

Case as denotational property: the interaction of DOM and discourse-linking in Shkodër pronouns.

Leonardo M. Savoia - Maria Rita Manzini
Università di Firenze

1. Some theoretical points

Recent theoretical debate concerning the notions of Faculty of Language (FL) and Universal Grammar (UG) raises questions as to the status of the grammatical categories normally assumed in linguistic analysis. If we admit that the linguistic capability of humans has a genetic basis, FL, it remains to ask what the notion of UG refers to. The content of UG and the adequacy of the traditional categorial distinctions represent two sides of the same coin, what we can think of as a sort of ‘orthodox generative synthesis’.

The crucial point is that in the traditional framework, categories correspond to real Platonic objects, entirely listed in UG. Culicover & Jackendoff (2005: 6) aptly characterize a particularly popular conception of the relation of the semantics to the syntax as ‘Interface Uniformity’. In other words, much current theorizing assumes a picture where syntax includes interpretation, whereby all relevant semantic information finds itself translated into syntactic structure.

Many authors, from different perspectives, consider this solution inadequate to allow for the extent of linguistic variation, trying to provide the notion of UG with a more defensible characterization. Evans & Levinson (2009) get to the point of asserting that linguistic diversity makes the existence of linguistic universals and, in particular, the notion of UG into a myth, devoid of explanatory power. We think that this conclusion is in many cases questionable, and frankly ideological, in turn. Rather, we agree with Culicover & Jackendoff (2006: 416) on the idea that interpretation is ‘the product of an autonomous combinatorial capacity independent of and richer than syntax’, ‘largely coextensive with thought’, which syntax simply restricts in crucial ways.

Let us briefly review some key conceptual points. According to Chomsky (2000: 119), ‘the human language faculty and the (I-) languages that are manifestations of it qualify as natural objects’. This approach - that ‘regards the language faculty as an “organ of the body”’ - has been labelled the ‘biolinguistic perspective’ by Chomsky

(2005: 1). Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch (2002: 1570) base their discussion of the key biological question of evolution on the ‘biologically and individually grounded’ use of the term language ‘to refer to an internal component of the mind/ brain (sometimes called “internal language” or “I-language”)’. They distinguish two conceptions of the faculty of language, one broader (FLB) and one narrower (FLN):

FLB includes FLN combined with at least two other organism-internal systems, which we call “sensory-motor” and “conceptual-intentional”... A key component of FLN is a computational system (narrow syntax) that generates internal representations and maps them into the sensory-motor interface by the phonological system and into the conceptual-intentional interface by the (formal) semantics system ... Most, if not all, of FLB is based on mechanisms shared with nonhuman animals ... (Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch 2002: 1571).

We can wonder in what sense the role of FLN and FLB interact in domains such as language evolution, genetics, neurology, specifically as regards the issue of language variation, starting with the idea that:

There is a reason to believe that It may be that the computational system itself is (virtually) invariant, fixed by innate biological endowment, variation among languages and language types being limited to certain options in the lexicon; quite restricted options ... (Chomsky 2000:79)

In fact, we know that there exist languages that seem to cast a shadow over the more crucial tenets of FL/UG, like recursion/ embedding (Evans & Levinson 2009, Pinker & Jackendoff 2009, Everett 2005) or fundamental categorial distinctions like noun and verb (Jelinek 1995). This suggests that the traditional notion of UG, as the container of a fixed list of categories, must be revised; we can think that UG simply refers to a conceptual (and phonetic) space which establishes the boundaries of linguistic variation. In the present study we address the issue of how the linguistically relevant conceptual space yields different languages beyond the obvious aspect of ‘Saussurean arbitrariness’.

Suppose that the lexicon is the locus of linguistic variation – in the presence of an invariant repertory of interface primitives, both phonological and conceptual. Non-trivial questions arise here: how can the lexicon vary on the basis of a universal inventory of properties

(or “features”)? and how come that variation in the lexicon has as its consequence variation in order, agreement, selection, and other syntactically relevant relations? A possible answer which is pursued by various scholars is that there is a fundamental distinction between functional and non-functional elements. Thus within the Distributed Morphology framework, Embick (2000:187) assumes a ‘distinction between the *functional* and *lexical* vocabularies of a language... functional categories merely instantiate sets of abstract syntacticosemantic features’, on which the derivational component operates. Variation is the result of the different ways of lexicalizing these abstract categorial primitives.

In Manzini & Savoia (2005, 2007, 2008, 2011) we pursue a different picture, where morphosyntactic structures are projected from lexical terminals. There is a conceptual and grammatical space to be lexicalized and variation results from the different partition of that space. There is no fixed functional lexicon which varies along the axis of overt vs. covert realization – so-called functional space is just like all other conceptual space, and all lexical entries are overt. Thus the distinction between functional, i.e. grammatical, contents and conceptual ones is an external one; as such it is at best useless, while at worst it obscures the real underlying linguistic generalizations. In short, the lexicons of the different languages are formed on this universal basis, covering slightly different extensions of it and in slightly different ways.

In this sense, linguistic variation depends on which pieces of the universal conceptual space and of an invariant repertory of interface primitives, the language-specific lexicon is able to externalize. It is the ‘externalization’ processes (Berwick & Chomsky 2011) that creates the space of the variation. In this line of thought, the comparison between two Albanian varieties presented in this work can contribute to an understanding of the mechanisms underlying and feeding the morpho-syntactic component of FL/UG.

1.1. The notion of case

Consider the notion of case in syntactic theory. In the minimalist approach of Chomsky (1995 ff.) syntactic structures are projected from lexical specifications – and the latter correspond to intrinsic properties of lexical items. Properties of number and person, that correspond to denotational primitives of argumental constituents, are taught of as real features, namely phi-features. However relations,

such as theta-roles, are not features at all, but correspond to configurations. Therefore, it is potentially problematic to assimilate case, which is traditionally conceived of as a relational notion, to a feature. The fact that case is the only feature in Chomsky (1995) which is radically uninterpretable (i.e. which does not have an interpretable counterpart) is a reflex of the deeper difficulty of reconciling its relational core with its feature status. The solution at which Chomsky (2008) arrives is effectively to deny that case has a primitive relational content. In technical terms case does not enter into any feature checking. We agree with the idea that case cannot be a primitive of grammar. However, if case is reduced to other primitives, why do we need to keep the case label at all? In other words: what is the difference between a language which has just agreement (say, Italian) and a language like Latin which has the ‘case’ reflex of agreement?

Works such as Chomsky’s, or Pesetsky and Torrego’s 2007 consider so-called ‘abstract’ case, i.e. a case property independent of morphological realization, and as such found (by hypothesis) in all languages. In turn, case inflections have been the target of morphological discussion, in particular in relation to syncretic morphology. If we maintain a syntactic level including abstract case features, the effect of syncretic forms exist is just to conceal the semantic properties that should be expressed by them.

In the standard morphological implementation of minimalist syntax, namely Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993, 1994, Calabrese 1998), case and phi-features are functional properties, as such undergoing morphological rules. In DM the syntax operates on abstract bundles of features to which Vocabulary Insertion associates lexical terminals, i.e. ‘exponents’, only after morphological rules have applied (*Late Insertion*). One of the results of these morphological operations is the creation of syncretic surface forms. A good illustration is provided by the analysis of the two-case system (nominative vs. objective) of Old French in Calabrese 1998. The case inflection of the nouns deriving from the II nominal class of Latin present a crossed distribution, whereby the same inflection *-s* puts together nominative singular and accusative plural, e.g. *mur-s* ‘wall/walls’, as opposed to $\emptyset$ of nominative plural and accusative singular, e.g. *mur* $\emptyset$. According to Calabrese 1998 the syntactic representation of these forms includes a complete case specification, i.e.

[+subject,+direct] for nominative and [-subject,+direct] for accusative, but vocabulary insertion depends on underspecified lexical element, which register only the [+/-plural] difference.

More precisely, case exponents are introduced by the two rules in (1a, b), which apply to the result of two Morphological rules of readjustment. In particular, (1c) impoverishes the content of syntactic representation by deleting [-plural] in the context [+subject, II, III class]; (1d) changes the value of the feature [+plural] in the context [+subject, II class]. Impoverishment (1c) feeds (1b), in the sense that (1a) can no longer apply to a representation devoid of the feature [-plural] so that (1b) will introduce the default ending *-s*. Feature change (1d) creates a representation which undergoes (1a).

- (1) (Calabrese 1998: 117)
- a. $\emptyset \leftrightarrow \emptyset_{\text{ThematicVowel}} [-\text{plural}]$
 - b. *-s* $\leftrightarrow$ *Elsewhere*
 - c. Impoverishment
 $[-\text{plural}] \leftrightarrow \emptyset / [__, +\text{subject, II, III class}]$
 - d. Feature change
 $[+\text{plural}] \leftrightarrow [-\text{plural}] / [__, +\text{subject, II class}]$

The result of the system in (1) is that syncretic morphology is only based on the [+/-plural] feature and the underlying case specifications are completely obscured.

What interests us here directly is that under the Distributed Morphology approach, a morpheme traditionally associated with case, e.g. nominative, turns out not to have any such property, but only a [+/- plural] denotation. In general, in case-inflected languages, the presence of morphological entries associated with several case contexts (i.e. syncretic in traditional terms) leads to the conclusion that these case morphologies have a purely denotational content, devoid of case properties, and associated only with nominal class, number, possibly definiteness, etc. As we will see, the conclusion that case properties depend on nominal denotational features is reached also in other theoretical framework, for instance in the literature on Person Case Constraints (PCC) effects (Adger & Harbour 2007).

2. *The data.*

As generally in Albanian varieties, in the Geg of *Shkodër* indefinite

nouns distinguish nominative-accusative from oblique, and, in the plural nominative-accusative, oblique and ablative-locative; definite nouns have nominative, oblique and accusative in the singular (Camaj 1984, Beci 2004). This definite case system is illustrated by by 3rd person pronouns, as in (2).

(2)		Nom	Acc	Obl
	3sg	a-i/a'j-a	a't-ε	a't-i-j / a's-a-j
	3pl	a't-a	a't-a	a't-y-nε

A different distribution of cases characterises 1st / 2nd pronouns in (3), where objective case covers the accusative, exemplified in (4i), the dative, exemplified in (4ii), and a subset of prepositional contexts (e.g. *me* 'with') as exemplified in (5ii). This latter form is separated from the ablative, also associated with prepositional contexts, as exemplified in (5iii).

(3)		Nom	Obj	Abl
	1sg	un	m-u	mej-ε-t
	2sg	t-i	t-y	tej-ε-t
	1pl	n-a	n-e	ne-ʃ
	2pl	ju	ju	ju-ʃ

- (4) i. ε / mə / na ʃɔfin a'tε / mu / ne
him/to.me/to.us they.see him/to.me/to.us
'They see him/ me/ us'
- ii. j / m / n a japin a'tij / mu / ne
to.him/to.me/to.us it they.give to.him/to.me/to.us
'They give it to him/ me/ us'

- (5) i. **P – Nominative**
tε un / ti / ai
at I/ you/ he
- ii. **P – Objective/ 3rd Accusative**
mε mu / ty / ate
with me/ you/ him
- iii. **P – Ablative / 3rd Oblique**
prei/ poʃt/ para mejet/ nε-ʃ / atij
from/ behind/ before me / us / him

In many of the Arbëresh varieties of Italy the pronominal paradigm presents a more reduced case system. For example, in the grammar of *Greci* (Campania) the three-case system characterizes 3rd person pronouns in (6i), but in the 1st and 2nd person a more reduced system shows up, as in (6ii, iii). In particular, 1st singular person only distinguishes a nominative and an objective case which encompasses accusative and oblique/ ablative meanings; 2nd singular has a sole syncretic form. 1st/2nd plural pronouns in (6iii) separate an accusative from an oblique form, whose distribution is however different from those in the 3rd person. In fact, *Greci*'s accusative *ne/ ju* are restricted to some prepositional contexts, as in (8ii). Oblique *neui/ juvui* are inserted in other verbal and prepositional contexts, as in (7i, ii) and (8iii), except for nominative context, like (8i).

- (6) *Greci*
- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| i. | Nom | Acc | Obl |
| 3sg | a-i/a-jə | at-ə | at-i-a / asa-i-ta |
| 3pl | at-a | at-a | at-i-rv-ui |
| ii. | Nom | Obj | |
| 1sg | u | m-ua | |
| 2sg | t-i | t-i | |
| iii. | Nom | Acc | Obl |
| 1pl | n-a | n-e | ne-ui |
| 2pl | ju | ju | ju-v-ui |
- (7) i. *ʃɛhan atə / mua / juvui*
he.sees him / to.me / to.you
‘He sees him/me/you’
- ii. *j / m / v a jɛpan atia / mua / juvui*
to.him/to.me/to.you it he.gives to.him/to.me/to.you
‘He gives it to him/me/you’
- (8) i. **P – Nom**
ka ai / u / ju
at he / I / you
- ii. **P – Acc/ 1st/2ndsgObj**
ma atə / mua / ne
with him / to.me/ us
- iii. **P – Obl/ 1st/2ndsgObj**
para atia / mua / neui
before to.him/ me / us

3. DOM and discourse-linking properties.

The major question raised by the examples in (2)-(8) is why 1st/2nd person referents (speaker, hearer) are associated with a specialized array of ‘cases’ with respect to other (3rd person) referents. We can think of this distribution as a manifestation of the classical 1st/2nd vs. 3rd split. In our data, three principal types of split show up: 3rd person (nouns included) vs. 1st and 2nd person; 1st and 2nd singular vs. 1st and 2nd plural (*Greci*); 1st vs. 2nd (*Greci*).

To begin with, 1st and 2nd person pronouns unify all types of verbal objects (first arguments of transitives and goals/ possessors of ditransitives) as well as arguments of prepositions. As hinted at by our glosses, we conclude that there is no specialized morphological exponent for 1st/2nd accusative and the first argument of a transitive is marked as a dative/ locative complement, as an instance of the phenomenon known as Differential Object Marking (DOM) in typological literature (cf. Aissen 2003). The gist of DOM is that certain types of referents, of which participants in the discourse are the fundamental subset, are associated with the agent role (i.e. ‘nominative’) or the possessor role (i.e. ‘dative’ or ‘oblique’) in the event, but not with the theme role (i.e. ‘accusative’). In Albanian varieties 1st/ 2nd person cannot be embedded as the theme of an event, but they require the oblique form associated with the possessor.

Let us clarify our conception of so-called oblique. Consider the syncretism between dative, locative and genitive attested in *Shkodër* by the *-ij* of 3rd singular pronouns inflection in (2). Manzini & Savoia (2011, 2011a), explain it by assuming that a single quantificational property, namely inclusion/superset-of $Q(\subseteq)$, is associated with the different interpretations. In particular, Manzini & Savoia (2011) argue that we can take all types of possession, hence of ‘genitive’, including inalienable and psych state possession to fall under a reasonable extension of the same relation. This proposal is close to that advanced by Belvin & den Dikken (1997:170) according to whom ‘Entities have various zones associated with them, such that an object or eventuality may be included in a zone associated with an entity without being physically contained in that entity... The type of zones which may be associated with an entity will vary with the entity’. In turn, the conceptual closeness of the notions of possessor to both ‘dative’ and ‘locative’ is well-known in the typological literature. This conceptual closeness, mirrored by the syncretic ‘oblique’, corresponds

fundamentally to inclusion, in present terms to $Q(\subseteq)$.

Despite the strong split between 3rd person and 1st/2nd singular that we observe in *Greci*, 1st/2nd plural at least partially pattern with 3rd person. This can be derived from the fact that 1st/2nd plural, like 3rd person, involve individuals which are different from speaker and hearer. On the other hand the coincidence of 1st/2nd plural with the noun/3rd person system is only apparent, since the oblique forms in (6iii) appear as the internal argument of transitives as well, thus contrasting with nouns/ 3rd person pronouns, which select the specialized accusative in this context.

In short, the referential properties of 1st / 2nd person entail an inclusion/ location relation to other arguments/ events in the semantic space. In Romance varieties that have ‘prepositional accusatives’, like Spanish, Romanian and Southern Italian dialects, the same interpretive relation is externalized by means of a locative/ directional preposition *a* ‘to’. In general, DOM morphosyntax appears to be a reflection of the intrinsic denotational force of these lexical elements. The reference of 3rd person lexical elements is not directly anchored at the universe of discourse, but it is mediated by anchoring in the event structure (cf. Manzini & Savoia 2005, 2007, 2008). By contrast, the denotation of 1st/2nd person is fixed in virtue of their being coordinates of the universe of discourse, without necessarily making reference to the structure of the event. Their merging in the sentence requires the oblique form associated with ‘possession’ or ‘zonal inclusion’ in the sense just discussed. In other words, 1st and 2nd person intrinsically are sources/ agents of the event (‘nominative’) or ‘possessors’ ‘including’ (a part of) the event.

4. Is case a spurious notion?

DOM morphosyntax can be connected with the ‘referential/ person/ animacy hierarchy’ (Nichols 2001): 1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person animate > 3d person inanimate. Specifically, in many languages the Object cannot outrank the Subject in the hierarchy, in the sense that for example a sequence 3rd *subj* – 1st *object* is either excluded or morphologically marked. Our data, in particular the externalization of 1st/2nd person as dative/ oblique, can be connected with the hypothesis (Nichols 2001) that dative is a last resort strategy aimed at avoiding the configuration in which a 1st/2nd person object combines with a 3rd person (or an equally ranked) subject.

A related observation is that case syncretism between accusative and dative in 1st/2nd pronouns feeds the Person Case Constraint (PCC). The constraint usually observed is restricted to clitic or inflectional elements and prevents 1st/2nd person accusative from combining with 3rd person datives (Bejar & Rezac 2003, 2009, Adger & Harbour 2007). The PCC is at work also in Albanian, as for instance in (9i)-(9ii). In the *Shkodër* variety 1st/2nd sg. clitics have an accusative/ dative syncretic form *m/t*, while 3rd person clitics distinguish singular Acc *ε/a* from Dat and Acc. pl. *i*. The co-occurrence of a 1st/2nd clitic with dative or another 1st/2nd clitic is excluded. A similar exclusion is in force in *Greci*.

- (9) i. *ai m i ka prezan'tu: *Shkodër*
 *ai m i prəzəntuacən *Greci*
 he to.me to.him (has) introduced
 ii. *m tə ka prezan'tu: *Shkodër*
 to.me to.you he.has introduced

In this connection, we can consider the variation between Geg data and Arbëresh data. In *Shkodër* the combination between strong 1st/2nd pronouns is only marginally possible, as in (10i). The sequence 1st/2nd pronouns - 3rd dative is excluded, as in (10ii).

- (10) *Shkodër*
 i. ai m/ t ka prezan'tu ?mu: ty / ?? ty mu:
 he to.me/to.you has introduced me to.you/ you to.me
 ii. ai ka prezan'tu *mu:/ ty atij /asqj
 he has introduced me/ you to.him/to.her

Normally two 1st/2nd objective arguments are admitted only if the goal argument is introduced by a locative element, as in (11i). (11ii) illustrates the combination *person pronoun* - 3rd *person locative*

- (11) *Shkodër*
 i. m/ t kan prezan'tu: mu: tε ti / ty tε un
 to.me/to.you they.have introduced me at you/you at I
 ii. m/ t kan prezan'tu: mu:/ ty tε ai
 to.me/to.you they.have introduced me/you at he

The insertion of a 1st/2nd is allowed of in the context of a 3rd person internal argument, as in (12), where the locative is correspondingly excluded.

- (12) *Shkodër*
 m/t a kan prezan'tu: a'tɛ mu:/ ty /*tɛ un/ ti
 to.me/to.you him they.have introduced him to.me/you/at I/you

In (12) it is the presence of 1st/2nd clitics associated to the goal/ possessor argument that calls for the oblique form of the strong pronouns. Locative is realized if the 1st/2nd clitic is not inserted, as in (13). This is consistent with the fact that in (11) locative occurs, since the clitic cluster 1st/2nd/3rd_{Dat} – 1st/2nd_{Acc} is banned.

- (13) *Shkodër*
 ɛ kan prezan'tu: a'tɛ tɛ un/ ti
 him they.have introduced him at me/ you

By contrast, in *Greci*, the combination between strong pronouns, as in (14i,ii), is normally accepted.

- (14) *Greci*
 i. mə prəzəntɔci mua ti
 me he.introduced me to.you
 ii. mə / a prəzəntɔci mua atirvui / atə mua
 me/him he.introduced me to.them / him to.me

A fundamental point is that the literature on referential hierarchy phenomena, to which our data can be ascribed, and the constraints on the distribution of case morphology (PCC) entail referring to intrinsic denotational properties of the involved elements (pronouns, agreement morphemes). In particular, the PCC is related to an effect of competition in person feature checking. Adger & Harbour (2007) assume that in the internal argument position of a ditransitive verb, only a 3rd person can occur, because devoid of [participant] features – while 1st/2nd person pronouns are excluded. To reiterate, a significant point emerges from the works on referential hierarchy/ PCC phenomena, to which we subscribe. That is, the constraints on the distribution of case morphology (hence the PCC) entails reference

to intrinsic denotational properties of the elements involved (pronouns, agreement morphemes), while the notion of case is effectively not involved.

We noted that there is a link between referential hierarchy phenomena and case inflection syncretism, as in (3). As we have seen, this corresponds to the fact that, unlike 3rd person elements, syncretic forms of 1st/2nd person pronouns exclude the canonical transitive event structure comprising an agent and a theme, creating the DOM distribution (cf. (4), (7)). Only 3rd person elements, as in (4i), yield a canonical transitive event structure comprising an agent and a theme.

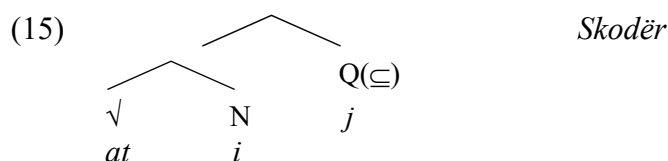
5. What does case inflection externalize within a lexicalist model?

In the present approach, syntactic and semantic content is directly imputed to morphological entries. They specify a mapping between sound and meaning (cf. Jackendoff 2002), without having recourse to a morphological buffer (as in DM) between syntactic nodes and the exponents that instantiate them. Argumental lexical items (nouns) are associated just with denotational properties that characterize them independently of the position of insertion. We recognize three fundamental types of properties as theoretically relevant for case and nominal inflection, namely N(ominal class), Q(quantification), D(efiniteness). Q inflections are responsible for the so-called oblique case – effectively a dyadic operator yielding a ‘zonal inclusion’ (possession) relation between the element to which it attaches and the internal argument of the verb (dative) or the head of a noun phrase (genitive). Q inflections are further responsible for plurality, while N inflections satisfy argument-of contexts (accusative) and D characterizes EPP contexts (nominative).

In a language with no ‘case’ on nouns, like Italian, the so-called agreement inflection of the noun phrase can be analysed as a structure in which the lexical base, indicated as $\sqrt{}$ (root), expressing predicative content, combines with a nominal class (gender) N inflection, associated with the internal argument of the predicative base, as in $[[macchin_{\sqrt{}}]a_N]$. If the traditional labels of case in reality correspond to denotational primitives such as nominal class (gender), definiteness, quantification, we are induced to assume that case languages like Latin or Albanian/ Arbëresh are not qualitatively different systems with respect to Italian but only slightly richer systems. More precisely, the so-called case inflection is an inflection

with denotational content (nominal class, quantification etc.) specialized for the satisfaction of certain syntactic junctures (agreement, but also theta-configuration, or other). Case is but the name given to lexical items which in virtue of these properties specialize for the satisfaction of certain syntactic environments.

Consider for instance *Shkodër*, where a syncretic 3rd singular pronoun inflection *-ij* lexicalizes dative, locative and genitive, as illustrated in (2). Following the discussion in section 3, *-ij* introduces a superset-of reading corresponding to dative/ locative/ genitive in relation with certain contexts of insertion. A more detailed analysis can decompose *-ij* in the nominal class formative *-i-* which occurs in the morphology of nouns as well, and the quantificational element *-j*, as suggested in (15).



In the dative interpretation, we take the superset-of reading of *-j* to depend on the sentential scope of $Q(\subseteq)$. In the genitive reading, the $Q(\subseteq)$ specifications of *-j* take in their scope the head noun of the phrase. In the locative interpretation the scope of $Q(\subseteq)$ is the sub-event introduced by the preposition. Thus, the notion of case reduces to denotational primitives (person, nominal class, definiteness, quantification), associated with the relevant lexical entries in accordance with the general theory of the lexicon just outlined. Different denotational properties satisfy different interpretive environments. The constraints on the distribution of the morphology are effectively treated as emergent properties of the lexical elements – not the lexical elements as an emergent property of the constraints.

6. Prepositional contexts.

The fact that prepositional phrases license all cases that sentences do, appears to be incompatible with the idea that prepositions assign a specialized Oblique case in the sense of Chomsky (1995). Consider first the prepositions selecting accusative in the 3rd person. Prepositions are always two place predicates whose internal argument is their complement, while the external argument is controlled by

some argument of the matrix predicate. Therefore, prepositional contexts with accusative behave like those defined by transitive active verbs, in that the internal argument is satisfied, by the specialized N morphology of nouns (-*n*) or of 3rd person pronouns corresponding to the traditional ‘accusative’ in the terms of Manzini & Savoia (2011, 2011a). As we can expect, 1st / 2nd singular person pronouns are characterized by the DOM morphology occurring in transitive contexts: the prepositional domain is conceptualized as being ‘possessed’/‘included’ by 1st/ 2nd person. Note however that 2nd plurals introduce the same form occurring in EPP context, i.e. in traditional terms they present a nominative – accusative syncretism, or in other terms yet the *ju* form simply lexicalized a direct (non-oblique) case.

Prepositions requiring so-called nominative provide a crucial clue that there really are no case inflections, but only denotational properties capable of satisfying argument reference in certain syntactic contexts. So-called nominative inflections can associate with contexts where they are in the scope of the D (EPP) argument of the sentence (the finite verb inflection). However, the same denotational properties that satisfy the subject contexts, also satisfy the sub-event introduced by prepositions like *ka/ te* in (5i) and (8i), whose internal argument they satisfy. In particular, in the 1st/ 2nd person, the pronominal bare forms *u(n)*, *ti*, *ju*, *na* show up, suggesting that their deictic properties alone are able to lexicalize these contexts. 3rd person pronouns and nouns introduce specialized definite inflections.

We then come to prepositional contexts selecting ablative in *Shkodër*. In this variety the specialized singular ablative morphology appears not only on 1st/2nd person pronouns but also on a set of locative nouns, such as ‘house’, ‘room’, ‘door’, ‘chair’ etc. (Manzini and Savoia 2011, 2011a), as in (16).

- (16) prej/ mas/ para ʃpi-ε-t
 from/ behind/ before house-fs-Abl.def
 ‘from/ behind/ before the house’

We propose that 1st and 2nd person have in common with locative nouns a connection with the universe of discourse. In other words, the specialized ‘ablative’ morphology in reality is locative/ deictic. In fact, it is generally agreed that ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ are two necessary coordinates of the universe of discourse; a locative

specification, roughly ‘here’, must also be one of the coordinates. In the *Greci* variety, lacking a specialized locative/ ablative form, the oblique is inserted. We conclude that the inclusion relation associated with oblique morphology can be read as locative inclusion and is therefore able to introduce the locative interpretation.

The particular shape that the person split takes in our data has different case specifications associated with the lexical bases denoting elements of the universe of discourse (i.e. ‘hearer’ and ‘speaker’) and other lexical bases. 1st /2nd person lexicalize an uninflected form for ‘nominative’ and a Q($\subseteq$) form for ‘dative’, ‘locative’ and DOM ‘accusative – or eventually two Q($\subseteq$) forms, one of which specialized for prepositional contexts ‘locative’, as in *Shkodër*. Thus there is a strict correlation between the referential content of the lexical base and its specialization for so-called case, i.e. for denotational properties satisfying contexts of lexical insertion – which we take to argue in favour of our overall conception of case.

7. The referential split again.

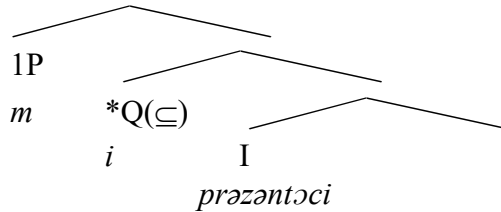
In what precedes, we have seen that 1st /2nd singular and 3rd person have different way for lexicalizing different argumental contexts (subject vs. object vs. arguments of prepositions). We have argued that these morphological differences are not surface phonetic labels of abstractly identical categories. On the contrary, they correspond to true different types of conceptualization, within the same universal space of interface primitives.

In a nutshell, the split between 1st/2nd person pronouns and 3rd person can be related to different manner of lexicalizing the participants of the event. Our idea is that lexical bases denoting elements of the universe of discourse participate in the event in terms of their intrinsic properties of agent/ location (dative/ oblique morphology). Indeed the morpho-syntactic properties of *mu:/ mua*, *ty/ ti* show that 1st / 2nd person forms cannot be embedded as the internal argument of an event. Our hypothesis is that their embedding requires the presence of the Q($\supseteq$) operator for inclusion, externalized by the the oblique morphology of 3rd persons as well, as in (2) and (6i).

In this perspective, we may also pursue an explanation for the PCC, as seen in the clitic combinations in (10) and (14). Two different mechanisms of argument satisfaction are introduced by 1st/2nd person forms, i.e. the simple anchoring to the coordinates of discourse and

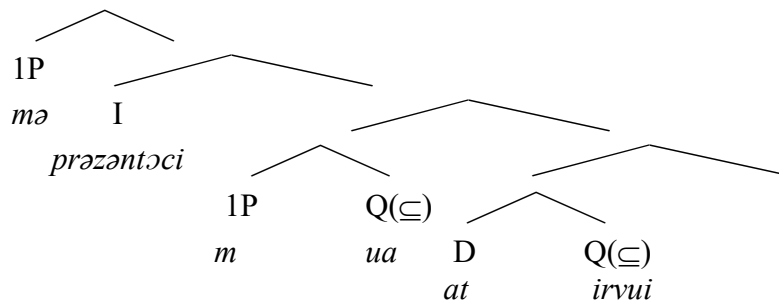
$Q(\supseteq)$ quantification. Suppose that simple anchoring underlies the argumental interpretation of 1st/2nd person pronoun, hence 1st and 2nd person clitics do not in fact include the superset-of operator. Nevertheless they make the superset-of $Q(\supseteq)$ operator unavailable for 3rd person clitics, as suggested in (17) for *Greci* – in the absence of which the event cannot be read.

(17)



Unlike the incompatibility between 1st/2nd (acc) and 3rd dative clitics, in Arbëresh the combination of the quantificational properties of the strong 1st/ 2nd person pronouns and of the 3rd person dative are interpretable, as in (18).

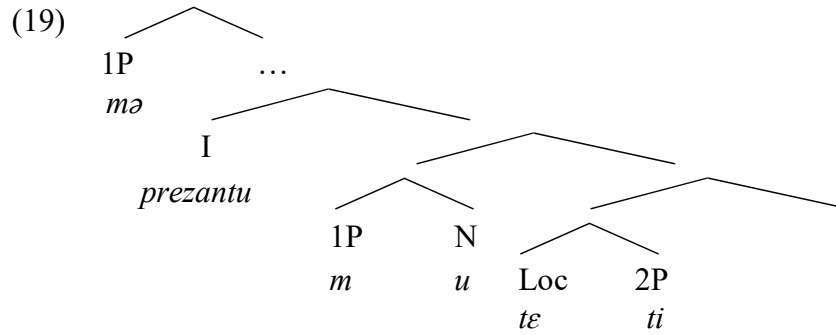
(18)



This possibility opposes Arbëresh to *Shkodër*, where this combination is not admitted. Naturally, we may expect that objective forms of strong 1st/ 2nd person pronouns are incompatible in their turn. This is the case of *Shkodër*, where none of the sequences *mu: ty/ ty mu:/ mu: atij/ ty atij* occur. Therefore, with strong pronouns as well, anchoring underlies the argumental interpretation of 1st/2nd person pronoun, making nevertheless unavailable the superset-of meaning lexicalized by the $Q(\supseteq)$ operator.

Shkodër solves the incompatibility by introducing a locative which allows the 1st/2nd person referents to combine with a 3rd person

possessor/goal, as in (19).



The variation between the morphosyntactic behavior of *Greci* and *Shkodër* can be accounted for by assuming that their grammars contain different lexical entries. In particular in the lexicon of *Shkodër* strong pronouns are not treated as dative, i.e., more precisely, as elements associated with the $Q(\supseteq)$ operator, like 1st/2nd person clitics.

8. Concluding remarks.

This article presents an account of case morphology in Albanian varieties, proposing in particular that DOM follows from deeper referential properties, namely that only nouns and 3rd person pronouns yield a canonical transitive event structure comprising an agent and a theme. Deictic referents are introduced not as themes, but as possessor ‘locatives’. This corresponds to the fact that the denotation of 1st and 2nd person is fixed in virtue of their being coordinates of the universe of discourse, without necessarily making reference to the structure of the event. In general, we have examined case phenomena from a lexicalist viewpoint, whereby each lexical entry is a function from sound to interpretation (and vice versa). The notion of case reduces to denotational primitives (person, nominal class, definiteness, quantification), associated with the relevant inflectional entries – where different denotational properties satisfy different syntactic environments. In this perspective, we can think of morphological differences as authentically different conceptualizations, within a single universal space of interface primitives. In the same framework, we also proposed an approach to the PCC, pointing out once again its strict link to the referential properties of the lexical items involved.

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