised as DAT, which makes this DP more similar to an ergative DP (see Progovac 2013 for a similar idea on ERG patterns in Serbian).

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(9) [v \text{DP} [+hr] [v' \text{V DP}_2]]
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(10) [v \text{DP} [+lr] [v' \text{V DP}_2]]
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**Conclusions and outlook:** Derivational approach to dependent case assignment via Agree can account for the assumption that only caseless DPs compete for dependent case. Moreover, such approach can enable a unified treatment of lexical case and dependent case in corresponding local domains and structural configurations. Future work involves extending the approach to other cases (e.g. structural and lexical genitive, accusative, instrumental) and to ergative systems.