UNMARKED CASE is unvalued case: default Voice in Formosan restructuring

Theodore Levin (MIT)

Introduction: Preminger (2011, 2014) and Kornfilt & Preminger (2013) argue that Marantz's (1991) UNMARKED CASE is the morphological spell-out of a DP's case feature that was *never valued during the course of the derivation*. In this paper, I argue that Voice morphology in Formosan restructuring provides an argument in favor of this treatment of UNMARKED CASE.

Voice is case agreement: In this paper, I maintain that Voice is agreement morphology on T^0 which reflects the case of the goal (e.g. Rackowski 2002). On a syntax-internal implementation of the Dependent Case model (e.g. Preminger 2011, 2014), this relation is established after case-marking is determined. Case competition will occur, at the latest, when the external argument is merged in Spec-*v*P, preceding merger of T^0.

Voice in restructuring: Formosan languages display two patterns of Voice-marking in restructuring clauses (Wurmbrand 2014): (i) *Voice concord* – the matrix and embedded Voice match (1-2) or (ii) *default Voice* – the embedded Voice remains constant regardless of matrix Voice (3-4).

(1) **M**astatala saikin tu **m**-aun bunbun.cia
AV.wait 1.CS **AV**-eat banana.OBL
'I am waiting to eat the bananas.'

(2) Astala**un**-ku bunbun-a tu kaun-**un**
wait.**PV**-1.CS banana-CS eat-**PV**
'I have been waiting to eat the bananas.'
(Isbukun Bunun; Wu 2013)

(3) <**M**>naqru i t<**um**>uting cu bawaq *i Yumin*
<**AV**>finish LNK beat<**AV**> ACC pig KU Yumin
Yumin is finishing beating/killing pigs.

(4) Naqaru<**un**> i t<**um**>uting ni Yumin *ku bawaq*
finish<**PV**> LNK beat<**AV**> GEN Yumin KU pig
Yumin finished beating/killing the pigs. (Mayrinax Atayal; Chen 2010)

AV in (4) is a default because it does not block object extraction, unlike canonical Voice-marking in which only the argument tracked by Voice can undergo movement, as in (5-6) (Chen 2010).

(5) *Nanuan* ku tuting<**un**> ni Yumin
what KU beat<**PV**> GEN Yumin
What did Yumin beat/kill?

(6) **Nanuan* ku t<**um**>uting i Yumin
what KU beat<**AV**> KU Yumin
What is Yumin beating/killing?

Default Voice languages reveal a robust cross-linguistic generalization. *Default Voice morphology in restructuring is identical to Agent Voice*. Compare (3-4) to (6). This pattern is also attested in Squliq Atayal, Takibakha Bunun, Takituduh Bunun, Saaroa, and Kanakanyu (Wurmbrand 2014).

This generalization is unexpected if the form of default Voice is simply a language-specific choice made to achieve morphological well-formedness of the embedded verb. In principle, each language could employ a distinct Voice in the case of a default, yielding wide cross-linguistic variability. Furthermore, (in Atayal) AV form is not the citation form, nor the most frequently occuring form (e.g. Huang 1994). The correlation can be better understood as in the following generalization (7).

(7) Agent Voice is the Spell-Out of an unvalued Case-Agreement (CAGR) feature.

Default Voice restructuring clauses are identical to AV, because neither ever values their case-agreement feature. In fact, I posit that verbs in restructuring clauses *never bear* a case-agreement feature in the syntax. This feature is supplied post-syntactically (see also Chen 2010, Wu 2013).

Voice in restructuring is not syntactically present: While default Voice is *morphologically* present, we can be sure that it is not *syntactically* present in the embedded predicate (contra Wurmbrand 2014), because the embedded clause cannot host Voice, as illustrated by the interaction of Voice and aspect. In many Austronesian languages, there is reason to think Voice-marking is hosted

at or above aspect. First, observe the differences that arise via choice of Voice in the translations of (1-6). Also, in some cases, aspectual morphology obliterates Voice-marking (8). In the Tagalog recent perfective, no XP bears *ang*, which marks the nominal tracked by Voice, and no Voice morphology is realized (McGinn 1988, Schachter 1996). If Voice and *ang*-marking were determined lower than AspP, we would expect an *ang*-marked XP in (8), even if Voice were obscured.

(8) **Kabi**-bigay lang ng maestra ng libro sa bata.
REC.PERF-give just CS teacher CS book DAT child
'The teacher just gave a book to the child.' (Schachter 1996)

Rather, the data suggest that recent perfective aspect blocks case-agreement from T^0. Blocking of higher probing by aspectual morphology has also been employed in modeling TAM-based split-ergativity (e.g. Coon 2010). However, AspP is not present in restructuring (Chen 2010).

(9) *<M>naqru i t<um><**in**>uting i Yumin cu bawaq
<AV>finish LNK beat<AV><**PERF**> KU Yumin ACC pig

If Voice is hosted above aspect (8) and restructuring clauses are smaller than AspP (9), we can conclude that Voice is not present syntactically. This is further supported by the observation that the embedded Voice does not interact with extraction, as seen in (4-6).

Capturing the restructuring Voice dichotomy: I take restructuring to be *v*P-, not VP-, complementation (Bhatt 2005, Legate 2012, Wurmbrand 2014; contra. Wurmbrand 2001), capturing *both* the semantic identity of the Agents of the two predicates and the syntactic independence of the embedded VP, as in VP-topicalization (Wurmbrand 2007).

In the absence of a syntactic host for Voice, I posit that Voice arises in restructuring by means of AGR INSERTION (10) (e.g. Noyer 1997, Kramer 2010, Norris 2013), because *some* Voice specification is required for morphological well-formedness.

(10) **AGR INSERTION schema** (Noyer 1997)
$X \rightarrow [X\ \text{AGR}]$

In the case of the Formosan restructuring, an unvalued CAGR-feature is added to the predicate. Other languages, like Acehnese (Legate 2012), which can tolerate bare verb forms, utilize such forms on embedded predicates in restructuring clauses, regardless of matrix verbal morphology.

The dichotomy between Voice concord and default Voice is captured by whether the CAGR-feature is valued. In Voice concord (1-2), Voice morphology *spreads downwards* from the matrix verb to the embedded verb, valuing the lower CAGR-feature with a matching feature. (See Erlewine 2013 for a similar proposal for Kaqchikel Agent Focus spreading). In default Voice (3-4), spreading does not occur. The CAGR-feature is left unvalued and is realized as AV under (7).

UNMARKED CASE is unvalued case: Under a case-agreement approach to Voice-marking, if nominative case were a case value, default Voice and nominative case-agreement could have distinct forms. However, if (7) is correct, we can understand why the two are identical. If UNMARKED CASE is, in fact, unvalued case, a case-agreement probe targeting a nominative-marked argument will not value its CAGR-feature, because *the nominative-marked element has no case value*. By viewing UNMARKED CASE as unvalued case, we collapse the environments of default Voice and AV capturing the identical morphology of both.

Furthermore, the identity of default and AV provides a conceptual argument in favor of viewing Voice as case-agreement. On this view, the two domains can be collapsed. If Voice indicates argument structure alternations which drive the syntactic derivation (e.g. Aldridge 2004), there is no way to collapse the two environments. It remains an accident that default and AV are identical.