Principles and Parameters Set Out From Europe

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The Opportunity Afforded

The conception of universal principles plus finite discrete parameters of variation offered:

- The hope and challenge of simultaneously doing justice to *both* the similarities and the differences among languages.

- The discovery and expectation of *patterns* in crosslinguistic variation.

The Opportunity Afforded

These were first presented with respect to "medium-sized" differences in European languages:
- The subjacency parameter (Rizzi, 1982)
- The pro-drop parameter (Chomsky, 1981; Kayne, 1984; Rizzi, 1982)

They were then perhaps extended to the largest differences among languages around the world:
- The configurationality parameter(s) (Hale, 1983)

"The more languages differ, the more they are the same"

The More Languages Differ… (Mohawk)

a.   Sak wa-ha-hninu-'   ne ka-nakt-a'.
                Sak FACT-3mS-buy-PUNC NE 3n-bed-NSF
b.   Sak kanakta wahahninu'
c.   Kanakta' wahahninu' ne Sak
d.   Kanakta' Sak wahahninu'
e.   Wahahninu' ne Sak ne kanakta'
f.   Wahahninu' ne kanakta' ne Sak
g.   Wahahninu' ne kanakta'
h.   Kanakta' wahahninu'
i.   Sak wahahninu'
j.   Wahahninu' ne Sak
k.   Wahahninu.
                All: 'Sak/he bought a bed/it.'

The More Languages Differ… (Mohawk)

Polysynthesis:

a. Sak wa-ha-nakt-a-hninu-'
    Sak FACT-3mS-bed-Ø-buy-PUNC
    'Sak bought the bed.'

b. Wa-sh-ako-t-ya't-awi-tsher-ahetkv-ht-v-'.
    FACT-MsS-FsO-SRFL-body-wrap-NOM-be.ugly-
    CAUS-BEN-PUNC
    'He made the thing you wrap around your body (a
     dress, a shirt) ugly for her.'

…the More They Are the Same (Mohawk)

a. O-wir-a'a   wa-hra-k-e'   ne   o-'wahr-u.
   N-baby-NSF FACT-MsS-eat-PUNC NE N-meat-NSF
   'The baby ate the meat.'

b. O-wir-a'a   wa-ha-'wahr-a-k-e'.
   N-baby-NSF FACT-MsS-meat-Ø-eat-PUNC
   'The baby ate the meat.'

c. *Wa-ka-wir-a-k-e'   ne   o-'wahr-u.
    FACT-NsS-baby-Ø-eat-PUNC NE N-meat-NSF
   'The baby ate the meat.'

Compare English phrase structure, compounds

…the More They Are the Same (Mohawk)

Therefore many of Principles of Universal Grammar:
- The theta-criterion, projection principle
- The Uniformity of Theta-role Assignment Hypothesis
- The laws of movement: upward, structure preserving, local; compare V$\rightarrow$T and T$\rightarrow$C

Plus a small number of strategically-placed parameters:
- Head movement can apply to N$\rightarrow$V (Baker 1988, 1996)
- Also whatever induces nonconfigurationality given super-rich agreement (Baker 1996)

The More Languages Differ… (Kayardild)

Evans and Levinson (2009): Tense marking spreads to elements other than the verb. *A difference*

Nyingka   kurri-nang.*ku*   niwan-*ju* balmbi-*wu*.
2sg.NOM see-NEG-FUT 3sg-FUT morrow-FUT
'You will not see her tomorrow.'

But this marking spreads onto objects but not subjects, revealing a VP (Evans 1995).   *A similarity, underlying principles.*

… the more they are the same!

The Promise Continues: An Example

Chomsky (2000, 2001): Case and agreement are two sides of the same coin, reflexes of Agree
- Nominative case and subject agreement result from finite T in Agree with the closest NP.
- Accusative case and object agreement result from active v in Agree with the closest NP.

(One of) my current fascinations:
- Is this relationship between case and agreement universal or parameterized?
- Is it supported in languages where accusative case and object agreement are both overt?

Joining the Story Already in Progress

Baker and Vinokurova (2010) on Sakha (Turkic):
Nominative case and agreement on T are closely related

- If the subject is dative, T agrees with the nominative object, or is default.
- If the verb is nonfinite (T doesn't agree), the subject must agree with D and be genitive (in relative clauses, noun complements), or it must be PROarb.
- Only one verb agrees with the nominative subject in constructions with auxiliary verbs plus main verbs.

Like familiar languages of Greater Europe (roughly)
Principles!

Joining the Story Already in Progress

Baker and Vinokurova (2010) on Sakha (Turkic):
Accusative case is not related to agreement with active v
- There is no overt object agreement in the language.
- Passive verbs can have accusative themes, if an implicit agent is present.

  [Cup-ACC intentionally break-PASS-3sS.]
- Agentive nominalizations have accusative themes

  [company-ACC manage-AG.NOM]

  'The manager of the company'

Joining the Story Already in Progress

Baker and Vinokurova (2010) on Sakha (Turkic):
Accusative case is not related to agreement with active v
- Raising to object with unaccusative matrix verbs
  [Keskil [Aisen-ACC come-NEG-AOR that] sadden-3sS]
  'Keskil became sad that/because Aisen is not coming'
- Accusative on the objects of certain Ps if and only if the verb has a thematic subject.
  [goats [barn-(ACC) near] graze]
  [(it) [barn-(*ACC) near] be.warm]

Unlike familiar languages of Greater Europe
A Parameter?

Dependent Case Assignment

Baker and Vinokurova (2010) on Sakha (Turkic):
If there are two distinct argumental NPs in the same phase such that NP1 c-commands NP2, then value the case feature of NP2 as accusative unless NP1 has already been marked for case.   (Developed from Marantz 1991)

Acc and Agr-O in Amharic

Amharic has overt accusative and object agreement:

Ləmma wɨʃʃa-w-ɨn   j-aj-əw-al.
Lemma dog-DEF-ACC 3mS-see-3mO-Aux(3mS)
'Lemma sees the dog.'

But the two do not pattern together closely in general.

Acc without Agr-O in Amharic

Definite objects:

    Ləmma wɨʃʃa-w-ɨn   j-aj-al.

    Lemma dog-DEF-ACC 3mS-see-AUX(3mS)

    'Lemma sees the dog.'

Indefinite and quantified objects:

    Mann-ɨn   ajj-ɨʃ?   (??ajj-ɨʃ-əw)

    Who-ACC   see-2fS   see-2fS-3mO

    'Who did you (feminine) see?'

Acc without Agr-O in Amharic

Indefinite and quantified objects:

Ləmma səw-u-n   hullu gabbəz-ə.
Lemma person-DEF-ACC every invite-3mS
'Lemma invited everyone.'

Second objects of double object constructions:

Ləmma Aster- ɨn   hɨs'an-u-n   asaj-at.
Lemma Aster-ACC child-DEF-ACC show-(3mS)-3fO
'Lemma showed Aster(f) the baby(m).'

Agr-O without ACC in Amharic

Dative objects of double object constructions:
Ləmma l-almaz   məts'əhaf-u-n   sət't'-at.
Lemma DAT-almaz book-DEF-ACC give-(3mS)-3fO
'Lemma gave the book to Almaz.'

Nominative experiencers/possessors:
Aster   wɨʃʃa   all-at
Aster   dog   exist-(3mS)-3fO
'Aster has a dog.'

Object of P where P is doubled on the verb:
Aster bə-mət'rəgiya-w dədʒdʒ   t'ərrəg-ətʃtʃ-ɨbb-ət
Aster with-broom-DEF doorway sweep-3fS-with-3mO
'Aster swept a doorway with the broom.'

Object Agreement in Amharic

Baker's (in press) analysis:

- F agrees with the closest NP probing downward: the goal if there is one, otherwise the theme.

- This is subject to a phase-(like) condition, allowing agreement with goals/applied objects and shifted themes, but not with unshifted themes (or objects of undoubled Ps).

- It is not subject to the activity condition. (In terms of Baker 2008, this is a language with the Case Dependency of Agreement Parameter set "no".)

Accusative Case in Amharic

Then where does accusative case come from, if it is not assigned by F under Agree?

Answer: It is dependent case, like accusative in Sakha.

If there are two distinct argumental nominals X and Y in the same *clause* such that X c-commands Y, then value the case feature of Y as accusative unless X has already been marked for case.

Dependent Accusative in Amharic

ACC is not available in the passive of a dyadic verb…

Ləmma gənzəb-u-n   sərrək'-ə-w.   (active)
Lemma money-DEF-ACC rob-3mS-3mO
'Lemma stole the money.'

Gənzəb-u-(*n)   tə-sərrək'-ə.   (passive)
Money-DEF-(*ACC) PASS-steal-3mS
'The money was stolen (from Aster).'

Dependent Accusative in Amharic

… but ACC is available in the passive of a triadic verb.

Ləmma Aster-in   gənzəb-u-n   sərrək'-at.
Lemma   Aster-ACC money-DEF-ACC rob-(3mS)-3fO
'Lemma robbed Aster of the money.'   active

Aster   ʃant'a-wa-n   tə-sərrək'-itʃ-(*əw)
Aster   suitcase-3fP-ACC PASS-rob-3fS-(*3mO)
'Aster was robbed of her suitcase.'   passive

Interim Conclusion: ACC and AgrO

We have different kinds of evidence that converges on the same parameterized principle of accusative case marking in two different kinds of language:

- Sakha, where there is no object agreement, seen in some fancy constructions.
- Amharic, where there is object agreement, but it doesn't pattern with accusative case.

Are ACC and AgrO Ever Closely Related?

Tentative answer: Yes, the relationship is parameterized

Mangarayi also has overt ACC and overt Agr-O:

Ŋawuyan-yiri+wa-ni   jarbiñ-gayanŋan.
1sS/3pO-see-PC   young.man-ACC.PL
'I saw the young men.'

Ŋali̠-na   ŋala̠-bugbug   wuran-jirag malam-gara-ŋan
F.NOM-DIS F.NOM-old.person 3sS/3dO-eat man-DU-ACC
'That old woman ate the two men.'

ACC and AgrO in Mangarayi

Mangarayi agrees with ACC objects that Amharic doesn't:

Ŋayaŋayag wuyanba-bu-ni-wa.   Quantified object
Some   3pS/3pO-kill-PC-SUF
'They killed some (people).'

Ŋiñjaŋ-gi-na   ŋan-gadugu   ña-wu-na?   Question object
Who-SG-ACC F.ACC-woman 2sS/3sO-give-PP
'Who did you give it?'
(AgrO is Ø, but this isFM's gloss, PL exists: Ŋiñja-ya-n-ŋan)

ACC and AgrO in Mangarayi

Mangarayi agrees with accusative goals but not dative ones (Amharic agrees with both):

ŋa-ṉiri-j   wuṉya   Ø-mawuj.   Dative goal
1sS/3sO-bring 3pl.DAT ACC-veg.food
'I brought them vegetable food.'

Wuyanba-wu-na   [pro.3pl]   Ø-garag   Ø-ṉanan. Acc
3pS/3pO-give-PP   (them)   ACC-much ACC-money
'They gave them plenty of money.'

ACC and AgrO in Mangarayi

Experiencers that tigger object agreement in Mangarayi also have *ACCUSATIVE* case (can be nominative in Amharic):

Larg   ga-ŋan-daya.   Object agreement
Be.cold 3-1sO-AUX
'I'm cold.'

Ø-malam   larg   ja-Ø-daya.   Accusative case
M.ACC-man   be.cold 3-3sO-AUX
'The man is cold.'

Almaz bərrəd-at.   Amharic
Almaz be.cold-(3mS)-3fO
'Almaz is cold.'

Parameterization in ACC and Agr-O

The match between accusative and object agreement is much closer in Mangarayi than in Amharic, in a cluster of ways.

Accusative case is assigned:
- Via agreement with functional head F, F lower than T and the subject (Mangarayi)
- Via a rule of dependent case assignment (Amharic, Sakha)

(One anomaly: ACC on the theme of a ditransitive verb)
Wuyanba-wu-na   [pro.3pl] Ø-garag   Ø-nanan.
3pS/3pO-give-PP   (them)   ACC-much ACC-money
'They gave them plenty of money.'

Principles and Parameters:
Where are We Now?

The principles have been vindicated, and are alive and well (details always evolving).(Amharic, Tamil)

The parameters need some help:
- The minimalist ethos puts pressure against them, at least in the classical sense.
- The fascination of microcomparative work (and single-language studies) can distract attention from them.

Principles and Parameters: Where are We Now?

Key empirical question regarding parameters:
Are there larger scale patterns in crosslinguistic variation?

- We should hope so: more constrained, potential benefits for learning.
- We should aim not only for beautiful theories, but for beautiful analyses of languages.

Possible Nonlexical Parameters

From my own personal quest:
- The symmetrical object parameter: Kichaga and Chichewa.
  Languages can have {1, more} "objects" (=str Acc case?)
- The Polysynthesis Parameter (Baker, 1996)
  Languages {must, need not} express all theta-roles as morphemes on the verb.
- The case dependence of agreement parameter (Baker, 2008)
  Functional heads {must, need not} assign case to an NP they agree with.
- The direction of agreement parameter (Baker, 2008)
  The goal of agreement {must, need not} c-command the agreeing head.

Possible Nonlexical Parameters

From my own personal quest:
- Parameterization in the minimal link condition
  {The closest, any} NP can move into the Specifier of a
  functional head. (Baker & Collins, 2006)
- Parameterization in the Case filter (Diercks, to appear)
  NPs {are, are not} generated with an unvalued case feature.
- Parameterization in how case is assigned (Baker &
  Vinokurova, 2010)

Notable examples from other work:
- Head initial versus head final languages.
- Verb raising to Tense, in all tenses, or none (Pollock, 1989).
- Wh movement for all wh-words, or none (Huang, 1982)

(My) Conclusions

- It is already feasible to compare unrelated languages in an interesting way, given the constraints of universal principles.
- We should remain open to the possibility of deeper/more extreme parameterization, at least until we know more.
- There is some reason to think that there are broad patterns in crosslinguistic variation (and we should relish them).
- We need to be doing comprehensive generative analyses of large fragments of languages from across the range of attested crosslinguistic variation, the fruits of which have undeniable descriptive value. *[No one else will!]*
- We need to work toward building a better typology on the results of these language-particular analyses.