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Kristin Davidse and Béatrice Lamiroy, eds.: *The Nominative & Accusative and Their Counterparts* (Case and Grammatical Relations across Languages 4). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002. x + 363 pp. € 125.

Introduction

The volume under review is the fourth book published in the series *Case and Grammatical Relations across Languages*, originally started up by the late Brygida Rudzka-Ostyn. Volume 1 (*Case, Semantic Roles and Grammatical Relations*, edited by Petra Campe) contains a comprehensive bibliography consisting of more than 6,000 publications dealing with case phenomena in a variety of languages, both Indo-European and non Indo-European (nominative-accusative, as well as ergative-absolutive). Volumes 2 and 3 describe the dative (its description and its theoretical and contrastive aspects), and are edited by William Van Belle and Willy Van Langendonck, and Willy Van Langendonck and William Van Belle, respectively.

Readers expecting the traditional ('phenotypical') approach to case might find the series a bit disappointing since case is not approached as a system of inflexions on nouns (as in Latin), but in a much broader sense as a "system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their head" (Blake 1994: 13), i.e., word order, head marking, partly or wholly covert case are also included.

In addition to the *Introduction*, written by the editors, the book contains contributions on more than ten languages representing seven distinct language families: 1. Michael Herslund: *Romance transitivity* (15-39); 2. Ludo Melis: *Objects and quasi-objects: The constellation of the object in French* (42-79); 3. Nicole Delbecq: *A construction grammar approach to transitivity in Spanish* (81-130); 4. Kristin Davidse: *Nominative and oblique in English: reflexive clauses as a test case for distinct Agent-Patient models* (131-173); 5. Luk Draye: *Aspects of nominative and accusative in German* (175-200); 6. Zofia Kaleta: *The Source-Path-Goal schema and the accusative in interaction with the Genitive in Polish* (201-225); 7. Eugene Casad: *Objects, verbs and categories in the Cora lexicon* (227-264); 8. Larry Trask: *Ergativity and accusativity in Basque* (265-284); 9. Bill McGregor: *Ergative and accusative patterning in Warrwa* (285-317); 10. Felix Ameka: *Constituent order and grammatical relations in Ewe* (319-352).

Chapter by chapter review

Michael Herslund: *Romance transitivity*

Since the Latin case system disappeared in Romance languages (only early Gallo-Romance still had the nominative-oblique opposition, and there is still a genitive-dative distinction in Rumanian), Romance languages had to find new ways to express the central subject-object or Agent-Patient opposition. Herslund argues that in the development from Latin into Romance all of the five types of marking grammatical relations (GRs) can be found: dependent (case) marking, word order, marking by adpositions, head marking (agreement), and pronominal coindexation. The original Latin case system was gradually reduced to a three case system which is preserved in the personal pronouns in all Romance languages and which reflects the verb's valence potential, i.e. a verb can govern three valence defined complements:

a. the fundamental argument, which “contracts a particularly close connection with the verb and constitutes a syntactic predicate with it. This fundamental argument is the argument of the verb which is subject to the most severe and precise selectional restrictions, and it is the argument which specifies the reading of polysemous verbs.” (p. 16). The fundamental argument corresponds to the traditional notions of the object of a transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive verb, i.e. it corresponds to Dixon's (1994) O/S.

b. Unlike the fundamental argument, which constitutes the predicate with the verb, the subject constitutes a predication.

c. The third GR, the adjunct, corresponds to what are traditionally known as indirect objects, subject and object complements, prepositional objects, and some governed local complements.

In the remaining part of his contribution Herslund zeroes in on the so-called *object zone*, which he defines as “[...] the zone defined by the different manifestations of the object relation [...]” (p. 17). The object zone, which is opposed to the proposition, whose main argument is the subject, is thus opposed to the notion of subject whose cross-linguistic viability has often been disputed (see, for example, Van Valin 2001), who explicitly claims that Role and Reference Grammar “does not attribute cross-linguistic validity to the traditional relations of subject, direct object and indirect object, and therefore does not employ them as theoretical or analytical constraints” (p. 212). A similar view is also adopted by Construction Grammar (cf. Croft 2001), but if GRs like subject and object were totally superfluous, then volumes like the present one or Givón (1997), Faarlund (2001) and Aikhenwald et al. (2001) would hardly be worth publishing. In the object zone, Herslund differentiates between bare objects, normal objects and prepositionally marked (‘supertransitive’) objects, all of which are opposed to the single, unitary manifestation of the subject. The old nominative-accusative distinction was retained only in Gallo-Romance, which had the V2 word order, and without overt case marking many sentences would have been ambiguous, especially when both the subject and the object were

third person singular and agreement provided no help. Within the object zone, bare noun is opposed to the so-called articulated noun (a noun phrase) since bare nouns denote only the concept, whereas the articulated noun denotes an instance of the concept. Being non-referential, bare nouns occurred first as predicatives, and in contexts such as negatives, interrogatives and conditionals, i.e. in contexts where referentiality is reduced or non-existent. Herslund then discusses various instances of incorporation of a bare noun as object, which is found in Gallo-Romance, Spanish, Italian and Rumanian, but not in Modern French, which uses the preposition *de* in front of the noun, making it thus adverbial-like.

Prepositional objects, which are found in Spanish, Romanian, Sardinian and Southern Italian (and sometimes in Catalan and Portuguese) constitute the opposite pole from incorporated objects in that they refer to more specifically referential, individualised and cognitively salient objects. These different features responsible for the differentiation of the object zone can be organized in three hierarchies: empathy, referentiality, and autonomy:

The three hierarchies are closely interconnected: the more human-like, individual and autonomous with respect to the verb an object phrase is, the less it resembles a prototypical object, and the greater is the tendency to mark it prepositionally. The prototypical object, on the other hand, is an inert entity which only comes into existence by virtue of the activity denoted by the verb, i.e. an effected object as in for instance *She knitted a sweater*. Such objects are those most liable to fuse with the verb, i.e. to be incorporated, or at least not to be marked differentially. Autonomous, independent and reacting entities, on the other hand, which are only affected by the activity denoted by the verb, not created by it, have many features in common with prototypical subjects and do not, consequently, constitute 'good' objects. (p. 27f)

The final section discusses pronominal coindexation, which can be found in all Romance languages, but is fully grammaticalized with prepositional objects only in Romanian. At the end, Herslund proposes the following implicational hierarchy:

Neutral transitivity < Incorporation < Supertransitivity < Pronominal coindexation

which suggests that if a language has supertransitivity, then it also has incorporation and neutral transitivity, but if it lacks incorporation, then it also lacks supertransitivity and pronominal coindexation.

Ludo Melis: *Objects and quasy-objects: The constellation of the object in French*

In his contribution to this volume, Ludo Melis analyzes in more detail the object zone in French. To start with, direct objects (DOs) have to be characterized on four levels: (i) the lexico-grammatical level, which describes the valency of the verb and includes the subcategorization features of the verb; (ii) the categorial level, which defines DO as an NP; (iii) the syntactic level, which includes such coding properties as the position after the verb or passivization, and (iv) the semantic/cognitive properties, which include such features as affected vs. effected object, etc.

After a short summary of the characteristics of a prototypical object in French (Melis warns the reader that the discussion is restricted to French in order to preclude hasty generalizations), three types of non-subcategorized DOs are discussed: (i) the first group consists of the so-called activity verbs denoting subspecies of the process. The verbs are basically intransitive and the DO is then a hyponym of the deverbal noun, as in *Il court le marathon* ('He runs the marathon'). The verbs in this class save the semantic characteristics; i.e. they do not easily classify as either affected or effected objects; (ii) noise verbs do not fit the category of prototypical DOs easily either, which may be due to "the pressure of a metaphorical transposition of domain – from noise to communication" (p. 52), i.e. while *aboyer*, *barrir* and *bramer* ('bark', 'trumpet', 'bellow') in their intransitive uses do not require a human subject, when they are used with a DO the subject must be human, otherwise the sentence is ungrammatical, and in this sense they are quite similar to communication verbs; (iii) the third group of verbs with non-subcategorized objects consists of objects incorporated in compound verbs. These are some fixed expressions in which the NP is not really incorporated into the verb (e.g. *franchir le pas* 'to take the plunge'), but remains an independent NP, and the question that remains unanswered is whether such fixed expressions are collocations, idioms, or an intermediary category.

Section 3 discusses the loss of categorial properties, which is frequently coupled with the loss of coding, functional and semantic properties, and the NP has similarities with an *adject*, a term used to subcategorized adverbial phrases; however, the NP is not yet a full-fledged adverbial phrase. This type of NP is most frequently found with the so-called measure verbs, and with some intransitive movement verbs (e.g. *Cele vingt francs* 'This is worth 20 francs' *Il court vingt mètres* 'He is running 20 m'). In section 4, Melis discusses NPs with fewer and fewer object-like properties. Two classes of verbs take complement-like NPs, and the third class has NPs which modify the verb rather than the subject (e.g. *Il crève le froid* 'He is freezing to death'). The main reason why the NPs following verbs in these three groups are not true complements is that they share with the object NP at least one important property: they are used in the object slot in causative constructions, which is never the case with true complements. In section 5, Melis describes what he calls the object having no role or the internal or cognate object. "In this case the verb is followed by an NP exhibiting all the categorial and syntactic properties of an ordinary object, but with none of the semantic properties: the NP does not refer to an autonomous participant fulfilling a role in the process" (p. 69). Melis concludes that none of the four levels mentioned at the beginning is sufficient by itself, although it seems that the coding property is a necessary condition.

Nicole Delbeque: *A construction grammar approach to transitivity in Spanish*

In her corpus-based analysis Delbeque discusses the *a/ø* alternation in Spanish transitive constructions and argues against the traditional view that the preposition is used exclusively with animate objects with specific reference. Although the use of the preposition with such objects may be a prototypical case, this still does not ex-

plain the use of generic reference with *a*, or the use of \emptyset with specific human referents. Delbeque's working hypothesis is that "*a* marks the relationship between the S entity and O entity as 'bilateral', i.e. instead of having a simple, unidirectional force-dynamics going from the subject entity towards the DO entity, the relationship could just as well be presented the other way around, viz. with the DO entity as external argument" (p.87). In Langackerian terms, the prepositionally marked DO is not only the Landmark of the clausal Trajector S, but it is simultaneously the Trajector which has S as its Landmark, i.e. the relationship could be viewed in the opposite sense. One piece of evidence adduced in support of this claim are different translations of \emptyset DOs and *a*DOs in English. Verbs with *a*DOs have as their translational equivalents either less transitive verbs (e.g. *fight* vs. *fight against*) or the English translational equivalent of the Spanish *a*DO construction is the subject (e.g. *characterizar* + \emptyset DO = 'characterize, describe'; *characterizar* + *a*DO = 'be typical/characteristic of'). The *a* frame and the \emptyset frame also differ in terms of their argument roles. Whereas in the \emptyset frame this assignment is fairly straightforward (i.e. the subject is assigned the Actor and DO the Goal role), the *a* frame has an additional layer, that is, both the S and the DO are assigned an additional role which makes the *a* object the "*circumstantial cause representing the entity that enables ascription of the process to the Actor*" (p. 101 – author's italics) thus assigning the additional Carrier role to the subject.

Kristin Davids: *Nominative and oblique in English: reflexive clauses as a test for distinct Agent – Patient models*

Davids begins her paper by arguing that the nominative and oblique case should not be associated with the coding of both the Subject and Object grammatical relations and the participant roles such as Agent and Patient.

She argues that a distinction should be made between two types of Agent-Patient model: the transitive one, which involves the Agent's action towards an inert Goal, and the ergative one in which a nuclear process involving a Medium can be instigated by an Instigator.

Due to the loss of a case-marking system morphological case has become a very marginal phenomenon in English. Even in predicative complements, where traditional grammars insisted on the use of the nominative (*It's I*), the oblique is commonly used today (*If it's not me, I'm glad it's him*). The nominative is used only to encode the Subject function, which, according to Davids serves an 'instantiating' and a 'grounding' function.

Much more attention is devoted to the coding of participant roles, where the major contribution of morphological case to the meaning of participant roles consists in the contrast between bare NPs and prepositional phrases. Within the basic transitive and ergative construction paradigms Davids distinguishes four subtypes:

- (i) Transitive: *He spread his sandwiches.*
- (ii) Ergative: *The breeze spread the fire.*
- (iii) Inergative: *The fire spread.*

(iv) Intransitive: *The tribes spread south.*

Davidse claims that “Not only do we have distinct **semantic** process-participant relations in these examples, they also instantiate distinct **constructional** templates” (p. 142). The major difference between transitive and intransitive, on the one hand, and ergative and inergative, on the other hand, is that the latter are systematic alternates of each other, as shown by (a)-(c):

- (a) Transitive: *He spread his sandwiches :: *His sandwiches spread.*
- (b) Intransitive: **The wind spread the tribes south :: The tribes spread south.*
- (c) Ergative: *The breeze spread the fire :: The fire spread.*

The basic difference, then, is that one participant ergatives always allow construal of the corresponding ergative (cf. *The fire spread* vs. *The breeze spread the fire*), i.e. the inergative evokes a scene in which only one participant is profiled (the Medium), which is not the only energy source; there is always implied some second, instigative source that may be involved, which is why these constructions are often referred to as activo-passive. Consequently, transitive construals are Goal-targeted, with an Actor and a Goal. Intransitives contain only an Actor, whereas an inergative construction has a Medium in Subject position which implies an Instigator, which need not be overtly expressed. The remaining part of the paper is devoted to the application of these theoretical considerations to the analysis of reflexive clauses in English.

Luk Draye: *Aspects of nominative and accusative in German*

Draye's contribution begins with a description of the morphological case system in Standard German. Although German has retained the richest case system among West Germanic languages, there is a lot of syncretism in the pronominal, determiner and nominal paradigms. Draye is particularly interested in the nominative/accusative and dative/accusative syncretism in gapping constructions since only formally identical constituents can be gapped, and the question arises whether syncretized forms code case concepts broad enough to cover the semantic ranges of the two former formally distinct cases. In spite of case syncretism, word order in German is free and Draye challenges the claim that there is no basic word order in German and the claim that word order is determined by the theme/rheme organization of the sentence. Evidence from gapping shows that when there is a conflict between the Thematic Hierarchy and the Case Hierarchy, word order is free if case is morphologically phenotypical; when case marking is morphologically cryptotypical, the basic word order is determined by the case hierarchy nominative-oblique and is independent of the semantic properties of the verb.

The third part of Draye's contribution is concerned with some semantic aspects of two constructional types in which the accusative is being replaced by the nominative: predicative complements of reflexive objects and nominal predicates in infinitival clauses. Draye concludes that “the nominative seems to be emerging in present-

day German as THE CASE to express a predicative relation, irrespective of the case of the constituent it is a predicate of” (p. 198).

Zofia Kaleta: *The Source-Path-Goal schema and the accusative in interaction with the Genitive in Polish*

Unlike other contributors to this volume Kaleta does not discuss the coding of nuclear grammatical relations in the clause; she discusses the coding of the Source-Path-Goal schema in Polish within the general cognitive framework. Although the Source-Path-Goal schema in Polish can be coded by five cases (genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental and locative) Kaleta focuses on two major cases (the genitive and the accusative) since the other three cases play a rather marginal role. The way the Source-Path-Goal schema is coded depends on how the goal is perceived (as a surface, a container or a point), the type of path and the speaker’s vantage point.

The beginning of the path (the source) is always coded by the genitive in combination with directional verbal prefixes and prepositions irrespective of whether the source is perceived by the speaker as a container, a surface or a point. The Path-Goal subschema is mainly coded by the accusative but there is also some competition with the genitive. When the goal is perceived as a surface onto which the trajector moves, or the goal is perceived as a container into whose interior the trajector moves the accusative is generally used, but there is also some competition with the genitive. The choice between the accusative and the genitive depends on the type of goal into whose interior a trajector moves. The accusative is used for three-dimensional goals whose borders are not precisely defined (e.g. the air, the world, mist, a crowd). Container shaped goals with precisely defined borders (rooms, buildings, theaters) are coded by the genitive case when the trajector moves into the interior of such containers.

Kaleta concludes that the Source-Path-Goal schema in Polish is a hierarchical semantic structure representing a radial category. The prototypical instances are the container shaped goal coded by the genitive and the surface shaped goal coded by the accusative. Other types of goal are linked to the prototype by processes such as metonymy, generalization and specialization. The accusative has more homogenous meaning and it can justly be called the goal case.

Eugene Casad: *Objects, verbs and categories in the Cora lexicon*

Casad looks at verb agreement patterns in Cora, a language belonging to the Southern Branch of Uto-Aztecan. Basic verb agreement in Cora can be summarized as follows: (a) the morphemic structure of the Cora verb allows only for a subject slot and one generalized object slot; (b) subject and object prefixes on the verb mark agreement in person and number with the subject and object, respectively (agreement can also be marked by reduplication or suppletion); (c) when two overt objects are present, human objects rank higher than inanimate objects, i.e. the verb agrees with the human object; (d) object nominals or pronouns normally follow the verb they are a complement of; however if they precede the verb then the normal verb-object

agreement is suspended. In simple transitive sentences the verb agrees in number and person with both its subject and direct object; however, intransitive verbs seem to fall into two classes: stative verbs are marked for the person and number of their subject, but there is also a set of intransitives which mark person and number agreement not only with the subject but also with the indirect object. Although verb-object agreement is suspended when the object precedes the verb for topicalization purposes, with some intransitive verbs that take Patient or Experiencer nouns for their subjects, agreement is not suspended although the subjects of such sentences are indirect object pronouns rather than subject pronouns.

To support his claim that IOs take precedence over DOs in Cora syntax Casad adduces additional evidence from three types of possessive constructions. His final statement is that “an adequate characterization of Direct and Indirect Objects in Cora must account for a wide range of data and go far beyond a discussion of only the prototypical transitive and ditransitive sentences that have so much captured the attention of formal syntax if one hopes to help form the basis for a credible typology of language structures” (p. 261).

Larry Trask: *Ergativity and accusativity in Basque*

Trask begins his contribution with an elaborate description of Basque verb agreement system. Although Basque has rich nominal morphology, nouns are not inflected for case; only full noun phrases can be inflected. There is no gender agreement and no noun classes are distinguished although animate NPs form their cases somewhat differently. Verbal morphology is overwhelmingly periphrastic and very elaborate. A finite verb does not agree only with the subject, but also with a DO (if any) and an IO (if any) regardless of whether they are overtly expressed or not. There are three sets of verb agreement affixes in Basque. Set I consists of prefixes which mark agreement with an S (the subject of an intransitive clause) or with an O (the object of a transitive clause) i.e. with the absolutive argument. Set II consists of suffixes; they express agreement with an A (the subject of a transitive clause, that is with an ergative NP, except in the cases of ‘ergative displacement’). Set III suffixes mark agreement with an indirect object. When Sets II and III are both present, markers from Set III take precedence over markers from Set II.

Trask makes a very careful distinction between morphological transitivity and syntactic transitivity because of a frequent mismatch between the two notions. Syntactic intransitivity and transitivity are characterized by the absence vs. presence of a direct object. Morphological intransitivity is marked predominantly by morphological means (subject in the absolutive case, ‘be’ as a finite auxiliary, prefixes from Set I on the finite verb). A morphologically transitive construction has the subject in the ergative case and the direct object in the absolutive, the auxiliary ‘have’ and agreement affixes from Sets I and II for the direct object and subject, respectively. However, although a syntactically transitive construction is always also morphologically transitive, there is a significant number of syntactically intransitive verbs that require a morphologically transitive construction, except, of course object agreement since

there is no object. Trask calls this group of verbs compound VITM verbs (verb intransitive with transitive morphology). In the typical case, the construction consists of a light verb and a bare noun (e.g. *egin* ‘do’, ‘make’, as in *lo egin* ‘sleep’, *negar egin* ‘weep’, ‘cry’, *dantza egin* ‘dance’). Etymologically, VITM verbs are collocations with such literal meanings as ‘do sleep’, ‘do weep’, ‘do dance’, and this explains their transitive morphology. Another peculiarity of verb agreement in Basque is the so-called ergative displacement, that is, with some syntactically transitive or VITM verbs the subject is marked by Set I prefixes instead of the Set II suffixes, as is normally the case.

Trask rejects both the so-called passive theory of Basque syntax, according to which the subject is in the absolutive case, and, hence every transitive sentence in Basque is passive, as well as Martinet’s view that there is no subject in Basque. Trask adduces a lot of syntactic evidence (reflexives, reciprocals, complements of *nahi*, **edin*, purpose clauses, indirect commands, non-finite indirect questions, genitivation of objects of the gerund), all of which show that in Basque A and S pattern together, as opposite to O, that is, evidence which shows Basque is syntactically accusative.

Bill McGregor: *Ergative and accusative patterns in Warwa*

Warwa is a highly endangered Aboriginal language spoken in Western Australia, “with just one full speaker, and a small number of part speakers” (p. 286). Grammatical relations are marked in two ways: (i) dependent marking by bound postpositions on NPs, and (ii) head marking (i.e. by means of bound pronominals attached to inflecting verbs). Unlike NPs, which pattern ergatively, verbal cross-referencing pronominals pattern accusatively. As in most other Australian Aboriginal languages word order in Warwa is free. In McGregor’s view the two above mentioned systems separately mark language particular grammatical relations. McGregor argues against the widely accepted view that clauses in any language can be divided into two basic types (intransitive and transitive) and that S (intransitive subject), A (transitive subject) and O (transitive object) are primitive grammatical relations (cf. Dixon 1979; 1994; Aikhenwald et al. 2001), which can be marked in three obvious ways because of the need to distinguish A from O: (a) S and O are marked in the same way, as opposed to A; (b) A and S are marked identically, and (c) all three relations are marked differently. In McGregor’s view grammatical markers do not have only the discriminatory function: they also have semantic value.

Since grammatical relations are language-specific, McGregor proposes three types of grammatical relations for Warwa: the state-of-affairs role is expressed by the verb, whereas two other relations are associated with NPs and correspond to participant roles – PRs (*actor*, *undergoer*, *implicated*) and connate roles – CRs (*medium*, *agent*, *target*), respectively. Both types of roles are semiotic primitives, with the PRs representing the nominative-accusative tier, and the connate roles representing the ergative tier. NPs functioning in PRs designate actors in a play (‘the stage

model'), whereas CRs are associated with the world of experience ('the billiard-ball model').

Felix Ameka: *Constituent order and grammatical relations in Ewe*

Ameka discusses grammatical relations in Ewe, a Kwa language of West Africa. Since Ewe is an isolating language with some agglutinative features in which grammatical relations are defined primarily by constituent order it is rather surprising that a description of Ewe should have been included in a volume on nominatives and accusatives.

Ewe is not only an isolating language, it is also a verb serialising language, and a 'hypertransitive' language, as Ameka puts it, because it does not have verbs equivalent to canonical intransitive verbs such as *run* or *jump*. To express a sentence like *Kofi swam* one has to say *Kofi moved limbs in a medium water* (p. 321). There is an asymmetry between the subject and object functions in that the subject must be expressed in every clause, whereas objects may be omitted, e.g. in focus constructions if the subject NP is focused upon, it is obligatorily marked; when object is in focus, the focus marker is optional. In Ewe there is no equivalent of Equi NP Deletion in the so-called 'SAY' construction. On the other hand, in compound clauses it is not the subject that is deleted under identity with an NP in the first clause but the object. In fact, an object NP can be omitted from the second clause if it is coreferential with any argument in the first clause. In serial verb constructions two or more verbs share the same subject, which is expressed only once (in front of the first verb); each verb may be followed by an object argument of its own, and this is the crucial difference between a compound (an overlapping) clause and a verb serialising construction.

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