Nonovert Subjects in Malagasy in Simple & Complex Constructions
April 20, 2001
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(2a) Mianatra tsara i Paoly.
(2b) Hoc mianatra tsara quote i Paoly.
(2c) Izany mianatra tsara izany i Paoly.
(2d) Ity mianatra tsara this i Paoly.
(2e) Io mianatra tsara this i Paoly.
(3a) Mianatra tsara i Paoly io.
(3b) Mianatra tsara this i Paoly.

(2a) means that ‘Paul studies well’. The versions in (2b)–(2e) also have this reading, but in addition (2b) says that Speaker S is merely quoting from someone else and that, as a consequence, s/he should not be held personally responsible for the statement if the latter should turn out to be untrue. The (2e) version implies that Speaker S is not quite positive about his/her statement, that Hearer H has within his/her capacity the means to verify this on his/her own, and that ultimately s/he will have to decide for her/himself whether s/he should believe S’s statement or not. The (2d) version implicates S more than the others since s/he is ready to testify to the truth of the statement. Finally, (2e) introduces the idea of mutual verifiability in that both H and S share a common Here and Now or share some common knowledge.

Point # 1.2: Discourse context-based null subjects.

(1) Date: Fri, 05 Mar 1999 12:19:59 -0500
From: JR<n@magmacon.com>
To: R<uzsmav@uni-bonn.de>
M-amerina ny arahaba ho an'i Mia sy ny rehetra 0 [1 st S] pres-renew the greeting for art Mia and the all Empty
‘(1) renew my greetings to Mia and to everybody…’
Point # 1.3: Linguistic utterance-based null subjects.

Point # 1.3.1: Head-Specifier Relation - AGR & Overt Subject.
From Randriamasimanana (2000)b. Illustrative from Abinal & Malzac (henceforth A & M) (1888) as well as from contemporary sources using $[ + \text{CONTROL}]$ predicates:

(3) **Ireo m-iady ireo ny zanakao.**
AGR pres- fight AGR the children-of-yours
Plural verb plural
'Voilà vos enfants qui se battent.' (A & M 1888: 282)
From French to English: 'Your children are there, fighting.'
Literally: 'Your children are fighting --as we can see for ourselves.'

(4) **Io tamy io ny zanako.**
AGR coming AGR the child-of-mine
Singular verb singular
'Voici mon enfant qui vient.' (A & M 1888: 281)
Eng.: 'Here is my child coming.'
Literally: 'My child is coming --as you can see for yourself.'

Point # 1.3.2: Head-Specifier Relation - No AGR & Null subject.

(6) **Tsy mbola teraka hono Θ !**
Not yet born be-said Empty
Nonverbal predicate
"X is said to be not yet born!"

From Randriamasimanana (1998):

(7) **Ity teraka ity ilay saka.**
AGR born AGR the cat
?"The (previous mention) cat is being born."
(8) Ity teraka ity ilay saka.
   [ity ... ] [the cat]
   "This is where the cat was, giving birth!"

where 'ity...ity' heads a complex NP comprising a doubly-headed relative clause surrounding the predicate 'teraka' = '(was) born'. a simpler form of the same sequence would be the following:

(9) [Ity] [ilay saka]
    [this] [the cat]
    "Here [Emphasis] is the (previously mentioned) cat!"

Point # 1.4: Distribution of AGR (generally) restricted to main clause.

(10)a. N-ityady [ ... h-anjaka ---] Ravoniarisoa ...
    Past-seek [ ... fut-dominate EC] Ravoniarisoa
    "Ravoniarisoa was seeking to dominate."

    AGR AGR

(11)a. M-angataka ahoa[h-ityondra ity any amin-dRama ---].
    Pres-ask you I [.. fut-take this to Rama EC]
    "I am asking you to take this to Rama."

b. *M-angataka ahoa [ity h-ityondra ity ity any amin-dR.-]
    AGR AGR

Point # 1.5: Raising Predicates.

(12)a. I Paoly aloha marina tokoa [fa n-amono tena ---].
    Art Paul first true truly [that past-kill self EC]
    "First of all, it is true that Paul killed himself."

b. Marina tokoa [fa ... n-amono tena ... i Paoly].
    true really [that ... past-kill self ... art. Paul]
    "It is true that Paul killed himself."

c. Marina tokoa [fa iny n-amono tena iny i Paoly].
    true really [that AGR past-kill self AGR art. Paul]
    "It is true that Paul AGR killed himself."

Point # 2: Reflexivization & Null Subjects in Malagasy.

(13) N-amono tena i Paoly.
    past-kill self art Paul
    "Paul killed himself."
(14)a. N-ilaza tamin'i Jaona i Paoly [fa h-amono tena --- ]
past-say to art John art Paul that fut-kill self EC
"Paul told John that he (Paul) would kill himself."

"Paul told John [ that he (P.) would kill himself EC]."
**"Paul told John to kill himself."

Point # 3: Distribution of Null Subjects: Subtypes.
Adapted from Randriamasimanana (1998)

CONTROL structures and AGR in matrix clause:
pres-intend [ fut-kill self EC ] Paul
"Paul intends to kill himself."

past-ask DO Paul fut-kill self --- ] John
"John asked Paul to kill himself."

Case of Adjunction:
(17) Lasa [ n-andeha --- ] [ n-amono tena --- ] i Paoly.
gone [ past-go --- ] [ past-kill self EC ] Paul
"Paul went and killed himself."

Raising structures and embedded Agr:
(18) I Paoly aloha marina tokoa [ fa n-amono tena --- .] = (12)a.
Art Paul first true truly [ that past-kill self EC ]
"First of all, it is true that Paul killed himself."

Previous mention (i.e. Antecedent-governed):
(19)a. ... H-amp-anambadiana ahoana ange ---- ?
... Fut-CAUS-marry-passive how Q EC
"To be married, how?"

b. Ity h-amp-anambadiana ity i Jeanne è!
"Jeanne is just about to be married off!"

Point # 4: Feature-checking – HeadSpecifier.
AGR & Features vs No AGR & No Features.
Illustrative examples from Randriamasimanana (1997):

(20)a. M-ianatra lesona ny mpianatra.
pres-study lesson(s) the student(s)
Head Specifier
"The student is studying his/her lesson." or
"The students are studying their lesson."
b. *Ity m-ianatra lesona ity ø.
AGR pres-study lesson AGR Empty
Head Specifier
[Sing.] [Sing.] [ø-Feature]
"The student is studying his/her lesson."

(21)aym-ianatra leisona ity ø.
AGR pres-study lesson AGR Empty
Head Specifier
[Sing.] [Sing.] [ø-Feature]
"The student is studying his/her lesson."

(21)b. *Ireto m-ianatra lesona ireto ø.
AGR pres-study lesson AGR Empty
Head Specifier
[Plural] [Plural] [ø-Feature]
"The students are studying lessons."

Both situations in (21)a and (21)b. exclude antecedent-governed cases (previous mention where an antecedent is available in an immediately adjacent utterance). Matrix/Independent clause with a [+ CONTROL] predicate with an empty AGR containing no matrix features:

(22)a. M-ianatra lesona ny mpianatra. = (20)a.
pre-study lesson(s) the student(s)
[ + CONTROL]
Head Specifier
Ø AGR
No features
Context dependence (Marked Structure)
"The student is studying his/her lesson." or
"The students are studying their lesson."

(23) Tsy mbola teraka hono ø ! = (6)
Not yet born be-said Empty
[ - CONTROL]
Head Specifier
Nonverbal predicate
Context dependence (Unmarked Structure)
"X is said to be not yet born!"
Point # 5:  **HeadSpecifier Relation – Tense as Head of S (= clause).**
Adapted from Handout # 2, March 16, 2001:

First, note contrast between **Weak Tense** (Active) and **Strong Tense** (Passive)

(24).a N-an-didy ilay mofo i Paoly.
  Pres-prefix-root the bread art Paul
  **Active Voice**
  **Head** Specifier
  ‘Paul cut the bread.’

b. No-didi-n’ i Paoly ilay mofo. Passive 1 (Direct Object > Subject)
  PastPassive1-by art Paul the bread
  **Head** Specifier
  PUNCTUAL---------------‘The whole of N’
  ‘The (whole) bread was cut by Paul.’

c. N-an-didi-an’ i Paoly ilay mofo. Passive 2 (Oblique > Subject)
  PastPassive2-by art Paul the bread
  **Head** Specifier
  DURATIVET---------------PARTITIVE
  ‘(Some of) the bread was cut by Paul.’ See Randriamasimanana (2000b.)

Second, note contrast between interpretation of Specifier in (24)c, above & in (25)b.,

  Past-prefix-cut bread perf-with the knife art Jeanne
  **Head** Specifier
  ‘Jeanne was cutting bread with the knife.’

  PastPassive2-cut-by art Jeanne bread the knife
  **Head** Specifier
  #DURATIVE——-000000000000000000000000PARTITIVE
  [+ CONTROL]------------------------CAUSEE
  ‘The knife was being cut-the-bread-with by Jeanne.’

(26) N-a-tsipin-dRabe ny rano. Ballistic meaning
  Past-passive-throw-by-Rabe the water
  **Head** Specifier
  [+ CONTROL] CAUSEE
  ‘The water was thrown away by Rabe.’

**Point # 5.1: Distribution of Null Subjects – Weak Tense & o in Spec.**

Tense/aspect markers (i) n-, m-, h- for active voice (Weak T) vs
(ii) no-, o-, ho- for passive voice (Strong T).

See Handout # 2 dated March 16, 2001 for detail.

(27) N-ikasa (ny) h-andeha o i Paoly.
  past-intend (comp) fut-go Empty deic Paul
  ‘Paul intended to leave.’

Randriamasimanana (1997: 488)
(28) Tia-ko ho entina ilay fiara (obligatorily overt subject).
be-liked-by-me fut be-driven the car
"I would like to drive the (previous mention) car."

(29) No-kasa-in' i Paoly ho entina ilay fiara.
past-intend-by deic Paul future be-taken the car
"Paul intended to take the (previous mention) car."

(30) N-ikasa (ny) h-iton dra ilay fiara o i Paoly.
Past-intend (comp) fut-drive the car EC art. Paul
‘Paul intended to drive the (previous mention) car.’
Randriamasimanana (2000b)

Point # 5.2: Distribution of Null Subjects – Weak Aspect & o in Spec.

A. Empty Specifier of V₂ P of S₁.

past-kill o not past-cause-dead o article Paul
Literally: ‘Paul killed but did not cause (someone) to
die’ i.e. freely translated into English: ‘Paul
tried to kill (someone) but did not manage to.’

b. N-amono an ‘i Jeanne i Paoly.
Past-kill DO art Jeanne art Paul
‘Paul was killing Jeanne.’

(32) Tsy mbola teraka hono o !
No! yet born be-said Empty subject
Nonverbal predicate
"X is said to be not yet born!" Randriamasimanana (1998)

B. Full Phrase in Specifier of V₂ P of S₁:

(33) N-amono an ‘i Jeanne, i Paoly, fa tsy n-aha-faty o, o,.
past-kill acc.art Jeanne art Paul but not past-cause-dead Empty Empty
Literally: ‘Paul killed but did not cause Jeanne to
die’ i.e. freely translated into English: ‘Paul
tried to kill Jeanne but did not manage to.’

‘Unmarked’ vs ‘Marked’ Causative constructions. Manipulative causative with ONE complex verb & Complement & restructure:

(34) N-am-(v)aky an’ ilay fitaratra i Paoly.
Past-caus-broken acc. the glass art Paul
V₁ + V₂ acc.
‘Paul broke the (previous mention) glass.’
One complex verb, i.e. verb $V_1 + V_2$ combination & NO complement:

(35) *N-am-(v)aky $\emptyset$ i Paoly.
    Past-caus-broken $\emptyset$ art Paul
    $V_1 + V_2$ acc.
    *'Paul broke.'
Note the absence of any overt aspect-marker on the lower verb $V_2$ in (35).

Lower $V_2$ requires Full Phrase in Specifier of VP in a Causative:

(36) Ny ditrany no n-ampa-voa-kapoka an’ i Paoly.
    Themischief-his part past-caus-voa-passive1-punish acc. art Paul
    $V_1$-voa-$V_2$
    ‘It was his mischief which was the cause of Paul’s being punished.’
    From Randriamasimanana (1986: 5)

(37) * Ny ditrany no n-ampa-voa-kapoka $\emptyset$.
    Themischief-his part past-caus-passive1-punish $\emptyset$
    $V_1$-voa-$V_2$
    ‘It was his mischief which was the cause of $\emptyset$’s being punished.’
Note presence of the perfective aspect-marker voa on the lower verb $V_2$ in (36).

Point # 6.1: Nature of Feature Checking, given Malagasy data under Point # 4.
Covalent Bonding, as in ‘Towards deriving the EPP and abstract case’ by Eric Haeberli in Generative Grammar in Geneva 1:105-139, 2000. Also see 6.3.

(38a) Ity m-ianatra lesobity ny mpianatra. = (20)
    AGR pres-study lesson AGR the student
    Head Specifier
    [Sing.] [Sing.] [NonVal. F] where $F$ not yet valuated* or Missing $F$
    "The student is studying his/her lesson."

b. Ireto m-ianatra lesora ireto ny mpianatra.
    AGR pres-study lesson AGR the students
    Head Specifier
    [Plural] [Plural] [NonVal. F] or Missing $F$
    "The students are studying lessons."

Haeberli (2000: 134): ‘Suppose that language is, to use Chomsky’s (1995) terminology, to a large extent a "perfect" system and that "perfection" in the domain of categorial feature matrices consists of having a complete feature matrix with all the categorial features positively specified. In terms of this assumption, feature matrices like $[+N, -V]$ or $[-D, +T; -N, +V]$ are "imperfect" because they contain negatively specified categorial features. Hence, we could argue that such categories have to make up for their "imperfection" by establishing a local configuration with an element which contains the missing feature(s). Once such a local configuration has been established, the categorial feature
matrix is licensed because the locally available features compensate for the "imperfection" of the category.

*As proposed in Chomsky (2000) and implemented, for instance, in Frampton & Gutman (2000). See references under Point # 6.3 below.

**Point # 6.2: ‘Covalent Bonding’ & Feature Checking, given Malagasy data under Point # 5 above.**

(39)a. **No-didi-n’** i Paoly ilay mofo. Passive 1 (Direct Object > Subject) = (24)
    **PastPassive1**-by art Paul the bread
    **Head** **Specifier**
    PUNCTUAL----------[ Missing F]
    ‘The (whole) bread was cut by Paul.’

b. **N-an-didi-an’** i Paoly ilay mofo. Passive 2 (Oblique > Subject)
    **PastPassive2**-by art Paul the bread
    **Head** **Specifier**
    DURATIVE----------[ Missing F]
    ‘(Some of) the bread was cut by Paul.’ See Randriamasimanana (2000b.)

In (39)a, the relevant missing F(eature) accompanying the Specifier = ‘the whole of the referent of N’ as a result of the Head F [ +PUNCTUAL]; whereas in (39)b, the missing F inside the Specifier = ‘a/some portion of the referent of N’ will result from the relevant Head’s F [ + DURATIVE].

**Point # 6.3: ‘Covalent Bonding’ & English Illustrative Example.**

(40) A beaver is building a dam.
    **Spec** T.1
    | **Head**
    [ Missing F ] [ + PROGRESSIVE]

[ Missing F ] ---→ [ + SPECIFIC] for the interpretation of indefinite article ‘a’ in (40) under Head-Specifier relation because of Head feature [ + PROGRESSIVE].

b. A beaver builds dams.
    **Spec** T.2
    | **Head**
    [Missing F] [ + HABITUAL]

[ Missing F ] ---→ [ + GENERIC] for the interpretation of indefinite article ‘a’ in (41) under Head-Specifier relation because of Head feature [ + HABITUAL].

Point # 7: Null Subjects & ‘Missing F(eatures).

If Infl or Head contains a Weak AGR, i.e. ø or a Weak Tense, or a Weak Aspect, it will have no phonetic content; but the corresponding Specifier node is still present, but it may contain no F(eatures), i.e. is (or at least can be) a Null subject. At any rate the ‘missing F’ alluded to under Point # 6.1 and Point # 6.2 is still there in order to receive the relevant interpretation from the feature of the head.

(42) Tsy tsara [ ny ] m-amono tena pres-kill self
     Neg good Comp
     Head Specifier
     [ + HABITUAL] [ Missing F]

‘It is not good to kill oneself.’

The feature [ Missing F] --→ [ + GENERIC] for the interpretation of the null subject in (42) under Head-Specifier relation because of the Head feature [ + HABITUAL]. Hence, the arbitrary PRO interpretation of the null subject in this sentence.

(43) M-ikasa [ h-amono tena ] i Paoly. = (15)
     pres-intend [ fut-kill self EC ] Paul
     Head Spec
     [ + PUNCTUAL] [ Missing F]

"Paul intends to kill himself."

The feature [ Missing F] --→ [ + SPECIFIC] for the interpretation of the null subject in (43) under Head-Specifier relation because of the Head feature [ + PUNCTUAL]. The determination of whether this null subject is an anaphor or a pronominal will depend on the ‘relative distance’ between it and its putative antecedent, i.e whether both the antecedent and the null subject show up inside one and the same domain (anaphor) or whether they show up in two different domains (pronominal).

(44) a. N-ilaza h-andeha ---- i Paoly. Colloquial Malagasy
     Past-say fut-go art Paul
     [ + Anaphor]

‘Paul said that he would go.’

b. N-ilaza i Paoly fa h-andeha ----. Standard Malagasy
     Past-say art Paul that fut-go EC
     [ + Pronominal]

‘Paul said that he would go.’

Point # 8.1: Consequences of our Feature Checking Analysis.

(i) Raising     (ii) Binary Branching –See example (16).

(45) N-ikasa [(ny) h-ondra ilay fiara ø ] i Paoly. = (30)
     Past-intend [(comp) fut-drive the car Spec] art. Paul
     Weak T ø-F

‘Paul intended to drive the (previous mention) car.’

Randriamasimanana (2000b)
(46) No-kasa-in' i Paoly [ ho entina ilay fiara ]. = (29) 
past-intend-by deic Paul [ future be-taken the car ]
Passive

Strong T Spec/Features
"Paul intended to take the (previous mention) car."

Case of Raising, i.e. different from the one under Points # 1.5 & 3 above:

(47) N-anandranana [ n-itondra (an) ilay fiara ---- ] i Paoly.
Past-try [ past-drive (acc) the car Spec ] art Paul
Weak T o-F

‘Paul was trying to drive the car.’

(48) N-andrana-n' i Paoly [ n-entina --- ] ilay fiara.
Past-passive-try-by art Paul [ past-passive-driven Spec] the car
Weak T o-F

In (47), the phrase ‘ilay fiara’ ‘the car’ is in the embedded clause; whereas in (48) it
now in the matrix clause. Yet in the pair of sentences below in (49) vs (50), the phra:
‘ilay sakay’ ‘the chilli’ remains inside the embedded clause:

(49) N-anandranana [ n-ihinana (an) ilay sakay ---- ] i Paoly.
Past-try [ past-eat (acc) the chilli Spec] art Paul
Weak T o-F

‘Paul was trying to eat the chilli.’

(50) N-andrana-n’ i Paoly [ no-hanina ilay sakay ].
Past-passive-try-by art Paul [ past-passive-eat-by the chilli]
Strong T Spec/Features

Likewise, as in (47) vs (48), we see Raising with the following pair of sentences:

(51) N-ihezaka [ n-ianatra (an) ilay lesona ---- ] i Paoly.
Past-strive [ past-learn (acc) the lesson Spec] art Paul
Weak T o-F

‘Paul was striving to learn the (previous mention) lesson.’

(52) N-ihezaha-n’ i Paoly [ n-ianarana ---- ] ilay lesona.
Past-passive-strive-by art Paul [ past-passive-learn Spec] the lesson
Weak T o-F

Again, in (51), the phrase ‘ilay lesona’ ‘the lesson’ is in the embedded clause;
whereas in (52), the same phrase –according to our analysis– now appears in the
matrix clause. It looks as though there may be an ‘escape hatch’.
Point # 8.2: Keenan (1976:283) and Raising-to-Object Verbs.

2.5 Raising

In general, Malagasy is rich in raising processes. Raising to Object (R-O) is very productive, applying in a uniform way to a large class of predicates and satisfying the Relational Succession Law (RSL) discussed below. Raising to

2.5.1 Raising to Object (R-O): From an underlying structure like 104a, R-O may derive 104b.

104 a. nanantena [sa nanasa ny zaza Rasoa] Rabe
   +act
   past-hope that washed the child Rasoa Rabe

104 b. nanantena an-dRasoa ho nanasa ny zaza Rabe
   hoped
   acc-Rasoa comp washed the child Rabe
   "Rabe hoped that Rasoa washed the child"

(53) N-anantena [ an-dRasoa ho n-anasa ny zaza --- ] Rabe.
     Past-expect [ acc-Rabe Comp past-wash the child -- ] Rabe
     Weak T Spec
     O-F

     ECM
     'Rabe expected Rasoa to wash the child.'

(54) M-ihevitra [azy, ho mahay ---- ] i Paoly,
     Pres-believe [ him/her, comp intelligent Spec] art Paul,
     No T o-F

     ECM
     'Paul considers himself intelligent.'

(55) *M-ihevitra azy, [ho mahay ---- ] i Paoly,
     Pres-believe him/her, [comp intelligent ---- ] art Paul,

Where the pronominal 'azy' 'him/her' has actually been raised into the matrix clause and has become a direct object of the verb 'm-ihevitra' 'pres-believe': Coreference between 'I Paoly' and 'azy' is now totally impossible.

We can replace 'm-ihevitra' 'believe' with other verbs like 'm-anao' 'pres-do' (here meaning something like 'consider').

12
Supplement to Handout # 7

1- Chomsky (1974) proposes that the main categories can be defined on the basis of the features V and N. The feature system he proposed is in (2).

(2) a. verb: [−N, +V]  c. adjective: [+N, +V]
b. noun: [−N, −V]  d. preposition: [−N, −V]

2- On handout #4 of March 1st, 2001 we saw that in Malagasy it should be the case that \( P = [+V, +N] \).

3- Eric Haeberli (2000: 108): ‘Thus, the central proposal of this paper will be that categorial feature matrices basically start out with positive values (e.g. [+N, +V] for lexical categories) and that the adequate feature matrices for particular categories are established through checking in the course of a derivation. A verb for example starts out with an uninterpretable N-feature that has to be checked or a noun has an uninterpretable V feature that has to be checked so that the adequate categorial status is established for the interfaces.’

4- Eric Haeberli (2000: 109): ‘What about functional categories? Following Grimshaw (1991) and van Riemsdijk (1990), I will assume that functional categories are partly defined by the lexical features N and V. Thus, D is defined by a N-feature and T is defined by a V-feature. As for the functional component of a functional categorial feature matrix, I will propose, contrary to Grimshaw and van Riemsdijk, that it mirrors the lexical level in the sense that the functional part of a functional category consists of one functional feature which is verbal and another one which is nominal. More precisely, I will assume that the functional component consists of the features T and D.3 Given this feature system, D and finite T can be defined in terms of the following feature matrices:

(3) a. D: [+D, -T; +N, -V]  b. T: [-D, +T; -N, +V]

5- Haeberli (2000:110): ‘Thus, we do not have to stipulate that nominal constituents have to be assigned Case (GB) or that they have to check Case features (MP). Instead, Case phenomena can be analyzed in terms of a theory of syntactic categories which is based on the assumption that, at the beginning of a derivation, categorial feature matrices are always equipped with the entire set of categorial features (N, V for lexical categories; D, T, N, V for functional categories) and that the adequate content of a feature matrix is established through checking in the course of a derivation.’

13
6- Deriving the Extended Projection Principle:

Haeberli (2000: 110):

(4)  a. * (There) is a cat in the office.
    b. * (It) seems that they left.

At the outset, T contains uninterpretable D- and N-Features in its feature matrix as indicated in note 5 above, i.e.

(5) \[ T = [ +D, +T; +N, +V] \]

Therefore T has to enter into a checking relation with another element containing D- and N-Features in order to get its features checked (i.e. in particular, to get rid of the positive values for relevant features).

Ideally the target should contain positively valued nominal features for D and N. As it turns out and as pointed in example (3) above the eligible ‘checker’ ‘it’ or ‘there’ in sentence (4)—assuming the presence of the pleonastic subject—contains the following features, i.e. \[ [+D, -T; +N, -V] \] Once a feature has been checked it can be deleted, i.e. here as shown in (6) below assigned a negative value.

The expected output as a result of the Head T and Spec checking is:

(6) \[ T: [-D, +T; -N, +V] \]

which is precisely the set of features characterizing the grammatical category T, as given in note 3 (3)b. above.

Omitting the expletives in (4) would mean that no such checking relation could be established because no element with nominal features would be in the necessary local configuration for feature checking on T.

7- Haeberli (2000:111): ‘Given the basic assumption made so far that categorial feature matrices get modified through checking, we have obtained a system in which the EPP and Case Theory simply turn out to be different manifestations of the same underlying phenomenon. What has been referred to as Abstract Case is the situation where a nominal element has to erase verbal features from its feature matrix, whereas the EPP is the effect of the opposite scenario, namely the one where a verbal element has to erase nominal features from its feature matrix. Thus, the EPP and the Theory of Abstract Case are simply two sides of the same coin.’