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Remarks on case and agreement asymmetries in coordination

Anna Grabovac*

Abstract. Recent literature has claimed that while coordination may give rise to agreement asymmetries, case is always symmetric among the conjuncts in a coordinate structure (Weisser 2020). In other words, a predicate may agree with only one conjunct, but all conjuncts are predicted to realize the same case features. This paper offers evidence against this claim, showing that both types of asymmetries can be found. I then reflect on the wider implications of this data for the relation between case and agreement. The purported lack of case asymmetries but existence of agreement asymmetries has been taken as evidence that case should be evaluated based on syntactic hierarchy, while agreement can be at least partly postsyntactic. Given this reasoning, it follows that analyses that regard case as a byproduct of agreement are incompatible without additional stipulations. Although this paper establishes the existence of both case and agreement asymmetries, I show that the data pose similar issues for traditional analyses of case as a byproduct of agreement, but align readily with those that regard case as a precondition for agreement.

Keywords. coordination; unbalanced case; conjunct agreement; symmetry of case in conjunction

1. Introduction. Coordinate structures display a number of confounding properties that have been subject to much attention and debate. Some of these properties can be characterized as symmetric, in which the conjuncts appear to be equal in status, whereas others are asymmetric, where one conjunct takes priority over the others. Commonly cited symmetric properties include the general commutativity of conjuncts as in (1), and the ban on extraction of or out of only one conjunct (Ross's 1967 Coordinate Structure Constraint), as in (2).¹

(1) {Swans and ducks / Ducks and swans} are in the lake.

(2) *Who did you see Masha and t_{wh} ?

In terms of asymmetric properties, (3) shows that in coordinate structures, a universal in the first conjunct can bind a variable in the second conjunct but not vice versa. This is taken as evidence that the first conjunct asymmetrically c-commands the second (see, e.g., Munn 1993).

(3) a. [Every person]_i and their_i dog went to the park.

b. *Their_i dog and [every person]_i went to the park.

Other indications of asymmetry in coordination fall under the purview of Johannessen's (1998) "unbalanced coordination." This is apparent in examples of agreement when the features of the predicate correspond to those of only one conjunct, as in (4), or in examples such as (5), where only one conjunct realizes the case assigned to the syntactic position of the coordinate structure.

* I am happy to be able to dedicate this work to Masha Polinsky, who has been a thoughtful friend and mentor, and who inspired the topic of this paper with a question about Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. In addition to being directly motivated by her question, this paper explores case and agreement, two areas which have greatly benefited from Masha's extensive work. I would also like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback. Author: Anna Grabovac, University of Maryland, College Park (anna.j.grabovac@gmail.com).

¹ There are apparent exceptions to certain symmetric properties of coordination, but they are not relevant for the purposes of this paper. For related discussion, see Fox (2000), Johnson (2014), and Bruening & Al Khalaf (2020).

- (4) Czech (Johannessen 1998: 28)
 Půjdu tam [já a ty].
 will.go-1SG there I and you
 ‘You and I will go there.’
- (5) Norwegian (Johannessen 1998: 18)
 [Han og meg] var sammen om det.
 he.NOM and me.ACC were together about it
 ‘He and I were in it together.’

It is these agreement and case asymmetries that constitute the focus of this paper. While agreement asymmetries have been well-studied (Benmamoun et al. 2009; Marušič et al. 2015; Willer Gold et al. 2016; Arsenijević et al. 2019; Nevins & Weisser 2019, among others), case asymmetries have received comparatively less attention. In fact, Weisser (2020) claims that such asymmetries do not exist, and that case is always symmetric in coordination. By contrast, Przepiórkowski (2022) disputes the nonexistence of case asymmetries, arguing that there are genuine case asymmetries in coordination. The current paper adds to this debate with data from Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) that also instantiate true case asymmetries (see also Grabovac 2024).

Beyond lending support to the existence of case asymmetries in coordination, the primary goal of this paper is to investigate the implications of case and agreement asymmetries for the relationship between case and agreement. Generative theories often link case and agreement given the observation that in finite clauses, it is common for subjects to both control agreement on the verb and realize nominative case (see Polinsky & Preminger 2014 and references therein). This drive to link case and agreement has resulted in two prominent views: either that case is the reflex of an agreement relation (Chomsky 2000, 2001), or that case is a precondition for successful agreement (Bittner & Hale 1996; Bobaljik 2008). In alignment with the second view, Weisser (2020) contends that the discrepancy between case and agreement asymmetries strongly suggests against analyses that treat case as a byproduct of agreement. More concretely, Weisser argues that case is always determined based on hierarchical syntactic structure, while agreement asymmetries may be determined postsyntactically. As a result, theories that assume case to be assigned as a byproduct of agreement cannot be correct. This paper evaluates the existence of both types of asymmetries against this argument and concludes that the data align more readily with theories that regard case as a precondition for agreement.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews some of the existing literature on unbalanced case and establishes that the BCS data constitute genuine asymmetries. Section 3 introduces some commonly cited examples of agreement asymmetries. Section 4 reflects on the implications of the existence of both case and agreement asymmetries for the relation between case and agreement, considering accounts that argue for case as a byproduct of agreement, as well as those that consider case to be a precondition for agreement. Section 5 concludes with considerations for future research.

2. Unbalanced case. Descriptively, unbalanced case occurs when not all conjuncts realize the case assigned to the coordinate structure (Johannessen 1998). The mere existence of this phenomenon has come under recent scrutiny. In particular, Weisser (2020: 43) argues that “once we control for superficial morphological operations such as allomorphy and Suspended Affixation which can create asymmetries in form, the conjuncts in nominal conjunction are always identical in morphological case.” Weisser refers to this generalization on the even distribution of case

across nominal conjuncts as Symmetry of Case in Conjunction (SOCIC). In (6a), for example, there is an apparent mismatch between the two conjuncts. However, Weisser argues based on case concord that this is not a genuine case asymmetry because, as (6b) shows, the apparently asymmetric second conjunct can be modified by a genitive-marked adjective. This suggests that terminative case is cliticized to the coordinate structure as a whole, rather than the second conjunct alone.² The case mismatch is therefore superficial.

- (6) Estonian (Weisser 2020: 46)
- a. Ta jook-sis jõe ja puu-ni.
 3SG run-3SG river.GEN and tree-TERM
 ‘He went to the river and the tree.’
- b. Ta jook-sis jõe ja suu-re puu-ni.
 3SG run-3SG river.GEN and big-GEN tree.GEN-TERM
 ‘He went to the river and the big tree.’

2.1. EVIDENCE AGAINST SOCIC. Przepiórkowski (2022) challenges the SOCIC generalization based on a variety of data from Polish, among other languages. I present only a couple of relevant examples here, but the gist of the argumentation is similar across the broader set of data.

In evaluating SOCIC, there are two aspects to test: (i) that the case asymmetries cannot be explained away by appealing to certain morphological operations, and (ii) that the coordinate structure in question is true nominal coordination. In (7), for example, which contains coordinated temporal phrases, there are no relevant syncretisms that can explain the instrumental-genitive asymmetry within the coordinate structure. We can further observe that such temporal phrases allow modification by agreeing adjectives, which reflects the nominal character of the phrase. Przepiórkowski also remarks that the modifier *łącznie* ‘jointly’ applies to the coordinate structure as a whole; a conjunction reduction analysis of the coordinate structure, which would consist of clausal coordination plus ellipsis, is therefore untenable. Under such an analysis, the input to (7) would require *łącznie* to modify each conjunct individually, which is reportedly marginal at best (see also Borsley 2005).

- (7) Polish (adapted from Przepiórkowski 2022: 600)
- Jutrzejsza burza przyniesie więcej śniegu niż spadło **łącznie**
 tomorrow.NOM storm.NOM bring.FUT more snow than fell jointly
 [wieczor-em i poprzedni-ej zim-y].
 evening-INS.SG.M and previous-GEN.SG.F winter-GEN.SG.F
 ‘Tomorrow’s storm will bring more snow than jointly fell in the evening and last winter.’

A conjunction reduction analysis is likewise unavailable with the possessive coordination in (8) because the input to ellipsis would have a markedly different meaning (i.e., each individual joined their own hands). As above, it is also clear that two distinct cases are realized – nominative and genitive.

- (8) (adapted from Przepiórkowski 2022: 601)
- Ręce [moje i Zofii]... złączyły się... na psich kudłach...
 hand.NOM.PL.F my.NOM.PL.F and Zofia.GEN.SG joined self on dog’s fur
 ‘My and Zofia’s hands met on the dog’s shaggy fur.’

² All abbreviations in this paper follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. In addition to the standard abbreviations, TERM = terminative in (6), and I, II are gender/class markers in (18).

2.2. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM BCS. Similarly, BCS contains evidence of case asymmetries in nominal coordination that cannot be subsumed under the morphological processes outlined in Weisser (2020). While BCS normally displays balanced case, where both conjuncts realize the case assigned to the syntactic position of the coordinate structure, examples containing higher numerals (greater than or equal to ‘five’) involve the “genitive of quantification” and show different distributions according to the external case environment. Schematically, the distribution is as in (9); for the purposes of this paper, a description of the relevant case asymmetries is sufficient, but see Grabovac (2024) for further analysis of these patterns.

- (9) a. Structural case contexts: $\{X_{STR\ CASE} \& Y_{GEN} / Y_{GEN} \& X_{STR\ CASE}\}$
 b. Lexical case contexts: $\{?X_{LEX\ CASE} \& Y_{GEN} / *Y_{GEN} \& X_{LEX\ CASE}\}$

As is common in other Slavic languages, BCS higher numerals license genitive case on their complements, the so-called “genitive of quantification” (Franks 1995; Bošković 2006, among others). These numeral constructions are grammatical in structural case environments such as (10), where the genitive of quantification appears to take priority over structural accusative.³

- (10) BCS
 Vidjela je t-ih pet iskusn-ih fotograf-a.
 saw AUX.3SG that-GEN.PL five experienced-GEN.PL photographer-GEN.PL
 ‘She saw those five experienced photographers.’

However, higher numeral constructions are considered ungrammatical in verb-governed dative and instrumental case contexts (Zlatic 1997; Wechsler & Zlatic 2003; Bošković 2006; Šarić 2014). In dative contexts, exemplified below with the dative-case-assigning verb *odmoći*, neither the genitive of quantification nor dative case realization on the numeral construction is available.

- (11) a. *Odmogla je pet iskusn-ih fotograf-a.
 hindered AUX.3SG five experienced-GEN.PL photographer-GEN.PL
 b. *Odmogla je pet iskusn-im fotograf-ima.
 hindered AUX.3SG five experienced-DAT.PL photographer-DAT.PL
 ‘She hindered five experienced photographers.’

These patterns of grammaticality extend to coordination. In particular, coordinate structures containing a conjunct with a higher numeral construction are grammatical in structural case environments. The genitive of quantification takes priority in the higher-numeral conjunct, and the conjuncts are commutative (with slight differences in meaning), as shown in (12).

³ One may question whether the genitive realized on the demonstrative and on the nominal constituent below the numeral reflects the case of the whole construction. Indeed, as a reviewer points out, some have argued that these numeral constructions reflect the case corresponding to their syntactic position, even if this case is not reflected morphologically (e.g., Franks 1994: 607–608). Connected to this argument is the view that the demonstrative in examples like (10) is base-generated below the numeral, where it is assigned genitive case prior to movement. In Grabovac (2022: Chs. 1 and 4), I defend an alternative account where the genitive of quantification takes priority over structural case. I also argue based on semantics that the demonstrative in (10) does not originate below the numeral; rather, the genitive features licensed by the numeral are allowed to percolate above the numeral. Additional support for the high position of the demonstrative comes from Universal 20 (Greenberg 1963). In deriving the universal, Cinque (2005) argues that Num-Dem-A-N constitutes an unattested order within a single extended nominal projection and that deriving attested orders, such as Dem-Num-A-N, must involve movement of the noun; an analysis of (10) where the demonstrative moves alone from a position below the numeral is therefore incompatible.

- (12) a. Vidjela je jedn-og novinar-a i pet fotograf-a.
 saw AUX.3SG one-ACC journalist-ACC and five photographer-GEN.PL
 ‘She saw one journalist and five photographers.’
 b. Vidjela je pet fotograf-a i jedn-og novinar-a.
 saw AUX.3SG five photographer-GEN.PL and one-ACC journalist-ACC
 ‘She saw five photographers and one journalist.’

In dative and instrumental case environments, the first conjunct must realize the case licensed by the verb, or the construction is considered ungrammatical. Given the general behavior of higher numeral constructions, this means that the numeral construction must occur in the second conjunct. Note that while lexical case examples such as (13a) are degraded compared to structural case examples like (12a), my consultants find a definite contrast between (13a) and (13b), the latter of which is completely ruled out.

- (13) a. ?Odmogla je jedn-om novinar-u i pet fotograf-a.
 hindered AUX.3SG one-DAT journalist-DAT and five photographer-GEN.PL
 ‘She hindered one journalist and five photographers.’
 b. *Odmogla je pet fotograf-a i jedn-om novinar-u.
 hindered AUX.3SG five photographer-GEN.PL and one-DAT journalist-DAT
 ‘She hindered five photographers and one journalist.’

Interestingly, the BCS examples appear to demonstrate a “first-conjunct effect,” in that the declinability of the first conjunct determines the grammaticality of the example as a whole. It is possible to distinguish a first-conjunct effect from a closest-conjunct effect because BCS allows scrambling. As shown in (14)–(15), when the coordinate phrase appears in preverbal or medial position (between the auxiliary and participle), the declinability of the first conjunct is crucial.⁴

- (14) a. ?Jedn-om novinar-u i pet fotograf-a je Elma
one-DAT journalist-DAT and five photographer-GEN.PL AUX.3SG Elma
 odmogla.
 hindered
 ‘Elma hindered one journalist and five photographers.’
 b. *Pet fotograf-a i jedn-om novinar-u je Elma
five photographer-GEN.PL and one-DAT journalist-DAT AUX.3SG Elma
 odmogla.
 hindered
 ‘Elma hindered five photographers and one journalist.’
- (15) a. ?Elma je jedno-m novinar-u i pet fotograf-a
 Elma AUX.3SG **one-DAT journalist-DAT** and five photographer-GEN.PL
 odmogla.
 hindered
 ‘Elma hindered one journalist and five photographers.’

⁴ The postverbal order in (12) and (13) is the most information-structurally neutral, so I assume that the coordinate structures in (14) and (15) have undergone \bar{A} -movement.

- b. *Elma je pet fotograf-a i jedno-m novinar-u
 Elma AUX.3SG **five** **photographer-GEN.PL** and one-DAT journalist-DAT
 odmogla.
 hindered
 ‘Elma hindered five photographers and one journalist.’

While the BCS examples appear on the surface to constitute a case asymmetry, it is important to establish that it is not merely superficial. Following Przepiórkowski’s (2022) analysis of Polish, the conjuncts in (16) can be modified by unambiguously dative and genitive modifiers, and there are no syncretisms that allow an appeal to allomorphy. Alternative analyses based on conjunction reduction are also not plausible given the possibility of adding *istovremeno* ‘simultaneously’ in (17a) and the comparative ungrammaticality of (17b-c).

- (16) ?Odmogla je jedn-om nov-om novinar-u
 hindered AUX.3SG one-DAT new-DAT journalist-DAT
 i t-ih pet iskush-ih fotograf-a.
 and that-GEN.PL five experienced-GEN.PL photographer-GEN.PL
 ‘She hindered one new journalist and those five experienced photographers.’

- (17) a. ?Istovremeno su odmogli jedn-om novinar-u i
 simultaneously AUX.3PL hindered one-DAT journalist-DAT
 i pet fotograf-a.
 and five photograher-GEN.PL
 ‘They hindered one journalist and five photographers simultaneously.’

- b. *Istovremeno su odmogli jedn-om novinar-u i
 simultaneously AUX.3PL hindered one-DAT journalist-DAT and
 odmogli pet fotograf-a.
 hindered five photographer-GEN.PL
 ‘They hindered one journalist and five photographers simultaneously.’

- c. ??/*Istovremeno su odmogli jedn-om novinar-u
 simultaneously AUX.3PL hindered one-DAT journalist-DAT
 i istovremeno su odmogli pet fotograf-a.
 and simultaneously AUX.3PL hindered five photographer-GEN.PL
 ‘They hindered one journalist simultaneously, and they hindered five photogra-
 phers simultaneously.’

Overall, the data suggest that case asymmetries in nominal coordination do exist. At the very least, the examples presented here cannot be explained away with any morphological operations that have thus far been identified as relevant.

3. Agreement asymmetries. Unlike case asymmetries, the existence of agreement asymmetries in coordination is relatively uncontroversial. For example, some languages display closest-conjunct agreement, where the conjunct closest to the predicate controls agreement. In preverbal position, the controller is the last conjunct, while in postverbal position it is the first conjunct.

- (18) Tsez (adapted from Benmamoun et al. 2009: 71, 78)
 a. Kid-no **uži-n** Ø-ik’i-s.
 girl.ABS.II-and boy.ABS.I-and I-went
 ‘A girl and a boy went.’

- b. Y-ik'i-s **kid-no** uži-n.
 II-went girl.ABS.II-and boy.ABS.I-and
 'A girl and a boy went.'

Another common agreement asymmetry is resolution, where the predicate realizes a form based on the resolution of features from all conjuncts. In (19), for example, the agreement features on the predicate are [PL.M] with singular conjuncts of mixed gender.⁵

- (19) French (adapted from Wechsler 2008: 567)
 [Le garçon et la fille] sont compétents.
 the.SG.M boy.SG.M and the.SG.F girl.SG.F AUX.3PL competent.PL.M
 'The boy and the girl are competent.'

Thirdly, there is distant-conjunct agreement (also referred to as *first-conjunct agreement* or *highest-conjunct agreement*), which appears to be the least understood of the agreement asymmetries. This kind of agreement occurs with the first conjunct preverbally but is not well-attested postverbally (although Neeleman et al. 2023 suggest postverbal distant-conjunct agreement may be available in Slovenian).

- (20) Slovenian (Willer Gold et al. 2016: 189)
Knjig-e in peres-a so se podraži-le.
 book-PL.F and pen-PL.N AUX.3PL REFL became.more.expensive-PL.F
 'Books and pens became more expensive.'

The precise analysis of conjunct agreement varies among theories and the syntax they assume for coordination. The next section only covers possible analyses insofar as they are relevant to the discussion of the interaction between case and agreement, but see Nevins & Weisser (2019) for a thorough overview of conjunct agreement.

4. Implications of case and agreement asymmetries. In the generative framework, case has long been linked to agreement, with some proposals calling for case as a reflex of agreement, and others treating case as a precondition for successful agreement. The account in Weisser (2020) suggests that analyses that treat case as a byproduct of agreement do not align well with the SOCIC generalization, as they require additional stipulations to capture the data. Moreover, Weisser reasons that the apparent lack of case asymmetries, but existence of agreement asymmetries, can be accommodated if case is assigned based on syntactic hierarchical structure, while agreement applies either based on syntactic hierarchy or on postsyntactic, linearized structures; given this timing, case cannot follow as a result of agreement. Weisser takes the argument a step further and contends that the data align more readily with analyses of case as a precondition for agreement.

This section unpacks these claims. We will see that despite evidence against SOCIC, Weisser's conclusions about the relation between case and agreement can largely be maintained. More concretely, analyzing case as a byproduct of agreement does not automatically align with the existence of case asymmetries. The data are, however, compatible with analyses that treat case as a precondition for successful agreement.

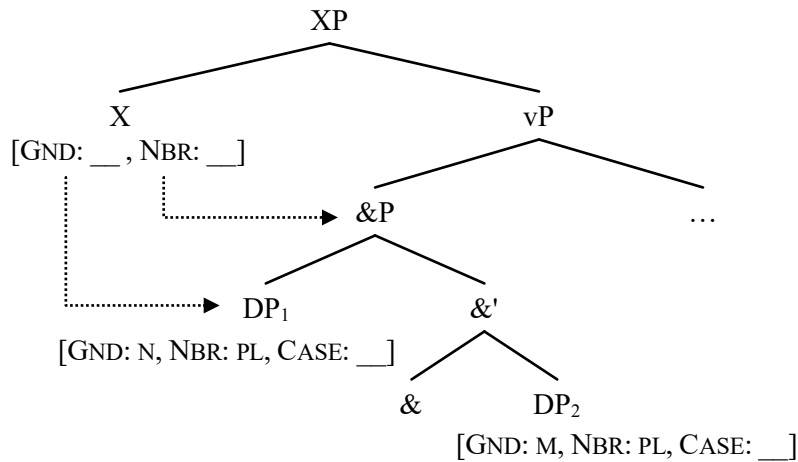
⁵ Resolution has occasionally been referred to as *default agreement*. The differences between resolution and true default agreement are not especially relevant for the purposes of this paper, but it is not always the case that the typical default features in a language are the same as those realized under resolution (see Nevins & Weisser 2019; Lyskawa 2021).

4.1. ARGUMENTS AGAINST CASE AS A REFLEX OF AGREEMENT. Analyzing case as the reflex of an agreement relation has been a prevalent approach in the Minimalist literature (e.g., Chomsky 2000, 2001) – assuming syntactic operations are driven by the need to check uninterpretable/unvalued features, then the checking of case on, for instance, the subject noun phrase can be coupled with the agreement relation that values the φ -features of the verb. As mentioned above, however, the SOCIC generalization can be construed as evidence against case as a reflex of agreement. Even in the face of case asymmetries, we will see that arguments against case as the reflex of agreement largely hold up.

In considering the relation between case and agreement, Weisser (2020) specifically analyzes the proposal for closest-conjunct agreement outlined in Bošković (2009). The agreement probe, which requires gender and number features, simultaneously targets both the top node of the coordinate structure and the first conjunct. Turning to the distribution of features in (21), it is assumed that the top node of the coordinate structure can compute number [PL] from both of its conjuncts but fails to compute gender. The probe thus agrees with the top node for number but the first conjunct for gender, as illustrated in (22).

- (21) BCS (Bošković 2009: 16)
 Juče su uništena sva sel-a i svi grad-ovi.
 yesterday AUX.3PL destroyed.PL.N all.N village-NOM.PL.N and all.M city-NOM.PL.M
 ‘All the villages and cities were destroyed yesterday.’

- (22) (adapted from Weisser 2020: 63)



In order to derive SOCIC with balanced case on the conjuncts, the agreement relation with the top node of the coordinate structure would have to be the one that triggers case, which would then percolate onto each of the conjuncts. As Weisser points out, this only appears to be achievable by stipulation.

Another issue is that the above analysis was developed specifically for BCS, which only shows closest-conjunct agreement with plural conjuncts. Other languages, as Weisser points out, provide evidence that number (along with other features) is clearly copied from the first conjunct rather than the entire coordinate phrase, as in (23).

- (23) Old Norse (Nygaard 1966, as cited in Weisser 2020: 43)
 Hefi [ek ok mínir menn] haft alla þessa stund þat einu oss
 have.1SG I and my men had all this time that only we.DAT
 til framflutningar.
 to maintenance
 ‘All this time have I and my men had only this for maintenance.’

This implies that there was never an agreement relation with the top node of the coordinate structure. Still, if both conjuncts bear nominative case, and case is only assumed to be a result of agreement, then it is unclear how to derive the facts. Weisser thus concludes that case can appear on a conjunct even without an agreement relation.

Although the examples in section 2 suggest that contrary to SOCIC, case asymmetries do exist, the analysis of case as a byproduct of agreement is still not immediately compatible with the data. Complications arise with the need to accommodate the existence of both balanced and unbalanced case within a given language. Even if we restrict our attention to nominative case licensed on the subject, the facts do not immediately fall out. Consider the Polish example below, where a quantifier gives rise to unbalanced case in the coordinate structure, but either closest-conjunct agreement or resolution is possible (note that these agreement options are also available with non-quantified conjuncts).

- (24) Polish (adapted from Przepiórkowski 2022: 606)
 ... do pokoju { wpadli/wpadł } [lekarz i kilka
 into room burst.3PL.M/3SG.M doctor.NOM.SG.M and several.ACC.PL.F
 pielęgniarek].
 nurse.GEN.PL.F
 ‘... into the room burst a doctor and several nurses.’

In terms of closest-conjunct agreement, we might assume that the probe agrees only with the first conjunct, and nominative is licensed as a result; case within the quantified conjunct is determined separately. However, resolution is also possible – in this instance, the probe could agree with the coordinate structure as a whole or with each individual conjunct (Smith et al. 2018), and as a result, nominative should be licensed on all conjuncts. An additional story is needed to explain how the case of the quantified conjunct takes priority over nominative. This is not an insurmountable problem (for proposals, see Przepiórkowski 1999; Lyskawa 2020; Grabovac 2022, among others), but analyzing case as a byproduct of agreement does not automatically capture the facts. Moreover, Polish contains many examples of balanced case; any analysis of case as a byproduct of agreement would thus need to ensure that case is distributed evenly to all conjuncts. Example (24) suggests that the probe can agree with either the first conjunct or the whole coordinate structure, but in the former scenario, we need to explain how any other conjuncts come to realize the same case.

4.2. CASE AS A PRECONDITION FOR AGREEMENT. The previous section presented arguments against case as a byproduct of agreement. Conceptually, the existence of both case and agreement asymmetries seems to pose no issues for analyses that dissociate case and agreement (e.g., Bhatt & Walkow 2013), but is it possible to argue more strongly that case conditions agreement? Proposals in favor of case as a precondition for agreement cite examples where agreement clearly tracks morphological case (see Bobaljik 2008). For instance, Icelandic quirky-subject constructions show agreement with the nominative object rather than the dative subject (Zaenen

et al. 1985). Likewise, the coordination data below suggest that agreement is sensitive to the case of the conjuncts.

Let us consider the following examples from Polish. In (25), the conjuncts display balanced case; in (26) (repeated from above), the conjuncts display a case asymmetry due to the quantifier in the second conjunct; in (27), both conjuncts contain numeral quantifiers that cause the genitive of quantification to take priority over nominative case. In (25) and (26), both resolution [3PL.M] and closest-conjunct agreement are available (though see Lyskawa 2021: 249 for further discussion on the variability in judgments with agreement asymmetries and quantified conjuncts). Note that in Polish, predicates agree with nominative subjects (Lyskawa 2020), and [3SG.N] is considered default agreement (Dziwirek 1990; Przepiórkowski 1999, among others). This is apparent in (27), where two numerically quantified conjuncts require default agreement on the predicate.

- (25) Polish (Przepiórkowski 2022: 614)
 Do pokoju {weszli/weszła} [Maria i jej mąż].
 into room entered.3PL.M/3SG.F Maria.NOM.SG.F and her husband.NOM.SG.M
 ‘Into the room entered Maria and her husband.’
- (26) (adapted from Przepiórkowski 2022: 606)
 ... do pokoju {wpadli/wpadł} [lekarz i kilka
 into room burst.3PL.M/3SG.M doctor.NOM.SG.M and several.ACC.PL.F
 pielęgniarek].
 nurse.GEN.PL.F
 ‘... into the room burst a doctor and several nurses.’
- (27) (adapted from Lyskawa 2020: 7)
 [Pięć czarownic i sześć wróżek] przyjechało do miasta.
 five.ACC witch.GEN.PL.F and six.ACC fairy.GEN.PL.F arrived.3SG.N to city
 ‘Five witches and six fairies arrived in the city.’

Assuming case conditions agreement, the lack of default agreement in both (25) and (26) suggests that agreement between the subject and predicate has been successful (see Preminger 2014). In closest-conjunct agreement, nominative case on the first conjunct allows for successful agreement. Regarding resolution, we can assume that the probe agrees with the coordinate structure as a whole or each conjunct individually; either way, a subset of case features licensed on the conjuncts, including nominative, presumably serves as input to the resolution computation. In (27), by contrast, the agreement features on the verb must be default. If case conditions agreement, then this is exactly what we expect, since neither conjunct is nominative (for discussion surrounding the accusative case realized on the numeral, see Przepiórkowski 1999; Franks 2002; Miechowicz-Mathiasen 2012; Lyskawa 2020). Even if the SOCIC generalization cannot be maintained, case asymmetries nevertheless appear to be consistent with case as a precondition for agreement.

It is worth briefly considering the theoretical consequences of case as a precondition for agreement. For one, the agreement relation must follow case assignment; this situates agreement in the postsyntax (at least partially) – for proposals, see Bobaljik (2008), Arregi & Nevins (2012), Marušič et al. (2015), among others. Regarding the specifics of case, both a simple relation between head and phrase or a dependent-case account are, in principle, compatible with agreement conditioned by case. In light of the coordination case asymmetries, however, additional assumptions are required, regardless of the view of case one adopts. Considering first case that is licensed by a head-phrase relation, the syntax of coordination will in part affect whether

case is licensed on the coordinate structure as a whole or on individual conjuncts (for various analyses of the syntax of coordination, see Munn 1993; Zoerner 1995; Johannessen 1998; Philip 2012; Neeleman et al. 2023). If case is licensed on the whole coordinate structure, then balanced case follows relatively easily, while examples of unbalanced case require further explanation (see Grabovac 2024 for a proposal). If case is licensed on conjuncts individually, then the theory must work to derive balanced case (see Bošković 2006: 526–527; Weisser 2020: 66–68).

In a dependent-case account, case is assigned based on structural relations between arguments (Marantz 1991; Baker 2015). Weisser (2020) points out that dependent case can be made compatible with balanced case in coordination, provided the individual conjuncts do not count as co-arguments of one other. In other words, the theory must ensure that the case of one conjunct is not determined by its position relative to others. Further, the coordinate phrase as a whole must receive case via the dependent-case mechanism, and this case must be inherited by all conjuncts. In the unbalanced case examples, it is likely that similar assumptions are needed, as it would be undesirable for the case of one conjunct to be determined solely by its structural position relative to other conjuncts. If case is licensed on the coordinate structure, then any asymmetries could be attributed to properties internal to each conjunct.

4.3. TWO-STEP AGREE: A POSSIBLE MIDDLE GROUND. A two-step Agree operation (Franck et al. 2006; Benmamoun et al. 2009; Arregi & Nevins 2012; Bhatt & Walkow 2013, among others) may offer a middle ground that accommodates case as both a reflex of agreement and a precondition for agreement.⁶ Adopting the terminology of Arregi & Nevins (2012), we can define Agree-Link as the stage that establishes the agreement relation in the syntax and Agree-Copy as the postsyntactic stage that copies the relevant features to the agreement probe. If we also assume that Agree-Link case licenses the nominal, then Agree-Copy can be sensitive to case. Applying this to a concrete example, consider (27), where two quantified conjuncts occur with default agreement. Agree-Link establishes an agreement relation with the whole coordinate structure, licensing nominative on all conjuncts as a result. However, the case licensed by the quantifier takes precedence within the conjuncts (Przepiórkowski 1999; Lyskawa 2020; Grabovac 2022), so that by the time Agree-Copy occurs, the case on the conjuncts is no longer nominative. Since agreement in Polish occurs only with nominative subjects, default agreement results.

With the balanced case example in (25), both closest-conjunct agreement and resolution are possible outcomes. To derive closest-conjunct agreement in this example, we could again suppose that Agree-Link establishes an agreement relation with the coordinate phrase as a whole, thus licensing nominative on all conjuncts. Then, Agree-Copy applies postsyntactically after linearization to copy the features of the closest conjunct (see Marušič et al. 2015; Willer Gold et al. 2016). In deriving the resolved agreement pattern, Agree-Link applies in the same way, though I leave the timing of resolution with respect to Agree-Copy to be worked out in the future (for relevant discussion, see Lyskawa 2021; Willer Gold 2023). The unbalanced case example in (26) would be derived similarly, provided we account for case assignment in the quantified conjunct.

While the data discussed in section 4.2 seem to favor analyses of case as a precondition for agreement, the notion of case as a reflex of agreement may not need to be abandoned entirely. Careful exploration of the implementation of the two-step approach offers an avenue for future research.

5. Conclusion. This paper has provided an overview of current developments in research on coordination, with a particular focus on the relationship between case and agreement. Recent work

⁶ Thanks to a reviewer for this suggestion.

has claimed that case is always symmetric in coordination, whereas agreement may be asymmetric. This distribution follows if case is determined in the syntax, while agreement may operate on post-syntactic structures. Taken further, this timing suggests that case should not be analyzed as a byproduct of agreement. This paper has presented data that support the existence of both case and agreement asymmetries, but that nonetheless present issues for standard analyses of case as a byproduct of agreement. The asymmetries are compatible with analyses in which case ultimately conditions agreement.

In future work, agreement patterns with unbalanced-case subjects, such as the example in (26), would benefit from further investigation. Although conjunct agreement in general has been widely studied, the existing literature is replete with balanced-case subjects, such as (25). Any examples with unbalanced case are rare and seem to be subject to a fair amount of variability in terms of acceptability. Additional data of this kind would be useful in further analyzing the relation between case and agreement. It is also worth more closely investigating the apparent first-conjunct effects in BCS, as I have yet to find comparable patterns in other languages. The pattern is particularly interesting because it indicates that at least some case asymmetries favor the first conjunct regardless of word order, whereas agreement asymmetries more often favor the closest conjunct. In addition to providing more data with which to evaluate the relationship between case and agreement, the distribution of these patterns may inform analyses of the syntax of coordination.

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