Case, agreement, EPP and information structure:
A quadruple-dissociation in Zulu

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A number of recent proposals suggest that Case and agreement can be reduced to other components of syntax: (a) Case-licensing as agreement (e.g. Chomsky 2000, Bobaljik 2008); (b) subject-Case as EPP, or vice versa (e.g. Boskovic 2002, Marantz 2000); and (c) agreement as information structure (e.g. Zeller 2008, Cheng and Downing 2009 for Zulu). These papers support their proposals by overlapping, but not co-extensive, sets of data, leaving open the possibility that there are instances of Case and agreement that cannot be reduced to one or another of these factors. In this paper, I argue that we find such a situation in Zulu. I present data from Zulu raising constructions that demonstrate a four-way dissociation between EPP, Case, agreement, and information structure.

Zeller (2006) describes Zulu raising constructions where the subject of an embedded subjunctive clause raises to subject position of the raising predicate fanele (1a). This process is optional, alternating with a construction where the embedded subject remains low (fanele takes expletive agreement) (1b):

(1) a. uSipho u-fanele ukuthi a-y-e eParis namhlanje
   1Sipho 1s-necessary that 1sjc-go-sjc loc5Paris today
   ‘Sipho must go to Paris today.’

   b. Ku-fanele ukuthi uSipho a-y-e eParis namhlanje
   17s-necessary that 1Sipho 1sjc-go-sjc loc5Paris today
   Sipho must go to Paris today.’

Zeller argues that despite the ability of raising subjects to be licensed in the embedded subject position in (1b), the raising in (1a) is Case-driven, due to the defective nature of T in raising subjunctive CPs, in line with other raising-out-of-subjunctive analyses (e.g. Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1999).

I discuss new data that share raising properties with (1). In (2), a DP again alternates between embedded (2b) and matrix (2a) subject position, here with an indicative embedded predicate:

(2) a. ku-bonakala sengathi iqhina li-phum-ile embizeni
   17s-seems as-if 5small.animal 5s-exit-prf loc-9pot
   It seems like the secret came out. (idiomatic reading)

   b. iqhina li-bonakala sengathi li-phum-ile embizeni
   5small.animal 5s-seems as-if 5s-exit-prf loc-9pot
   The secret seems to have come out. (idiomatic reading)

(3) illustrates raising-to-object in Zulu, where the embedded subject lands in a non-agreeing object position in the higher clause:

(3) a. Ngi-linde (ukuba) iqhina li-phume embizeni
   1sg-expect that 5small.animal s5sjc-exit loc-9pot
   ‘I expect the secret to come out.’ (idiomatic)

   b. Ngi-linde iqhina (ukuba) li-phume embizeni
   1sg-expect 5small.animal that s5sjc-exit loc-9pot
   ‘I expect the secret to come out.’ (idiomatic)
I also discuss obligatory raising-to-object of NPIs: NPI embedded subjects, which typically cannot control agreement, may nonetheless control embedded subject agreement iff they undergo raising (4). While raising was optional in (1)-(3), in (4) it is obligatory:

(4) a. angifuni muntu ukuthi a-pheke iqanda
    neg-1sg-want 1person that 1sjc-cook 5egg
    ‘I don’t want anyone to cook an egg.’
b. * angifuni ukuthi muntu a-pheke iqanda

I use these data to argue against the associations in (a), (b), and (c).

Against (a): I argue that Case and agreement function independently in Zulu. (1) and (2) show agreement of the raised subject with both the higher and lower predicate. On a view where Case and agreement are linked, regardless of whether raising is Case-driven, only one instance of agreement should occur in the raising constructions. Moreover, I argue that the obligatory raising of the NPI in (4) is the only Case-driven raising in the language, motivated by the need of NPIs to be structurally case-licensed in a vP-internal argument position. If so, (4), in which agreement only occurs with the lower (non-case) position, shows direct evidence that Case licensing is not a reflex of agreement.

Against (b): (1)-(4) also show a dissociation between Case and EPP in Zulu. The existence of raising out of indicatives (2) eliminates the possibility of linking raising to a Case-defective subjunctive complement as in Zeller (2006), a proposal already lacking a principled means to distinguish between the raising and non-raising subjunctive complements in (1). Instead, the contrast between the obligatory raising in (4), which I analyze as driven by argument-licensing Case, and the optional raising in (1)-(3) suggests that only a subset of Zulu raising is Case-driven. The alternation between a raised subject and an expletive in (1) and (2), however, show the EPP functioning in the absence of Case.

Against (c): Finally, the data in (4) are evidence against a formal link between information structure and agreement in Zulu. (4) is counter-evidence in particular to Zeller’s (2008) claim that subject agreement in Zulu is linked to an anti-focus interpretation for the subject. In NPI raising-to-object constructions, the NPI receives focus, yet controls subject agreement in the lower clause.

The four-way dissociation between EPP, Case, agreement, and information structure observed in Zulu thus argues against proposals that eliminate one of these factors in favor of others.

References