

Feature Inheritance and Case Values in Nominative-Accusative Systems*

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Abstract

This article argues for a construal of structural Case as a property of phasal domains rather than of ϕ -feature Probes: phasal domains are capable of checking Case, regardless of agreement, but licensing of a lexical, overt DP is strictly dependent on a felicitous Probe-Goal relationship, specifically an A-chain. Nominative or Accusative spell-out of a DP is shown to be a dynamic property of the featural build up of the entire Case-checking domain rather than determined by whether the Probe is T or v^* . The analysis focuses on lexical DP subjects in non-finite CPs and relies on availability of null expletive *pro* as a UG primitive.

Keywords: Case, phases, feature-inheritance, expletives, agreement, non-finite CPs, lexical subjects

This paper is a Minimalist account of DP Case instantiation where it is argued that the traditional correlation between structural Case and agreement (Chomsky 1981 et seq., George and Kornfilt 1981), while important, is not the crucial factor in Case assignment. Instead, it is shown that what is critical for structural Case checking is the phasal domain (as defined in Chomsky 2000 et seq.). This is in line with recent work by Chomsky (2005, 2006), where A-related features such as Case, agreement and the EPP are not intrinsic properties of T (or V), but of C (or v^*) - hence of the phase head.

Agreement, understood as ϕ -specifications, is nonetheless shown to be an important ingredient of Case realization. In particular, it is argued that in Nominative-Accusative languages, the presence of a ϕ -Probe triggers Nominative Case, while its absence triggers either an Accusative Case value or PRO, the latter split being sensitive to whether an Agree operation, hence an A-chain, is established or not. Paramount is the fact that (C)-T and (v^*)-V are not intrinsically associated with Nominative and Accusative Case, respectively.

The discussion in the paper focuses on A-related features in uninflected phases and language-particular properties triggering variation in the values of lexical subjects. More specifically, the analysis proposed is reliant on parametric variation in availability of null expletives, so argues for expletive *pro* as a UG (Universal Grammar) primitive. The main empirical claim is that uninflected phasal domains permit Nominative subjects only in languages with null expletives. Theoretically, the paper dissociates feature-checking (licensing) from feature-values (in the spirit of Marantz 2000, Schütze 1997): agreement (as ϕ -features on either T or a null expletive) while relevant for Case, is restricted to determining the NOM-ACC distinction, rather than actual Case checking.

The article is organized as follows. With Chomsky (2005, 2006) as the point of departure, Section 1 focuses on the role of the phase head in linguistic computations, discusses the empirical limitations of equating Case with agreement, and introduces the reader to the conceptually superior view of Case as a phasal property. In Sections 2 and 3, I refine the role of ϕ -features in relationship to Case and propose that expletives, as ϕ -Probes, interfere with the encoding of Case. In Section 4, I provide an analysis of how

Case values are acquired in non-finite CPs by focusing on English and Romanian and discuss licensing of null expletives, as well as some micro-parametric variation. Section 5 looks at further implications of this analysis and Section 6 is a conclusion.

1 On the role of the Phase

In recent work, Chomsky (2005, 2006) has redefined the relationship between C, as a phase head (or Edge), and T, as its complement. Specifically, T is said to inherit all of its features from C so that it only operates as a Probe derivatively, by virtue of its relationship with C. The feature-inheritance model is conceptually motivated by the A/A'-distinction and empirically motivated by the impossibility of TP to “move or appear in isolation without C” (2005:10), as well as by “raising (or ECM) infinitival[s], lacking ϕ -features or tense” (2005:9). In addition, given the requirement of valuation upon Transfer (see Chomsky 2004 et seq., Epstein and Seely 2002, Richards to appear), if all uninterpretable features are a property of the phase head, the look-ahead issue on the part of T dissolves, a conceptually desirable move.

Let us see briefly consider Tense as a phasal property. Stowell (1982) argues that control infinitives in English are tensed, while their raising counterparts are not, and concludes that domains with a [+tense] feature on T are CPs and not just TPs. Various refinements exist in the literature, such as for example Landau's (2004) split into anaphoric and non-anaphoric (whether dependent or independent) T, which takes into account issues such as finiteness. The crucial point though is that anaphoric T is never selected by C, while non-anaphoric T has to be saturated by C. In terms of technical

implementation, Chomsky first assumes no Tense feature on T in the lexicon (2005) but then reconsiders given the danger of lexical items with no features and allows for Tense as a property of T which nonetheless “receives only some residual interpretation unless selected by C” (2006:14). It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail this though recent work by Pesetsky and Torrego (2004b), henceforth, P&T, who separate interpretability from valuation might prove insightful. Suffice is to say that the C-T (phase-level) relationship seems to be the defining condition for temporal deixis (i.e., a non-anaphoric tense value) on T, formalizable for example as iT , following P&T (2001, 2004a).^{1, 2}

Consider next A-related Edge features, specifically: ϕ -features, Case, and the EPP. Both Chomsky (2006) and Richards (to appear) provide solid conceptual reasons for assuming that any uninterpretable A-features C may possess have to be transferred to T. Unless, transfer to a proxy head is assumed, these features will not be shipped off and deleted upon Spell-Out and will interfere with later cycles, causing “the derivation to crash at the next phase” (Chomsky 2006:13). The question, however, is whether every phase head possesses (and transfers) a complete set of A-related features or whether this varies with properties of each phase head. This paper argues for agreement (defined as $u\phi$) as a strict property of finite C heads but for Case (defined as syntactic licensing of DP arguments) and the EPP (construed as a structural requirement coerced by CI interface conditions – Chomsky 2006:14) as uniform properties of phasal heads. The proposed dichotomy raises questions with respect to the relationship between Case and agreement, considered indispensable in Case assignment to this day, as discussed in the next section.

1.1 Case, agreement and phases

The standard view in generative grammar since Chomsky (1981) and George and Kornfilt (1981) has been that structural Case is incumbent on agreement properties within the functional domain, currently understood as an uninterpretable set of phi-features ($u\phi$), regardless of whether these ϕ -properties are taken to project independently as Agr phrases or to be couched parasitically on T (and v^*), as suggested by Minimalist proposals.³ Crucially, ϕ -complete T Probes are thus synonymous to lexical subjects with Nominative Case, while ϕ -complete v^* -V Probes are synonymous to DP objects valued Accusative.⁴

There are, however, various conceptual and empirical problems with a strict correlation of Case with ϕ -features. First, the idea that (C)-T ensures Nominative Case, while v^* -V ensures Accusative Case, if correct, is theoretically unwieldy. If all A-related features are *uninterpretable* on the various phase heads and, implicitly, their complements, then how can they possibly have values, such as Nominative and Accusative, *a priori*? What would this follow from in a system of optimal design?

Second, Haeberli (2002), P&T (2001) and Svenonius (2001) have all pointed out that elsewhere, feature-checking is not allowed in the absence of an interpretable feature, so there is something wrong with our understanding of Case if we construe it as uninterpretable on both Probe and Goal. An equally thorny issue is that Case, as a relational property of DPs, is reliant on features inherent to the DP (i.e., ϕ -features), as opposed to features independent of the DP; any Case Theory where agreement is the crucial ingredient has a suspiciously circular flavour to it.

There are other, more minor points. In order to account for the lack of lexical subjects in infinitives and for the inability of past participles and predicate adjectives to Case-mark, Chomsky is forced to assume that a defective, ϕ -incomplete Probe cannot license Case. However, it has been argued that there is no principled reason for this to hold (Carstens 2001, P&T 2004b); in fact, Carstens (2001: 148) points out that “Gender is systematically excluded from the features of subject agreement in Indo-European languages with gender systems.” If $u\phi$ on T lacks gender, it is “defective” with respect to this property, so ϕ -incomplete. We may also ask whether $u\phi$ and u Case are assumed to exist independently on the Probe (as in earlier work by Chomsky) or whether these are collapsed into one (as hinted in Chomsky 2005, 2006). Either way, the exact relationship between structural Case and ϕ -properties needs to be sharpened if we are to understand what structural Case actually *is* and what role the phase head has to play.

Since Burzio’s (1986) generalization, it has been fairly uncontroversial that transitive v (i.e., v^* here), is capable of licensing Case, either directly or derivatively by its proxy complement head.⁵ Given Chomsky’s assumptions of v^* and C as uncontroversial phasal heads, the burden then rests with checking the relationship between C and Case. Note, however, that inflected CP domains will shed little light, if any on the questions at hand. Given that ϕ -features are indisputably available to these domains, it would be impossible to determine whether the presence of lexical subjects is due to agreement, to the phasal status of C or both. Consequently, we need to explore CP domains that lack ϕ -features and see to what extent structural Case would be available

there. Therefore, before outlining a novel theory of Case valuation, let us first investigate Case realizations of lexical subjects in ϕ -featureless phasal domains.

1.2 Lexical subjects and ϕ -featureless phasal domains

The first issue is to establish whether ϕ -featureless phases exist and which CPs would qualify as such. Intuitively, CPs without inflectional morphology on T, in languages with otherwise inflected T paradigms, are arguably ϕ -featureless. Some authors (e.g. Alboiu 2006, Landau 2004) have already made this claim. While this is the simplest assumption, it does not hold of necessity and some conceptual or empirical proof would be desirable. I offer such evidence in Section 1.3 but, for now, let us assume this to be the case.

Traditionally, the distinction between inflected and uninflected clausal domains mirrors the distinction between finiteness and non-finiteness, respectively (e.g. Binnick 1991, Jespersen 1924, Ledgeway 1998 and references therein). Thus, indicatives, subjunctives, optatives and imperatives - which manifest agreement - are all finite forms, while infinitives, gerunds and participles - which lack inflectional morphology - are non-finite forms. I adopt this distinction and use the non-finite label for the uninflected infinitives, gerunds and participles that I investigate below in relationship to Case.⁶

A number of languages allow for lexical Nominative subjects in non-finite clauses. Let us refer to these languages as “Type A” languages. Particularly well-known are the Romance languages (for elaborate discussions and dialectal variation, see Ledgeway 1998 and Mensching 2000), many of which permit Nominative subjects in some infinitive, gerund and participial constructions, but the phenomenon is more

widespread, being also available at least to Greek gerunds (Sitaridou 2002), West Flemish infinitives (Haegeman 1985), Hungarian (Liptak, personal communication) and Albanian (Kallulli, personal communication) absolute participial constructions. In (1)-(3), I illustrate with various languages but consistently with Romanian as Nominative subjects are available to all types of non-finite clauses in this Romance variety (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Motapanyane 1995, etc.): infinitive, gerund and participial.

(1) Tensed infinitives (or “personal”, following Ledgeway 1998):

a. [CP *(Pentru) a avea tu / *tine liniște], plecă. (RO)
 [CP *(for) INF have 2.SG.NOM-*ACC quiet] leave.PST.3SG
 ‘S/he left so that you can have peace of mind.’

b. Pe el l-a deranjat (RO)
 PE 3SG.M.ACC CL.3SG.M.ACC-AUX.3SG bothered
 dreptul [CP *(de) a câștiga noi mai bine].
 right-the [CP *(of) INF win 1PL.NOM more well]
 ‘He was bothered by our right to make more money.’

c. Lo supimos [CP *(después de) llegar él]. (SP)
 we found out [CP *(after of) arrive.INF he.NOM]
 ‘We found out after he had arrived.’ (adapted from Ledgeway 1998: 5)

d. [CP *(Mee) ik da te zeggen], hee-se dat hus
 [CP *(with) I.NOM that to say] has-she that house

gekocht. (adapted from Haegeman 1985:125) (WF)

bought

‘Because of my saying that she has bought that house.’

(2) Gerund adjuncts

a. [CP Fiind tu / *tine gata], am pornit
[CP be-GER 2.SG.NOM- *ACC ready] AUX.1PL started
la drum. (RO)

at way

‘Given that you were ready, we started on our way.’

b. [CP Telionondas o Thodoris to fajito tu], irthe
[CP finish-GER the Thodoris.NOM the food his] come-PST.3SG
i Maria. (Sitaridou 2002: 160) (GK)

the Maria.NOM

‘When Thodoris was finishing his food, Maria came.’

c. [CP Avendo Gianni / (lei) chiuso il dibattito], la riunione
[CP having Gianni / (3SG.NOM) closed the debate] the meeting
è finita prima. (IT)

is finished before

‘Having Gianni closed the debate, the meeting ended early.’

(adapted from Belletti 1990: 98)

(3) Absolute participial constructions

- a. [CP Odată (fata / ea) deșteptată
[CP once girl-the.NOM/she awoke. PRTC.FSG,
(fata / ea)], mama puse de mîncare. (RO)
girl-the.NOM/she] mother-the put.PAST.3SG of food
'The girl having awoken, mother started preparing some food.'
- b. [CP A gyermek felébredvén], az anya ebédet készített. (H)
[CP the child.NOM wake.PRTC] the mother lunch.ACC made.3SG
'The child having woken up, the mother prepared lunch.'

Throughout (1)-(3), the non-finite domains are adjuncts (whether adverbial or relative clauses), so phasal by definition, which I take to be the crucial ingredient to Case checking. Nonetheless, there are differences. The infinitives (but not the gerunds) require the presence of a preposition associated with the CP phase. It has been argued that the presence of this preposition, suggested to be external to the CP, activates Case-assigning properties of the Inflectional domain, properties intrinsically related to agreement (see discussion in Cowper 2002, Haegeman 1985, Ledgeway 1998, Motapanyane 1995, and Raposo 1989). However, such a view is untenable under the current analysis which assumes no $u\phi$ (i.e., agreement) on T in the absence of overt agreement morphology.⁷ With gerunds, there has to be long head movement (LHM, in the sense of Rivero 1994) or Aux-to-Comp (in the sense of Rizzi 1982). Absolute participial constructions show agreement in gender and number in Romance, on a par with participles in passives.

Chomsky (2005:10) states that inflection on participles is simply a morphological effect of agreement, with no significance in the syntactic computation. Arguably then, ϕ -features on (C)-T are not present in absolute participial constructions in Romance either.

Consider next languages that do not freely allow for Nominative subjects in non-finite CP domains. I refer to these languages as “Type B” languages. Many, if not most, Nominative-Accusative languages fall under this second category but for ease of exposition, I focus on English. In (4), we notice that phasal infinitives allow for lexical subjects only in the presence of a preposition, (4a,b), and that the subject is always Case-marked Accusative rather than Nominative, (4b,c).⁸

- (4) a. It was unexpected [_{CP} *(for) them to show up so early].
b. It felt weird [_{CP} PRO / *she / *her to see them again].
c. [_{CP} For him/*he to listen to that talk] was awkward.

These observations are banal but not trivial. They were uninteresting for classical Case accounts given the intrinsic relationship between Nominative and agreement and the fact that prepositions in English assign Accusative. However, given the data in (1) they beg further explanation. Furthermore, the behavior of phasal gerunds is equally intriguing, as they not only permit lexical subjects in the absence of a preposition, see (5a), but even allow for Nominative lexicalization in adjuncts, see (5b) from Reuland (1983: 126).

- (5) a. [_{CP} Him / *he baking the pie] pleased everyone.
b. Roddy tried to avoid Elaine, he being a confirmed bachelor.

To sum up, what clearly emerges from empirical investigations is the validity of a theoretical correlation between Case and phases and not between Case and agreement.⁹ Conceptually, this is a desirable result as it rids Case-licensing of its circular flavour by guaranteeing that Case is reliant on properties beyond those of the DP, specifically on phases. Structural Case as a phasal property has been suggested at least by Alboiu (2006), Branigan (2005), Rivero and Geber (2004), and Sitaridou (2002), and is clearly in line with Chomsky's recent views of Case as a feature derivative from the phase head.

1.3 Non-finite CPs and ϕ -features

I offer here some empirical back up for the assumption that the presence of ϕ -features is exclusive to finite C heads in languages with overt agreement morphology. Specifically, there is no ϕ -feature transmission from C to T in uninflected domains.¹⁰ This assumption finds support in the behaviour of subject clitics. Poletto (2000) mentions that in Friulian, a Northern Italian dialect, subject clitic doubling is extremely common. Paoli (personal communication) confirms that they occur in finite clauses with both pre- and post-verbal subjects regardless of predicate type. However, subject clitics are ruled out in non-finite clauses, which, interestingly, otherwise permit a Nominative lexical subject postverbally. For illustration, consider the Friulian data in (6).

- (6) a. E rive 'l pustin.
 SCL arrives the postman.
 'The postman is coming.'

- b. Ue e cusine Marie
 today SCL cook Mary
 ‘Mary is cooking today.’
- c. (*E) Vint Marie / je ciacaraat cun ti, e ha
 SCL having Mary / she spoken with you, SCL have
 diciduu di cumprà el livri.
 decided of buy.INF the book
 ‘Having spoken with you, Mary decided to buy the book.’

While subject clitics occur with both unaccusative (6a) and unergative (6b) finite predicates in Friulian, they are ruled out in non-finite contexts as illustrated by the gerund Aux-to-Comp construction in (6c). Given that Brandi and Corvin (1989) argue that subject clitics are not pronouns and Rizzi (1986) claims they are agreement markers, nominal substitutes for verbal inflection, Roberts (2006), construes them as $u\phi$ on T. If correct, (6) provides empirical evidence against $u\phi$ on uninflected T heads.

How would this work in a feature-inheritance model where ϕ -features are C properties? Seemingly, there are two logical possibilities. One is to suppose that both finite and non-finite C heads uniformly contain an uninterpretable ϕ -feature (as in Mensching 2000, Rizzi 1982, Rizzi and Shlonski 2005) which is only transmitted to T in finite contexts. While optional transmittal of features is a possibility left open in Chomsky (2005:14), it is typically not favoured in a system of optimal design. In fact,

Chomsky (2006) argues for obligatory transmittal of uninterpretable features to the proxy head, so this option would be difficult to maintain. In addition, if phasal heads are the locus of information read off by the interfaces (Chomsky 2005, Roussou 2006), how would the semantics interface distinguish between finite and non-finite domains if C were to uniformly contain ϕ -features? The other logical possibility is to assume that C only contains ϕ -features in finite contexts. This seems more promising as it would imply obligatory transmittal of uninterpretable features whenever present, as well as do away with the conceptual problem at the interface level.

To sum up, I will assume that only finite C phase heads are equipped with uninterpretable ϕ -features. Non-finite C heads, as well as v^* heads (pace Chomsky) lack these features. This second point is more difficult to argue but follows in a principled manner once we assume morphological inflection to be the spell out of ϕ -features. Crucially, in Nominative-Accusative systems, there is never any overt morphological agreement between v^* and the argument it Case-marks.¹¹ Moreover, once we accept the ϕ -feature – finiteness correlate, the absence of $u\phi$ on v^* follows naturally given that, as argued by Rizzi (1997), the C domain is the locus of finiteness distinctions.

2 On the Spell-out of lexical subjects: the proposal

Given that C licenses both Case and temporal deixis, one could capitalize on this correlation and argue that Case is ‘Tense’, an avenue explored by, at least, Haerberli (2002), Martin (2001), P&T (2001, 2004), and Svenonius (2001). The most coherent formalization of this approach can be found in P&T’s work, where the authors assume

Nominative and Accusative structural Case to be simply a *uT* feature on D which checks against *iT*, a phasal property, as discussed. While desirable in terms of ensuring a welcome systematicity in terms of feature checking (i.e., *uF* can only check in the presence of *iF*), this account runs into potential problems once we consider languages where Nominative Case values occur in the absence of Tense. A case in point are Hungarian possessive constructions, discussed by Szabolcsi (1983) and Kenesei (1986).

Kenesei (1986:115) notes that Nominative Case occurs in “two constructions in Hungarian: (a) in tensed sentences, and (b) in possessive constructions.” The author further argues that the category Tense cannot be assumed to play a role in the latter situation and concludes that Nominative is dependent on Agr (*uφ* here) given that an agreement suffix must appear on the head noun with possessives. Examples in (7):

- (7) a. a te ház-ad
the you.NOM house-SG
‘your house’ (Kenesei 1986: 115)
- b. a fiú-k kapu-ja
the boy-PL-NOM gate-3SG/PL
‘the boys’ gate’ (Kenesei 1986: 112)

In addition, while all the non-finite clauses discussed in section 1.2 are of necessity phasal domains, it is unclear whether they all instantiate Tense which further suggests we need to tread carefully prior to equating Case with Tense. For example, Avram (2003) argues that semantic and syntactic properties of Romanian gerunds point

toward an AspP status of these phrases. Semantically, they denote events (see also Pires 2001, for English), are verbal in nature but cannot combine with either a Neg head (i.e., the negative free morpheme *nu*) or a T head (i.e., auxiliaries) and to the extent that they license temporal adverbs, these adverbs denote time of event in the Reichenbachian (1947) sense, rather than time of reference. These arguments provide compelling evidence for lack of a TP with Romanian gerunds. However, it is difficult to maintain a pure AspP analysis for these gerunds given the fact that they, (i) can combine with speaker-oriented adverbs such as *probably*, which according to Cinque (1999) associate with epistemic modality, so are higher than Aspect, (ii) allow for topicalized subjects, which arguably target the left periphery of the clause (i.e., the CP domain, following Rizzi’s cartographic approach), and precede clitics, which are part of the Inflectional domain in Romance (Kayne 1991, Uriagereka 1995). These properties are illustrated in (8), with (8a) containing a topicalized subject and an epistemic adverb and (8b) showing linearization with respect to clitics.¹²

- (8) a. Ea fiind încă supărată, am
 3SGF.NOM be-GER yet upset.3SGF, AUX.1PL
 decis să plecăm singuri.
 decided SBJ leave.1PL alone.1PL
 ‘What with her still being upset, we decided to leave by ourselves.’
- b. Supărându-se pe mine, a plecat.
 upset-GER-CL.REFL.3 PE me.ACC, AUX.3SG left

‘Being upset with me, she (or he) left.’

Therefore, I will assume that Romanian phasal gerunds are tense deficient CPs (i.e., AspP selected by C with no intervening T) and will henceforth use the C-I notation as the umbrella term for the sentential phase head and its proxy. This allows for Asp proxy heads, as well as, in principle, for other inflectional proxy heads.¹³

In conclusion, Case deficiencies cannot be readily construed as satisfiable by Tense any more than they can be construed as satisfiable by agreement. What they need is the phase and where present, temporal deixis, like agreement, is epiphenomenal.¹⁴

The phasal domain is the necessary and sufficient condition for Case licensing so that active DPs are unequivocally de-activated at the phase level.¹⁵ However, suppose that the phase head itself has nothing to say about Case spell-out, specifically about the Case *value* a respective DP is (or is not) granted. To clarify, de-activation is equivalent to Case checking (i.e., syntactic licensing) but not equivalent to granting a Case value. Instead, Case values are determined by the specifics of the probing domain, as follows:

(9) Case spell-out:

- a. NOMINATIVE, *iff* the probing domain is specified as [$uD, u\phi$]
- b. ACCUSATIVE, *iff* the probing domain is specified as [uD]
- c. No Case value (i.e., PRO), *iff* no Probe

(9) assumes that Case valuation is dependent on the operation Agree, specifically, the formation of an A-chain, triggered by either $u\phi$ or the EPP (i.e., uD). In Nominative-Accusative systems any active DP entering an A-chain will be guaranteed a Case value.

Choice of Nominative versus Accusative rests solely with availability or lack thereof of ϕ -features.¹⁶ In a sense this vindicates Chomsky (and much subsequent work in generative grammar) as agreement does turn out to have a special relationship with Case; however, what (9) shows is that, while paramount in determining type of Case (i.e., DP spell-out), ϕ -features are not crucial for syntactic Case licensing. In the absence of a Probe, an active DP will fail to receive a Case value. Given the absence of relevant featural specifications, such a DP is constrained to silence (i.e., to a PRO status).¹⁷ Nonetheless, the derivation does not crash as the presence of a phase head will ensure syntactic licensing of all DPs.¹⁸

Such an approach befits the uninterpretable status of A-related phase features and is in line with proposals by Marantz (2000) and Schütze (1997), both of whom dissociate Case licensing from Case values (i.e., morphological instantiations of Case) and both of whom argue for availability of default Case, typically in the absence of syntactic licensing. For Marantz (2000:20), default Case morphology is inserted post-Spell-Out, “if no principle or language particular property determines the case features”, while for Schütze, default Case morphology is language specific (e.g. Accusative for English and Nominative for Latin) and reflects the absence of syntactic Case licensing for which agreement is taken to be a prerequisite. Crucially, I argue for syntactic licensing of Case as phase-related across the board. Given that the absence of a Case value is the direct result of syntactic inactivity (i.e., lack of participation in an A-chain), in the spirit of both Marantz and Schütze, to the extent that there is a ‘default’ morphological Case, I take it to be equivalent to lack of any morpheme insertion (i.e., PRO).¹⁹ This approach is more

parsimonious in that it obviates the need for language-specific default Case, a desirable approach from a Minimalist point of view. Language ‘preferences’ for Nominative or Accusative DP spell-out fall out from independent language-specific properties. The task is to offer an implementation that can systematically account for morphological Case realizations in the data discussed so far in this paper and preferably beyond. To this purpose, let us move on to Section 3.

3 The role of ϕ -features

Chomsky (2005:14) argues that C has two probes: the edge-feature (EF) and an Agree-feature (ϕ -features). EF attracts a *wh*-phrase to the edge of C, while ϕ -features attract a DP, but only as far as T. However, the EF may “spread” (Chomsky 2005:22) from C to T, resulting in T’s EPP feature alongside $u\phi$.²⁰ There is no probing Case feature. I take this to be essentially correct and will not construe *uCase* as a separate Probe.²¹

Recall that our discussion focuses on non-finite phasal domains, as this is where languages show disparity in spell-out of DP subjects as Nominative, Accusative or PRO. Given that C lacks an uninterpretable ϕ -feature in these domains, the unique A-related probe transferred by C to its proxy head is the EPP feature (i.e., a nominal deficiency). What then ensures the ϕ -specification assumed to associate with Nominative values in languages with Nominative subjects in these domains? Various authors (e.g. Ledgeway 1998, Sitaridou 2002) have remarked that only null subject languages permit Nominative DP subjects in these constructions. Nonetheless, West Flemish is not, technically speaking, a null subject (i.e., *pro*-drop) language, as it only permits for null expletives

(Haegeman, personal communication). Suppose then that null expletives are somehow involved in Nominative Case valuation. Support for this view comes from various dialects of English, such as Newfoundland English in Canada and working-class Somerset English in the UK, where null expletives are still current, and where uninflected infinitives with Nominative subjects, as in (10), are also permitted.²²

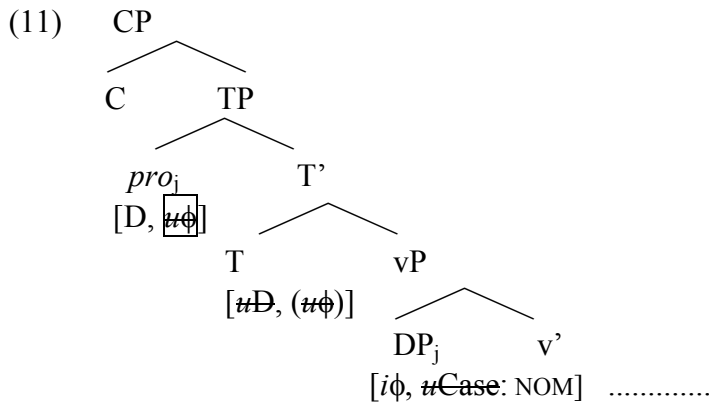
(10) For he to listen to that talk was awkward.

I suggest that the null expletive, merged in Spec,TP to satisfy the EPP, itself acts as a Probe thus ensuring that the thematic subject enters an A-chain and is thereby Case-licensed. Furthermore, the featural specifications of this Probe will ensure that the subject gets a Nominative Case value, as discussed below.

3.1 Expletives as Probes

Chomsky (1981) introduces *pro*, an empty category that does not always bear the same array of featural specifications. On the one hand, there is the null subject of *pro*-drop languages, a nominal element that is referential and ϕ -complete and enters the derivation in theta-assigning domains, on the other hand, there is a null expletive, which is non-referential, lacks intrinsic ϕ -values and cannot be merged in theta-related positions. Distinct morphosyntactic and semantic features make collapsing these two instances of empty categories into one somewhat spurious. For the purposes of this paper, *pro* refers to the null expletive unless specified otherwise.²³ Suppose then that expletive *pro* is

featurally specified as $[D, u\phi]$.²⁴ Consequently, it can be merged in Spec,TP and thereby check off T's nominal deficiency, as outlined below based on the syntactic tree in (11).



(11) illustrates a derivation for either finite or non-finite C (hence the brackets around $u\phi$ on T). In finite domains, T is phi-complete, so Probes for a DP Goal even if *pro* satisfies its uD . In non-finite CPs, T only inherits a nominal deficiency, which is checked off by *pro*, as shown in (11). Merge of *pro* in Spec,TP cancels T's status as a D-related Probe. Nonetheless, *pro* has no specification for ϕ -features, so must find a syntactic object to value these features. Consequently, $u\phi$ on *pro* probes for a Goal with interpretable ϕ -features, checks against the highest contender (i.e., the subject DP) and copies its ϕ -values, thereby getting a 'j' index. Note that the null expletive does not branch (as it never selects N), so will uncontroversially c-command the subject DP.²⁵ Crucially, at Spell-Out, the subject DP is part of an A-chain where the probing domain is specified for both nominal and ϕ -feature deficiencies, so the DP will be valued as Nominative, in accord with (9). In effect, *pro* acts as a Probe and guarantees a Nominative as opposed to an Accusative value.²⁶

Assuming that *pro* is part of the lexical array, an issue I return to shortly, one might ask what guarantees insertion of the null expletive in Spec,TP as opposed to dislocation of the thematic subject? Chomsky (2000:104) claims that “Preference of Merge over Move” selects the expletive. Alternatively, Uriagereka (2002) argues that any lexical item present in the numeration must make it to LF as part of general conditions of Inclusiveness and Recoverability. Either way, inserting *pro* into the derivation has theoretical precedence over subject dislocation.

3.2 Two notes on expletives

If we are to take the above seriously, we need to ask at least the following two questions:

(i) what guarantees *pro* in the lexical array, and (ii) whether the ‘null’ status of this expletive has any bearing on the issues at hand.

With respect to the first question, the language under consideration must have a lexeme with the specification $[D, u\phi]$ as part of its mental lexicon. The expletive, lacking semantic content, will participate in the checking of features otherwise devoid of any semantico-pragmatic flavour, hence checking of purely nominal features. This would in turn ensure that contentful DPs are free to occupy structural positions with various semantic and pragmatic relevance with the effect of what is often referred to as a ‘free word order’ language. The presence of a $[D, u\phi]$ lexeme in the lexical array would ensure the desired flexibility in DP positioning. For example, I have argued in previous work (Alboiu 1999, 2002, 2004a,b) that Romanian exploits syntactic structure to encode sentence pragmatics. Specifically, DP phrases never dislocate to check A-related features

(i.e., Case, agreement, or the EPP), but do so only for novel interpretive effects related to the encoding of the Theme-Rheme partitioning (i.e., for ‘discourse-configurational’ purposes, in the of Kiss 1995). Availability of *pro* as a structural nominal licenser would explain what enables Romanian to encode information structure in any derivation.²⁷

Clearly then, $[D, u\phi]$ as part of the mental lexicon is the minimum premise. If unavailable, Nominative Case values are only licensed in the presence of inflected phasal domains (i.e., in finite clauses). Nonetheless, variation is expected not only at the macro- but also at the micro-parametric level, especially since availability in the mental lexicon does not immediately guarantee insertion in the lexical array. Empirically speaking, at the micro-parametric level, there are languages like Romanian (and possibly Spanish and Catalan - all of which are Ibero-Romance) where Nominative subjects are the norm, regardless of finiteness. At the other extreme, there are languages like Serbian and Bulgarian which exclude Nominative values in non-finite domains (Tomić, personal communication) and Ancient Greek which shows only Accusative lexical subjects in infinitives (Sevdali 2005). There are also ‘in-betweens’. For instance, Old Italian shows both Nominative and Accusative subjects in infinitives (Mensching 2000), while modern Italian requires Aux-to-Comp to license Nominatives in uninflected CPs, as discussed earlier. Consequently, a more careful investigation of *pro* licensing is required.

With regards to whether the ‘null’ status of the expletive is syntactically relevant, the answer is ‘no’ as phonetic features are not accessible to the computational domain. Under a view of late vocabulary insertion (as in Distributed Morphology), phonetic features are not even available prior to Spell-Out. Arguably, ϕ -featureless nominal

elements have insufficient properties to warrant any morpheme insertion as they simply copy ϕ -features off the closest c-commanded DP. While null status is not an a priori requirement, if these expletives solely satisfy a purely formal principle, there is no need for overtness.²⁸ Interestingly, most overt expletives have various degrees of ϕ -specifications and possibly deixis (a property Kayne (2006) associates with *there*, among other expletives) which explains their distinct syntactic properties and more restricted character. Agreement facts show that French *il*, English *it* and Icelandic *það*, are all specified as 3rd person singular neuter (for various discussion, see Chomsky 1995, Rezac 2004, and Rizzi and Shlonski 2005). Chomsky (2000) argues that English *there* is specified for 3rd (or default) person but no number and Rezac (2004) shows that Czech *von* tracks number and gender of its associate but is specified for person. This gives us (12) in which ϕ -features are represented independently if relevant, as follows: ‘ π ’ for person, ‘#’ for number and ‘g’ for gender.

(12)	[D, $u\phi$]	[D, $\pi:3$, #:SG, g:N]	[D, $\pi:3$]	[D, $\pi:3$, $u\#$, ug] ²⁹
	<i>pro</i>	<i>il, it, það</i>	<i>there</i>	<i>von</i>

4 Case values in phasal gerunds and infinitives

In this section, I first look at the macro-parametric variation by discussing data from a Type A language like Romanian, where the null expletive (i.e., [D, $u\phi$]) is always available in the lexical array, and a Type B language, like English, which lacks an active [D, $u\phi$]. Lastly, I briefly revisit the micro-parametric variation and attempt to shed some light on what constrains *pro* in the derivation beyond canonical discourse requirements.

4.1 The case of Romanian

Before embarking on an analysis of Romanian subjects and their Case values, this section offers some conceptual and empirical evidence for the existence of *pro*.

4.1.1 Compulsory *pro* in the lexical array

Cardinaletti (2004) argues convincingly on both theoretical and empirical grounds for *pro* and discusses some interesting evidence with respect to the existence of (at least) two IP-related preverbal subject positions in natural languages: SpecSubjP - which hosts the subject of predication (i.e., the ‘notional’ subject) and need not be constrained to DPs - and SpecAgrSP - which hosts the grammatical subject and is constrained to weak pronouns and *pro*. The author suggests that these positions are distinct from the CP-related XP positions introduced by Rizzi’s cartographic approach, so would therefore not interfere with any of the preverbal discourse related positions such as Topic or Focus positioned in the left-periphery of the clause. Furthermore, the EPP feature is to be kept distinct from the subject of predication feature, as the former can be satisfied by expletives in structures with inverted subjects, while the latter cannot be satisfied by an expletive - in view of its lack of referentiality - but has to be satisfied exclusively by the thematic subject moved preverbally. However, in Italian, the EPP feature is argued to also project independently from AgrS, given thatthetic sentences - which report on events in out-of-the-blue contexts - show a split across predicate types, as follows: preverbal subjects with transitives and unergatives and postverbal subjects with

unaccusatives. Given that inthetic sentences there is no subject of predication and that SpecAgrSP can only host weak pronominals, these preverbal subjects must be assumed to dislocate for EPP purposes. Italian then shows evidence for the following non-CP-related preverbal subject positions:

(13) specSubjP specEPPP specAgrSP (Cardinaletti 2004:154)

With respect to Romanian, in Alboiu (2002), I show that any preverbal DP in Romanian is subject to a specificity effect (unless contrastively focused), hence discourse configurationally displaced to a presupposed, topic-type position.³⁰ I remain agnostic for now as to whether these specific preverbal subjects occupy a Topic position or a subject of predication position in the sense of Cardinaletti (2004) (i.e., whether they are CP- or IP-related) since the focus here is on *pro* which is of necessity ruled out from either such position. What is nonetheless crucial is that the ‘grammatical’ subject position can only be occupied by *pro* given that no other weak nominals are allowed preverbally. In addition, Romanian shows no evidence for separate EPP and AgrS heads. As I’ve shown in earlier work, postverbal subjects in Romanian are not constrained by predicate type as seen in Italian. Specifically, inthetic sentences, VS(O) word order is the norm, as illustrated in (14), all of which are appropriate answers to questions like *What happened?*

- (14) a. A sosit Victor.
 AUX.3SG arrived Victor
 ‘Victor arrived.’
- b. A sunat Mihai.

‘After the exhibit, each painting was returned to its own artist.’

In (15), the direct object, which does not dislocate to a preverbal position in the absence of relevant semantico-pragmatic interpretations, enters an Agree relationship with T and has its Case valued as Nominative. The indirect object appears to the left of this direct object, so is structurally higher than the latter.³² But (15) is well-formed. Conspicuously, the binding relations between the quantified direct object DP_j and the possessive pronoun can only be accounted for by positing a null expletive in Spec,TP as in (16).

(16) [TP *pro*_j T [DP-DAT POSS_j]_k DP_j]
 [D, $\mu\phi$] [iT, μD , $\mu\phi$] [D, *i\phi*, $\mu\text{Case:NOM}$]

Expletive *pro*, merged in Spec,TP to check off μD on T, as discussed, bears the same index with the direct object which indirectly (i.e., via T) values its features. Crucially, it c-commands the indirect object DP_k, a seemingly sufficient condition for felicitous binding of the possessive at LF.³³ The exact implementation of this well-formedness could be perceived as falling out from either LF-movement and replacement of the expletive by its associate, as assumed in early Minimalism (Chomsky 1995) or, from a failure to delete the expletive’s ϕ -features. Neither approach is totally free of problems. Evidence against LF-movement seems to be ruled out by data like (17) unless we assume Condition C to not be operative at LF.

(17) a. [profesorul lui Victor]_i_k pro_k l_i-a
 [teacher-the his Victor]_k pro_k CL.3SG.ACC.M.-AUX.3SG

- (18) a. [CP *(Pentru) a avea tu liniște], plecă.
 [CP *(For) INF have 2.SG.NOM quiet] leave.PST.3SG
 ‘S/he left so that you can have peace of mind.’
- b. [CP Fiind tu gata], am și pornit.
 [CP be-GER 2.SG.NOM ready] AUX.1PL also started
 ‘Once you were ready, we started on our way.’

In both examples, the Nominative lexical subject occurs postverbally, in a position distinct from the grammatical subject position, in the sense of Cardinaletti (2004).³⁴ In infinitives, the preposition-type complementizer is obligatory and the subject cannot dislocate to a preverbal position. In gerunds, on the other hand, there is no preposition and the subject can occur preverbally, as discussed in Section 1.3. With infinitives, the lexical verb raises to T but not further as the infinitive particle ‘a’, blocks subsequent T to C movement of the verb.³⁵ With gerunds, the verb undergoes movement beyond the Inflectional domain and into C. That this movement is possible follows from the verbal nature of the gerund affix and that LHM actually occurs is evidenced by its interaction with clitics, as shown in Section 1.3. Consequently, an overt complementizer occurs with infinitives but not with gerunds. I assume this visibility of the phase head to be a direct manifestation of the syntactic relationship established between C and its proxy head.³⁶

Schematically, the personal infinitive can be represented as (19), where C transfers its sole A-related feature to its proxy head and *pro* is externally merged to

satisfy this feature. The unvalued features of the expletive establish a syntactic chain with the thematic subject, which at Spell-Out is valued Nominative. Overt items are bolded.

- (19) Romanian uninflected / personal infinitives:

$$[{}_{CP} C \quad \mathit{pro}_j \quad a\text{-}T \quad DP_j \quad \langle v \rangle \dots]$$

$$\text{“P”} \quad [D, \mathit{\#}\phi] \quad [INF, v, \mathit{\#}D] \quad [\mathit{\#}Case: NOM, i\phi]$$

In the same vein, with gerund constructions, the schematic representations in (20) show the EPP feature being transferred to Asp, the Inflectional head available to gerunds (see section 1.3). Unvalued ϕ -features and Case check as discussed above.

- (20) a. Romanian gerund adjuncts with VS linearization:

$$[{}_{CP} C \quad \mathit{pro}_j \quad Asp \quad DP_j \quad \langle v \rangle \dots]$$

$$\mathbf{v\text{-}GER} \quad [D, \mathit{\#}\phi] \quad [\langle v\text{-}GER \rangle, \mathit{\#}D] \quad [\mathit{\#}Case: NOM, i\phi]$$
- b. Romanian gerund adjuncts with SV linearization:

$$[{}_{CP} C_{High} \quad DP_j\text{-}Top \quad C_{Low} \quad \mathit{pro}_j \quad Asp \quad \langle DP_j \rangle \quad \langle v \rangle \dots]$$

$$[\mathit{\#}Case: NOM, i\phi] \quad [\mathbf{v\text{-}GER}] \quad [D, \mathit{\#}\phi] \quad [\langle v\text{-}GER \rangle, \mathit{\#}D] \quad \langle [\mathit{\#}Case: NOM, i\phi] \rangle$$

In addition, (20b) differs from (20a) in that it projects an expanded CP domain, with a Topic position sandwiched in-between a high C head (i.e., “Force”) and a low C head (i.e., “Finite”) to accommodate the topicalized preverbal subject (in the spirit of Rizzi 1997, 2004).³⁷ Crucially, the gerund must raise at least to a low C head, as evidenced by linearization with respect to pronominal clitics. Nonetheless, I assume a high C head must be present to guarantee phasal status of the domain at hand.³⁸

4.2 *pro*-less languages: the case of English

If a ϕ -deficient expletive guarantees Nominative valuation in non-finite domains, languages lacking such expletives should only allow for Nominative values in finite domains, where C heads transfer an uninterpretable ϕ -feature to their complement. In non-finite contexts, the phase will guarantee Case checking but valuation will be exclusively Accusative. Conversely, in the absence of valuation, DPs with a Case deficiency will be deactivated upon Transfer and default PRO will ensue at Spell-Out. English is a case in point. Consider first infinitive phases in (21).

- (21) a. [CP For her to give up now] was unthinkable.
b. [CP PRO_{arb} /*her to give up now] was unthinkable.
c. [CP PRO_i to improve myself_i] is an ongoing personal goal.

All instances of (21) contain subject clauses, hence embedded CP domains. In (21a) but not (21b,c), the embedded subject is overt and valued Accusative. In (21a) but not (21b,c), C is overt, a disparity I suggest indicates a distinct C and T head in the former but not the latter cases. When C is distinct from T, it needs to be clause typed accordingly (hence insertion of the prepositional complementizer). When the two heads form a merged projection - C/T - clause typing is a priori guaranteed. In Minimalist spirit, I take a merged C/T domain to be present whenever C has no uninterpretable features to transfer.³⁹ Generally speaking, ‘matching’ or ‘merging’ of functional categories has been proposed by Culicover (1999), Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), and Haider (1988). Crucial to all of these analyses is the absence of a specifier requirement between the two

merged/matched functional projections and feature sharing. In (21b,c), the phase head shares with T a temporal specification property, as discussed in Section 1, and T fails to project a specifier, as indicated by the impossibility of a lexical subject. Note that while a silent subject in (21c) could simply fall out from semantico-pragmatic requirements of obligatory control, the same cannot be argued for (21b) which is not an instance of obligatory control. Therefore, I take absence of morpheme insertion to indicate lack of a Case value in (21b,c). In (21a), C is construed independently of T and transfers its deficiencies to the latter head. This translates as an inherited EPP feature (and presumably saturation of T as *i*T, but this is less relevant here). For a schematic representation, see (22), with spelled-out items in bold.

- (22) a. for-to CP infinitives
- | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| [_{CP} C | DP _i | T | <DP _i > | v....] |
| for | [#Case: ACC, <i>i</i> φ] | [<i>i</i> T, #D] to | | V |
- b. Prepositionless CP infinitives
- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| [_{CP} | C/T | ●* (lexical) DP / ✓ PRO | v] |
| | [<i>i</i> T] to | [#Case, <i>i</i> φ] | V |

In (22a), *u*D transferred to T from C probes and checks against the subject DP, which it subsequently dislocates to the specifier of TP. Given that there is no *u*φ associated with the domain that probes but that an A-chain is established, this DP will lexicalize as Accusative. In (22b), C fails to transfer any A-related features to T. This entails that the C/T domain is not interested in establishing a syntactic relationship with the subject DP

(i.e., there is no Probe). Spell-Out ensures syntactic licensing of the subject DP but no value, so there is no morpheme insertion and a silent subject ensues.⁴⁰

Consider next clausal gerunds (CG, see Reuland 1983).⁴¹ Reuland (1983) and later Pires (2001) discuss five types of CGs, as in (23). These are illustrated in (24).

- (23) a. Acc-ing as complements to verbs (24a).
b. Acc-ing as complements to subcategorized prepositions (24b).
c. Acc-ing in subject position (24c).
d. Acc-ing in constructions in adjunct prepositional phrases (24d).
e. Absolute constructions (24e-f).
- (24) a. I_i don't like [them / PRO_i watching that much TV].
b. I_i asked about [them / PRO_i leaving tomorrow].
c. [Us / PRO_i leaving] saddened [our friends]_i.
d. Sam_i found a wife [without/ after/ before (us / PRO_i) coming to town].
e. Mike expected to win the game, he / him being the best athlete in the school. (Pires 2006:3)
f. PRO_i being the idiot that he_i was, John_i was unable to keep his_i job.

Cases (24a-d) instantiate a subcategorized CG situated in a canonically Case-marked position, an issue I return to shortly. (24e-f) are clausal adjuncts. Crucially, all of these clauses license an Accusative subject, realized lexically or as PRO. In addition, the absolute construction may license a Nominative subject. Structurally speaking, adjunct and subject CGs are phasal domains, so must be CPs. Prepositions in English also select phasal domains (i.e., P or D), so the CGs in (24b,d) are nominal CPs. Lexical verbs may select non-phasal arguments in English (e.g. perception verbs and raising verbs select

some Inflectional domain), but given the possibility of obligatory control readings, I take the CG in (24) to also instantiate a C head. In conclusion, CGs have uniform CP status.⁴²

The relevant literature on gerunds (see footnote 41) typically argues for *-ing* as either a nominal category or a participial category. However, I adopt a monosemic approach (see also Cowper 1995) and assume a single lexical entry for *-ing*, a category neutral affixal functor, unspecified for nominal or verbal status. The distinct properties associated with various *-ing* environments, fall out from other factors, such as intrinsic properties of insertion site (in the spirit of Marantz 2001). In CGs, the *-ing* GER(UND)/PART(ICIPIAL) feature must merge high, as a C head, for clause typing purposes.⁴³ However, when not involved in clause typing, this feature merges lower, as an aspectual head (e.g., in domains selected by perception verbs or T heads) and *-ing* itself is not a phase head.⁴⁴ The affixal nature of this feature, corroborated by the absence of lexical verb raising in English, entails that *-ing* will always be linearized lower than its initial Merge site (i.e., in the v domain or on the highest available verbal root).⁴⁵

Nonetheless, while a monosemic approach to *-ing* is favourable by Ockham's razor, it precludes a Case deficiency on *-ing* and the nominal nature of argument CGs still needs to be accounted for. That these CPs can associate with Case-related positions is clearly shown by the asymmetrical subject-auxiliary inversion data in (25).⁴⁶

- (25) a. * Did [that him bake a cake] please everyone?
b. Did [him baking a cake] upset you?

Subject CGs but not finite CPs may occupy Spec,TP. Obviously, this is not simply a finite versus non-finite property as infinitives do not behave like gerunds, given that **Did [for Sam to act like that] look suspicious?* is ungrammatical. I suggest that neither the nominal nature nor the Case requirement of selected CGs is due to intrinsic properties of the *-ing* category neutral affixal functor, but fall out from properties of a null D head selecting a C with this feature. In view of the shared requirement condition on merged heads, this D head is only capable of selecting a non-verbal C, so will not associate with either infinitives or finite CPs, domains that are clause-typed via T in English. This D head itself has a *uCase* specification which it will have to satisfy.⁴⁷ Schematic representations with feature checking is given in (26). Spelled-out items are bolded.

(26) a. Object gerunds

[D/CP D/C	[TP	DP _j	T	<DP _j > v ...]
(GER/PART		[uCase : ACC, iφ]	[uD]	V-ing
) uCase : ACC				

b. Subject gerunds

[D/CP D/C	[TP	DP _j	T	<DP _j > v ...]
(GER/PART		[uCase : ACC, iφ]	[uD]	V-ing
) uCase : NOM				

Argumental CGs are nominal CPs (i.e., CP domains selected by a null D head). The non-finite C head will transfer its *uD* feature (but no *uφ*) to the proxy T head. This feature probes for a DP, ensuring that the subject enters an A-chain with the result of an Accusative value. The merged D/C head is licensed by the absence of a specifier and

shared properties between these two heads (see arguments in P&T 2001 and Szabolcsi 1983). Clause-typing is satisfied by Merge of the GER/PART feature in C and the C-T relationship is guaranteed by the affixal nature of *-ing* which surfaces on the lexical verb, thus guaranteeing across-the-board SV linearization. Lastly, the Case requirement of the null D head is checked and valued as either Accusative or Nominative, in compliance with properties of the domain probing for the CG. Case valuation at the clausal level will in no way affect Case valuation of the subject internal to the CG.

Let us now return to adjunct CGs (i.e., absolute constructions). Reuland (1983) analyzes these constructions as containing a Nominative *-ing* and specifies that *-ing* has Nominative if ungoverned. Besides being stipulative, as the author himself acknowledges, this analysis creates problems for control constructions as pointed by Pesetsky in footnote 20:128. In line with what I have developed so far, *-ing* has no Case deficiency so cannot be responsible for lexical subjects and Nominative in non-finite CPs should only be available to grammars where null expletives are an option. So, why is (24e) acceptable with either a lexical Accusative or a lexical Nominative?

First, let me point out that there is variation in native speaker acceptance of (24e). To quote Michael Barrie (personal communication), “The ‘he’ versions sound like you’re hypercorrecting for some 19th century grammarian.” To quote an anonymous reviewer, “**Roddy tried to avoid Elaine, him being a confirmed bachelor* is dreadful”. To cite an example from Schütze (1997:56), “*Him / *he liking beans, they bought some.*” What to make of the data then? Clearly, judgments vary from unacceptable, to prescriptive, to acceptable, to required. I suggest that these structures have dubious current productivity

and are a relic of a time when the grammar of English allowed for a null expletive. It is well-known that earlier stages of English (i.e., Old and Middle English), while not fully *pro*-drop, permitted null expletives (Fischer et al, 2000). So, it should not surprise us that, following the model of Latin, nominative absolute constructions were introduced in the language when the need arose to replace the absolute dative construction, lost due to dying dative inflections (see Jespersen 1940/1961, cited in Reuland 1983). Nonetheless, while null expletives disappeared in Early Modern English, the nominative absolute construction did not. Noteworthy is the fact that the construction continued to be perpetuated by prescriptive grammarians, so that it is not unreasonable to assume that some speakers of English have “learnt” to allow for a null expletive in these obsolete constructions despite the fact that a null expletive is not an active property of the English grammar. Such a view would explain the variation in judgments, as well as the telling prescriptive flavour. It would also account for why Nominative in non-finite CPs are felicitous in English in just these contexts. What is crucial is that Accusative subjects start to appear alongside the Nominative (and in some idiolects, totally replace it) in the 16th and 17th century (Poutsma 1929), so precisely around the time that English *lost* the null expletive. This is exactly what would be expected for a grammar without null expletives.

So, for some speakers, [D, $\mu\phi$] is optionally insertable in the lexical array of absolute constructions in English. The two options, with relevant feature-checking, are illustrated in (27), with items spelled out in bold. Given low linearization of the GER/PART feature, SV word order will ensue irrespective of the presence of absence of *pro*.⁴⁸

(27) a. Adjunct gerunds with *pro*

[_{CP} C	<i>pro</i> _j	T	DP _j	v]
[GER/PART]	[D, $u\phi$]	[$\#D$]	[$\#Case$: NOM, $i\phi$]	V-ing

b. Adjunct gerunds without *pro*

[_{CP} C	DP _j	T	<DP _j >	v]
[GER/PART]	[$\#Case$: ACC, $i\phi$]	[$\#D$]		V-ing

In both (27a,b), C transfers its uD feature to its proxy head. This feature will either check via *pro* insertion, with subsequent consequences as illustrated for Romanian, or will check against the thematic subject DP. Either way, the thematic subject will be selected as a Goal and appropriate Case valuation will ensue: Nominative, if the probing domain contains $u\phi$ (i.e., when the expletive is present) and Accusative in its absence. That C projects independently of T is indicated by the presence of an intervening specifier, empirically supported by availability of a lexical subject, which precludes a merged C/T projection. As with argumental CGs, clause-typing is satisfied by Merge of the GER/PART feature in C and the C-T relationship is guaranteed by the affixal nature of *-ing* which surfaces on the lexical verb. Different from argument CGs is the absence of a selecting D head, which explains the adjunct properties of this CP and lack of any Case requirements.

To conclude, with phasal gerunds, lexical subjects denote the presence of an EPP feature, hence uD feature transfer from C to its distinct proxy head. Consequently, the thematic subject will engage in an A-chain and lexicalize as Accusative with two exceptions: (i) the presence of *pro* in the lexical array, in which case the subject lexicalizes as Nominative, and (ii) obligatory control, in which case, the subject is constrained to silence due to the semantico-pragmatic properties of obligatory control, as

previously discussed. With phasal infinitives, C either projects independently of T, in which case A-related feature transmittal and a lexical Accusative subject ensue, or C forms a merged head with T, in which case there is no feature transmittal and no lexicalized subject. Interestingly, the generalization that emerges about PRO is not that it lacks a Case value, nor that it has a Case value, but simply that it has a Case deficiency which it checks upon Spell-Out, regardless of whether valuation ensues or not.

4.3 Micro-parametric variation

The discussion in this section is by no means exhaustive. The purpose is not to provide a typology of language micro-variation with respect to subject lexicalization but, rather, to show that languages with active null expletives may choose not to select these as part of their lexical arrays. I briefly focus on Ancient Greek (AG) and Old Italian (OI).

Sevdali (2005) discusses some very interesting data which show that subjects can only lexicalize as Accusative in AG infinitives despite proof of other Case values, such as Genitive, Dative and Nominative, as evidenced by the predicate which agrees in Case with the subject in copular constructions.⁴⁹ Consider (28).

- (28) a. Epei de di: ta politika voulei
 because then the politics-ACC wants-he
 [sofos genesthai].
 [wise-NOM be.INF-PRES]
 ‘Because he wants to be wise with respect to political things.’
 (Plato, *Theages*: 128, c, 8. In Sevdali 2005:135)

- b. Fe:mi [se men egno:kenai peri touto:n]
 say-I you-ACC to know-PRF about these-GEN]
 [eme de suneire:kenai tais sais epithumiais]
 [me-ACC to go along-PRF the your wishes-DAT]
 ‘I say that since you knew about these things, I went along with your
 wishes.’ (Isokrates, *Ad Philippum III*, 3:3-4. In Sevdali 2005: 134)

In (28a), the predicate is Nominative but the subject is null, while in (28b), the predicate is marked Accusative and the subject is overt. To clarify, subject lexicalization is only an option in the absence of control, when the subject is in some way contrastive. Sevdali (2005) argues for the CP status of these infinitives and against an ECM analysis, especially given that some of these infinitives are adverbial or subject clauses. The author assumes Case to only be present when a Focus head projects in the clause and the interaction between Focus and T to license “contrastive Case”. While, some additional semantic feature is arguably present with lexical subjects, given the contrastive reading, in keeping with general assumptions about PRO, let us assume that *u*Case is nonetheless present on this AG nominal. This Case deficiency checks at the phase level and systematically gets a value as evidenced by predicate agreement. Recall that lack of morpheme insertion in all cases of control, regardless of Case valuation, falls outside of computational requirements. So, in (28a), PRO has a Nominative value, as indicated by the form of the infinitive predicate. This Nominative value presupposes insertion of a null expletive in the lexical array, which satisfies *u*D on T, as shown in (29).

(29) infinitives with *pro*

[_{CP} C	<i>pro</i> _j	T	PRO _j	v]
	[D, $\mathit{u}\phi$]	[INF, v, $\mathit{u}\mathit{D}$]	[#Case : NOM, $i\phi$]		

Now, if requirements of control will keep the subject silent, why should lexicalization be constrained to an Accusative value, in effect, lack of expletive insertion? Adopting Sevdali's (2005) observation that lexicalized subjects have a contrastive reading triggered by the presence of a Focus head in the derivation, then either this head, merged between T and C (Rizzi 1997), acts as the proxy to which C transmits its A-related feature (i.e., $\mathit{u}\mathit{D}$) or the [+focus] feature encroaches onto T, with the same effect. This nominal requirement cannot be satisfied by a null expletive as these, by definition, cannot be contrastively focused. Consequently, a thematic DP is the sole contender. The subject DP, as the highest D, will check off this feature, as seen in (30). In the process, it partakes in an Agree operation and receives a focused reading. Lack of $\mathit{u}\phi$ on the probing domain will result in an Accusative value across the board.

(30) infinitives with focused subjects

[_{CP} C	[_{Focus/TP}	DP _i	Focus / T	[_{vP} <DP _i >]]
	[#Case : ACC, $i\phi$, FOC]	[#D]			

Moving next to Old Italian, Mensching (2000) argues that both lexical Accusative and Nominative subjects were available but that postverbal subjects are strictly NOM. Data in (31) from Mensching (2000:20).

- (31) a. Tu non ti rallegri [aver io incontrata una morte]
 you not CL delight [to-have I found a death]
 ‘You are not glad that I have found death.’
 (D’Azeglio, ch. 18, p222, cf. Schwehendener 1923:72)
- b. Negar non voglio esser possibile, [lui essere beato ..
 to-deny not (I) want to-be possible **him** to-be blessed
 ‘I do not want to deny that it is possible that he is blessed.’
 (Boccaccio, Dec., I, 1; cf. Schwehendener 1923:82)

As an adjunct and a subject clause, respectively, both (31a) and (31b) are CP domains. Assuming that discourse conditions determined whether *u*D was checked via external or internal Merge, I propose the following schematic representations for Old Italian.

- (32) a. infinitives with *pro*
 [_{CP} C *pro*_j X DP_j <*v*>....]
 [D, *u*φ] [INF, *v*, *u*D] [*u*Case: NOM, *i*φ]
- b. infinitives without *pro*
 [_{CP} C DP_i X <DP_i> <*v*> ...]
 [*u*Case: ACC, *i*φ] [*i*T, *v*, *u*D]

First, availability of lexical subjects suggests C discharged a *u*D feature to its proxy head, say X, feature necessary to initiate an A-chain with the subject. In (32a), this feature is satisfied by external Merge of the expletive, with NOM consequences for the subject, while in (32b), this feature is satisfied by the subject itself, with ACC consequences. Second, the fact that both pre- and post-verbal lexical subjects are licensed in the absence

of any overt C marker suggests that the clause typing relationship was satisfied by head movement to a position below C. Presumably X is some C_{LOW} domain, akin to what we observed for Romanian gerunds, fact strengthened by the observation that preverbal Nominative subjects were attested in Old Italian so there was no Aux-to-Comp in these constructions. Consider (33a), from Mensching (2000:133), represented in (33b).

- (33) a. perchè io disso [io aver trovato iscritto ...]
 because I said [I to-have found written
 ‘because I said that I had found that it was written ...’
 (Malispini, ch. 42, 13th c; cf. Diez 882:946)

b. infinitives with *pro* and subject fronting

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 [_{CP} C & DP_j & & pro_j & X & & \langle DP_j \rangle \ \langle v \rangle \dots] \\
 & [\neq \text{Case: NOM}, i\phi] & & [D, \neq \phi] & [INF, v, \neq \bar{D}] & &
 \end{array}$$

The schematic representation in (33b), indicates subsequent movement into the CP, left-peripheral domain of the thematic subject. I leave open the question of locus of movement given that we do not have the tools to determine differences in interpretation.⁵⁰

It is noteworthy to remind ourselves that in standard modern Italian lexical subjects in uninflected CPs are restricted to Aux-to-Comp constructions (Belletti 1990, Rizzi 1982), with preverbal subjects ruled out. This suggests very different infinitive structures diachronically speaking. Specifically, the left peripheral field in modern Italian non-finite CPs must be more limited, with presumably less available XP positions than in

Old Italian and a single C head. Consequently, clause-typing and feature transmission for C presuppose LHM (Aux-to-Comp).

To sum up then, *pro*-availability does not automatically guarantee insertion in the lexical array and various language specific phenomena might either prevent or require the presence of the expletive in the Numeration. The main empirical claim here is that uninflected phasal domains permit Nominative subjects only in languages with null expletives. However, structural Accusative subjects are only ruled out in these domains if the null expletive satisfies C's A-related D deficiency discharged on its proxy head. In addition, this section has hinted at the availability of non-T-related C proxy heads involved in Case licensing. The next section focuses on some predictions the analysis put forth in this paper makes beyond non-finite CP domains.

5 Predictions beyond non-finite phasal domains

If this analysis is on the right track, we can in principle expect to see languages (or dialects or specific grammatical constructions) where subjects and objects have the same Case or where subjects can be Accusative in finite CP domains and objects can be Nominative with phasal *v**P. Recall that nothing in (9) associates T with Nominative and *v** with Accusative and, in fact, we have already seen that other Inflectional heads can act as A-Probes for thematic subjects if immediately selected by a phasal C head. Interestingly, these predictions are borne out.

In Khoekhoe (Central Khoisan, spoken in Namibia), for example, the subject and object both have the same Case in interrogative contexts, as illustrated in (34).

- (34) axa-p-a ko !^xo ani-s-a ? ⁵¹
 child-M.SG-OBL RCT.PST catch bird-F.SG-OBL
 ‘Did the boy catch the bird?’ (Compton 2005:11)

While this Case is referred to as ‘oblique’ in the descriptive literature, it is valued in the absence of $u\phi$ on either T or v, so I take it to be an instance of Accusative on both the subject and the object DP. Cole and Jake (1978) make similar remarks for Imbabura Quechua. This Nominative-Accusative SOV language shows Accusative marking on both the subject and the object in desiderative clauses. See (35) from Cole and Jake (1978:74).

- (35) a. Ñuca-Ø can-da ricu-ni/*-ngui.
 I-NOM you-ACC see-1SG/-2SG
 ‘I see you.’
- b. Ñuca-ta can-da ricu-naya-n/*-ni/*-ngui
 I-ACC you-ACC see-DES-IMP/-1SG/-2SG
 ‘I would like to see you.’

In (35a), the presence of subject-verb agreement denotes transmittal of phi-features from C to T and the thematic subject is Nominative. In (35b), in the presence of the desiderative morpheme, there is no argument-verb agreement, so no ϕ -feature C-T (or v^* -Tr) transmittal. As predicted, both arguments bear an Accusative value. Crucially, Case values depend on the morphosyntactic properties of the probing domain and are not specific to (C)-T or v^* , a point also supported by Nominative Case values. In Japanese,

the Nominative *-ga* morpheme associates with both subjects and objects in constructions with psych verbs, in effect adjectival predicates. Specifically, in the absence of v^* both arguments check their Case feature against finite T. (36) is from Ura (2000: 107).⁵²

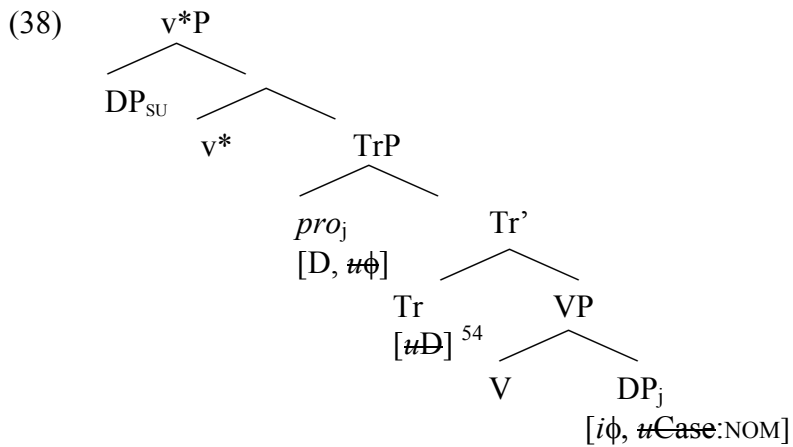
- (36) Joe-ga unagi-ga suki/kirai-da.
 Joe-NOM eels-NOM likes/dislikes-COP
 ‘John likes/dislikes eels.’

Returning to West Country varieties, including Newfoundland English, these show what is referred to as “pronoun exchange” in the descriptive literature, such as use of Nominative where one would expect Accusative. Consider (37).

- (37) a. She pushed I down.
 b. Pass he over to me.

The typical explanation in the literature is that Nominative replaces Accusative whenever there is emphasis. Under the present proposal, the object DP surfaces with Nominative if and only if the probing domain involved in assigning Case (i.e., v^*) contains $u\phi$. Maximal rhematic focus obtains when a DP is deeply embedded within the predicate domain. Suppose that whenever there is need to focus/emphasize the object, a null expletive *pro*, available to the mental lexicon of these dialects, is merged in the specifier of Tr (the proxy head of v^*) to satisfy uD , thus preventing the object from displacement. This would ensure an “inverted-object” construction similar to the inverted subject constructions of Romance which have been argued by Rizzi (1997), among others, to

involve focusing of the subject.⁵³ Maximal embedding of the object yields the desired pragmatic effects, while at the same time guaranteeing Nominative, given the need of expletive *pro* to check its $u\phi$ features, as in (38). In addition (38) shows that syntactic licensing of objects is distinct from selection of objects, facts independently argued for in recent work by Hill and Roberge (2005) and Chomsky (2006).



These data all point to a dissociation between specific syntactic heads and particular Case values and strengthen the exclusive relationship between Nominative valuation and the presence of ϕ -features, as argued throughout.

6 Conclusions

This article has argued for a construal of Case as a property of phasal domains, irrespective of agreement. ϕ -feature deficiencies are properties of C in finite phases and properties of null expletive *pro* but not properties of v^* (Voice) or non-finite C. However,

regardless of whether ϕ -feature deficiencies are present or not, Case checking, understood as syntactic licensing of DP arguments, is guaranteed at Spell-Out.

I further proposed a dichotomy between feature checking and feature valuation, such that, while Spell-Out guarantees Case checking for all DPs, it does not guarantee a Case value. The paper makes the non-trivial claim that whether the DP Goal is spelled out as Nominative or Accusative is a dynamic property of the featural build up of the entire domain that probes, rather than being dependent on whether the Probe is T or v^* . Following Chomsky (2005, 2006), phasal heads transmit their A-feature deficiencies to their proxy head which for C is usually T but can equally be a Focus or an Aspectual head. Paramount for lexicalization is the presence of an A-chain. In the absence of syntactic linking with a Probe, there is no value, so no morpheme can be inserted and the subject is constrained to a PRO status. Furthermore, if and (only if) this chain contains ϕ -feature deficiencies, will the DP value be Nominative. In the absence of such agreement, the DP is valued Accusative. Needless to say, these Case labels reflect a dichotomy in which agreement is the crucial ingredient.

In the absence of ϕ -features on (C)-T, the Probe is either a uD deficiency or a null expletive. In uninflected phasal domains, languages without null expletives will license at most Accusative subjects, while languages where null expletives are an active part of the grammar have the option of Nominative DP values whenever *pro* is present in the lexical array. This latter choice is strictly semantico-pragmatically determined, as discussed.

Nominative, then, is not a primitive of finite or inflected T but the spell-out of a bundle of features, conspicuously available to uninflected T domains (or heads in the

predicational domain), as long as the ϕ -specification is met. Overall T (or I, more generally) is typically associated with Nominative, and v^* with Accusative, because the issue of finiteness and, implicitly, the presence of a $u\phi$ Probe on an inflectional head is sorted out at the level of the C phase and not the v^* phase.

An analysis which assigns Nominative to finite (C)-T and Accusative to v^* a priori cannot readily explain the language facts discussed in this paper. On the other hand, the analysis I have proposed here, based on featural specifications of probing domains, allows for the flexibility needed to capture cross-linguistic variation at both the macro- and micro-parametric levels, while at the same time having the conceptual merit of moving the burden of Case checking away from some poorly understood independent property of (C)-T and v^* . Lastly, the paper has shown that null expletives are felicitous primitives of Universal Grammar and, as such, while these may be silent categories, they should not yet be silenced. Ditto for PRO.

Endnotes

* Acknowledgments forthcoming.

¹ For other references where Tense on T is a C attribute see also Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Farkas 1992, Krapova 2001, Roberts and Roussou 2002, and Varlokosta 1994.

² uF is used to represent uninterpretable formal features and iF stands for interpretable formal features (unless otherwise stated). Furthermore, checked features are striked and traces are indicated via angled brackets. In addition, I use the following abbreviations in

this paper: Agr: agreement, IMPR: impersonal, AUX: auxiliary, SBJ: subjunctive, INF: infinitive, GER: gerund, IMP: imperative, DES: desiderative, PRES: present, PRF: perfect, PRTC: participle, PST: past, COP: copula, CL: object pronominal clitic, SCL: subject pronominal clitic, SU: subject, OBJ: object, SG: singular, PL: plural, NOM: Nominative case, ACC: Accusative case, DAT: Dative case, REFL: reflexive, M: masculine, F: feminine, and PE: a preposition associated with Romanian direct objects that have an <e> type denotation (see Cornilescu 2000a). For languages other than English, AG: Ancient Greek, GK: Greek, H: Hungarian, IT: Italian, RO: Romanian, SP: Spanish, WF: West Flemish.

³ In addition to work by Chomsky, for recent proposals on the relationship between Case and agreement in Minimalism, see also Branigan 2005, Landau 2004, and Schütze 1997.

⁴ I use the term ‘subject’ to refer to the structurally highest DP argument within the predicational domain that is ‘active’ (i.e., can act as a Goal). This DP will enter an Agree relationship with the T domain, provided there is a Probe searching for nominal related features within that domain, as discussed in Section 3. Once an Agree relationship is established between the T domain and the subject, whether this DP dislocates to Spec,TP or not depends on language (or construction) specific properties, again to be refined later. Crucially, location in Spec,TP is not the defining property of subjecthood. Furthermore, overt instantiations of subjects are referred to as ‘lexical’. Lexical subjects (i.e., subjects with phonetic content) presuppose a Case *value*, such as Nominative or Accusative.

⁵ Nothing hinges on the exact label of the verbal head assigning Case to the direct object; this can be *v*, the verbalizing head of Marantz (2001), *T_o* of P&T (2004a), *Tr* of Bowers (2002), *AGR-O* of Lasnik (2003), or *V* of Chomsky (2005, 2006). Crucially, it is a verbal

head involved in the stacking of events which is lower than the theta-assigning head responsible for the insertion of subjects, otherwise labelled Voice in Marantz (following Kratzer, 1996), *v* in Pesetsky and Torrego (following much of Chomsky's work who in turn follows Marantz), Pr(ed) in Bowers, and *v** in Chomsky (2005, 2006) to distinguish it from unaccusative *v*. Following Bowers (2002), in this paper I use Tr for the complement of *v** and take this to be a functional head. See P&T (2006) for reasons as to why only functional heads may act as Probes and establish Agree.

⁶ Note that under this division of labour, inflected infinitives in European Portuguese of the type in (i) would qualify as 'finite'.

- (i) Será difícil [eles aprovarem a proposta].
'It will be difficult they to-approve-AGR the proposal.'
(Raposo 1987: 86)

However, this is not why I do not discuss this particular construction here. Terminology aside, the Nominative subject in (i), *a proposta* 'the proposal', could be licensed by either agreement, the phase head, or both. See both Raposo (1987) and Ambar (2006) for evidence that these inflected infinitives are CP phasal domains.

⁷ As can be seen from the matrix clauses, these are all languages which otherwise show overt manifestation of ϕ -feature valuation.

⁸ I am not assuming here that all languages which fall under Type B behave identically to English. However, the purpose of this paper is to show that Case is not strictly correlated to agreement, and to explain the relationship between Case, phases and probes. To this extent, the crucial point is that there are languages with no Nominative or no

lexical subjects in phasal uninflected domains and to show how this theory can account for them. In order to do so, I have chosen to look at familiar data from English.

⁹ This implies that PRO bears Case (as in Bošković 1997, Chomsky and Lasnik 1995, Landau 2004, Martin 2001, but contra Bouchard 1984, Chomsky 1982, Koster 1984). Empirical evidence from Case-agreement in Icelandic control infinitives (Harley 1995, Sigurðsson 1991) supports this theoretical view.

¹⁰ Note that these are T heads which lack inflection entirely throughout a particular paradigm. Crucially, cases of accidental gaps in an otherwise overt paradigm are not considered ϕ -featureless. For example, for English I adhere to the standard assumption that finite T has ϕ -features despite the fact that singulars may or may not show overt agreement morphology and plurals typically show no agreement.

¹¹ Recall that by ‘agreement’ I refer to ϕ -features. In some languages objects agree with v^* , but never in person and number. Coppock (2004) discusses Hungarian objects which agree with verbs in definiteness: transitive verbs with definite objects use a paradigm that is distinct from that used for transitive verbs with indefinite objects and intransitives.

¹² See also Dobrovie-Sorin (1994) and, especially, Motapanyane (1995) for a more comprehensive discussion that the gerundive verb in Romanian moves to the C domain. See Section 4.1 for remarks on the status of preverbal subjects in Romanian.

¹³ Concerns as to how reduced CPs fit in with the Chomsky’s (2005, 2006) claim of Tense as a phasal property (see Section 1) can be readily dispelled. If I understand Chomsky correctly, the claim made is that temporal properties of T are dependent on C

and not vice-versa. Insofar as C is concerned, it simply needs a proxy head to discharge its uninterpretable features. From a theoretical standpoint, there seems no principled reason to assume this proxy head could not be Asp, or some other functional head.

¹⁴ On the phasal status of DPs - which explains structural Case licensing in the Hungarian possessives - see Chomsky (2005, 2006), following Svenonius (2004), etc.

¹⁵ On similar proposals for ϕ -features, see Branigan (2005) who argues that unvalued $u\phi$ is granted a default 3SG value upon Spell-Out, which presupposes a phase head.

¹⁶ Correlating ϕ -features with Nominative finds empirical support in that, in Nominative-Accusative languages, only Nominative DPs can trigger morphological agreement on the finite verb. In addition, note that Nominative valuation in Hungarian possessives is then unsurprising, in view of the presence of a $u\phi$ Probe.

¹⁷ Under a Distributed Morphology framework, where vocabulary items are inserted post-Spell-Out (Halle and Marantz 1993), this would entail lack of morpheme insertion.

¹⁸ Note that this also explains why, contrary to A-bar movement, A-movement operations are prohibited outside of their phasal domain (see Chomsky 2000 et seq.).

¹⁹ An important clarification is in order here. While I take lack of a Case value to result in the absence of morpheme insertion on a Case licensed DP, typically labelled PRO, the conditional should not be turned into a bi-conditional. Specifically, failure to spell-out a DP is not necessarily equivalent to lack of a Case value. Given that Icelandic quantifiers can bear Dative or Accusative Case in control structures (Sigurðsson 1991), PRO, with which these quantifiers associate, must be assumed to also bear a synonymous Case

value. Here, absence of morpheme insertion is due to epiphenomenal requirements of control, such as the shared argument requirement. These requirements are most probably semantic rather than syntactic in nature, as argued by Schütze (1997:34). Conversely, as shown in Section 4.2, controlled PRO is not synonymous with a Case valued DP.

²⁰ Incidentally, the same mechanism is assumed for v^* , a point I return to in Section 5.

²¹ A reviewer points out that in the absence of a Case Probe it would be difficult to explain the ungrammatical data in (i):

- (i) a. * Each child was spoken one secret word [to t].
- b. [To each child] was spoken one secret word t.
- c. Each child was spoken [to t].
- d. * [To each child] was spoken t.

If (ia) is ruled out by some sort of locality constraint, (id) seems to be ruled out by the failure to check T's Case deficiency. However, note that in (id) $u\phi$ also has not been checked. PPs are opaque, phasal domains (Abels 2003) and DPs contained within them cannot check uninterpretable ϕ -features. Consequently, the fact that pseudo-passives do not pied-pipe in English, as in (id), does not represent clear evidence for Case as an independent Probe. However, given the well-formedness of *To each child was told three stories*, we could follow Branigan (2005) and assume that unchecked $u\phi$ results in default agreement rather than ungrammaticality. If so, then (id) may fail because of T's unchecked Case. Nonetheless, even if we insist on a Case Probe, this could only be construed as a free rider on $u\phi$. The interdependency of $u\text{Case}$ and $u\phi$ is supported by the

fact that languages which divorce A-type feature checking do so in one way and one way only: EPP-checking versus Case and ϕ -feature checking (see also discussion in Schütze 1997 on EPP checking independent of Case checking). Note that this interdependence entails that *uCase* as a Probe is non-extant on P and *v** heads, which lack *u ϕ* . This could explain why one and the same P or V can be both transitive and intransitive. The idea that Accusative Case need not be discharged goes back to at least Chomsky (1995) and is in sharp contrast to data like (id). Summing up, to the extent that *uCase* occurs in the derivation, it will be accompanied by *u ϕ* . Note also that *uCase* would be absent in non-finite C domains which lack *u ϕ* so there is no point in construing this as a separate Probe.

²² In his analysis of null subjects with working-class Somerset English, Ihalainen (1991) points out that the subject is ommissible in the West Country variety about 20% of the time (by comparison to 1% in the standard). Data in (i) is from Ihalainen (1991:205).

- (i) a. \emptyset Was old chaps called Toutes use to do it.
b. You could hardly see ‘cause \emptyset was so much dust around.

²³ It is well-known that, while expletive *pro* was the norm for null subject languages in the 80s and early 90s (Burzio 1986, Chomsky 1982, Rizzi 1982, among others), it was later questioned and/or eliminated due largely to theoretical re-negotiations enticed by the Minimalist program (see, for example, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998, Manzini and Savoia 1997, 2002). However, it has reemerged recently in a number of works (e.g. Cardinaletti 2004, Rezac 2004, Rizzi and Shlonski 2001, Torrego 1998).

²⁴ Given that DPs have an *iD* feature by definition, I henceforth take D(P) to be synonymous to *iD*. Furthermore, as a D category, null expletives are potentially also specified for an *uCase* feature (i.e., require Case licensing). Nothing crucial hinges on whether this feature is present (or not), so I leave it out for ease of exposition. Chomsky's (1995: 288) standpoint is that expletives are Caseless nominals but Chomsky (2004), following Lasnik (1999), revises this assumption for *there*, so the issue is unclear.

²⁵ Note that Chomsky (2005: 12) does not rule out Spec as Probe in "special cases" (presumably whenever the Spec is non-branching and so c-command is not violated) and Chomsky (2004: 114), takes expletive *there* to be "a simple head, not formed by Merge".

²⁶ This analysis is counter to standard proposals which obligatorily link null subject (referential) *pro* to a phi-related head, such as Agr or T [$u\phi$] (see Rizzi 1982, Rezac 2004 and earlier references therein), though see Holmberg (2005) for arguments against *pro* identified by Agr. Of late, Chomsky (2004, 2005) has been arguing against the validity of Spec-Head agreement more generally. One possibility would be to follow McCloskey's (2002) suggestions for Irish complementizer agreement, and argue that what is crucial is whether the specifier is formed by "internal merge" or "external merge" - in the sense of Chomsky (2004) - and not Spec-Head agreement. Non-trivially, null expletives are merged directly from the lexical array, hence externally-merged, while *pro*-drop is an instance of internal merge, so the two need not trigger the same agreement effects.

²⁷ See also Rizzi and Shlonski (2005:13) who view expletives as formal devices required by "discourse conditions" or "communicative intentions" and Tomić (2006) who argues for null expletives as a property of languages that are structurally pragmatically oriented.

²⁸ As an aside, Taraldsen (2001) argues for French *qui* as *que* + *EXPL*. To the extent that *-i* is morphologically related to *il*, its morphosyntax differs. Rizzi and Shlonski (2005) provide evidence against any ϕ -specifications for *-i*. This then would be a good candidate for an overt $[D, u\phi]$. French has also been argued to have null expletives in stylistic inversion contexts (Roberts and Roussou 2002). Presumably the overt instantiation in *qui* is forced by the need to dissociate the complementizer + *EXPL* from *que*.

²⁹ Potentially noteworthy of mention is also the fact that *pro* has a π deficiency, contrary to the other expletives in (12), which could well turn out to be the crucial ingredient in Nominative valuation. I leave this issue aside.

³⁰ Note that ‘specificity’ refers to definite DPs or indefinite DPs with a referential, partitive, or a generic collective reading.

³¹ See also Dobrovie-Sorin (1994) for further arguments against an independent AgrS projection in Romanian.

³² For arguments that linear order reflects hierarchy in this language see Alboiu (2002). Note that Datives do not passivize in Romanian, so are opaque to A-chain formation.

³³ Note that if the indirect object were to topicalize and move into the left-periphery of the clause, above TP, (15) would be ungrammatical, as expected given that *pro* in Spec,TP is no longer in a position to c-command the possessive pronoun. See (i).

- (i) * $[\text{Pictorului } \text{său}_j]_k$ după expoziție i-a fost
 [painter-DAT his_j]_k after exhibition DAT.CL.3SG -AUX.3SG been
 înapoiat <math>[\text{pictorului } \text{său}_j]_k> [fiecare tablou]_j.

returned.3SG <[painter-DAT his_j]_k> [each painting]_j-NOM

‘After the exhibit, each painting was returned to its own artist.’

³⁴ Given that lexical verbs always raise to the highest Inflectional head in Romanian (e.g. Dobrovie-Sorin 1994), “postverbal” refers to material below the respective available head. The exact locus of the inverted subject is less important here. There are various proposals in the literature, ranging from a leftward vP external specifier position, lower than Spec,TP (Cornilescu, 2000b) to an in-situ position (Alboiu 1999, 2002).

³⁵ This particle can be taken to head its own projection (e.g. MoodP) or parasitically encroach on the clitic T-related domain. For discussion, see Alboiu (2002), Cornilescu (1997), Dobrovie-Sorin (1994), Motapanyane (1995), Pirvulescu (2001), among others.

³⁶ This relationship could be triggered by properties of C (see Roberts and Roussou 2002, P&T 2001, 2004), or it could be seen as a need of T to access features of the phase head (e.g., ‘tense anchoring’, as in Ledgeway 1998, Poletto 2000, Varlokosta 1994 or A-related features, as in Belletti 1990, Rizzi 1982, Watanabe 1996). I take it to be a prerequisite for feature inheritance, as well as clause-typing but offer no further refinements. Crucially, what is relevant is the syntactic relationship – which typically results in an overt C head – rather than the actual visibility, an issue which becomes relevant for English gerunds.

³⁷ Romanian preverbal subjects are interpreted as topic (or contrastive focus) and precede wh-phrases (see Alboiu 2002, Cornilescu 1997, 2000, Dobrovie-Sorin 1987, 1994, among others). The general consensus is that these subjects move into the CP, as opposed

to the IP domain in Romanian and given linearization with respect to pronominal clitics, I take this to be correct.

³⁸ Note in passing that absolute participial constructions can readily be construed as a sub-type of the gerund construction, where a *be*-GER is replaced by a null Aspectual head.

The CP adjunct in (3a), repeated as (ia), is semantically equivalent to (ib).

- | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------|------------------|--------------------|
| (i)a. | [_{CP} Odată | (fata / ea) | Ø | deșteptată | (fata / ea)], ... |
| | _{CP} once | (girl-the.NOM/she) | ASP | awoke. PRTC.FSG, | (girl-the.NOM/she) |
| b. | [_{CP} Fiind | (fata / ea) | <fiind> | deșteptată | (fata / ea)], ... |
| | _{CP} be-GER | (girl-the.NOM/she) | ASP | awoke. PRTC.FSG, | (girl-the.NOM/she) |

I therefore do not provide a distinct analysis, but simply assume that the unaccusative vP in (ia) is selected by a null Aspectual head which lacks the GER specification. Consequently, no head movement to C can ensue and a stative adverb is inserted for clause-typing, as seen for infinitives. Case-licensing is not affected.

³⁹ Presumably C may lack A-related features when neither a subject of predication nor a grammatical subject (in the sense of Cardinaletti 2004) need ensue. Suppose that in English non-thetic sentences a grammatical subject feature (i.e., EPP) cannot be available in the absence of a subject of predication feature (regardless of whether we assume these to project independently or not). The logophoricity of arbitrary PRO (see Williams 1992) as well as the controlled reading would readily follow. Note, however, that whether non-finite C is equipped with an A-related feature or not seems to be cross-linguistically parametrized. In French control infinitives, for instance, C and T are realized as separate heads as evidenced by the presence of the prepositional complementizer in data like

J_i'essaie [de PRO_i venir demain]. Consequently, C must be assumed to have an A-related *u*D feature which it transfers to T. The subject DP checks this feature, so enters an A-chain and is valued ACC. Semantic constraints on control will prohibit morpheme insertion with the effect of PRO.

⁴⁰ A reviewer expresses concern over infinitival questions, such as, *What to PRO do is unclear*, if one adopted a merged a C/T projection. In this case, C has an EF which does not further “spread” to T (to use Chomsky’s 2005 terms), a possibility left open by control (see above footnote). Consider the schematic representation in (i), where the EF is satisfied by *wh*-movement and the subject DP has the same fate as in (22b). Crucially, T does not inherit any A-related features from C.

(i) Infinitival questions

[_{CP} <i>What</i>	C/T- <i>to</i>	●* (lexical) DP / ✓ PRO	<i>do</i>	< <i>what</i> >]
[<i>iwh</i> , ...]	[<i>i</i> T, EF: <i>wh</i>]	[# Case, <i>i</i> φ]		

⁴¹ I do not discuss gerunds with possessive subjects as they do not expand to a CP, phasal domain (for discussion see Abney 1987, Chomsky 1981, Emonds 1970, Horn 1975, Moulton 2004, Reuland 1983, among others).

⁴² Pires (2001) argues that CGs are simply TP domains but Reuland (1983) shows that they can extrapose, allow *wh*-extraction, and permit epistemic adverbs, all of which point toward a C domain and CP status.

⁴³ *-ing* as a C head is far from new, as illustrated by some of Abney’s (1987) structures.

⁴⁴ Pires (2006) takes gerunds selected by perception verbs to be phasal vPs as they lack clausal properties. However, they are non-phasal so must project beyond phasal vP.

⁴⁵ Abney (1987) proposes that the verb raises to *-ing*. Nonetheless, standard raising tests seem to indicate otherwise, as shown in (i):

- (i) a. [Him not being (*not) what we had hoped for] did not matter.
b. [Her never being (*never) late again] made a huge difference.

⁴⁶ While not new, I thank Ian Roberts (p.c.) for pointing out these data to me.

⁴⁷ Incidentally, the Romanian GER feature can never be assumed to Merge in C, with subsequent selection by D, as gerundive clauses are infelicitous in argument positions. In this language, GER is specified as a verbal affix and merged as an aspectual head.

⁴⁸ Alternatively, following Cardinaletti's (2004) claim that the subject of predication projects separately from the grammatical subject, the DP may raise to the left of *pro*, above T. The issue is irrelevant for linearization in gerunds but would explain data like (10) - *For he to listen to that talk was awkward* - unless we assume *to* merges lower than T (see, Cowper and Currie Hall 2001, for a VP-related merge analysis of infinitive *to*).

⁴⁹ I do not discuss AG gerunds as these emerge late in Greek (11th century, Sevdali p.c.).

⁵⁰ Note that ACC subjects could, in principle, be construed as for Ancient Greek though I am unaware of any literature referring to these as contrastively focused.

⁵¹ Khoekhoe lacks agreement morphology, 'RCT' stands for 'recent' past and '!^x' denotes an alveolar click with a velar fricative manner/release (Richard Compton, p. c.).

⁵² Ura (2000: 107, footnote 8) notes that the older generation requires NOM-NOM in these constructions, but the younger generation also allows for NOM-ACC patterns. This suggests a reanalysis of *v** properties in Japanese.

⁵³ That postverbal (inverted) subjects have maximal focus prominence in Romance has also been argued for by Alboiu (1999, 2002, 2004a) for Romanian, Vallduví (1995) for Catalan, and Ordóñez (1998) and Zubizarreta (1998) for Spanish. Note that this type of focus is to be kept distinct from operator/contrastive focus associated with the Focus head in the preverbal field, as it does not trigger any of the typical A-bar effects.

⁵⁴ Note that under the present analysis Case assigning properties within the predicational domain are directly linked to phasal status of the predicate domain (i.e., saturation by Voice or higher event). The absence of saturation by Voice (or v*) accounts for unaccusative and passive constructions (i.e., vP as opposed to v*P domains).

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