On Iranian Case and Agreement

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In this talk I explore case and agreement patterns in Iranian languages, mainly focusing on Zazaki and Kurdish varieties. Empirically, I discuss the typologically rare *double-oblique* pattern as in (1), and demonstrate that the term 'oblique' corresponds to distinct Cases in Iranian languages, ranging from structural (ACC) Case to nonstructural (DAT) Case, and to ergative Case. It is possible for verbs to show agreement with a 3rd person plural A argument in the oblique, in combination with 3SG objects in Kurdish (2a), and SG objects in Zazaki (2b). I contend that the phase-based explanation as in Atlamaz & Baker (2016, 2017) fails to capture the facts. Instead, given the oblique split, I argue for a Multiple Agree account (Hiraiwa 2005), in which the partial number agreement is a process that takes place in the morphology via Impoverishment, and not in the syntax proper.

(1) mın   te   dit
     1SG.OBL 2SG.OBL see.PST.3SG

     'I saw you.'   (Muş Kurdish)

(2) a. wana   hew   di-(n)
         3PL.OBL 3M.DIR see.PST-(PL)

         'They saw him.'   (Adıyaman Kurdish)

     b. heyi   mı   güe   / güî
         3PL.OBL 1SG.OBL like.PST.3SG / like.PST.PL

         'They liked me.'   (Mutki Zazaki)

The talk also investigates the case properties of Iranian languages. Contra Atlamaz & Baker (2016, 2017)), I propose to capture the case patterns along the lines of Svenonius (2006), in which nonstructural cases get their licensing from a combination of two heads (cf. Chomsky 1993), one of which is *Stem*, the locus of split-ergativity in Iranian. The chain is established between *Stem* and v to yield the nonstructural case on internal arguments, whereas the ergative case on external arguments is the result of the chain between *Stem* and Voice.

References

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