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Alexey A. Kozlov

CASE MATTERS FOR CHUKCHI NP STRUCTURE

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*Alexey A. Kozlov*¹

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This paper focuses on the basic syntax of noun phrases in Amguema Chukchi. We are going to show that the case feature that a noun phrase bears has impact on: a) incorporation of adnominal dependents; b) scrambling of adnominal dependents that are realized as free words; c) constituent order in noun phrases.

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¹ National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia). Laboratory for Formal Models in Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Junior Research Fellow

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1. Introduction

Quite expectedly, nouns seem to be heads of noun phrases in Chukchi. For example, nouns always host case markers which reflect the external syntactic relation of noun phrases, whereas other NP constituents (adjectives, demonstrative pronouns, quantifiers, etc.) only do so in marked contexts. Then we should expect the internal structure of NPs to remain the same with a proviso of a case concord possibility therein.

This does not hold, however. Chukchi NPs violate the “morphosyntactic locus” rule formulated by Arnold Zwicky [1985]. Syntax of absolutive and oblique noun phrases in Chukchi (or, rather, in the variety of Chukchi I studied) is drastically different, and this is not due to case concord.

The question this paper focuses on goes as follows: why should the case matter at all?

My data comes from two fieldtrips to the village of Amguema, Chukchi Autonomus District, in 2017–2018, with a team of researchers from HSE. As far as I know, it is the first project on documentation Chukchi done collectively. Amguema is one of the few Chukchi inland villages (and presumably the largest of those); it is built around a reindeer Kolkhoz farm. It is situated on the Chukotka peninsula and thus represents the eastern but not the easternmost variety of Chukchi.

In many respects Amguema Chukchi is different from the variety where the data of several reknowned typologists who worked on Chukchi (Vladimir Nedyalkov, Maria Polinsky, Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, etc.) come from. For example, it lacks a productive antipassive derivation, which is crucial for some typologically oriented accounts of Chukchi argument encoding (Polinsky & Nedjalkov 1987, Kozinsky et al. 1988), syntactic ergativity (Polinsky 2016), relativization (Polinsky 1994) etc. This may be due to the fact that the aforementioned scholars mostly worked with Chukchi-speaking linguists working at St. Petersburg (Pëtr Inenliqej, Vladimir Raytəłən), who were presumably speakers of westernmost varieties of Chukchi. However, Telqep, a south-western variety of Chukchi described in a corpus-based grammar of Michael Dunn (Dunn 1999) is much closer to Amguema Chukchi, e. g. it lacks productive antipassive.

In general, my paper raises the issues partially covered in the research of Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1995). However, my primary focus will be on the Amguema data which are different in many respects.

Case matters for the following aspects of NP morphosyntax in Chukchi, which will be subsequently discussed: expression of number as opposed to morphological number neutrality

(Section 1); incorporation of adnominal dependents into nominal heads (Section 2); and word order in the noun phrase (Section 3). Section 4 discusses the lack of harmony between the hierarchies from Sections 2 and 3 and what it tells us about Chukchi NP structure.

2. Nominal morphology and the expression of number

Chukchi possesses two sets of nominal case suffixes, which are traditionally called “animate” and “in-animate” declensions. Proper nouns attach animate declension case suffixes, inanimate nouns make use of the inanimate declension, and common human nouns can employ both. (Genitive is not traditionally recognized as a case and is sometimes described as an adjectivizing derivation; see however Kozlov 2018 for arguments in favour of its casehood).

Table 1. Chukchi nominal inflection

	inanimate nouns		animate nouns	
	SG	PL	SG	PL
ABS	-∅ / -n / -ŋə	-t / -ti	-∅ / -n / -ŋə	-nti
ERG	-(t)e		-ne	-rə-k
LOC	-k(ə)			
DAT	-γtə / -etə ^{+VH}		-na	-rə-kə ^{+VH}
ABL	-jpə / -γəpə / -epə ^{+VH}		-jpə / -γəpə / -epə ^{+VH}	
ORI	-γjit		-γjit	-rə-γjit
PROL	-jekwe ^{+VH}		-jekwe ^{+VH}	
EQU	-(n)u			

As can be seen from this table, animate declension distinguishes singular and plural forms for all cases except the Equative. However, inanimate declension suffixes (which is far more frequent) are number-neutral for all cases save the Absolutive:

- (1) a. mət-ekwen-mək təmŋelqot-γəpə
 1PL.A-go.away-1PL.O T.-ABL
 1. ‘We went away from Tymnelqot.’
 2. * ‘We went away from the Tymnelqots (i. e. Tymnelqot and his kin).’

- b. mət-ekwen-mək təmŋelqotə-r-γəpə
 1PL.A-go.away-1PL.O T.-AN.PL-ABL
 1. ‘We went away from the Tymnelqots (i. e. Tymnelqot and his kin).’
 2. * ‘We went away from Tymnelqot.’
- c. mət-ekwen-mək elγə-ŋaj-γəpə
 1PL.A-go.away-1PL.O white-hill-ABL
 1. ‘We went away from the white hills.’
 2. ‘We went away from the white hill.’

However, oblique nouns are only number-neutral from the point of view of morphology. Syntactically, they seem to retain a [+plural] feature, which shows itself through case concord within the NP and argument indexing on the verb.

In the sentences (2a–c), which are headed by a transitive verb *-jʔo-* ‘come to, reach’ (a very useful tool for eliciting transitive sentences in a community whose members hate to speak about killing and even breaking!) the A-participant is marked with the Ergative. Ergative is an oblique case, and it means that the form *qɫawəl-a* [man-ERG] can be in principle translated as ‘man’ or ‘men’. However, the sentences (2a–c) are not ambiguous, as the number of the A-participant is consistently indexed on the verb, singular in (2a–b) and plural in (2c). Moreover, in (2b–c) the *-ɫʔ-* participle agrees with its head in ϕ -features, but chooses the animate declension rather than the inanimate (and regularly so, as it refers to an animate entity). In such cases, the participle chooses a number form according to the semantic number of the head.

- (2) a. wakʔo-twa-ɫʔ-a qɫawəl-a eryatək r-ena-jʔo-γʔe
 sit-RES-ATR-ERG man-ERG tomorrow FUT-3SG.A.1SG.O-reach-TH
 ‘The man who is sitting will visit me tomorrow.’
- b. wakʔo-twa-ɫʔə-na qɫawəl-a eryatək r-ena-jʔo-γʔe
 sit-RES-ATTR-AN.ERG man-ERG tomorrow FUT-3SG.A.1SG.O-reach-TH
 ‘The man who is sitting will visit me tomorrow.’
- c. wakʔo-twa-ɫʔə-rə-k qɫawəl-a eryatək na-ra-jʔo-γəm
 sit-RES-ATTR-AN.PL-ERG man-ERG tomorrow 3PL.A-FUT-reach-1SG.O
 ‘The men who are sitting will visit me tomorrow.’

So in this respect, the case of the head only matters for the morphology of number and does not have any deeper syntactic consequences.

3. Incorporation of adnominal dependents

Chukchi has incorporation. In particular, some adnominal dependents sometimes incorporate into head nouns.

For each class of adnominal dependents, the rules of incorporation are different, but all of them have to be formulated wrt the case of the head. The same opposition is relevant there: Absolutive vs. all other cases.

For example, adjectival roots can always incorporate into head nouns, but in absolutive NPs they may also appear in a “stative” circumfixal shell *nə-...-qin*:

(3) a. *nə-γtin-qin* *newəsqet* *ekwet-γʔi*
 ST-beautiful-ST.3SG girl.ABS go.away-AOR.3SG

b. *γətin-newəsqet* *ekwet-γʔi*
 beautiful+girl.ABS go.away-AOR.3SG
 ‘The beautiful girl went away.’

(4) a. **nə-γtin-qin* *newəsqet-e* *ʔettʔə-qej* *rələmɲenaw-nen*
 ST-beautiful-ST.3SG girl-ERG dog-DIM.ABS take.away-AOR.3SG

b. **nə-γtin-qin-e* *newəsqet-e* *ʔettʔə-qej* *rələmɲenaw-nen*
 ST-beautiful-ST.3SG-ERG girl-ERG dog-DIM.ABS take.away-AOR.3SG

c. ^{OK} *γətin-newəsqet-e* *ʔettʔə-qej* *rələmɲenaw-nen*
 beautiful+girl-ERG dog-DIM.ABS take.away-AOR.3SG
 ‘The beautiful girl took the dog away.’

Numerals (as well as possessive pronouns such as *γəm-nin* [I-AN.GEN] ‘my’) are complementarily distributed wrt case: they have to surface as separate phonological words in the Absolutive, and to incorporate in the oblique cases:

(5) a. *jet-γʔe-t* *mənyətken* *ʔorawelʔa-t* / **mənyət+ʔorawelʔa-t*
 come-TH-3PL 10 person-ABS.PL 10+person-ERG
 ‘Ten people have come.’

b. *mənyət-ʔorawelʔa-ta* / **mənyətken* *ʔorawelʔa-ta* *ne-tiɲu-γʔe-n*
 10+person-erg 10 person-erg 3PL.A/S-pull.out-TH-3SG.O
 ‘Ten people pulled out a little pro.’

Demonstratives (as well as yet other quantifiers, e.g. *-mək-* ‘many’, *elwelin* ‘different’, etc.) are obligatorily realized as separate phonological words in the Absolutive, and can either incorporate or be realized as separate phonological words in the oblique.

- (6) a. *ɲotqen ləweer-ən / *ɲutin-ləweer-ən weriwet-γʔi*
 this milk-ABS this+milk-ABS sour-TH.3SG
 ‘This milk has gone sour.’
- b. *ɲotqen newsqet-e ren-nin ʔəttʔəqaj-qaj*
 this girl-ERG bring-3SG.S.3SG.O dog-DIM.ABS
 ‘This girl has brought the dog.’
- c. *ɲotqena newsqet-e ren-nin ʔəttʔəqaj-qaj*
 this.OBL girl-ERG bring-3SG.S.3SG.O dog-DIM.ABS
 ‘Idem.’

Finally, participles, genitives, or relational adjectives never incorporate:

- (7) a. *epeqej-nin sayət-ta / *apaqaj-nena-sayət-ta*
 grandmother-AN.GEN sister-ERG grandmother-GEN-sister-ERG
 ‘grandmother’s sister (did that)’
- b. *taɲne-ra-kena-t nenene-t / *taɲne-ra-kena-nanana-t*
 foreign-house-REL-PL child-PL foreign-house-REL-child-PL
 ‘someone else’s children’

Here is the summarizing table:

Tab. 2. Rules of adnominal dependent incorporation in Chukchi

dependent class	oblique cases		Absolutive
	possible	obligatory	possible
qualitative adjectives	+	+	+
numerals	+	+	-
possessive / genitive pronouns	+	+	-
<i>qot</i> ‘some, another’	+	-	-
demonstratives	+	-	-
<i>ełwet?in</i> ‘different’	+	-	-
<i>-mæk-</i> ‘many’	+	-	-
genitives	-	-	-
relational adjectives	-	-	-
<i>əmət?o</i> ‘all’	-	-	-

The question is: why on earth the external syntactic relations of the head are relevant for its dependents?

The following observation can be made on the basis of Table 2:

- (i) Oblique cases tend to incorporate more than the Absolutive;
- (ii) The classes of adnominal dependents in (but only partially) adhere to the “cartographic hierarchy” of adnominal dependents:

referential slot < quantification slot < lexical slot

[DP / DemP.... [QP, NumP, NumeralP, CIP... [nP, NP]]]

(cf. Lyutikova 2015, Borer 2005, Svenonius 2007)

Note that quantifiers do not form a uniform class but are rather dissipated between the three classes, and pronominal genitives behave differently from nominal genitives).

- (iii) Only non-branching adnominal dependents can ever be incorporated

We adopt here the phrasal vs. non-phrasal distinction introduced by Dryer (1992), who argued that what really mattered for word order generalizations was not head vs. dependent status of a syntactic node, but rather its ability to attach dependents. The latter is a parameter logically

independent of headness (what we recognize a head of a construction may be theory-dependent; non-phrasal syntactic nodes include both heads and pronominal dependent XPs who cannot attach dependents by trivial reasons).

Indeed, the incorporated elements are quantifiers, demonstratives, numerals and possessive pronouns, which cannot attach their own complements or modifiers. Note that in Chukchi, degree modifiers (‘slightly’, ‘very’, ‘really’, ‘approximately’) are grammatical prefixes rather than, e.g., adverbs:

(9) wək wə-lyə-qaj teγ-n-uwʔeʎe-qin teγ-nə-kee-qin
stone-SING-DIM-ABS.SG GOOD-ST-BLACK-ST.3SG GOOD-ST-SMOOTH-ST.3SG
‘It was a very black and a very smooth stone.’

(10) muri nə-lyi-nə-ŋin-muri
we ST-INTS-ST-young-NP.1PL
‘We were really young.’

Genitives (11) and relational adjectives (12) which may have their own dependents and modifiers never incorporate. (Note that one of the major function of Chukchi relational adjectives is encoding part-whole relations).

(11) [[epeqej-nin] sakett-en] wəʎə
grandmother-GEN sister-GEN knife.ABS
‘a knife of grandmother’s sister’

(12) [[epe-nin] wəʎə-ken] jəqujγ-ən
grandfather-AN.GEN knife-REL handle-ABS.SG
‘a handle of grandfather’s knife’

Another argument for the relevance of branchability is the distribution of the expressions *əŋŋin* ‘such, this way’ / *əŋŋin wa-ʔ-ən* [such be-ATR-ABS.SG] ‘being such’. In general, *əŋŋin* modifies VPs (13a) or is used predicatively (13b), while *əŋŋin wa-ʔ-ən* modifies NPs (14):

(13) a. əŋŋin n-en-ʔatsa-qen
such ST-3SG.S-wait-ST.3SG.O
‘He waited this way’

- b. əŋqen əŋŋin sinit-kin ənpəsʔatyəry-ən
 this such own-REL old.days-ABS.SG
 ‘Such were his old days.’

- (14) yəmnan yemo əŋŋin *(wa-ʔ-ən) anqatw-ən
 I-AN.ERG dunno such be-ATR-ABS edible.root-ABS
 ‘I don’t know such an edible root.’

It turns out that adjectives realized as separate phonological words in a “stative” circumfixal shell can be modified by *əŋŋin*, while incorporated adjectives can not (it is only *əŋŋin waʔən* that is allowed, which suggest NP rather than AdjP modification):

- (15) minkə yənan kur-γʔe-n [[əŋŋin] nə-tur-qin] para~par]ʔ
 where you.AN.ERG buy-TH-2SG.S3SG.O such ST-fresh-ST.3SGbutter~ABS.SG
 ‘Where have you bought such fresh butter?’

- (16) [[əŋŋin *(wa-ʔ-a)] tor+para-ta] kəkwat+kawkaw
 such be-ATR-ERG fresh+butter-ERG dry+bread.ABS.SG
 awn-a-ena-rke-ʔə-k-a
 PROH-NEG-INV-anoint-ATR-NEG-ERG
 ‘Don’t butter the dry bread with such fresh butter.’

It seems that while separate-word adjectives do attach modifiers, while incorporated adjectival stems do not.

3. Word order in NPs

3.1 Absolutive

In the Absolutive, Chukchi noun phrase exhibits certain properties of non-configurationality. Both head-final and head-initial orders are attested (17a–b).

- (17) a. yə-nin ʔu-ʔəʔ qnut koka-tset-jəʔyən
 you-AN.GEN see-DEB-ABS.SG like pot-put-CONT-ABS.SG
 ‘Your face is like a hot pad.’

- b. ətləyən yəm-nin qora-yənretə-ʔ-u y-it-lin
 father-ABS.SG I-AN.GEN reindeer-herd-ATTR-EQU PF-be-PF.3SG
 ‘My father was a reindeer herder.’

The order of the dependents is not fixed:

- (18) a. ^{OK}[$\eta\text{otqena-t}$ $\text{n}\bar{\text{a}}\text{-}\gamma\text{tin-qine-t}$ $\text{new}\bar{\text{a}}\text{sqe}\gamma\text{-ti}$]_{NP} $\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{m-nin}$ $\eta\text{eekke-t}$
 this-PL ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL girl-PL I-GEN daughter-ABS.PL
- b. ^{OK}[$\text{n}\bar{\text{a}}\text{-}\gamma\text{tin-qine-t}$ $\eta\text{otqena-t}$ $\text{new}\bar{\text{a}}\text{sqe}\gamma\text{-ti}$]_{NP} $\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{m-nin}$ $\eta\text{eekke-t}$
 ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL this-PL girl-PL I-GEN daughter-ABS.PL
- c. ^{OK}[$\eta\text{otqena-t}$ $\text{new}\bar{\text{a}}\text{sqe}\gamma\text{-ti}$ $\text{n}\bar{\text{a}}\text{-}\gamma\text{tin-qine-t}$]_{NP} $\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{m-nin}$ $\eta\text{eekke-t}$
 this-PL girl-PL ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL I-GEN daughter-ABS.PL
- d. ^{OK}[$\text{new}\bar{\text{a}}\text{sqe}\gamma\text{-ti}$ $\eta\text{otqena-t}$ $\text{n}\bar{\text{a}}\text{-}\gamma\text{tin-qine-t}$]_{NP} $\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{m-nin}$ $\eta\text{eekke-t}$
 girl-PL this-PL ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL I-GEN daughter-ABS.PL

‘These beautiful girls are my daughters.’

Moreover, dependents do not have to be adjacent to their heads (which does not seem to have consequences for the information-structure, intonation, etc.)

- (19) $\text{was}'\text{a-nen}$ $\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{m}\bar{\text{a}}\text{kayt}\bar{\text{a}}$ $\text{jet-}\gamma\bar{\text{i}}$ $\text{tum}\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{tum}$
 V.-AN.GEN I.DAT come-AOR.3SG friend.ABS

‘Vasya’s friend came to me.’

- (20) ajwe $\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{tt}\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{-qe}\bar{\text{j}}$ $\gamma\bar{\text{e}}\text{-}\gamma\text{intew-lin}$ $\text{n-il}\gamma\bar{\text{a}}\text{-qin}$
 yesterday dog-DIM.ABS.SG PF-run.away-PF.3SG ST-white-ST.3SG

‘Yesterday the white dog ran away.’

3.2 Oblique cases: head & dependent order

Such liberty, however, is only allowed for the Absolutive NPs. In oblique cases, adnominal dependents have to be adjacent to their heads, and be situated to the left of it (12a, 13a). They cannot appear to the left of their heads (12b, 13b) or be scrambled away from them (12c, 13c).

- (21) a. $\text{a}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{lon}}$ $\text{krism}\bar{\text{a}}\text{-kin}$ $\text{m}\bar{\text{a}}\text{s}\bar{\text{a}}\text{k}\bar{\text{w}}\bar{\text{a}}\text{-k}$ $\text{mumk}\bar{\text{a}}\bar{\text{l}}\text{-tip-}\gamma\bar{\text{i}}$
 s/he holiday-REL shirt-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG

‘She sewed a button to her holiday shirt.’

b. ^{??}ətɫon məsəkʷə-k *krismə-kin mumkəl-tip-γʔi
 s/he shirt-LOC holiday-REL button-pierce-AOR.3SG
 ‘She sewed a button to her holiday shirt.’

c. *krismə-kin ətɫon məsəkʷə-k mumkəl-tip-γʔi
 holiday-REL s/he shirt-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG
 ‘She sewed a button to her holiday shirt.’

(22) a. nə-ɫe-jyəm was’a-nen kowɫorw-a
 ST-go-NP.1PL V.-AN.GEN car-ERG
 ‘I went by Vasya’s car.’

b. ^{??}nə-ɫe-jyəm kowɫorw-a was’a-nen
 ST-go-NP.1PL car-ERG V.-AN.GEN
 ‘Idem.’

c. *was’a-nen nə-ɫe-jyəm kowɫorw-a
 V.-AN.GEN ST-go-NP.1PL car-ERG
 Expected meaning: ‘I went by Vasya’s car.’

3.3 Oblique cases: constituent order in NPs

Moreover, the order of constituents in oblique NPs is far more strict than in the Absolutive ones. Several word orders are strictly banned, in particularly those in which genitives or relational adjectives are followed by demonstrative pronouns:

(23) a. ətɫon ɲotqena krismə-kin məsəkʷə-k mumkəl+tip-γʔi
 s/he this.OBL holiday-REL shirt-LOC button+pierce-AOR.3SG
 ‘She sewed a button to this holiday shirt.’

b. *ətɫon krismə-kin ɲotqena məsəkʷə-k mumkəl+tip-γʔi
 s/he holiday-REL ətɫot.OBL pyɫaxa-LOC button+pierce-AOR.3SG
 Intended meaning: ‘Idem.’

(24) a. ətɫon ɲotqena sakett-en məsəkʷə-k mumkəl+tip-γʔi
 s/he this.OBL sister-GEN shirt-LOC button+pierce-AOR.3SG
 ‘She sewed a button to this shirt of sister’s.’

- b. *ətłon sakett-en ɲotqena məsək wə-k mumkeł+tip-γʔi
 s/he sister-GEN this.OBL shirt-LOC button+pierce -AOR.3SG
 Intended meaning: ‘Idem.’

The dependents which can be realized as separate phonological words in the oblique cases, i. e. genitives, participles, relation adjectives and demonstratives yield the following hierarchy:

- (iv) ² PTCP > Q > DEM > GEN, REL > PTCP ,

This patterns with a relatively strict stem order in nominal complexes with incorporated nouns:

- (25) a. ɲəron-ełγ-ʔəttʔəqaj-a na-jʔo-γəm
 3-white-dog-ERG 3PL.A-reach-1SG.O
 b. *ełγə-ɲəron-ʔəttʔəqaj-a na-jʔo-γəm
 white-3-dog-ERG 3PL.A-reach-1SG.O
 ‘Three white dogs came to me.’
- (26) a. ɲutin-iłγ-ʔəttʔəqej-e na-jʔo-γəm
 this.INC-white-dog-ERG 3PL.A-reach-1SG.O
 b. *iłγə-ɲutin-ʔəttʔəqej-e na-jʔo-γəm
 this.INC-white-dog-ERG 3PL.A-reach-1SG.O
 ‘These white dogs came to me.’
- (27) a. ɲəren-γəmək-ekke-te na-jʔo-γəm
 2-I.INC-son-ERG 3PL.A-reach-1SG.O
 b. ^{??/?} γəməγ-ɲəren-ekke-te najʔoγəm
 I.INC-2-son-ERG 3PL.A-reach-1SG.O
 ‘My two sons came to me.’

The resultant stem order is the following:

- (v) DEM > NUM > POSS > QUAL.ADJ

We presumably behold the ongoing grammaticalization of configurationality in Chukchi (for a similar account of syntactic evolution for ancient Indo-European languages see Luraghi (2010)). Note that the majority of oblique cases goes back to postpositions or non-finite verbs (for example,

the Dative clearly goes back to a verb with the meaning ‘go to’, and the Ablative to one with the meaning ‘take off’. So what had previously been non-finite forms or PPs and thus natural islands for scrambling changes syntactic status but retains scrambling properties.

4. Lack of harmony

The incorporation hierarchy (vi) (=Table 2) and the word order hierarchy in oblique NPs (vii) are not harmonic:

(vi) GEN, REL, PTCP < Q, DEM < NUM, PRON.GEN < ADJ

(vii)=(iv) ? PTCP > Q, DEM > GEN, REL > PTCP

Quantifiers and demonstratives should precede genitives and relational adjectives (vi) but also are more prone to incorporation (vii).

Let us take a pair of modifiers:

- quantifier *qoɫ* ‘some, another’, which can incorporate in the oblique cases;

- relational adjective *emnuŋ-kin* [tundra-REL], which never incorporates.

However, by (vii), *qoɫ* should precede *emnuŋkin* in the oblique cases. It turns out that (vii) matters not only for separate-word dependents, but also for incorporated ones.

In a canonical case, both *qoɫ* and *emnuŋkin* surface as separate phonological words:

(28) ena-jʔo-ɣʔe qutə-ne emnuŋ-kin ʔorawetʃa-ta
 1SG.O.3SG.A-reach-TH some-AN.ERG tundra-REL person-ERG
 ‘Some person from tundra visited me.’

Qoɫ can incorporate when expressed alone, and *emnuŋkin* can not:

(29) a. qoɫe+ʔorawetʃa-ta
 some+person-ERG
 b. *amŋon-kena-ʔorawetʃa-ta
 tundra-REL+person-ERG

However, one cannot incorporate *qoɫ* and modify the resultant compound with *emnuŋkin* simultaneously:

- (30) *ena-jʔo-γʔe emnuŋ-kin qoŋe-ʔorawetʔata
 1SG.O.3SG.A-reach-TH tundra-REL some+person-ERG
 Intended meaning: ‘Idem’

It seems to be due to the hierarchy in (vii), which thus matters not only for the order of constituents within an NP, but, more general, to the order of lexical items which are semantic modifiers of a noun, be they realized as separate phonological words or incorporate into the noun. Note that if we directly incorporate the stem *emnuŋ-* ‘tundra’ without the relational adjectivizer, the grammaticality is restored again (as the rule in (vii) is respected):

- (31) ena-jʔo-γʔe qoŋ+amŋon+ʔorawetʔata
 1SG.O.3SG.A-reach-TH some+tundra+person-ERG
 ‘Idem.’

The behaviour illustrated in (28–31) is not unique for *qoŋ* and relational adjectives. These facts also hold for each pair of adnominal dependent classes which have different relative position in (vi) and (vii) (for example, demonstrative pronouns and genitives).

5. Conclusions

These facts hint that the rules of incorporation (morphology) and those of linearization (syntax) are neither of a totally different nor of the same nature.

On the one hand, the oblique NPs are “tighter” than the NPs in the Absolutive, and this “tightness” both concerns syntax and morphology. First, more lexical items have to be realized as bound rather than free morphemes (i. e. incorporate); second, the constituent order (i. e. the order of separate phonological words) is much more strict in the oblique than in the Absolutive. Finally, the order hierarchy in (vii) concerns both separate-word adnominal dependents and incorporated stems.

On the other hand, the two hierarchies in (vi) and (vii) contradict each other, and this is presumably due to the fact that branchability is important for incorporation of adnominal dependents but lesser so when they are expressed by separate phonological words.

And yet we are left with the question we raised in the beginning. Why does case matter? Why do the NPs in the Absolutive differ so drastically from the NPs in the oblique cases? We suggested a diachronic explanation in the end of Section 3: the oblique cases emerged from the PPs

and non-finite forms which may have been islands for scrambling. Is this explanation exhaustive? Does it have any alternatives?

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Alexey A. Kozlov

National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia). Laboratory for Formal Models in Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Junior Research Fellow.

E-mail: aakozlov@hse.ru

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