

Chapter 4

Rethinking the nature of nominative case

Artemis Alexiadou

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin & Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft

Elena Anagnostopoulou

University of Crete

In this squib, we investigate the nature of nominative and accusative case in Greek from a cross-linguistic perspective in the light of recent discussion on the modes of case assignment, see Baker (2008; 2015), Bobaljik (2008), Zeijlstra (2012), Preminger (2014), a.o. We focus on Baker's (2008; 2015) typology of Case and Agreement systems asking the question of where Greek is situated in this typology. We argue that while accusative (ACC) fits in the system, qualifying as dependent case on the basis of Baker's (2015) criteria, nominative (NOM) is more problematic. On the one hand, Greek NOM behaves like unmarked case and is clearly not assigned under agreement with T in a number of environments. On the other hand, however, agreement always goes with NOM when both are present. Crucially, the language pervasively shows long-distance chains involving a single in situ NOM subject and many T heads fully agreeing with it. This is incompatible with Baker's (2008) agreement and case typology. Building on Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998), we suggest that Greek has T with interpretable ϕ -features as a by-product of V raising satisfying the EPP. This allows for the formation of long-distance chains between a single DP bearing unmarked NOM and many fully agreeing Ts. Turning to the question of why agreement always goes with NOM in Greek, this is compatible with the view that agreement is sensitive to unmarked case argued for by Bobaljik (2008), Preminger (2014), Baker (2015), a.o. We adopt this proposal and argue that the analysis of Greek NOM case in connection to agreement requires a separation of interpretability from valuation (Pesetsky & Torrego 2007). Finally, we address the implications of our proposal for the theory of pro and compare our analysis to the Agree theory of pro proposed by Roberts (2010a,b) and Holmberg (2010).



1 Introduction

As is well known, there are two influential views on *Case assignment*: under view (1), all structural Case is assigned by functional heads via Agreement (Chomsky 2001). Under view (2), structural Case is assigned by the principles of dependent case assignment (Marantz 1991 and many others building on him).

On the nominative under Agree perspective, an NP has nominative case (NOM) if and only if it is assigned that case by a T-like functional head that enters into Agree with it, see (1) from Baker (2015), but cf. Sigurðsson (2000), who argues for a *vP* based approach.

- (1) Overt NP X has nominative case if and only if exactly one verbal form in the clause containing X agrees with it.

On Case assignment under the principles of dependent case, the situation is different. Marantz (1991) argues that the distribution of morphological case is determined at PF, subject to the case realization hierarchy in (2):

- (2) Case realization disjunctive hierarchy:
(i) lexically governed case, (ii) “dependent” case (accusative and ergative),
(iii) unmarked case (environment-sensitive), (iv) default case

A lot of later literature has adopted the view that case distribution is subject to (2), without necessarily also adhering to the view that case realization is determined at PF (see e.g. Preminger 2014; Baker 2015 who argue that (2) applies in syntax). In this system, structural accusative and ergative is “dependent case” subject to the definition in (3), from Baker (2015: 74):¹

- (3) a. If NP₁ c-commands NP₂ and both are in the same domain, value NP₁'s case as ergative.
b. If NP₁ c-commands NP₂ and both are in the same domain, value NP₂'s case as accusative.
c. If NP has no other case feature, value its case as nominative/absolutive.

Nominative/absolutive is unmarked/default in the verbal domain, while genitive is unmarked/default in the nominal domain.

¹The domain is taken to involve two NPs within the same TP. See Schäfer (2012) for arguments that it involves NPs within the same *vP*.

Baker (2015) puts forth a typology of Case assignment, according to which, case is not always assigned by Agree, rather some structural Case is assigned on the basis of the principles of dependent case. From this “mixed case” perspective, agreement (Agree) can assign case or agreement is independent of case (see also Baker 2008 on the relationship between case and agreement, and the discussion below).²

On the basis of the criteria discussed in Baker (2008; 2015), it is not immediately evident what the status of nominative is in Greek, while it is clear that accusative is dependent case. In this squib, we will address the following questions:

- (i) What is the status of nominative and accusative in Greek, and how does it pattern with or differ from other languages?
- (ii) If nominative is unmarked in the language and hence dissociated from Agree, as evidenced from long-distance dependencies, among other properties, then why does agreement only go with nominative and never with some other case or category?

The squib is structured as follows: in §§2 and 3, we present Baker’s criteria to determine the two modes of Case assignment, Agree vs. dependent case. In §5, we apply these criteria to Greek. In §5, we address the issue of parametric variation with respect to nominative case assignment.

2 Principles of Case assignment

2.1 Case under Agree

Baker (2015: 29f.) provides evidence from Sakha that nominative is assigned under Agree. On this view, agreement and nominative are two sides of the same coin, as proposed in Chomsky (2001). The following environments make a clear case for NOM under Agree assignment in Sakha. First, as shown in (4), we find an overt nominative subject when the verb bears agreement, but not otherwise.

- (4) Sakha (Baker 2015: 29)
- a. Masha aqa-ta kinige-ni atyylas-ta.
Masha father-3SG.POSS.NOM book-ACC buy-PST.3SG.SBJ
‘Masha’s father bought the book.’

²There is a third option, namely that nominative (and perhaps also ergative/ accusative and perhaps also dative, depending on the language) “activates” a DP for agreement, i.e. agreement comes after case (Bobaljik 2008), we will come back to this.

- b. Uol uonna kyys kuorak-ka bar-dy-lar.
boy and girl town-DAT go-PST-3PL.SBJ
'The boy and the girl went to the town.'

As Baker points out, there are clause types in which agreement with the subject is disrupted. This is the case in relative clauses in Sakha, which are formed by using one of the participial forms available in the language preceding a head noun. Importantly, the participle cannot Agree with the subject, as shown in (5).

- (5) Sakha (Baker 2015: 30)
*Masha cej ih-er-e caakky
Masha tea drink-AOR-3SG cup
'a cup that Masha drinks tea from'

In order to construct a grammatical variant of (5), according to Baker, one option is that the head noun of the relative clause (not the participle) agrees with the subject of the relative clause, as in (6).

- (6) Sakha (Baker 2015: 30)
Masha cej ih-er caakky-ta
Masha-GEN tea drink-AOR cup-3SG.POSS
'a cup that Masha drinks tea from'

In this case, however, the subject inside the relative clause bears genitive and not nominative case morphology. Note that in Sakha genitive case is syncretic with nominative (both are null) except after a possessive agreement suffix as in (7).

- (7) Sakha (Baker 2015: 30)
[Masha aqa-ty-n] atyylas-pyt at-a
Masha father-3SG.POSS-GEN buy-PTCP horse-3SG.POSS
'the horse that Masha's father bought' Baker (2015: 30)

Baker concludes that the contrast between (4) and (6) suggests that if a different head agrees with the subject in Sakha, then the case of the subject is distinct as well. In (4), it is the verb that agrees with the subject, and the subject bears nominative. In (6), it is the head of the relative clause that agrees with the subject, and the subject bears genitive.

The second possibility is that there is no overt agreement on either the participle or on the head noun, and the subject of the clause is phonologically null, see (8):

- (8) Sakha (Baker 2015: 30)
cej ih-er caakky
tea drink-AOR cup
'a cup that one drinks tea from'

This suggests that an agreement-bearing head in a relative clause structure is not necessary in Sakha.

What seems to be, however, impossible is to have an overt NP in nominative case as the subject of the relative clause, in the absence of any overt agreement, as in (9), a fact indicating that there can be no nominative in the absence of agreement in this language:

- (9) Sakha (Baker 2015: 30)
*Masha cej ih-er caakky.
Masha tea drink-AOR cup
'a cup that Masha drinks tea from'

A further correlation between nominative and agreement emerges when we look at clauses that do not have a nominative subject. As Baker points out, the theme argument of a passive verb in Sakha may be nominative or accusative. If it is nominative, (10a), the passive verb must Agree with it; if it is not nominative, (10b), then the passive verb cannot agree with it:

- (10) Sakha (Baker 2015: 32)
- a. Sonun-nar aaq-ylyn-ny-lar.
news-PL read-PASS-PST-3PL.SBJ
'The news was read.'
- b. Sonun-nar-y aaq-ylyn-na.
news-PL-ACC read-PASS-PST.3SG.SBJ
'The news was read.'

Baker takes these facts to suggest that NOM is assigned under Agree.³

³As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, Levin & Preminger (2015) argue that these facts are equally consistent with the view that nominative is the unmarked case in the language, and that agreement targets only NPs with nominative case; We will come back to the issue of agreement targeting NOM DPs.

3 Case assigned by different means

Baker (2015: 112f.) presents evidence that if one NP is c-commanded by another NP in the same clause, it is accusative in Sakha. This is straightforwardly the case when both NPs are in the same domain, i.e. within the same TP:

- (11) Sakha (Baker 2015: 112)
Erel **kinige-ni** atyylas-ta.
Erel book-ACC buy-PST.3SG.SBJ
'Erel bought the book.'

But if an NP is c-commanded by another NP in a higher clause in Sakha, it is not necessarily accusative. For example, the matrix subject does not trigger accusative case on the subject of its CP complement, as shown in (12). This is exactly what is expected, if CP is a phase in Chomsky's (2001) sense:

- (12) Sakha (Baker 2015: 113)
Min [sarsyn **ehigi-(*ni)** kel-iex-xit dien] ihit-ti-m.
I.NOM tomorrow you-(*ACC) come-FUT-2PL.SBJ that hear-PST-1SG.SBJ
'I heard that tomorrow you will come.'

Importantly, in Sakha, the subject of an embedded clause can have accusative case under certain conditions, as shown in (13), where the NP has moved to the left edge of the embedded CP:

- (13) Sakha (Baker 2015: 114)
Min [**ehigi-ni** [bögün kyaj-yax-xyt dien]] erem-mit-im.
I you-ACC today win-FUT-3PL.SBJ that hope-PTCP-1SG.SBJ
'I hoped that you would win today.'

In (13), it is the presence of another NP in the matrix clause that determines the case of the embedded subject. Evidence that the embedded subject has moved to the left edge of the CP in (13) comes from adverb placement: if lower clause adverbs precede rather than follow it, then the lower subject must be nominative, suggesting that it has not moved to the left edge, and hence cannot bear accusative.

- (14) Sakha (Baker 2015: 115)
Min [sarsyn **ehigi-(*ni)** kel-iex-xit dien] ihit-ti-m.
I.NOM tomorrow you-(*ACC) come-FUT-2PL.SBJ that hear-PST-1SG.SBJ
'I heard that tomorrow you will come.'

This is a so-called edge effect, which is expected if the domains for dependent case assignment are phases in the sense of Chomsky (2001).

Moreover, Baker (2015) demonstrates that the one-to-one mapping of nominative and agreement collapses if we look at a number of environments in a different set of languages. For instance, in Oromo, there are clauses with more person-number-gender agreement than nominative subjects. This is the case in periphrastic tenses consisting of a past or imperfective main verb and an auxiliary. Here *both verbs* Agree with the subject in ϕ -features, including person, but presumably cannot both assign the subject nominative case.

(15) Oromo (Baker 2015: 99)

- a. Isaa-f xanni-t-é tur-t-e.
 him-DAT give-3SG.SBJ-PST was-3SG.SBJ-PST
 ‘You HAVE given it to him.’
- b. Joollée-n beelaw-t-é hin-jír-t-u.
 Children-MNOM get.hungry-F-PST NEG-exist-F-DEP
 ‘The children haven’t gotten hungry.’

Similarly, in Ingush multiple heads Agree with the same absolutive argument in the periphrastic progressive (Baker 2015: 71–72) and also, like Tsez (Polinsky & Potsdam 2001), the language tolerates long-distance agreement, where the matrix verb agrees with an NP inside an embedded clause):

(16) Ingush (Nichols 2011: 263)

- Txy naana-z maasha b-ezhh-ar.
 our.GEN mother-ERG homespun.B B-make.CVB.SIM B-PROG.PST
 ‘Our mother was making homespun (when I came in).’

(17) Ingush (Nichols 2011: 551, 550)

- a. Muusaa [zhwalii waaxar] qer.
 Musa.ABS dog.ABS bark.VN fear
 ‘Musa is afraid the dog will bark.’
- b. Waishet cec-j-ealar [Muusaa-z baq’ aalaragh].
 Aisha.ABS surprise-J-LV.PST Musa-ERG truth.ABS say.VN.LAT
 ‘Aisha was surprised that Musa told the truth.’

A related argument comes from the observation that Case assignment in infinitival clauses works exactly as in finite ones in Burushaski, exemplified below, but also in Shipibo, Chukchi, Greenlandic Inuit, Tamil:

(18) Burushaski (Baker 2015: 44)

- a. Já-a [**ún** ní-as-e] r rái é-t-c-abaa.
 1SG-ERG 2SG.ABS go-INF-OBL to want 3SG.OBJ-do-NPST-1SG.PRS
 ‘I want you to go.’
- b. Gús-e [**hir-e** in mu-del-as-e] r rái
 woman-ERG man-ERG 3SG.ABS 3.F.OBJ-hit-INF-OBL to want
 a-é-t-c-ubo.
 NEG-3SG.OBJ-do-NPST-3.F.SBJ.PRS
 ‘The woman doesn’t want the man to hit her.’

If T does not assign case to NP in the course of agreeing with it, then the nominative case presumably comes from elsewhere.

Baker’s proposal is that languages of this type have unmarked/default nominative or unmarked absolutive. Specifically, he links this to a parameter discussed in Baker (2008: 155, (2)):

(19) *The Case-dependency of Agreement parameter*

F agrees with DP/NP only if F values the case feature of DP/NP or vice versa.

Combined with the directionality parameter in (20) (his (1)), Baker 2008 derives a four-way typology of the agreement properties of Tense:

(20) *The direction of Agreement parameter*

F agrees with DP/NP only if DP/NP asymmetrically c-commands F.

This predicts certain language types, which can be described as follows, according to Baker (2008): First, there are many Bantu languages that systematically obey (20) but not (19), [No CDAP, Yes DAP]. As a result, the finite verb agrees with whatever precedes it, e.g. locatives or fronted objects:

(21) Kinande (Baker 2008: 158)

- a. Omo-mulongo mw-a-hik-a (?o)-mu-kali.
 LOC.18-village.3 18SM-TNS-arrive-FV AUG-1-woman
 ‘At the village arrived a woman.’
- b. Oko-mesa kw-a-hir-aw-a ehilanga.
 LOC.17-table 17SM-TNS-put-PASS-FV peanuts.19
 ‘On the table were put peanuts.’

Second, many Indo-European languages systematically obey (19) but not (20), [Yes CDAP, No DAP]. As a result, the finite verb only agrees with nominative DPs regardless of their position (preverbal or postverbal)].

Third, there are languages such as Turkish where both (19) and (20) are set positively, [Yes CDAP, Yes DAP]. As a result, the finite verb only agrees with nominative DPs, but only in SOV orders, not in inverted OSV orders which lack agreement.

Finally, Burushaski (an isolate ergative language spoken in the Himalayas) is argued to instantiate the fourth option, [No CDAP, No DAP]. This group of languages have the following properties: nominative and ergative subjects trigger the same form of agreement, unlike e.g. Hindi where verbs Agree only with nominative subjects, and this is independent of word order, i.e. agreement is always with the thematic subject and never e.g. with the fronted object in inverted OSV orders.

In the next section, we turn to our investigation of Case assignment in Greek from the perspective of the above-sketched typology. We will show that accusative is dependent case and nominative is unmarked case, i.e. not assigned under Agree with T, according to Baker's criteria. Nevertheless, agreement always goes with nominative arguments and never with non-nominative ones, unlike e.g. Bantu languages and like many Indo-European languages. We will then explore how we can account for this.

4 Case assignment in Greek

4.1 Accusative as dependent case in Greek

In Greek, the subject of an embedded clause can have ACC under certain conditions (Iatridou 1993; Kotzoglou & Papangeli 2007). In (22a), the subject of the embedded clause is assigned ACC when it occurs at the edge of the subjunctive. However, it is licensed by the negation in the subordinate clause, which provides evidence that this is an ECM and not an object control construction. As shown in (22b), object control constructions do not allow negative polarity items (NPIs) licensed by negation in the embedded clause. Crucially, the adnominal modifier in the embedded clause bears nominative obligatorily.⁴

⁴Mark Baker (personal communication) points out that a situation where the ECM subject receives ACC and the embedded modifier receives NOM, as in (22), does not arise in Sakha, as far as he knows.

(22) Greek

- a. Bika mesa ke me ekpliksi idha kanenan na min
 entered.I in and with surprise saw.I nobody.ACC SBJV NEG
 dulevi monos tu. Oli ixan xoristi se omades.
 work.3SG alone his.NOM. All had separated into teams.
 ‘I entered and I saw to my surprise that nobody was working alone.
 They had all separated into teams.’
- b. *Dietaksa kanenan na min figi apo edo
 ordered nobody.ACC SBJV NEG leave.3SG from here
 ‘I ordered that nobody leaves here.’

As in the other relevant languages discussed by Baker, the subject must move at least to the edge of the CP and optionally also higher (presumably to the Spec, vP of the matrix clause) in order for it to be assigned accusative case. The relevant facts of ACC vs. NOM distribution in Greek ECM constructions are illustrated in (23). As Kotzoglou & Papangeli (2007) point out, NOM DP-subjects of the embedded predicates cannot surface on the left of matrix adverbial material. On the contrary, this is possible with ACC-marked DPs, which may either precede matrix adverbials or follow them. When they precede matrix adverbials, embedded ACC subjects have presumably raised to the matrix clause, while when they follow adverbials they remain at the edge of the embedded subjunctive. In both positions, they can be assigned ACC case. This type of ACC assignment is very local: ACC subjects are not allowed to surface below the edge of the subjunctive, in a position following the embedded verb (arguably their vP internal base position), where NOM subjects are possible.

(23) Greek

- o Petros perimene {i Sofia / ti Sofia} me laxtara
 the Peter.NOM expected.3SG the Sofia.NOM the Sofia.ACC with desire
 {i Sofia / tin Sofia} na dhecti {i Sofia / *tin
 the Sofia.NOM the Sofia.ACC SBJV accept-3SG the Sofia.NOM the
 Sofia} tin protasi ghamu
 Sofia.ACC the proposal.ACC wedding.GEN
 ‘It is with desire that Peter expected Sofia to accept the wedding
 proposal.’ (*matrix reading of PP*)

Similarly, in constructions involving secondary predication, where the subject and the predicate must Agree in Greek, we see that no matter what the case of

the subject is (NOM or ACC), the embedded predicate always bears nominative (data from Kotzoglou & Papangeli 2007):

(24) Greek (Kotzoglou & Papangeli 2007)

- a. perimena o Janis na ine arostos / *arosto
 expected.1SG the John.NOM SBJV be sick.NOM *sick.ACC
 'I expected John to be sick.'
- b. perimena to Jani na ine arostos / *arosto
 expected.1SG the John.ACC SBJV be sick.NOM sick.ACC
 'I expected John to be sick.'

This suggests that accusative is dependent case in Greek and, moreover, that *dependent case can be assigned on top of a case assigned lower*, inside the embedded clause, which is always nominative in Greek. As Baker notes, there is cross-linguistic variation as to whether multiple cases can be realized or not.

A particularly clear instance of case stacking, discussed in Baker (2015), is seen in Cuzco Quechua, where an NP can get genitive case as the subject of a nominalized clause (i.e., as possessor of an NP), but then move up into a higher clause and get accusative case by being c-commanded by the subject on top of its genitive case.

(25) Cuzco Quechua (Baker 2015: 116)

- a. Mariyacha muna-n [Xwancha-q platanu ranti-na-n-ta].
 Maria want-3.SBJ Juan-GEN banana buy-NMLZ-3.POSS-ACC
 'Maria wants Juan to buy bananas.'
- b. Mariyacha Xwancha-q-ta muna-n [platanu ranti-na-n-ta].
 Maria Juan-GEN-ACC want-3.SBJ banana buy-NMLZ-3.POSS-ACC
 'Maria wants Juan to buy bananas.'

As we see in (25b), both the embedded and the matrix case are realized, which is expected from dependent case theory. In Greek, accusative case can be assigned on top of nominative, but only the higher case can be realized in case stacking configurations, unlike the situation in Cuzco Quechua.

Baker (2015) states the relevant morpho-syntactic parameter as follows:

(26) The case feature associated with nominal X can have a single value (Shipibo, Greek ...) or it can have a set of values (Quechua, Korean, some Australian languages).

Our conclusion then is that accusative in Greek is dependent case assigned in opposition to a higher argument at the CP-phase level.⁵ We turn to nominative next.

4.2 Nominative case in Greek

There is strong evidence that nominative is not assigned under Agree with finite T in Greek. Specifically, nominative can be assigned in the absence of finite T, as seen by the fact that it can appear in tenseless subjunctives in a number of cases.

A first piece of evidence comes from Greek raising constructions (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1999), shown in (27). In (27), we observe the absence of morphological and semantic Tense in the embedded clause, as it is not possible to vary or modify the embedded verb by a temporal adverb with independent reference, as shown in (27a) and (27b), respectively:

(27) Greek

- a. * O Janis arhizi na kolibise.
John begins SBJV swim.3SG
*‘John begins to have swum.’
- b. * O Janis arhizi simera na kolibai avrio.
John begins today SBJV swim.3SG tomorrow
*‘John begins today to swim tomorrow.’

In these contexts, the nominative can appear in the embedded clause, in spite of the absence of T. In this type of construction, similar to the languages discussed in §2, we have two verbs that Agree with one nominative obligatorily, a long-distance agreement (LDA) phenomenon, see Alexiadou et al. (2012) for detailed argumentation and arguments that this is not a covert raising construction but genuine LDA:

(28) Greek (Alexiadou et al. 2012: (36))

- Stamatisan / *Stamatise [na malonun i daskali tus mathites]
stopped.3PL stopped.3SG SBJV scold.3PL the teachers the students
‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

In these constructions, the subject resides in the embedded clause, but it agrees both with the matrix and the embedded predicate obligatorily. Evidence that the

⁵See Anagnostopoulou & Sevdali (2016) for evidence that Modern Greek genitive/dative is also dependent case, assigned in opposition to a lower argument at the vP level.

subject is truly embedded is provided by scope facts. The subject in the embedded clause must take low scope (29a); on the other hand, moved subjects must take wide scope (29b):

(29) Greek (Alexiadou et al. 2012: (41), (63))

a. *stop > only; *only > stop*

Stamatise na perni **mono i** Maria kakus vathmus
 stopped SBJV take only the Mary bad grades
 ‘It stopped being the case that only Maria got bad grades.’

b. **stop > only; only > stop*

Mono i Maria stamatise na perni kakus vathmus.
 Only the Mary stopped SBJV take bad grades
 ‘Only Mary stopped getting bad grades.’

Hence, these constructions violate (1), repeated here.

(1) Overt NP X has nominative case if and only if *exactly one verbal form* in the clause containing X agrees with it.

The above facts lead to the conclusion that there is no one-to-one correspondence between nominative case and verbal agreement (a single nominative and many full agreements can co-occur) and that nominative is realized in environments where Agree with a nominative assigning head does not take place (in the ECM, Raising and LDA constructions with embedded T lacking semantic and morphological tense discussed above). These phenomena are reminiscent of the ones attested in Burushaski, Tamil, Ingush, Tsez, which have been analyzed by Baker in terms of unmarked nominative (see §3).

Further evidence for unmarked nominative in Greek is drawn from a series of environments where nominative surfaces in the absence of agreement. For example:

1. Nominative assigned in the absence of agreement; Greek free-adjunct constructions including *-ing* forms (Tsimplici 2000 and many others call them “gerunds”) entirely lack subject agreement, but their subjects bear nominative case:

(30) Greek

fevgondas i Maria ... eklise ti porta.
 leaving the Mary.NOM closed.3SG the door.ACC
 ‘As Mary was leaving, she closed the door.’

2. Nominative is the case on NPs that appear in HTLD, ellipsis etc., Schütze (2001):

(31) Greek

- a. O Janis, ton ematha kala ola afta ta hronia.
the John.NOM him I learned well all these years
'As for John, I got to know him very well after all these years.'
- b. Pios theli na erthi? Ego / *emena
who wants to come I Me
'Who wants to come? Me.'

5 Nominative Case and parametric variation

Our conclusion leads to the following question: if nominative is unmarked, then this means that Greek is a [No CDAP] language like Bantu or Burushaski. But then why does the inflected verb in Greek only Agree with nominative NPs and never with anything else? Recall that Bantu languages (which are, in addition, [Yes DAP] languages) show agreement between the finite verb and whatever precedes it (locatives, objects etc.). On the other hand, Burushaski (which is, in addition, a [No DAP] language) shows agreement with the thematic subject regardless of the case of the subject (ergative or nominative) and regardless of where the thematic subject is placed.

Note that, as is well-known, the nominative NP does not need to be dislocated to Spec,TP in Greek, i.e. Greek clearly qualifies as a [No DAP] language (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998, i.a.):

(32) Greek

- a. O Janis / ta pedia agorase / agorasan to
the John.NOM the children.NOM bought.3SG bought.3PL the
vivlio
book.ACC
'John/the children bought the book.'
- b. agorase / agorasan o Janis / ta pedia to
bought.3SG bought.3PL the John.NOM the children.NOM the
vivlio
book.ACC
'John/the children bought the book.'

Crucially, verbal agreement is always with the nominative argument and never with e.g. a higher locative or dative argument. Anagnostopoulou (1999) provides evidence that dative experiencers in Greek have subject status with respect to some subjecthood criteria. For instance, the fact that they act as binders for anaphors can be viewed as one argument for their subjecthood; nevertheless, verbal agreement in this case is with the nominative and not with the dative argument:

- (33) Ton pedion tus aresi o eaftos tus
 The children.DAT CL.DAT like.3SG the self.NOM theirs
 ‘The children like themselves.’

Note, furthermore, that there are not even person restrictions in this kind of quirky subject constructions in Greek, unlike e.g. Icelandic, where the verb is not allowed to Agree with a nominative object if this is first or second person (Anagnostopoulou 2003; 2005 for Greek, cf. Sigurðsson 1989; Taraldsen 1995, i.a. for Icelandic):

- (34) a. Greek
 Tis aresume / aresete / areso / aresis (emis / esis / ego / esi)
 her like.1PL like.2PL like.1SG like.2SG we you.PL I you.SG
 b. Icelandic
 *Henni leiddumst við
 She.DAT was bored.by.1PL us.NOM
 ‘She was bored by us.’

Similarly, in LDA constructions under raising predicates with an experiencer argument agreement in person with the nominative argument is possible:

- (35) Greek
 Me apelise epidi den tu fenomun na dulevo (ego) kala
 me fired.3SG because NEG him seemed.1SG SBJV work.1SG I well
 ‘He fired me because I seemed to him to not be doing a good job.’
- (36) Icelandic
 a. Mér höfðu fundist þær vera gáfaðar
 Me.DAT had found they.NOM be intelligent
 ‘I had found them intelligent’

- b. * *Peim* *höfum alltaf fundist við* *vinna vel*
Them.DAT have always found we.NOM work well
'They have always thought that we work well.'

Thus, even though we have evidence from LDA, Raising, and ECM that Greek behaves like a [No CDAP] language, we also have evidence that inflected verbs agree (fully) with nominative arguments, just as in many Indo-European languages which Baker (2015) analyzes as Agree and Baker (2008) analyses as [Yes CDAP] languages.

The question then is what is the nature of the relevant parameter that can account for the distribution of nominative case with respect to multiple agreement in Greek in long-distance agreement constructions of the type discussed above. We would like to entertain the hypothesis that the availability of such chains relates to the full pro drop status of Modern Greek. Suppose that full pro-drop languages have [+interpretable] φ -features on T, according to the hypothesis in (37) (see Holmberg 2005 who rejects it, Barbosa 2009 who argues for a version of it, cf. Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998):

- (37) The set of φ -features in T (Agr) is interpretable in null-subject languages (NSLs), and *pro* is therefore redundant; Agr is a referential, definite pronoun, albeit a pronoun phonologically expressed as an affix. As such, Agr is also assigned a subject theta-role, possibly by virtue of heading a chain whose foot is in vP , receiving the relevant theta-role.

It would follow from (37) that T does not need to enter Agree in order to license its φ -features, and hence that NOM Case will not be assigned as a result of Agree with the φ -features of T. Thus, in such a theory, the φ -features of the lower T in LDA configurations like (27–29) are not deleted by entering Agree with NOM arguments, and can thus form an LDA chain with the φ -features of the higher T:

- (38) NSLs have T with interpretable φ -features which are not deleted after checking, thus being able to form long-distance chains via Agree (cf. Ura 1994).

Tsakali et al. (2017; 2019)⁶ and Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (2019) provide further discussion of such LDA chains in Greek, which are schematically represented in (39), as well as a discussion of the conditions under which such chains are disrupted:

⁶Tsakali et al. argue that apparent backward control configurations also involve LDA chains of the type depicted in (39).

(39) [$T\varphi_k$ [TP/CP $T\varphi_k$ $DP\varphi_k$]]

Crucially for present purposes, overt subjects are expected to receive unmarked NOM in NSLs and not NOM assigned by Agree in such a theory. In other words, the prediction of hypothesis (37) is the unmarked status of nominative in NSLs.

This prediction seems to be borne out in Greek and at least in Romanian, among other NSLs. Romanian like Greek has LDA (Alexiadou et al. 2012): as shown in (40), the in situ DP subject obligatorily agrees with both the matrix and the lower verb in person and number, just like Greek:

(40) Romanian
 Au încetat / *A încetat să-i certe profesorii pe
 stopped.3PL stopped.3SG SBJV-CL.3PL.ACC scold.3PL the teachers the
 elevi.
 students
 ‘The teachers stopped scolding the students.’

In situ subjects take narrow scope with respect to raising verb and matrix negation, as shown in (41) (compare to (29) above):⁷

(41) Romanian
 a. *only* > *stop*
 Numai Maria a încetat să ia note slabe.
 only Mary stopped SBJV get grades weak.
 ‘It is only Maria who stopped getting bad grades.’
 b. *stop* > *only*
 A încetat să ia numai Maria note slabe.
 stopped SBJV get only Mary grades weak
 ‘It stopped being the case that only Mary got bad grades.’

Like Greek, Romanian allows nominative *in gerunds*:

(42) Romanian (Alboiu 2009)
 fiind tu / *tine gata
 be-GER 2SG.NOM 2SG.ACC ready

⁷Note that the same judgements hold in Romanian for the infinitival Raising constructions. We would like to point out here that with ‘seem’ Romanian only has the *seem* > *only* reading, irrespectively of the surface position of the subject, i.e. before the raising verb or in the embedded clause.

If we accept the above reasoning, it seems that at least some NSLs have unmarked nominative.

But what is it that ensures that the ϕ -features of T always track/co-vary with NOM in NSLs? Recall that Greek (and Romanian) is not like a [No CDAP] language. Typical [No CDAP] languages dissociate agreement from nominative in particular cases, for instance, Bantu languages show agreement between the finite verb and whatever precedes it (locatives, objects etc.), while Burushaski T agrees indiscriminately with both ergative and absolutive subjects. Greek instantiates the type of language, which Baker (2008) explicitly states should not exist: “No agreement with obliques; multiple agreement OK” (Baker 2008: 223, (113d)). Multiple agreement in Greek and Romanian suggests that (i) NOM is not assigned under Agree and (ii) agreement on T is not valued by Nom, which straightforwardly follows from (37) above. Nevertheless, agreement can never trace genitive DP indirect objects (IOs) or PPs but only NOM DPs.

We can account for this puzzle, if we hypothesize that only DPs bearing unmarked case (i.e. nominative case) are accessible for phi-agreement (Bobaljik 2008, Preminger 2014, Baker 2015) in Greek. Under this hypothesis, even though the ϕ -features on T do not need to enter Agree with a DP (see (37) above) and even though NOM does not need to be licensed by Agree, when both agreement and a DP bearing NOM are present, agreement always targets DPs bearing NOM and not e.g. DPs bearing oblique/quirky GEN. Naturally, this raises two further questions: (a) What does “phi-agreement” mean, if this is not the reflex of Agree? What is the relationship between overt agreement and Agree? (b) What happens in pro-drop configurations where no overt DP bearing NOM is present?

We are not going to fully address these questions here, but we would like to suggest that the need for a separation of Agree from agreement in order to describe the state of affairs in Greek reflects the need for a separation of interpretability from valuation, argued for in Pesetsky & Torrego (2007) on independent grounds.

Suppose that the ϕ -features on T are [+interpretable], thus not requiring Agree to be licensed, as stated in (37), but at the same time they are unvalued and need to receive a value. One way of receiving a value is via an agreement operation copying the ϕ -features of a DP onto T. Under the hypothesis that only DPs bearing NOM are accessible for agreement in Greek, this will force agreement between NOM and the lower T in configurations like (39). Once its ϕ -features are valued, the lower T in (39) will further value the ϕ -features of the matrix T by copying its features onto the higher T through the formation of an agreement chain with it. On this view, Greek has two key properties. On the one hand, agreement always goes with a NOM DP, similarly to e.g. English and Sakha. This is due to

the fact that in all three languages, only NOM DPs are accessible for agreement. On the other hand, agreement and NOM are not in a one-to-one relationship, unlike Sakha and English. Greek behaves similarly to Oromo, Ingush and Tsez in showing multiple fully inflected for person and number verbal heads agreeing with a single NOM DP (LDA). This is due to the fact that T in pro-drop Greek has [+interpretable] ϕ -features which do not have to be licensed via Agree with a NOM DP, and, concomitantly, NOM is unmarked case and therefore possible also in environments lacking agreement (for instance, gerunds).

The final issue to address concerns question b) raised above, namely, how to analyze agreement in pro-drop configurations where no overt DP is present. We already said that we adopt (37) according to which, Agr on T is [+ interpretable], phonologically expressed as an affix. As such, Agr is also assigned a subject theta-role, by virtue of heading a chain whose foot is in ν P (we could call it pro), receiving the relevant theta-role. The question is what values the features of Agr in the absence of an overt DP bearing NOM. We believe that in these cases, valuation happens via a covert Topic operator situated in the CP-periphery of the clause, along the lines of proposals put forth in Frascarelli (2007), Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007), Miyagawa (2017) and others.

This view on pro is very close to ideas in Holmberg (2010) and Roberts (2010a,b). Holmberg (2010) and Roberts (2010a,b) take NSLs to have a D feature T, see also Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998). They assume that null pronouns are simply ϕ Ps, i.e. they are defective pronouns in the system of Cardinaletti & Starke (1999). When T probes a ϕ P subject, its unvalued ϕ -features are valued by the subject. This results in the union of the ϕ -features of T and the subject, which in turn yields a definite pronoun. Roberts and Holmberg take incorporation of a ϕ P in T to be a direct effect of Agree. In particular, finite T has a set of unvalued ϕ -features, and probes for a category with matching valued features. The defective subject pronoun has the required valued ϕ -features, and therefore values T's $u\phi$ -features. T values the subject's unvalued case feature. In this situation, according to Roberts (2010c), the probe and the goal form a chain, the ϕ P is not pronounced, but as the chain includes [D], which is valued by the topic, the result is a definite null subject construction. The chain is pronounced in form of an affix on the verb. Specifically, in Holmberg's system the index-sharing relationship between the null pronoun and the null Topic crucially involves T: the topic values the uD -feature of T, where the valuation consists of uD copying the referential index of the topic.

The difference between null pronouns and lexical DPs or D-pronouns is that they value T's uD -feature. However, in this case, T and the lexical subject DP, while they share ϕ -feature values as a result of Agree, they do not form a chain,

and consequently the lexical subject is spelled out and pronounced. In our analysis, though valuation is necessary, the additional layer of [+interpretable] features leads to a situation, according to which NOM Case will not be assigned as a result of Agree with the φ -features of T, and many fully agreeing Ts are possible.

6 Conclusion and open questions

In this squib, we investigated the nature of nominative and accusative case in Greek. We argued that while accusative qualifies as dependent case on the basis of Baker's (2015) criteria, nominative is problematic: while Greek Nominative behaves like unmarked case and is clearly not assigned under agreement in T in a number of environments, unlike English, agreement always goes with NOM when both are present, like English. An important characteristic of Greek not shared by English is that it pervasively shows long-distance chains involving a single in situ NOM subject and many T heads fully agreeing with it. We suggested that Greek has T with interpretable φ -features as a by-product of V raising satisfying the EPP. This allows for the formation of long-distance chains between a single DP bearing unmarked NOM and many fully agreeing Ts. Turning to the question of why agreement always goes with NOM in Greek, we adopted the view that agreement is sensitive to unmarked case and argued that the analysis of Greek nominative case in connection to agreement requires a separation of interpretability from valuation, as in Pesetsky & Torrego (2007).

Several issues arise from our proposal. First, an empirical question is whether it is possible to find evidence from LDA configurations under multiple agreement pointing to the same conclusion for other pro-drop languages as well. The first languages to look at would be pro-drop languages that have lost infinitives and have replaced them with inflected clauses similar to Greek subjunctives, or pro-drop languages with inflected infinitives: several languages of the Balkan Sprachbund and European Portuguese might be candidate languages to look at.

Second, in a system where nominative and absolutive can either be assigned via Agree or be unmarked cases (see Levin & Preminger 2015 for arguments against this dissociation), the more general question that arises is what determines which case will be unmarked and/or default in a language and what determines nominative/absolutive case assignment under Agree. For instance, in English (but also Norwegian), accusative is the default Case and NOM is assigned via Agree, see Schütze (2001) and McFadden (2004).⁸ A possible way of relating this particular distribution of cases would be to propose that because nominative

⁸Thanks to Terje Lohndal for raising this question.

is assigned via Agree in English and Norwegian, another case must take over the role of default case. Because of this, these languages have default accusative and not default nominative case. On the other hand, in a language like Greek where nominative is the unmarked case, default and unmarked case will have the same realization in the clausal domain, since nominative always surfaces on NPs that do not enter case competition.

Abbreviations

1	first person	LAT	lative
2	second person	LDA	long-distance agreement
3	third person	LOC	locative
ABS	absolutive	LV	light verb
ACC	accusative	MNOM	marked nominative
AOR	aorist	NEG	negation
AUG	augment	NMLZ	nominalizer/nominalization
B	gender agreement marker	NOM	nominative
CDAP	case-dependency of agreement parameter	NPI	negative polarity item
CL	clitic	NPST	non-past
CVB	converb	NSL	null-subject language
DAP	direction of agreement parameter	OBJ	object
DAT	dative	OBL	oblique
DEP	dependent	PASS	passive
ECM	exceptional case marking	PL	plural
EPP	extended projection principle	POSS	possessive
ERG	ergative	PROG	progressive
F	feminine	PRS	present
FUT	future	PST	past
FV	final vowel	PTCP	participle
GEN	genitive	SBJ	subject
GER	gerund	SBJV	subjunctive
INF	infinitive	SG	singular
IO	indirect object	SIM	simultaneous
J	gender agreement marker	SM	subject marker
		TNS	tense
		VN	verbal noun

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