A Note on Multiple Case Licensing

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ABSTRACT

In this brief paper, I will first review the free Merge system Chomsky (2013) proposes. Then, I will pick up Nagamori's (2020) analysis on multiple Case licensing, which makes most of the free Merge system. However, I will point out that there appear to be some problems in Nagamori's approach by showing some flaws of account for the derivation of the phenomena as to super-raising and subject raising. Although I have no tenable answers, I want to indicate the way to the solution.

KEYWORDS

free Merge, Multiple Case checking/valuation, super-raising, the Defective Intervention Constraint, subject raising

1. Merge is Merge, Whether Internal or External

One of the most interesting, all the more complicated, assumptions Chomsky (2013) proposes is that *Merge applies freely*; that is, Merge should apply with no reason/motivation, whether it is Internal Merge (IM), which has been regarded as "movement," or is External Merge (EM), which has been regarded as "Lexical Insertion." As Epstein et. al. (2014) point out, "Merge, by hypothesis, is no longer operating in order to create a configuration that allows interface-illegitimate features to be checked; it is not "purposeful" in the sense of early Minimalism in that it is no longer driven by convergence conditions (e.g., the valuation of φ-features or Case features)." (Epstein et. al. (2014: 463-464))

For example, Chomsky (2000, 2001) account for the *wh*-movement as follows[1].

(1) I wonder [$_{CP}$ C$_{[u\textit{wh}][EPP]}$ [$_{TP}$ Mary bought what$_{[i\textit{wh}][uQ]}$]]

In (1), the *wh*-phrase *what* has the interpretable *wh*-feature and the uninterpretable Q feature. On the other hand, the head C has the uninterpretable *wh*-feature and EPP feature. Thus, all of the uninterpretable features in this derivation should be checked off before Spell-Out/Transfer. How should the uninterpretable features be checked off? By movement of *what* into SpecCP. In (1), as

[1] In this paper, I will ignore the *v*P Phase for ease of discussion, which would not affect the current analysis.

to the *wh*-feature, *what* and C are involved in the feature-checking relation via operation Agree. The uninterpretable Q feature is checked off as a reflex of the feature-checking relation, which happens after movement of *what* to SpecCP.

(2) I wonder [CP what~~[iwh][uQ]~~ C~~[uwh][EPP]~~ [TP Mary bought t_i]]

However, in the recent Minimalism, there is no reason to "move" any element, so an element "moves" because it can, not it must. In this regard, the notion of Last Resort has been abandoned in that the uninterpretable/unvalued features do not function as the driving force of (or reason for) movement[2].

2. Multiple Case Licensing: Nagamori (2020)

Making use of free Merge, Nagamori (2020) presents a very interesting analysis. That is, a nominal phrase which has been already Case-checked/valued can move further and can check/value another Case, since under the current analysis IM can occur "as long as [a nominal phrase] is in narrow syntax" (Nagamori 2020). More precisely, Nagamori argues that as long as the Case feature of a nominal phrase escapes Transfer (by moving to the edge of a phase to avoid the PIC effect) and is still in narrow syntax, it remains active and retains its ability to receive another Case value via further Agree[3].

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[2] Kunio Kinjo (personal communication) pointed out to me that the Labeling Algorism may work indirectly as Last Resort. If any labeling is not determined, the derivation should crush. To identify the label, Chomsky (2013) assumes that labeling is just "minimal search," and that minimal search operates to find the label as follows.

a. Suppose SO = {H, XP}, H a head and XP not a head. Then minimal search will select H as the label, and the usual procedures of interpretation at the interfaces can proceed.
b. Suppose SO = {XP, YP}, neither a head. Here minimal search is ambiguous, locating the heads X, Y of XP, YP, respectively. There are, then, two ways in which SO can be labeled: (A) modify SO so that there is only one visible head, or (B) X and Y are identical in a relevant respect, providing the same label, which can be taken as the label of the SO.

For example, in the configuration {NP, {*v*, NP}}, minimal search is ambiguous, locating two relevant heads, N and *v*, violating Full Interpretation if objects are left as they are. In such a case, by raising NP to a higher position (b(A)), yielding the configuration {NP, {T, {NP, *v*, VP}}}}, the label of {NP, {*v*, NP}} can be identified as *v*. Thus, raising (movement) of NP makes the identification of the label possible. In this sense, movement to identify the label may function as Last Resort, but even when no label is determined derivation proceeds until the phase is formed, and no labeling just undermines the derivation. Therefore, it can be said that Last Resort has been abandoned in the recent Minimalism.

[3] As Nagamori (2020) points out, there are three possibilities for the multiply-received Case values to be realized, which differs language to language.

(i) **Case$_2$**+~~Case$_1$~~: The *last* Case value received is realized morphologically.

Niuean, as shown in (3)

(ii) ~~Case$_2$~~+**Case$_1$**: The *first* Case value received is realized morphologically.

Tsez (Polinsky and Potsdam (2002))

<kid$_i$>　[kid-bā$_i$　ziya　b-išr-a]　y-oq-si

girl.**II.Abs**　girl.**II-Erg**　cow.III.Abs　III-feed-INF　**II**-begin-Evid

'The girl began to feed the cow.'

(3) a. Teitei ke fakatau [**e** Sione] taha fale.
nearly SUBJNCT buy **Erg** Sione one house
'It nearly happened that Sione bought a house.'
b. Teitei [**a** Sione]$_i$ ke fakatau t_i taha fale.
nearly **Abs** Sione SUBJNCT buy one house
'Sione nearly bought a house.' (Bejar and Massam (1999))

In (3a), a nominal phrase *Sione* in the embedded clause has its Case feature checked/valued as Erg, then it moves to the matrix clause, where it has its Case feature re-checked/re-valued as Abs. Nagamori argues that *Sione* first moves to the embedded SpecCP to avoid the PIC effect, which means it is still active in narrow syntax, so that it retains its ability to receive another Case value via further Agree. Note here that there is nothing to prevent *Sione* from moving to the embedded SpecCP, since movement (or IM) applies freely.

3. Problem

Here is the gist of Nagamori's (2020) proposals : a nominal phrase can be active (or can be a candidate for further Agree/Minimal Search) even if it has already had its Case feature checked/valued as long as it is in narrow syntax via movement (or IM) to the edge of the phase, which should apply freely. His argument is very interesting to pursue, but it appears to impose some essential problems. Below I will point out two phenomena which would cast doubt on Nagamori's analysis.

3.1 Super-Raising

(4) a. Trinita$_i$ seems [t_i to win]
b.* Trinita$_i$ seems [that it is certain [t_i to win]]

In (4a), the embedded subject *Trinita* moves (or IM) into the matrix subject position, where it has its Case feature checked/valued as Nom. On the other hand, in (4b), even though *Trinita* moves into the matrix subject position, where it has its Case feature checked/valued, the sentence is ungrammatical. It has been argued that the ungrammaticality of the cases like (4b) is due to the fact that the most deeply embedded subject skips the possible landing site, i.e. the intermediate subject position, on the way to

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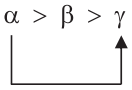
(iii) **Case$_2$+Case$_1$**: *All* the Case values received are realized morphologically.
Korean (Levin (2017))
a. Cheli-**hanthey-ka** ton-i isse.
Cheli-**DAT-NOM** mobey-NOM have
'Cheli has money.'
b. Swunhi-ka Yenghi-**hanthey-lul** chayk-ul cwuesse.
Swunhi-NOM Yenghi-**DAT-ACC** book-ACC gave
'Swunhi gave Yenghi the book.'

the matrix subject position, since the position is already filled with another subject, which violates the locality condition on movement. More recently, Chomsky (2000) argues that, when the matrix T probes its matching goal, the intermediate subject intervenes the probe-goal relation between matrix T and the most deeply embedded subject, which is called the Defective Intervention Constraint (cf. Hiraiwa (2001)). This is schematized as follows.

(5) The Defective Intervention Constraint



(*AGREE (α, γ), α is a probe and β is a matching goal, and β is inactive due to a prior Agree with some other probe.) (Hiraiwa (2001))

In this respect, the ungrammaticality of (4b) can be easily accounted for.

(6) T_{α} seems [that **it**$_{\beta}$ is certain [Trinita$_{\gamma}$ to win]]

In (6), the matrix T (= α in (5)) tries to probe its matching goal, the most deeply embedded subject *Trinita* (= γ). However, in (6) the intermediate subject *it* (= β), whose Case feature has already checked/valued, functions as the obstacle to establish the probe-goal relation between α and γ. Since the establishment of the probe-goal relation is the prerequisite for movement, the most deeply embedded subject cannot move to the matrix subject position. Thus, in the early Minimalism, why super-raising is prohibited can be accounted for.

However, under the recent Minimalism, in particular under the free Merge system along with Nagamori's (2020) approach, how super-raising should be prohibited appears to become unclear.

(7) Trinita$_i$ seems [$_{CP}$ t_i that it is certain [t_i to win]]

In (7), under the free Merge system, it should be allowed that the most deeply embedded subject *Trinita* first moves (or IM) to the embedded SpecCP to avoid the PIC effect, resulting in being still active in narrow syntax. Recall that there should be nothing to prevent *Trinita* from moving to the embedded SpecCP skipping over the intermediate subject *it*, since movement (IM) should apply freely, as long as it can.

Then, since *Trinita* in the embedded SpecCP in (7) is still active in narrow syntax, if we adopt Nagamori's (2020) assumptions, it could be probed by the matrix T and it could move to the matrix subject position, where it should have its Case feature checked/valued.

However, as (4b) indicates, the derivation in (7) should be ruled out. Then, there is an obvious question: how should the derivation in (7) be ruled out? All operations appear to obey the

assumptions Chomsky (2013) and Nagamori (2020) proposes. But the very fact that (7) (or (4b)) is ungrammatical has to be accounted for in some way.

3.2 Subject Raising

More simply, Nagamori's (2020) approach may mistakenly rule in such example as in (8b).

(8) a. It seems that John is smart.
b. * John$_i$ seems that t_i is smart.
(9) John$_i$ seems [$_{CP}$ t_i that t_i is smart]

Under Nagamori's (2020) analysis, the embedded subject, which has its Case feature checked/valued at that position, could move into the embedded SpecCP to avoid the PIC effect, and since it becomes still active in narrow syntax, it could be probed by the Matrix T and move into the matrix subject position. However, as (8b) indicates, the derivation in (9) should be prohibited. Then, there arises the same question: how should the derivation in (9) be ruled out[4]?

4. How to be solved?

Unfortunately, I have no idea how to solve these questions for now. However, the roadmap to the solution may appear rather clear: there would be something wrong either with the free Merge system or with Nagamori's (2020) approach. In particular, I wonder whether the movement (IM) to avoid the PIC effect should be permitted so freely as Nagamori (2020) assumes. That is, I believe that even if movement (IM) is assumed to apply freely, Nagamori's (2020) proposals on movement to avoid the PIC effect may overgenerate undesirable sentences. Therefore, from now on, I would like to pursue how Nagamori's (2020) approach should be modified in order to account for the ungrammaticality shown in (4b) or in (8b).

References

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[4]The paradigm shown in (8) has been called "that-trace effect." In this regard, see Bošković (2016) and Nakanishi (2017), both of which try to account for the ungrammaticality of that-trace effect based on the Labeling Algorithm. Though I have nothing to say about their arguments for now, I believe their arguments and discussions will be surely suggestive and helpful for the current analysis.
In this sense, even simpler counter-example may be as follows.
a.It seems that John loves Mary
b.* Mary seems that John loves *t*
c. Maryi seems [$_{CP}$ t_i that John loves t_i]
Since movement should apply freely, the embedded object *Mary* can move to the matrix subject position via the embedded SpecCP, where it has its Case feature re-checked/re-valued as Nom. However, the sentence (b) is ungrammatical, contrary to Nagamori's (2020) prediction.

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〔日本語要旨〕

本論文では、Chomsky (2013)で提案された自由併合システムについて概観したのち、このシステムを用いて格多重認可を分析しているNagamori (2020)を取り上げる。非常に興味深い分析ではあるが、Nagamoriの分析では正しく事実を捉えられないように思われる言語現象を二つ取り上げ、Nagamoriの主張の不備を指摘する。明確な解決法を示すには至っていないが、今後ここで指摘する問題をどのように解決すべきか、その研究の方向性について明らかにしたい。