

Title: Case variation of direct objects

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Chomsky (2000, 2001) proposes the Probe-Goal hypothesis to account for structural objective Case marking (among other phenomena), maintaining that  $\nu$  values accusative Case of the complement of V (1). However, little has been said in the literature regarding the assignment of other Cases to object NPs under a Probe-Goal framework (2). In this paper, using data from Russian, I argue against the null hypothesis that Case variation in objective strings reflects a variation of Case that  $\nu$  values. Instead, I argue that oblique Case (genitive in (2)) is assigned by a more local preposition, either overt or null. My proposal makes the prediction that unaccusative structures (that lack a  $\nu$ P by assumption) that do not co-occur with a preposition may not assign accusative Case (3). More broadly, as prepositions are standardly assumed to assign oblique Case in Russian, this proposal provides a uniform account of oblique complements of (overt) prepositions and verbal complements with a null preposition interceding between the verb and noun phrase. This also accounts for adjunct phrases that lack an obvious preposition and don't appear to have a syntactic source for Case within the verb phrase.

(1) ja        ždu        avtobus  
1.SNG wait    bus.ACC  
'I'm waiting for the bus'

(2) ja        ždu        avtobus-a  
1.SNG wait    bus-GEN  
'I'm waiting for a bus'

(3) \*ja        pojdu        dač-u  
1.SNG leave    cottage-ACC  
'I will set out for the cottage'

Chomsky, Noam. 2000. "Minimalist Inquiries: The Framework." In Martin, Roger, David Michaels & Juan Uriagereka (eds.), *Step by Step: Essays on Minimalist Syntax in Honor of Howard Lasnik*, 89-156. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chomsky, Noam. 2001. "Derivation by Phase." In Kenstowicz, Michael (ed.), *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, 1-52. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.