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## A Minimalist Account of Structural Case Assignment in Pashto Conjoined Subject Constructions

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### Abstract

Whereas cross-linguistically the verb of a conjoined subject either agrees with the first of the two conjuncts, called first conjunct agreement (FCA) or with the second conjunct, called second conjunct agreement (SCA) or last conjunct agreement (LCA), Pashto *ao* conjoined subjects are different in the sense that the verb shows agreement neither with the first conjunct nor the last conjunct. Rather, it shows agreement with the joint syntactic and semantic effect of the two conjoined subjects. Morphologically, in the present and future tenses, *ao* conjoined subjects show nominative Cases, while in the past tense they show accusative Cases. We propose, for Pashto *ao* conjoined subjects, following the minimalist idea of agreement in terms of features as responsible for structural Case assignment, that a single agree relation establishes between the conjoined subjects and T in the present and future tenses and between the conjoined subjects and Voice in the past tense. Agreement between T and *ao* conjoined subjects results in assigning nominative Case while agreement between Voice and *ao* conjoined subjects results in assigning accusative Case, as *v* in the past tense Pashto constructions, we consider, to be defective in the Chomskian sense (2001). The overall conclusion, for structural Case assignment in Pashto *ao* conjoined subjects constructions, is that the minimalist idea of structural Case assignment as a result of features agreement between a functional head and a nominal hold equally good.

**Keywords:** minimalist syntax; government and binding; case assignment; Pashto

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## 1. Introduction

Varied morphological forms of nouns and pronouns, with reference to their placement in a sentence, have always attracted grammarians/syntacticians. Thus, as the number of grammars increased, the number of approaches to study case also increased. In the generative enterprise, this interest crystalized in the shape of case theory/module of the government and binding (GB) era. In GB, the concentration was largely on structural Case<sup>1</sup> and Case assignment, the former dealing with the Case of a nominal with reference to its position in a sentence and the later dealing with the agency that is responsible for giving this Case to a nominal. Minimalist program went a step ahead as it tried to find the *why* of Case. With this background in mind, conjoined subjects pose a more challenging situation as here we have two or more than two nouns or pronouns at one place and all these nouns or pronouns need structural Case from a single functional head. Added to this has been the unique nature of Pashto conjoined subjects that are joined by the conjunction *ao* 'and'. Here, the verb neither agrees with the first conjunct nor does it agree with the last conjunct; rather, it agrees with the joint effect of the two conjuncts.

To deal with this situation this paper proposes that the two parts of a conjoined subject act as a single syntactic unit. This postulation has consequences. Instead of each of the two nominals having [uCase] feature, we propose that the two parts of the conjoined subject collectively bear the [uCase] feature. We also propose that both of the two nominals have the same structural Case. In addition, we propose that the two nominals jointly move from spec vP to spec TP as a unit. Taking all these points into consideration, this paper for the first time proposes structures/derivations for Pashto *ao* conjunction conjoined subject constructions in the three tenses of present, past, and future; as structural Case assignment cannot be dealt with comprehensively unless the derivation/structure of a construction is not established. For structural Case assignment this paper proposes that nominative Case in Pashto conjoined subject sentences is assigned as a result of  $\phi$ -features agreement between T and the relevant nominal, while accusative Case is assigned as a result of  $\phi$ -features agreement between the relevant nominal and v or Voice, depending on the tense of the sentence. In addition, in the morphological component, we propose that agreement for nominative Case assignment in Pashto *ao* conjoined subject constructions between T and the relevant nominal is visible while agreement for accusative Case assignment between v or Voice and the relevant nominal is invisible.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 1 introduces the topic and gives a brief idea of the issues that will be discussed in the paper. Section 2 gives a thumbnail sketch of the efforts that were made in the traditional grammar and the generative

enterprise especially the minimalist program with reference to structural Case assignment and conjoined subject constructions. Section 3 gives some idea of conjoined subjects, with more emphasis on *ao* conjoined subjects, and the mechanism that we will adopt to deal with structural Case assignment in Pashto *ao* conjoined subject constructions. Sections 4, 5, and 6 deal with structural Case assignment in Pashto *ao* conjoined subject constructions in the three tenses of present, past and future. Section 7 concludes this paper.

## 2. Literature Review

In the minimalist era, conjoined subject constructions have attracted a lot of attention. However, this is mostly with reference to agreement, not structural Case assignment. Moreover, their accounts are concentrated on single conjunct agreement, a phenomenon that has been found across many unrelated languages, for example Arabic (Aoun et al. 1994, Al-Balushi, 2011), Slovenian (Marušič, Navins, & Saksida, 2007), Serbo – Croatian (Bošković, 2009, 2010), and Hindi (Benmamoun et al. 2010). Single conjunct agreement may manifest itself either as first conjunct agreement<sup>2</sup> (FCA) or as second or last conjunct agreement<sup>3</sup> (S/LCA). As agreement has direct relation to structural Case in the minimalist program, therefore, their accounts of agreement can also be useful for our purposes.

For the phenomenon of structural Case assignment, we will restrict ourselves to the minimalist program and would do away with the efforts that were made in the GB era. In the minimalist program, different ideas have been propounded to explain structural Case assignment. Some of the important ideas are, firstly, that structural Case assignment is the result of features agreement between a functional head and a nominal ( Schütze (1997), Carstens (2001), Bejar (2003), Tanaka (2005), Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2005, 2006), Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (2006), Bobaljik & Branigan (2006), Richardson (2007), Legate (2008), Baker (2008, forthcoming), Baker & Vinokurova (2010). Secondly, structural Case is an uninterpretable tense feature on the relevant DP (Pesetsky & Torrego, 2001). Thirdly, mood and modality are responsible for the assignment of Case (Aygen, 2002). Fourth, that, in one way or another, aspect assigns Case (Itkonen (1976), Ramchand (1997), Arad (1998), Kiparsky (1998), Torrego (1998), Svenonius (2001, 2002b), Kratzer (2004)). Fifth, Case is licensed by location and person (Ritter & Wiltschko, 2009 ).

So far as structural Case assignment in Pashto conjoined subjects constructions is concerned, we find that neither the traditional nor the generative grammarians/syntacticians bothered to study structural Case assignment or conjoined subjects either traditionally or generatively. All that we find in different grammar books

about Pashto language are just passing mentions of different Pashto conjunctions in general. They do not dilate, in any way, on the nature of conjoined subjects or their agreement patterns, let alone generative/ minimalist treatment of conjoined subjects constructions or structural Case assignment in them. So all that, we have in Pashto grammar books written in Pashto, Urdu, or English languages, are of no use to us, as far as our present endeavour is concerned.

### 3. Pashto *ao* Conjoined Subjects and Structural Case Assignment in Them

The most important and well-known conjunctions in Pashto are, *ao* ‘and’, *ya* ‘or’ and *kho* ‘but’. There are also some correlating conjunctions. As here we are concerned with double subject or conjoined subject constructions, therefore, we will discuss *ao* conjunction with reference to the present, past, and future tenses. (For the conjunctions *kho* and *ya*, the correlating conjunctions, and the coordinating conjunctions, please see Masood (2014), as these conjunctions are more relevance to multi-clausal constructions in Pashto).

In order to deal with the assignment of Case in *ao* conjoined subject constructions in Pashto, we are adopting a unique and an ambitious technique. Normally, from a generative perspective, the process for assignment of Case should have been that the functional category T assigns nominative Case to the one conjunct, and then to the other conjunct, thus resorting to the mechanism of multiple agree. However, we are adopting a new approach, in which T establishes an agree relation with both the parts of the conjoined subject acting as a syntactic and semantic whole. As a result of this agree relation, the  $[u\phi]$  of T are valued, not by the individual subject parts but by the subject parts acting as a syntactic whole, and in return nominative Case is assigned to both the parts of the conjoined subject treating it as one DP.

That why we have adopted this approach when there is an alternative available needs attention. Solid grounds exist for adopting this approach. In Pashto, unlike English, the verb does not agree with one or the other of the conjoined subjects, rather, the verb agrees with the joint syntactic and semantic effect of the conjoined subject. To understand this, let us take some Pashto examples in the present tense:

1. *Zə*            *ao*            *Saleem*            *pen*            *mathawo.*  
 I.NOM            and            Saleem.NOM            pen            break.PRS.1PL  
 ‘I and Saleem break the pen/ I and Saleem are breaking the pen.’

Note that both the translations are right depending on the sense that we take of the sentence. However, for ease and economy in derivation we will adopt the former meaning throughout.

- |    |                                 |           |               |            |                  |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| 2. | <i>Saleem</i>                   | <i>ao</i> | <i>Zə</i>     | <i>pen</i> | <i>mathawo.</i>  |
|    | Saleem.NOM                      | and       | I.NOM         | pen        | break.PRS.1PL    |
|    | 'Saleem and I break the pen.'   |           |               |            |                  |
| 3. | <i>Thə</i>                      | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>pen</i> | <i>mathawai.</i> |
|    | you.NOM                         | and       | Saleem.NOM    | pen        | break.PRS.2PL    |
|    | 'You and Saleem break the pen.' |           |               |            |                  |
| 4. | <i>Saleem</i>                   | <i>ao</i> | <i>thə</i>    | <i>pen</i> | <i>mathawai.</i> |
|    | Saleem.NOM                      | and       | you.NOM       | pen        | break.2PL        |
|    | 'Saleem and you break the pen.' |           |               |            |                  |
| 5. | <i>Hagha</i>                    | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>pen</i> | <i>mathawi.</i>  |
|    | he.NOM                          | and       | Saleem.NOM    | pen        | break.3PL        |
|    | 'He and Saleem break the pen.'  |           |               |            |                  |
| 6. | <i>Saleem</i>                   | <i>ao</i> | <i>hagha</i>  | <i>pen</i> | <i>mathawi.</i>  |
|    | Saleem.NOM                      | and       | he.NOM        | pen        | break.3PL        |
|    | 'Saleem and he break the pen.'  |           |               |            |                  |

If looked at the examples above, in examples no. 1 and 2, the verb does not agree with any of conjunct subjects. Rather, the verb agrees with the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun which is not present in these sentences. 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun is semantically equal to the joint effect/meaning of the two conjuncts i.e. 'me and Saleem', in these two particular examples. The second pair of examples, namely, 3 and 4, and the third pair, namely 5 and 6, also show the same situation. Here, in the former pair the verb agrees with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural pronoun which is semantically and logically equal to the joint effect/ meaning of 'you plus Saleem', while in the later pair the verb shows agreement with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronoun which is semantically and logically equal to the joint effect/ meaning of 'he plus Saleem'. What this agreement pattern conveys here is the fact that the two conjuncts, in a conjoined subject construction in Pashto, joined by the conjunction *ao* together, do not act as separate entities, rather, they act as a semantic and syntactic whole.

From a minimalist perspective, to decide such issues based on agreement, a post-syntactic phenomenon is similar to putting a cart in front of a horse. However, we are using the agreement pattern only as a lighthouse, and it is an effort to explain differently something that behave differently in similar circumstances, namely, to account for the point that why the verb does not agree with one or the other conjunct of the subject, as it has been doing in other languages.

#### 4. Case Assignment in the Present *Ao* Conjoined Subject Constructions

To show how Case is assigned to conjoined subjects in monoclausal sentences, first we will make a derivation for a sentence, given here as example no.7, followed by different examples making use of Pashto pronouns, so as to substantiate and give empirical weightage to our views/ hypotheses.

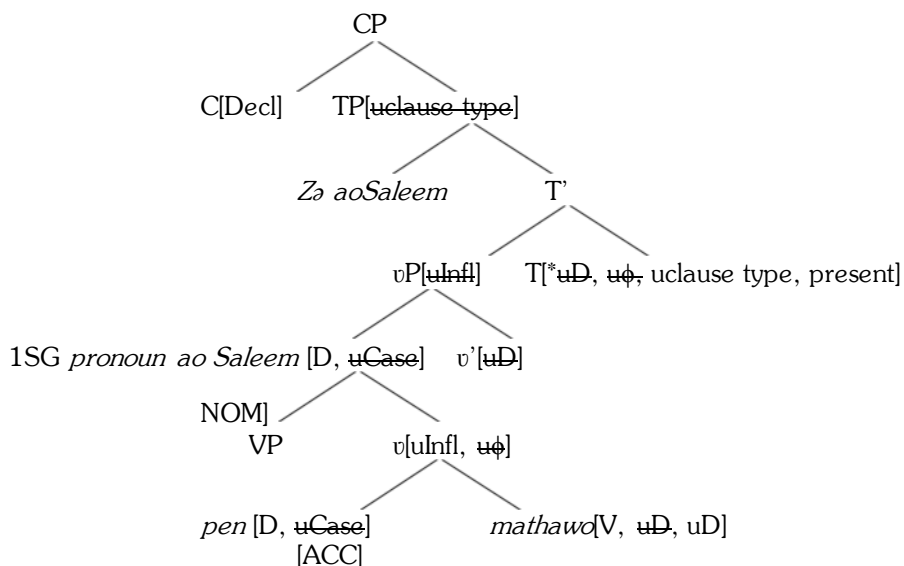
7.	<i>Zə</i>	<i>ao</i>	<i>Saleem</i>	<i>pen</i>	<i>mathawo.</i>
	I.NOM	and	Saleem.NOM	pen.ACC	break.PRS.1PL
	'I and Saleem break a/the pen.'				

First of all the verb *mathedal/mathawəl*, depending on the difference of opinion regarding the base form of the verb<sup>4</sup>, having [V, uD, uD] features merges with the internal argument *pen* having [D, uCase] features, to form VP. This merge results in checking/ deleting the one [uD] of the verb. A small *v* having [uInfl, uφ] features merges with the VP through Hierarchy of Projection Principle<sup>5</sup> to form *v'*. An agree relation establishes between the internal argument *pen*, acting as a goal here, and *v*, acting as a probe here, in terms of φ-features of person, number and gender. Because of this agree relation, the uninterpretable phi-features of *v* are valued as 3SGM, while accusative Case is assigned to the DP *pen*.

To satisfy the other [uD] of the verb, the external argument in the form of 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun plus *Saleem* having [D, uCase] features merges with the *v'*, as a unit, not as separate entities. This merge results in satisfaction/ deletion of the [uD] of the verb and formation of the *vP*. To check/delete the [uInfl] of *v*, an empty functional category T, having [\*uD, uφ, uclause type, present] features merges with the *vP*. Because of this merge, the [uInfl] is valued as present tense. An agree relation establishes between T, a probe, and the conjoined subject working as one syntactic unit, a goal, in terms of φ-features. The conjoined subject values the phi-features of T as 3PLM, while nominative Case is assigned to the nominals of the conjoined subject. Because of the nominative Case, the morphological or spell-out form of the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun becomes *zə* and the form of *Saleem* remains the same as is the case with other Pashto nouns vis-a-vis Case. As the 3PLM does not get visible on T, rather it along with the tense get visible on either V or *v* or both, therefore, the morphological base form of the verb *mathedal/mathawəl* changes to *mathawo*.

To satisfy the strong [\*uD] of T, the conjoined subject moves from specifier *vP*, to specifier TP; the symbols [\*], < > used in the Figures, following Adger (2004) show strength and movement respectively. Another functional category C, empty in this particular case, having [Decl] feature merges with the TP to form CP. Because of

this merge the [uclause type] of T that had projection on TP is checked/satisfied as declarative. Thus, our CP is complete, as is shown in the Figure below:



**Figure 1:** Complete derivation for the conjoined subject construction  
*za ao Saleem pen mathawo*

The example, we discussed, had a noun i.e. *pen* as its object DP; therefore, we were empirically unable to substantiate the claim that the Case borne by the object DP is accusative. This is due to the often-mentioned fact that mostly pronouns have morphological markings for accusative and nominative Cases in Pashto while nouns mostly do not have such markings. Therefore, towards the conclusion of this section on present tense conjoined subjects, we are giving a few examples where pronouns are used as objects.

- |     |                               |           |             |              |                  |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| 8.  | <i>Saleem</i>                 | <i>ao</i> | <i>Adil</i> | <i>ma</i>    | <i>takhnawi.</i> |
|     | Saleem.NOM                    | and       | Adil.NOM    | I.ACC        | tickle.PRS.3     |
|     | 'Saleem and Adil tickle me.'  |           |             |              |                  |
| 9.  | <i>Saleem</i>                 | <i>ao</i> | <i>Adil</i> | <i>moong</i> | <i>takhnawi.</i> |
|     | Saleem.NOM                    | and       | Adil.NOM    | we.ACC       | tickle.PRS.3     |
|     | 'Saleem and Adil tickle us.'  |           |             |              |                  |
| 10. | <i>Saleem</i>                 | <i>ao</i> | <i>Adil</i> | <i>tha</i>   | <i>takhnawi.</i> |
|     | Saleem.NOM                    | and       | Adil.NOM    | you.ACC      | tickle.PRS.3     |
|     | 'Saleem and Adil tickle you.' |           |             |              |                  |

11. *Saleem*                      *ao*        *Adil*                      *thaso*                      *takhnawi*.  
 Saleem.NOM                      and        Adil.NOM                      you.plural.ACC        tickle.PRS.3  
 ‘Saleem and Adil tickle you.’
12. *Saleem*                      *ao*        *Adil*                      *hagha*                      *takhnawi*.  
 ‘Saleem and Adil tickle him.’
13. *Saleem*                      *ao*        *Adil*                      *haghoi*                      *takhnawi*.  
 Saleem.NOM                      and        Adil.NOM                      they.ACC                      tickle.PRS.3  
 ‘Saleem and Adil tickle them.’
14. *Saleem*                      *ao*        *Adil*                      *day*                      *takhnawi*.  
 Saleem.NOM                      and        Adil.NOM                      he.near.NOM                      tickle.PRS.3  
 ‘Saleem and Adil tickle him.’
15. *Saleem*                      *ao*        *Adil*                      *doi*                      *takhnawi*.  
 Saleem.NOM                      and        Adil.NOM                      they.near.ACC                      tickle.PRS.3  
 Saleem and Adil tickle them.’
16. *Zə*                      *ao*        *Saleem*                      *tha*                      *takhnawo*.  
 I.NOM                      and        Saleem.NOM                      you.ACC                      tickle.PRS.1PL  
 ‘I and Saleem tickle you.’
17. *Moong*                      *ao*        *Saleem*                      *tha*                      *takhnawo*.  
 we.NOM                      and        Saleem.NOM                      you.ACC                      tickle.PRS.1PL  
 ‘We and Saleem tickle you.’
18. *Thə*                      *ao*        *Saleem*                      *ma*                      *takhnawai*  
 you.NOM                      and        Saleem.NOM                      I.ACC                      tickle.PRS.2PL  
 ‘You and Saleem tickle me.’
19. *Thaso*                      *ao*        *Saleem*                      *ma*                      *takhnawai*.  
 you.plural.NOM                      and        Saleem.NOM                      I.ACC                      tickle.PRS.2PL  
 ‘You and Saleem tickle me.’

These examples again, like the earlier few paragraphs on agreement, show that the verb agrees with the semantic and logical equivalent of the conjoined subject, not with the subject parts taken as individuals. At the same time, it shows that there is no visible agreement between the verb and the object. Based on the examples and discussion above, we can draw the following paradigm for Case forms for the present tense conjoined/double subject constructions.

Joint Effect of Conjoined Sub	Subject’s Case Form	Object’s Case Form
3rd Person Plural (distant)	Nominative	Accusative
3rd Person Plural (near)	Nominative	Accusative
2nd Person Plural	Nominative	Accusative
1st Person Plural	Nominative	Accusative



The examples discussed above give empirical weightage to the main hypothesis that in Pashto agreement between T and the relevant nominal results in assigning the nominative Case to that nominal, and that agreement between *v* or Voice and the relevant nominal results in assigning the accusative Case to that nominal. In addition, they substantiate a sub-hypothesis as well; namely, that in Pashto agreement between T and a nominal resulting in nominative Case is morphologically visible while agreement between *v* or Voice and a nominal resulting in accusative Case is invisible.

### 5. Case Assignment in the Past Tense ‘*ao*’ Conjoined Subject Constructions

For the past tense *ao* conjoined subject constructions, we are using the same set of examples that we have used for the present tense, with the only change that past tense has been used instead of the present tense. Let us see what the agreement pattern of the past tense conjoined/double subject constructions look like:

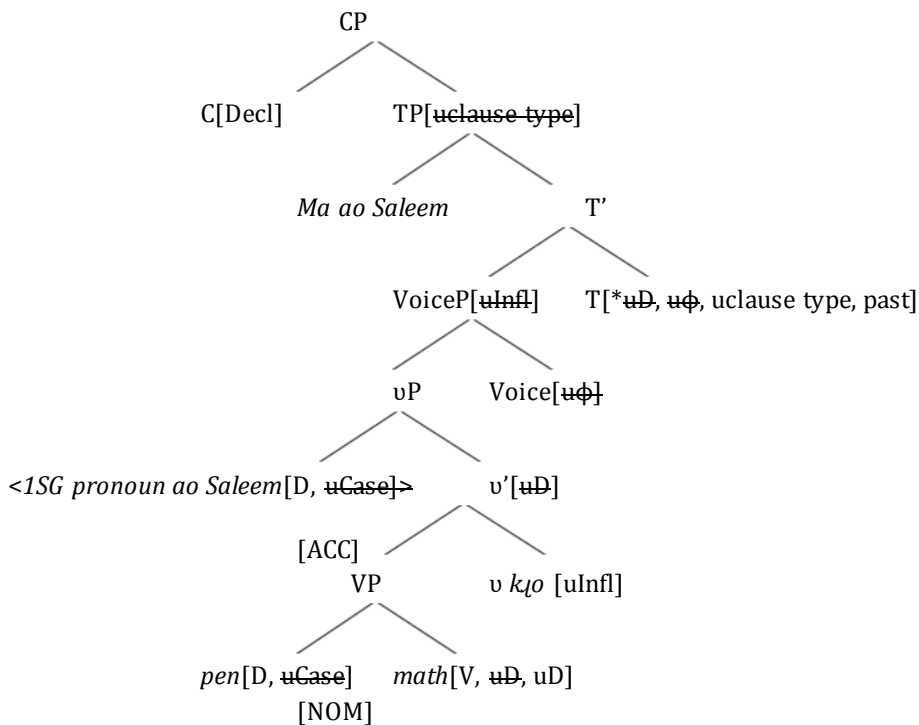
- |     |                                 |           |               |             |             |            |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 20. | <i>Ma</i>                       | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>pen</i>  | <i>math</i> | <i>kɔ.</i> |
|     | I.ACC                           | and       | Saleem.ACC    | pen.ACC.3SG | break.3SG   | do.PST.3SG |
|     | ‘I and Saleem broke the pen.’   |           |               |             |             |            |
| 21. | <i>Saleem</i>                   | <i>ao</i> | <i>ma</i>     | <i>pen</i>  | <i>math</i> | <i>kɔ.</i> |
|     | Saleem.ACC                      | and       | I.ACC         | pen.NOM.3SG | break.3SG   | do.PST.3SG |
|     | ‘Saleem and I broke the pen.’   |           |               |             |             |            |
| 22. | <i>Tha</i>                      | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>pen</i>  | <i>math</i> | <i>kɔ.</i> |
|     | you.ACC                         | and       | Saleem.ACC    | pen.NOM.3SG | break.3SG   | do.PST.3SG |
|     | ‘You and Saleem broke the pen.’ |           |               |             |             |            |
| 23. | <i>Saleem</i>                   | <i>ao</i> | <i>tha</i>    | <i>pen</i>  | <i>math</i> | <i>kɔ.</i> |
|     | Saleem.ACC                      | and       | you.ACC       | pen.NOM.3SG | break.3SG   | do.PST.3SG |
|     | ‘Saleem and you broke the pen.’ |           |               |             |             |            |
| 24. | <i>Haghə</i>                    | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>pen</i>  | <i>math</i> | <i>kɔ.</i> |
|     | he.ACC                          | and       | Saleem.ACC    | pen.NOM.3SG | break.3SG   | do.PST.3SG |
|     | ‘He and Saleem broke the pen.’  |           |               |             |             |            |
| 25. | <i>Saleem</i>                   | <i>ao</i> | <i>haghə</i>  | <i>pen</i>  | <i>math</i> | <i>kɔ.</i> |
|     | Saleem.ACC                      | and       | he.ACC        | pen.NOM.3SG | break.3SG   | do.PST.3SG |
|     | ‘Saleem and he broke the pen.’  |           |               |             |             |            |

In the examples above, relating to the past tense, we see neither the first conjunct nor the second conjunct nor does a combination of the two agreeing with the verb. Rather, the object agrees with the verb. Thus, the examples relating to the past tense are not going to explain to us the agreement pattern between the verb and the conjunct subject and we will follow the information obtained from the present tense examples in the previous section.

Now, we will derive a typical minimalist derivation for a past tense conjoined subject construction and see how Case is assigned in these constructions, as it is the focus of our discussion. In addition, due to the ergative-absolutive Case pattern in the past tense, we would make use of the Voice functional category (Masood, 2014).

26. *Ma*            *ao*        *Saleem*            *pen*            *math*            *kjo*.  
 I.ACC            and        Saleem.ACC        pen.NOM.3SG        break.3SG        do.PST.3SG  
 'I and Saleem broke the pen.'

Derivation for the above example is shown in the Figure below:



**Figure 2:** Complete derivation for *ma ao Saleem pen math kjo* (Past tense)

This derivation is somewhat different from the derivation for the present tense, as in the past tense nominative Case is assigned to the internal argument and accusative Case is assigned to the external argument. Relevant literature (Kratzer, 1996; Collins, 2005; Roberts, 2010, n.d.; Holmberg, 2007) attributes this to the inability of *v* to assign Case to the relevant nominal. We, therefore, introduce Voice in such situations (see Masood (2014) and Masood and Rahman (2013) for detailed discussion). Also, in the above example, we have the light verb complex

( $V_1V_2$ ), consisting of the main verb  $V_1$  *math* and the light verb  $V_2$  *kɔo/kɔol* (for a detailed treatment of Pashto light verb constructions, see Masood (2014).

This derivation will follow the familiar steps of merge of the verb *math* with the DP *pen*, to form VP. A light verb *v kɔo/kɔol* having [uInfl] and lacking [u $\phi$ ] features merges with *v'* to form *vP*. Thus, *v* in Pashto past tense construction is defective (Chomsky, 2001), in terms of [u $\phi$ ] features, hence lacking the ability to assign accusative Case. The conjoined subject *I<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun ao Saleem* merges with *v'* to form *vP*. As *v* here is unable to assign Case — either to the external or the internal argument due to the lack of  $\phi$ -features, as they are withheld by Voice in this case — Voice merges with the *vP* through the Hierarchy of Projection Principle to form VoiceP. An agree relation establishes between Voice and the external argument, acting as a syntactic unit, in terms of  $\phi$ -features, resulting in the valuation of the  $\phi$ -features of Voice and in return accusative Case is assigned to the external argument.

Another agree relation establishes between the internal argument *pen* acting as a goal, and T, acting as a probe, in terms of  $\phi$ -features. Because of the agree relation the phi-features of T are valued as 3SGM while nominative Case is assigned to the internal argument *pen*. The phi-features of T do not get visible on T; rather, as has been the case with other constructions as well, they get visible on either V or both *v* and V. In this case, the  $\phi$ -features of T along with tense get visible on both V and *v*. As a result, the light verb complex gets the form *math kɔo*. The rest of the processes such as movement of the external argument/ EPP, satisfaction of different uninterpretable features, addition of C[Decl] etc. remain the same as we had discussed for the present tense.

Now, we take up the issue that the Case, which the object nominal in Pashto past tense conjoined subject constructions receives, is nominative. The example, we discussed earlier had a noun as its object DP, therefore, we were empirically unable to substantiate the view that the Case is nominative, not accusative. We will now give examples of *ao* conjoined subject past tense sentences which have pronouns used in the subject and object positions, to substantiate our view.

### Third Person Pronouns

- |     |                                 |           |               |                     |                  |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 27. | <i>Ma</i>                       | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>hagha</i>        | <i>pasawəlo.</i> |
|     | I.ACC                           | and       | Saleem.ACC    | he.distant.NOM.3SG  | wake.3SGM        |
|     | 'I and Saleem were waking him.' |           |               |                     |                  |
| 28. | <i>Ma</i>                       | <i>ao</i> | <i>Saleem</i> | <i>hagha</i>        | <i>pasawəla.</i> |
|     | I.ACC                           | and       | Saleem.ACC    | she.distant.NOM.3SG | wake.3SGF        |
|     | 'I and Saleem were waking her.' |           |               |                     |                  |

29. *Tha*            *ao*        *Saleem*            *hagoi*                    *pasawəl.*  
 you.ACC        and        Saleem.ACC        they.distant.NOM.3PL        wake.3PL  
 ‘You and Saleem were waking them.’
30. *Tha*            *ao*        *Saleem*            *day*                      *pasawəlo.*  
 you.ACCa        nd        Saleem.ACC        he.near.NOM.3SGM        wake.3SGM  
 ‘You and Saleem were waking him.’
31. *Haghə*        *ao*        *Saleem*            *da*                        *pasawəla.*  
 he.ACC        and        Saleem.ACC        she.near.NOM.3SGF        wake.3SGF  
 ‘He and Saleem were waking her.’
32. *Haghə*        *ao*        *Saleem*            *doi*                        *pasawəl.*  
 he.ACC        and        Saleem.ACC        they.near.NOM.3PL        wake.3PLM  
 He and Saleem were waking them (men).’
33. *Haghə*        *ao*        *Saleem*            *doi*                        *pasawəlay.*  
 he.ACC        and        Saleem.ACC        they.near.NOM.3PL        wake.3PLF  
 ‘He and Saleem were waking them (women).’

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Person Pronoun

34. *Ma*            *ao*        *Saleem*            *thə*                        *pasawəlay.*  
 I.ACC        and        Saleem.ACC        you.NOM .2SG        wake.2SG  
 ‘I and Saleem were waking you.’
35. *Haghə*        *ao*        *Saleem*            *thaso*                      *pasawəlai.*  
 he.ACC        and        Saleem.ACC        You.NOM.2PL        wake.2PL  
 ‘He and Saleem were waking you.’

## 1<sup>st</sup> Person Pronouns

36. *Saleem*                    *ao*        *tha*                      *zə*                        *pasawəlum.*  
 Saleem.ACC                    and        you.ACC                    I.NOM.1SG        wake.1SG  
 ‘Saleem and you were waking me.’
37. *Ma*                            *ao*        *Saleem*                    *thə*                        *pasawəlay.*  
 I.ACC                            and        Saleem.ACC                    you.NOM.2SG        wake.2SG  
 ‘I and Saleem were waking you.’
38. *Saleem*                    *ao*        *haghə*                    *moong*                      *pasawəlo.*  
 Saleem.ACC                    and        he.ACC                    we.NOM.1PL        wake.1PL  
 ‘Saleem and he were waking us.’
39. *Moong*                    *ao*        *Saleem*                    *thaso*                      *pasawəlai.*  
 we.ACC                    and        Saleem.ACC                    you.NOM.2PL        wake.3PL  
 ‘We and Saleem were waking you.’

Based on the discussion and examples above, we can make a paradigm of the conjoined/double subject and object positions along with the morphological cases they exhibit on the pronouns:

Joint Effect Conjoined Subjects	Subject's Case Form	Object's Case Form
3rd Person Plural (distant)	Accusative	Nominative
3rd Person Plural (near)	Accusative	Nominative
2nd Person Plural	Accusative	Nominative
1st Person Plural	Accusative	Nominative

The paradigm and the examples above convey a few conclusions. First, the conjoined subject in the past tense bears accusative Case on both the conjoined nominals. Second, the internal argument in the past tense carries nominative Case. Third, the verb agrees with the internal argument in terms of different phi-features. Thus, these results substantiate and give empirical weightage to the hypotheses that we have adopted for Pashto language in the arena of Case. These hypotheses are that nominative Case is assigned as a result of  $\phi$ -features agreement between T and the relevant nominal, and accusative Case is assigned as a result of  $\phi$ -features agreement between *v* or Voice and the relevant nominal, and the sub-hypothesis that, morphologically, in Pashto only the agreement for nominative Case between T and the relevant nominal is visible.

## 6. Case Assignment in Future Tense *ao* Conjoined Subject Constructions

For the future tense, the behaviour of the conjunct subjects joined through the conjunction *ao* is the same as that for the present and past tense constructions, namely, that they jointly behave like one syntactic unit, without the individual parts asserting themselves.

40. *Zə*            *ao*        *Saleem*        *ba*        *pen*            *mathawo*.  
 I.NOM            and        Saleem.NOM    will        pen.ACC        break.1PL  
 'I and Saleem will break the pen/ I and Saleem will be breaking the pen.'

Note that both the translations are acceptable depending on the sense that we take of the sentence. However, for ease and economy in derivation we will adopt the former meaning throughout.

41. *Saleem*                    *ao*        *Zə*                    *ba*        *pen*            *mathawo*.  
 Saleem.NOM                    and        I.NOM                    will        pen.ACC        break.1PL  
 'Saleem and I will break the pen.'

42. *Thə*                      *ao*      *Saleem*              *ba*      *pen*                      *mathawai.*  
 you.NOM                      and      Saleem.NOM              will      pen.ACC                      break.2PL  
 ‘You and Saleem will break the pen.’
43. *Saleem*                      *ao*      *thə*                      *ba*      *pen*                      *mathawai.*  
 Saleem.NOM                      and      you.NOM                      will      pen.ACC                      break.2PL  
 ‘Saleem and you will break the pen.’
44. *Hagha*                      *ao*      *Saleem*                      *ba*      *pen*                      *mathawi.*  
 he.NOM                      and      Saleem.NOM                      will      pen.ACC                      break.3PL  
 ‘He and Saleem will break the pen.’
45. *Saleem*                      *ao*      *hagha*                      *ba*      *pen*                      *mathawi.*  
 Saleem.NOM                      and      he.NOM                      will      pen.ACC                      break.3PL  
 ‘Saleem and he will break the pen.’

These examples again follow the pattern that we have observed for the present and past tense *ao* conjoined subjects, namely, that the subject acts as a syntactic unit despite having two or more parts, and that in the present tense the verb shows agreement with the joint effect of the two conjoined subjects. Thus, in the first pair of examples, i.e. 40 and 41, the conjoined subjects behave like the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun in terms of agreement with the verb. In the second pair of examples, i.e. 42 and 43, the conjoined subjects behave like the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural pronoun and the conjoined subjects, in the third pair of examples, i.e. 44 and 45, behave like 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronoun in terms of agreement with the verb.

Now, we make a derivation for a future tense sentence, reproduced as example no. 46, below and see how Case is assigned in it to the external argument, i.e. conjoined double subject, and the internal argument.

46. *Zə*                      *ao*      *Saleem*                      *ba*      *pen*                      *mathawo.*  
 I.NOM                      and      Saleem.NOM                      will      pen.ACC                      break.1PL  
 ‘I and Saleem will break the pen.’

Thus, the derivation for the future tense is the same except that the Pashto modal clitic *ba* adjoins *vP*, resulting in an extended *vP*. The rest of the processes and valuation/ checking of uninterpretable features remain the same as we have discussed for the present tense. As for our purposes assignment of Case is the most important aspect, therefore, let us see how Case assignment takes place here. An agree relation establishes between *v*, a probe, and the DP *pen* in complement to *V* position, a goal. As a result of this agree relation the  $[u\phi]$  of *v* are valued as 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular male, while in return, accusative Case is assigned to the DP. However, because of the peculiar nature of Pashto language, this agreement does not get visible.

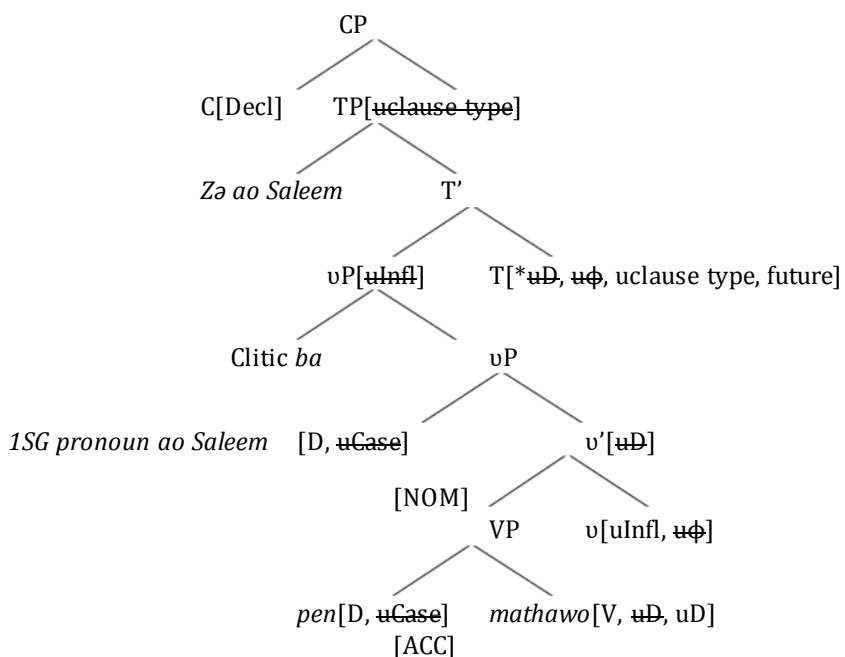


Figure 3: Derivation for *zə ao Saleem ba pen mathawo* (future tense)

Another agree relation establishes between the conjoined subject *1<sup>st</sup> PSG ao Saleem*, a goal, and T, a probe, in terms of  $\phi$ -features. The conjoined subject behaves as a syntactic whole and it shows the phi-features of 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun. Thus, the  $[\text{u}\phi]$  of T are valued as 1<sup>st</sup> person plural, and nominative Case is assigned to the conjoined subject, so that both the parts show nominative Case. Because of the nominative Case, the conjoined subject takes the spell-out or morphological form of *zə ao Saleem*. This agreement on T does not get visible on T, as has been the case with other Pashto constructions as well; rather, it gets visible on V.

The example, we discussed, had a noun as its object DP, therefore, we were empirically unable to substantiate the view that the Case is accusative, not nominative. We will now give examples of conjoined subject future tense sentences, which have pronouns used either in the subject or in the object positions, to substantiate our view.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Pronouns

47. *Zə*            *ao*            *Saleem*            *ba*            *hagha*                            *takhnawo.*  
 I.NOM            and            Saleem.NOM            will            he.distant.NOM            tickle.1PL  
 'I and Saleem will beat/ will be beating him.'  
 (Here we use the indefinite aspect for convenience).

48. *Thə*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *hagoi*      *takhnawai.*  
 you.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    they.distant.ACC    tickle.2PL  
 ‘You and Saleem will beat them.’
49. *Hagha*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *day*      *takhnawi.*  
 he.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    he.near.ACC    tickle.3  
 ‘He and Saleem will beat him.’
50. *Da*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *doi*      *takhnawi.*  
 she.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    they.near.ACC    tickle.3  
 ‘She and Saleem will tickle them.’
51. *Doi*           *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *hagha*      *takhnawi.*  
 they.near.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    he.ACC    tickle.3  
 ‘They and Saleem will tickle him.’

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Person Pronouns

52. *Zə*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *tha*      *takhnawo.*  
 I.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    you.ACC    tickle.1PL  
 ‘I and Saleem will tickle you.’
53. *Hagha*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *thaso*      *takhnawi.*  
 he.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    you.ACC    tickle.3  
 ‘He and Saleem will beat you.’

## 1<sup>st</sup> Person Pronouns

54. *Thə*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *ma*      *takhnawai.*  
 you.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    I.ACC    tickle.2PL  
 ‘You and Saleem will tickle me.’
55. *Thaso*      *ao*      *Saleem*      *ba*      *moong*      *takhnawai.*  
 you.NOM    and    Saleem.NOM    will    we.ACC    tickle.2PL  
 ‘You and Saleem will tickle us.’

Based on the discussion and examples above, we can make a paradigm for the conjoined/ double subject and object positions along with the morphological cases they exhibit.

Joint Effect of Conjoined Subjects	Subject's Case Form	Object's Case Form
3rd Person Plural (distant)	Nominative	Accusative
3rd Person Plural (near)	Nominative	Accusative
2nd Person Plural	Nominative	Accusative
1st Person Plural	Nominative	Accusative



The examples above and the paradigm once again show that the conjoined subjects in the future tense also behave like a single subject and the verb shows agreement with the joint syntactic and semantic effect of the two conjoined subjects. They also substantiate the hypothesis that  $\phi$ -features agreement between T and the relevant nominal results in nominative Case, while  $\phi$ -features agreement between *v* or Voice and the relevant nominal results in accusative Case.

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper, we analysed the assignment of structural Case in Pashto *ao* conjoined subject constructions. We observed that whereas in other languages, in majority of cases, the verb agrees with either the first conjunct or the last conjunct of the conjoined subject, in Pashto, on the other hand, the verb did not agree with either of the two. Rather, the verb agreed with the joint syntactic and semantic equivalent of the *ao* ‘and’ conjoined subject. To deal with the situation, we propounded the idea that the *ao* conjoined subject behave as a syntactic whole, thus having one [uCase] feature, and moving to the spec TP as a single unit. Thus, our proposed derivation was able to deal with the *ao* conjoined subject constructions, in the three tenses, effectively.

For structural Case assignment in Pashto *ao* conjoined subject constructions, we proposed that  $\phi$ -features agreement between the functional head T and a nominal results in assigning nominative Case to that nominal, while  $\phi$ -features agreement between the functional head *v* or Voice and a nominal results in assigning accusative Case to that nominal. For the present tense *ao* conjoined subject constructions, we saw that the subjects bore nominative Cases while the objects bore accusative Cases. In the past tense, we saw that the conjoined subjects bore accusative Cases while the objects carried nominative Cases. In the future tense constructions, we observed that the conjoined subjects had nominative Cases while the objects had accusative Cases. Thus, these patterns not only substantiated the above stated hypotheses, but also explained the nature of split-ergativity in Pashto, which was nothing but the failure of *v* to assign accusative Case in the past tense.

There was an issue, which could prove a profitable arena for future research, but was avoid due to the intensive nature of the project at hand. This issue related to the agreement patterns of Pashto conjoined subject constructions. This could prove an interesting topic, if studied in the light of Marušič, Navins, and Saksida (2007), Bošković (2009, 2010), and Benmamoun et al. (2010). They have tried to present minimalist accounts of conjunct agreements in different languages. Thus, the conjoined subjects agreements in Pashto could lead a long way in paving the way for a cross-linguistic account of conjoined subjects agreement.

## Notes

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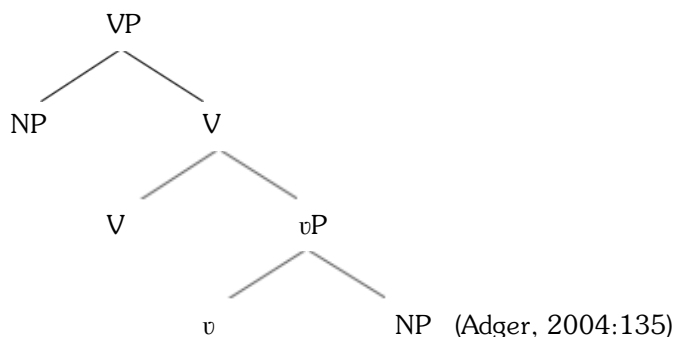
- <sup>1</sup> Normally, a capital ‘C’ is used in spelling for syntactic (abstract/structural) Case, while a small ‘c’ is used in spelling for semantic cases, morphological cases, and cases in general.
- <sup>2</sup> In the first conjunct agreement, the first conjunct of the two preverbal/postverbal conjoined conjuncts agrees with the verb.
- <sup>3</sup> In the second or last conjunct agreement, the second or the last conjunct of the two preverbal/postverbal conjoined conjuncts agrees with the verb.
- <sup>4</sup> Among Pashto grammarians, there are two schools of thought on the nature of the base form of the verb. Raverty (1855) and most of the traditional grammarians after him believe that ‘*māsdər*’ which can be roughly translated as ‘infinitive’ form, is the base form of the verb in Pashto. This form of verb is characterized by the morphological marking of ‘*ɟ*’ at the end of the word. This is similar to the English alphabet ‘L’ in its phonetic realization. However, Tegey and Robson (1996) came with the idea that ‘infinitive’ is not the base form of the verb, rather different verbs have different base forms, having different endings. So following the majority of grammarians our verb will have the base form *lekəl*, while following Tegey and Robson(1996) our verb will have the base form *leek*. On a personal note, we think that the formulation of Tegey and Robson (1996) may have some sophistication but the formulation of the rest of the grammarians has the advantage that it is very easy to learn. To avoid any controversy and to give a comprehensive picture, we have given both forms of the verb.
- <sup>5</sup> Hierarchy of Projection Principle is an innovation on the part of Adger (2004). This is what he says about Hierarchy of Projection:

In order to keep the relation between little *v* and VP conceptually distinct from selection, we will just assume that there is a special Hierarchy of Projections, such that whenever we have a little *v*, it always has a VP complement. In an intuitive sense, little *v*P is an extension of the projection of VP, in that it is still verbal, but it adds further semantic information. We will state the Hierarchy of Projections as follows:

(112)  $v > V$

If the Hierarchy of Projection is not met, then the structure will be ruled out. This means, for example, that the following structure is not generated by the system:

(113)



Later on, he completes his hierarchy of projection and gives it the following order:

“Hierarchy of Projection:

Clausal: C > T > (Neg) > (Perf) > (Prog) > (Pass) > v > V

Nominal: D > (Poss) > n > N” (p. 333).

The items enclosed in parentheses show that they are optional.

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