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## Structural Case Assignment in Pashto Unaccusatives

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### Abstract

This paper is an effort to explore the assignment of structural/abstract Case in Pashto unaccusative constructions from a minimalist perspective. A three pronged approach is adopted in this paper: one, it takes the minimalist hypothesis that  $\phi$ -features agreement between a functional category/ head and a relevant nominal results in assigning structural Case to that nominal as its starting point and applies the same to Pashto constructions in the present, past, and future tenses; two, as so far no structures have been suggested for Pashto unaccusative constructions, therefore, this paper suggests three structures/ derivations for unaccusative Pashto verbs in the three Pashto tenses; three, for Pashto unaccusative constructions this paper hypothesizes that  $\phi$ -features agreement between T and the relevant nominal results in assigning nominative Case to that nominal and  $\phi$ -features agreement between  $v$  or Voice functional category and the relevant nominal results in assigning accusative Case to that nominal. These three strands are put together and the output is evaluated and tested at the touch stone of different Pashto examples taken from a wide spectrum of daily life.

**Keywords:** Case assignment, Pashto, nominative Case, accusative Case, functional category

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### Introduction

Nouns and pronouns, with their varied case forms, have always been of interest for grammarians. This interest is visible in the fact that during the last fifty-odd years a few dozen names have been coined for the different forms of cases. This proliferation in names and information about case has, instead of making things

easier, made the phenomenon of case more confusing and elusive; thanks to the treatment of case along syntactic, semantic and morphological lines at the same time. The generative enterprise, especially the Government and Binding model (Chomsky, 1980, 1981), introduced a certain amount of clarity by separating the notions of semantic, syntactic, and morphological from one another. This the GB model achieved, on the one hand, by restricting the semantic roles of nominal elements/noun phrases (NPs)/ determiner phrases (DPs) to non-case-related functions ‘theta-roles’ within a separate module called ‘theta’ theory; and on the other, it distinguished syntactic Case<sup>1</sup> (represented with a capital C, for ‘Case’) from morphological case. The Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1993, 1995), successor to the GB model, also follows GB in the Case theory, but with certain modifications: “within the Minimalist Program, the basic role of abstract Case has remained essentially the same, but as the formal properties of syntactic derivation have been rethought, so has the formal implementation of Case” (McFadden, 2004:6).

Pashto, belonging to the Indo-Iranian family of languages, is an important language in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It has neither rich nor poor inflection for Case on nominal. While the pronouns, in most cases, show morphological markings for Case in Pashto, nouns, in very rare cases, show morphological markings for Case. The purpose of this paper is to look at the phenomenon of structural/ abstract Case assignment in Pashto unaccusative constructions through a minimalist perspective; thus to see whether the rules for Case-assignment/ Case-checking/Case-licensing, so-called in the technical jargon of the Minimalist Program, are applicable to structural Case assignment in Pashto or not. We propose the hypotheses that, in Pashto,  $\phi$ -features agreement between the functional head T and the relevant nominal results in assigning nominative Case to that nominal, and  $\phi$ -features agreement between the functional head *v* or the functional head Voice and the relevant nominal results in assigning accusative Case to that nominal. In addition, we propose a morphological hypothesis, a by-product of our endeavour on Case assignment that in the morphological component the agreement for nominative Case between T and the relevant nominal is visible while agreement for accusative Case between *v* or Voice and the relevant nominal is invisible. This paper would try to approve and substantiate the above mentioned hypotheses through empirical evidence.

The paper is laid out as follows. In section, 2 we present a thumbnail sketch of the developments that have taken place in the arena of structural Case, and the history of structural Case in Pashto. Section 3, gives a very brief introduction to accusativity and accusativity in Pashto. Section 4 deals with the phenomenon of Case assignment in the present tense unaccusative Pashto constructions. In section 5, we observe whether past tense has any effect on the dynamics of

structural Case assignment in unaccusative constructions in Pashto or not; as it has a lot of effect in other constructions, due to the phenomenon of split-ergativity in Pashto. Section 6 deals with the future tense/time unaccusative constructions, making arrangements for the placement of Pashto future marker, *ba*, and at the same time taking care to note whether the pattern of structural Case assignment in future tense parallels the present tense or the past tense. The final section presents our conclusions and suggests some avenues for future research.

### Literature Review

The history of structural Case is as old as the generative enterprise itself. However, space limitations do not permit us to follow its historical developments right from the beginning. Rather, we limit ourselves to the last three decades, especially the last days of the GB and the entire period of the Minimalist Program; since developments that took place during this time-span are of more relevance to our purposes, having a direct bearing on our endeavour. During the generative era, many mechanisms have been proposed for the assignment of structural Case to the nominal/DPs. The chief among these are: a) functional categories (T, v, n, and D) and agreement in terms of features (Chomsky, 2000, 2001; Schütze (1997; Carstens, 2001; Bejar, 2003; Tanaka, 2005; Chomsky, 2005, 2006; Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou, 2006; Bobaljik & Branigan, 2006; Richardson, 2007; Legate, 2008; Baker, 2008; Preminger, 2009; Baker & Vinokurova, 2010); b) that structural Case is an uninterpretable tense feature on the relevant DP (Pesetsky & Torrego, 2001); c) that mood and modality are responsible for the assignment of Case (Aygen, 2002); d) that, in one way or another, aspect assigns Case (Itkonen, 1976; Ramchand, 1997; Arad, 1998; Kiparsky, 1998; Torrego, 1998; Svenonius, 2001, 2002b; Kratzer, 2004); and, e) that Case is licensed by location and person (Ritter & Wiltschko, 2009). Our hypothesis for the assignment of structural Case in Pashto unaccusative constructions is that structural Case in Pashto is assigned as a result of  $\phi$ -features agreement between a functional category and a nominal/DP. Thus, our hypothesis is a version of the ‘functional categories and agreement in terms of features’ mechanism.

Case assignment in Pashto has not been studied from a purely generative perspective or from a structural Case perspective — let alone from a minimalist perspective. All that we have are traditional accounts of case. Among the traditional treatments meted out to case in Pashto, two trends are visible among Pashto grammarians. One group has divided case along semantico-syntactic paradigm while the other group has classified case along morphological lines. In the former group, Raverty (1855) is the first well-known grammarian of Pashto. He divides case in seven groups, namely, the nominative, the genitive, the dative,

the accusative, the vocative, the ablative and the actor or instrumental case. In addition, he gives nine declensions of Pashto nouns, based on various methods of inflection and the formation of plural nominative. Thus, in his classification the nominative, the genitive, the dative and the accusative correspond to the syntactic dimension while the ablative and the instrumental correspond to the semantic dimension of case classification. The vocative case mentioned in his classification is considered a case marking which is “oddly behaving” (Kibort, 2008).

Lorimer (1902) was the first grammarian who studied the grammar of Waziri<sup>2</sup> Pashto. In his book, he divides case in Pashto in two groups — the nominative and the oblique. Later on, in the same book he adds the vocative and the numeral case in the inventory of Pashto case system. Roos-Keppel (1922) divides Pashto cases in seven groups, namely, the nominative, the accusative, the genitive, the instrumental, the dative, the ablative, the locative and the vocative. Also, he gives eight declensions of Pashto nouns based on these cases. As such, it seems that he follows Raverty in his schematization of case in Pashto. Shafeev (1964) has divided case system in Pashto into the absolute, the oblique, the vocative, the genitive, the dative, the instrumental and the prepositional case. Rashteen (1994) is of the opinion that Pashto nouns have four cases according to meaning; they are nominative, objective, vocative and connective. It is evident that Rashteen has no idea of the dichotomy between syntactic and semantic aspects. Zayar (2005) is considered an important addition in the inventory of Pashto language grammarians; however, he fails to rid himself of the influence that Raverty has exerted on Pashto grammar. Like Raverty and Roos-Keppel he also divides Pashto case into seven groups.

Penzl (1955) is perhaps the first grammarian who classifies cases in Pashto on morphological basis, proposing four groups: direct, oblique<sub>1</sub>, oblique<sub>2</sub>, and vocative. He places nouns without prepositions, postpositions and transpositions into direct case while nouns with prepositions, postpositions and transpositions into oblique case. Mackenzie (1987) posits four cases for nouns in Pashto: direct, oblique, vocative and prepositional. Khattak (1988) also believes that Pashto has direct, oblique and vocative cases. Following this trend, Tegey and Robson (1996) divide nominal cases into direct and oblique forms.

We have a problem at hand: whereas the semantico-syntactic classification is too complicated, the morphological classification is too simplistic to warrant attention. All this research in different directions has made the phenomenon of case more elusive, and our effort will be not only to simplify this hotchpotch of cases, but also, at the same time, take care not to let comprehensiveness be sacrificed for brevity nor brevity for comprehensiveness.

### Unaccusativity and Pashto

As no attempt, so far, has been made either to describe the assignment of structural Case in Pashto unaccusative constructions or to describe the structures the way that would suit our purposes; we will first give some idea of the unaccusative constructions in Pashto, and then analyse the assignment of structural Case in them. Like in other languages, the main difference between unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs in Pashto lies with reference to the initial placement of the subject nominal/DP. Perlmutter's (1978) Unaccusativity Hypothesis says that the subject of unaccusative verbs, not being a true agent, originates in the complement to V position, while the subject of unergative verbs starts in the canonical subject position; i.e., specifier VP/vP. From a generative point of view, if the unergatives have no object nominals/DPs to assign Case to by the small *v*, in unaccusative constructions we have nominals/DPs originating in the complement to V position, but the little *v* is unable to assign accusative Case to it. Thus, we believe that *v* in Pashto unaccusatives represents the typical defective *v* (Chomsky, 2001), lacking  $[u\phi]$  features; hence the ability to assign accusative Case.

In very simple words, unaccusative verbs are those verbs where the DP occupying the canonical subject position does not do the act; i.e., it is not an actor or an agent; rather, it is the receiver of the action communicated by the verb. Thus, in most cases it is the theme/patient. Whether it can also be the goal or not in Pashto language, would be going too deep into the intricacies, not allowed by the limitation of the topic; therefore, a cover term 'theme' we would use. In fact, the introduction of the Uniformity of Theta Role Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH)<sup>3</sup> (Baker, 1988) has been instrumental in providing a convenient way of maintaining the distinction between the unergative and the unaccusative constructions in terms of structure. In addition, the generative enterprise tried to deal with unergative and unaccusative constructions through different efforts (Marantz, 1984; Hale & Keyser, 1993; Chomsky, 1995; Collins, 1995; Kratzer, 1996; Bowers, 2002; Adger, 2004; Adger & Ramchand, 2003; Collins, 2005; Hornstein, Nunes, & K. Grohmann, 2005; Harley, 2007; Radford, 2009; Gelderen, forthcoming) to name only a few. Of course, we cannot follow all of them at the same time, though we would seek guidance from their worthy efforts whenever we felt the need.

In Pashto, in majority of cases, the same verb functions both as unaccusative and as transitive. Thus, they stand in contrast with the unaccusative verbs in English, which can be segregated and put in a separate group. In case of unaccusative verbs in Pashto, it is the context/situation and the number of participants in an action that dictates the identity of an unaccusative verb at a particular time. For instance:

1. *David ma<sub>l</sub> sho.* (Unaccusative)  
David dead be. PST  
'David died.'
2. *David geda<sub>l</sub> ma<sub>l</sub> k<sub>l</sub>o.* (Transitive)  
David jackel kill do. PST  
'David killed a jackal.'

In examples no.1 and 2, the same Pashto verb serves as unaccusative and transitive respectively. In English, this contrast is visible by the fact that English uses two verb forms 'dead' and 'kill', while Pashto uses the single verb form *ma<sub>l</sub>* for both the situations.

### Structural Case Assignment in Unaccusative Present Tense Constructions

A derivation for a Pashto verb *wareg/wardə<sub>l</sub>*<sup>4</sup> 'fall' is made to see how structural Case is assigned in the present tense unaccusative constructions:

3. *Baran waregi*  
rain fall.3SG  
'Rain is falling'/'It is raining.'

In a typical minimalist treatment, the nominal/DP *baran* having the categorial c-selectional feature [D] and uninterpretable [uCase] merges with the unaccusative verb *wareg/wardə<sub>l</sub>* having [V, uD] features to form VP. As a result of this merge, the [uD] of the verb is satisfied/deleted. As the verb in this particular instance is a one place predicate, therefore, it would assign theta role to one argument. The argument in this particular instance is considered a theme argument because in the simplest of words it does not act; rather, it is the receiver of the action. The motivator for this merge, following Adger (2004) and Hornstein, Nunes, and Grohmann (2005), is the verb as it is this verb that will ultimately project after the merge, and also it is the verb that has to satisfy its uninterpretable [uD] feature.

Adger (2004) believes that the unaccusative verb is unique in the sense that it does not assign Case to the object:

This line of reasoning forces us to assume that the little *v* which occurs with an unaccusative predicate lacks both case features and a selectional uN-feature (and hence, a specifier). In fact, it is the lack of accusative case with these predicates which gives them their name: unaccusatives. (p. 183)

Chomsky uses the small  $v^*$  for verbs which have agents and  $v$  for verbs which have only themes. He believes that  $v$  is the defective one. However, we would not follow that distinction. Rather, we would use the small  $v$  in the derivation with the understanding that it does not assign Case if the verb is unaccusative.

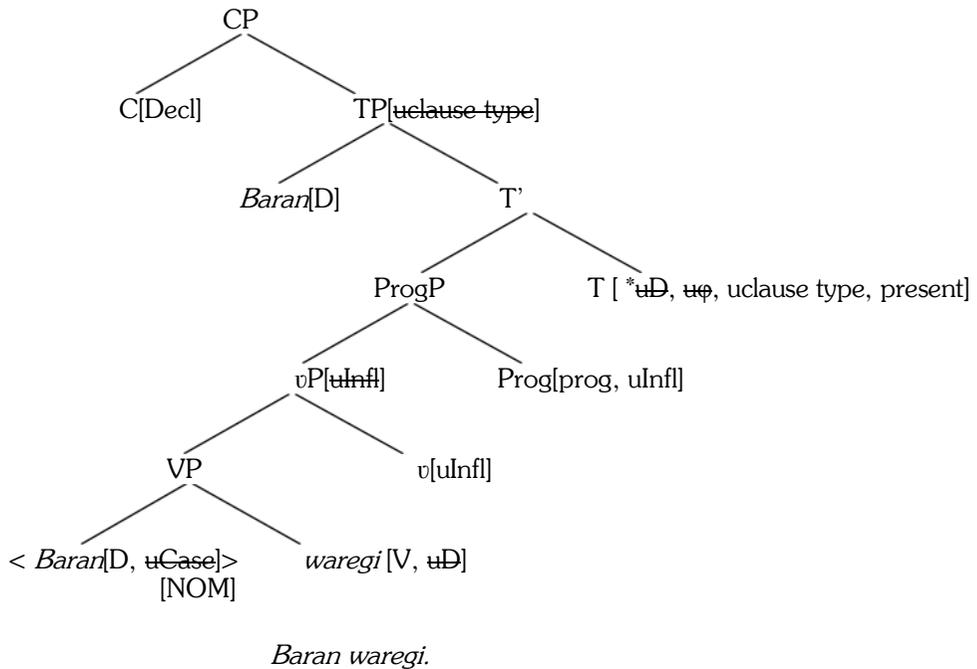
The VP merges with the small  $v$  [uInfl], under the Hierarchy of Projection Principle<sup>5</sup>, to form  $v'$ . As the verb here has been used as unaccusative, therefore,  $v$  lacks [u $\phi$ ], hence the ability to assign accusative Case. Unlike English, verb in this particular instance does not move to  $v$ . As  $v$  here does not have to satisfy the [uD] feature of the V, while the other [uD] has already been deleted in the initial merge, therefore, there is no need of spec  $v$ P. The little  $v$  has the uninterpretable tense feature [uInfl] and it needs to be satisfied/ checked if the derivation has to converge. As it is a progressive construction, therefore, Prog (Adger, 2004) having [prog, uInfl] features merges with the  $v$ P to form ProgP and values the [uInfl] of  $v$  as Progressive. The ProgP itself has the uninterpretable tense feature [uInfl] and it also needs satisfaction/ valuation. At this stage, T merges with the  $v$ P. T has strong [\*uD]<sup>6</sup> feature, interpretable tense feature 'present', uninterpretable phi-features, and uninterpretable [uclause type]. T values the uninterpretable [uInfl] of  $v$  as 'present'. An agree relation establishes between the uninterpretable phi-features of T, acting as a probe, and the interpretable features of the theme DP *baran*, acting as a goal. The probe searches for a goal in the specifier of  $v$ P as has been the tradition with transitive construction. As we have already said that the specifier of  $v$ P in this particular instance is empty, therefore, the probe searches for a goal in other places and ultimately finds it in the complement to V position. The probe and goal stand in the following relation at the time of agree:

[T {P:?, N:?, G:?, Infl: PRESENT}] [*baran* {P:1; N:SG; G:M; CASE:?}]

The agree relation is established between T and the object DP *baran* in terms of person, number and gender. It is important to note that the interpretable  $\phi$ -features as well as tense in the present tense Pashto unaccusative sentences do not get pronounced on T. So here the agreement remains invisible. Instead, it gets pronounced on the verb *wareg/warechl* as *waregi*. Also, if we look at the agree relation, we can see that the probe searches for the goal in its c-command domain, thus sticking to the tradition that is followed by the most minimalist practitioners.

As a result of the agree relation nominative Case is assigned to the DP *baran*. T has also a strong uninterpretable [\*uD] feature, commonly referred to as the EPP (Extended Projection Principle). Because of this strong [\*uD] feature, the nominal or pronominal DP in the object position moves to spec TP to satisfy this feature. The <

> symbol shows the movement of the items inside it. At this stage C having [Decl] feature merges with the TP to satisfy/delete the [uclause type] feature that still remains unchecked and ultimately had got projection on TP. This merge results in satisfaction/ valuation of [uclause type] as declarative, and the overall CP is obtained:



**Figure: 1**

As this particular example has a noun as its nominal/DP while nouns in Pashto do not have overt morphological markings for Case, therefore, we are unable to show the nominative Case explicitly. However, we can overcome this problem if we use pronouns instead of nouns; as pronouns<sup>7</sup> in Pashto have overt markings for Case.

3. *Hagha* *prevazzi.*  
 he/she.distant.NOM fall.PRS.3  
 'S/he falls/ is falling.' (We are not falling into the intricacies of continuous and indefinite tense in Pashto)
4. *Hagoi* *prevazzi.*  
 they.distant.NOM fall.PRS.3  
 'They fall/ are falling.'
5. *Dey* *prevazzi.*  
 he.near.NOM fall.PRS.3  
 'He falls/ is falling.'

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 6. <i>Do</i>              | <i>prevazzi.</i>  |
| she.near.NOM              | fall.PRS.3        |
| 'She falls/ is falling.'  |                   |
| 7. <i>Doi</i>             | <i>prevazzi.</i>  |
| they.near.NOM             | fall.PRS.3        |
| 'They fall/ are falling.' |                   |
| 8. <i>Thə</i>             | <i>prevazzay.</i> |
| you.NOM                   | fall.PRS.2SG      |
| 'You fall/ are falling.'  |                   |
| 9. <i>Thaso</i>           | <i>prevazzai.</i> |
| you.NOM                   | fall.PRS.2PL      |
| 'You fall/ are falling.'  |                   |
| 10. <i>Zə</i>             | <i>prevazzum.</i> |
| I.NOM                     | fall.PRS.1SG      |
| 'I fall/ am falling.'     |                   |
| 11. <i>Moong</i>          | <i>prevazzo.</i>  |
| we.NOM                    | fall.PRS.1PL      |
| 'We fall/ are falling.'   |                   |

All the pronouns, in the above examples, show that they are in the nominative Case. Thus, they substantiate the minimalist idea that nominals in unaccusative constructions receive nominative Case because of phi-features agreement between T and the nominal in complement to V position. However, it is worth consideration to know/determine that the subject DP has received Case from T and not from the little *v*. In other words, empirical evidence will be needed to substantiate the claim. For this we will take the two examples of pronouns from monotransitive constructions where they show the accusative forms when they are assigned Case in the spec *v*P position by the little *v*.

- |                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 12. <i>*Tha</i>          | <i>prevazzay.</i> |
| you.ACC                  | fall.PRS.2SG      |
| 'You fall/ are falling.' |                   |
| 13. <i>*Ma</i>           | <i>prevazzum.</i> |
| I.ACC                    | fall.PRS.1SG      |
| 'I fall/ am falling.'    |                   |

Here, these examples show that if the pronouns in the subject position are in the accusative, Case then these sentences become ungrammatical. The whole idea is something like this: if the nominal in the complement to V position is assigned Case in that position by the little *v*, then on its subsequent movement to the spec TP, it should show the accusative Case which it had received in the complement to V position. However, as we have seen above, pronouns with accusative Case in

the surface subject position are ungrammatical in Pashto unaccusative present tense sentences. Thus, this substantiates the claim made earlier in the derivation that *v* in Pashto unaccusative constructions is defective, lacking  $[\text{u}\phi]$  features; hence unable to assign accusative Case to the nominal in the complement to *V* position.

### Structural Case Assignment in Unaccusative Past Tense Constructions

The unaccusatives, discussed with reference to the present tense, have their counterparts in the past tense. Hence we will derive a derivation for a typical Pashto past tense unaccusative sentence, *Hagha prevatha* ‘she fell/ was falling’ and see how structural Case is assigned in it, as it is the main focus of our paper.

14. *Hagha prevatha.*  
 She.NOM fall.PRS.3SGF  
 ‘She fell.’

The derivation for example no. 15 is given in figure no.2:

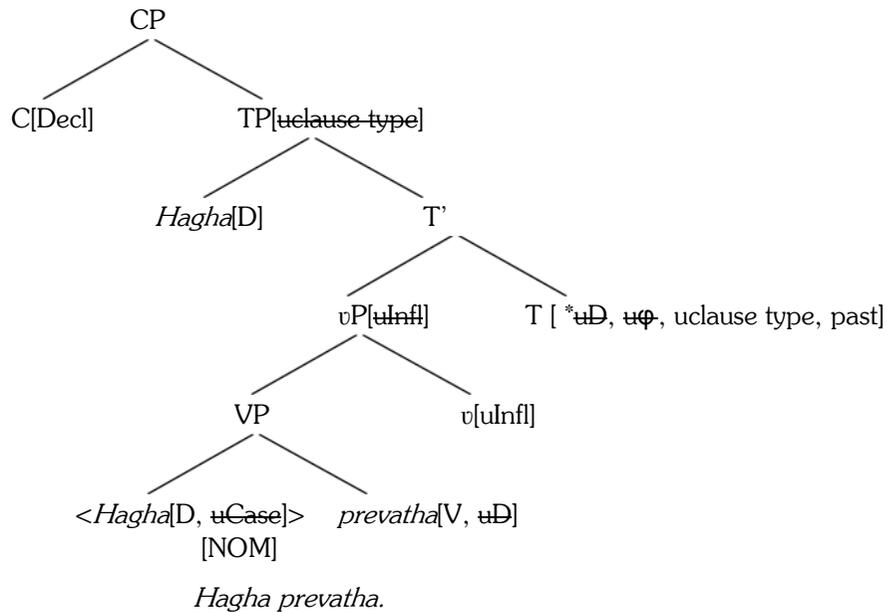


Figure: 2.

The derivation in figure no. 2 shows that it is almost the same as it is for the present tense, with some minor changes. The derivation is the same till the *vP*, which projects the  $[\text{uInfl}]$  of *v*. Again, *v* here is defective, lacking  $[\text{u}\phi]$  features,

hence the ability to assign accusative Case to the nominal in complement to V position. Also, past tense unaccusative constructions are unique in the sense that in other Pashto past tense constructions the  $[u\phi]$  features are withheld by the functional category Voice, however, in unaccusative past tense constructions there is no Voice functional category. Hence, at no stage accusative Case is assigned. To check/ value  $[u\text{Infl}]$  of  $v$ , T having  $[*uD, u\phi, \text{uclause type, past}]$  features, merges with the  $vP$ . T' is formed, while T, acting as a probe, agrees with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular female goal, in terms of person, number, and gender  $\phi$ -features. Thus, the  $[u\phi]$  of T is valued as 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular female, and in return T assign nominative Case to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular female pronoun. As a result of the nominative Case 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular female pronoun gets the phonetic realization as *hagha*. The  $\phi$ -features of T along with the tense do not get pronounced on T; rather, they get pronounced on the verb as *prevatha*. Thus, even in the past tense, agreement between T and a nominal is visible. The rest of the processes are the same that we have described for the present tense.

At this stage a relevant question arises, as what will be the consequence if we consider the unaccusative verb as behaving like a normal verb. In that case the nominal/DP in the object position will receive the accusative Case and after all the relevant operations and movements we will get the following structure:

15. \**Haghay*                      *prevatha*.  
       she.ACC                        fall.PST.3SGF  
       ‘Se fell/ was falling.’

Thus, this example clearly shows that the sentence will be ungrammatical if the unaccusative verb in the past tense behaves like an ordinary verb.

As example no. 15, deals with only one instance of Case assignment, therefore, we are not in a position to say that this is the case with other unaccusative constructions as well. As such, we will now give examples which contain Pashto pronouns and we will observe whether the same results obtain or not.

16. *Hagha*                                      *prevatho*.  
       he/she.distant.NOM                      fall.PST.3SGM  
       ‘He fell/ was falling.’
17. *Hagha*                                      *prevatha*.  
       he/she.distant.NOM                      fall.PST.3SGF  
       ‘She fell/ was falling.’

18. *Hagoi* *prevathal/prevath.*  
 They.distant.NOM fall.PST.3PLM  
 ‘They (males) fell/ were falling.’
19. *Hagoi* *prevathay.*  
 they.distant.NOM fall.PST.3PLF  
 ‘They (females) fell/ were falling.’
20. *Day* *prevatho.*  
 he.near.NOM fall.PST.3SGM  
 ‘He fell/ was falling.’
21. *Do* *prevatha.*  
 she.near.NOM fall.PST.3SGF  
 ‘She fell/ was falling.’
22. *Doi* *prevathal/prevath.*  
 they.near.NOM fall.PST.3PLM  
 ‘They (males) fell/ were falling.’
23. *Doi* *prevathay.*  
 they.near.NOM fall.PST.3PLF  
 ‘They (females) fell/ were falling.’
24. *Thə* *prevathay.*  
 you.NOM fall.PST.2SG  
 ‘You fell/ were falling.’
25. *Thaso* *prevathai.*  
 you.NOM fall.PST.2PL  
 ‘You fell/ were falling.’
26. *Zə* *prevathum.*  
 I.NOM fall.PST.1SG  
 ‘I fell/ was falling.’
27. *Moong* *prevatho.*  
 we.NOM fall.PST.1PL  
 ‘We fell/ were falling.’

So far as we have understood, the difference in the given unaccusative past tense verb, between indefinite and the continuous aspect lies not in the morphology of the verb; rather it seems to us that it lies in the phonetic realization of the verb; i.e., it is related to the intonation of the word. For instance, in the sentence *hagha prevatho* if we say the verb *prevatho* with one falling swoop then it means ‘he fell’; however, if we say the verb in three separate syllables *pre*, *va* and *tho*, then it means ‘he was falling’. This was a brief excursion into another field; now let us get back to our discussion.

In the above examples, we can see that all the pronouns in the surface subject positions have nominative Case. Thus, we can confidently claim that the derivation



The derivation is the same as for the present and past tenses, until *vP* is reached. At this stage a modal clitic *ba* adjoins<sup>9</sup> with the *vP* to form the extended *vP*. The [uInfl] which is still not checked/ deleted finds projection on the extended *vP*. The rest of the processes are the same as we have described for the present tense.

For our purposes, the most important step is that of Case assignment. As *v* is defective, lacking [u $\phi$ ] features, hence unable to assign accusative Case, therefore, an agree relation establishes between the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun and T in terms of  $\phi$ -features, and the  $\phi$ -features of the probe T are valued by the goal 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun as 3SG, while nominative Case is assigned to the DP 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun. As a result of receiving the nominative Case, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun gets the nominative morphological form of *hagha*. In Pashto future unaccusative verb clauses, this agreement does not get pronounced on T, rather it gets pronounced on V.

As we have already postulated that an unaccusative verb or *v* for that purpose does not license Case, therefore, at this stage a hypothetical question can be raised as, what will be the consequences of considering the unaccusative verb in the future tense as behaving like a normal verb. In that case the DP in the object position will receive the accusative Case and after all the relevant operations and movements we will get the following surface structure:

29. * <i>Hagha</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>prevzi.</i>
he/she.ACC	will	fall.PRS.3
'He/She will fall.'		

The above example illustrates the fact that if we do not give special status to the unaccusative verb, we will have a situation where the nominal/DP will have an accusative Case. Consequently, such sentences will be declared ungrammatical, causing our derivations to crash.

As, the derivation in figure no.3, for example no. 29, deals with only one instance of Case assignment, therefore, it needs further substantiation in the form of other examples. As such, examples which contain all the Pashto pronouns are given to see whether the same results obtain or not. Our preference for pronouns instead of nouns owes much to the morphological forms of the former.

30. <i>Hagha</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>prevzi.</i>
he/she.distant.NOM	will	fall.PRS.3
'He/she will fall'.		

31. <i>Hagoi</i> they.distant.NOM 'They will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzi.</i> fall.PRS.3
32. <i>Day</i> he.near.NOM 'He will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzi.</i> fall.PRS.3
33. <i>Do</i> she.near.NOM 'She will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzi.</i> fall.PRS.3
34. <i>Doi</i> they.near.NOM 'They will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzi.</i> fall.PRS.3
35. <i>Thə</i> you.NOM 'You will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzay.</i> fall.PRS.2SG
36. <i>Thaso</i> you.NOM 'You will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzai.</i> fall.PRS.2PL
37. <i>Zə</i> I.NOM 'I will fall.'	<i>ba</i>	<i>prevzum.</i> will fall.PRS.1SG
38. <i>Moong</i> we.NOM 'We will fall.'	<i>ba</i> will	<i>prevzo.</i> fall.PRS.1PL

In the above examples, we can see that all the pronouns in the surface subject positions have nominative Case. Thus, it can be confidently claimed that the derivation, we had made above, can be a representative for all the constructions, formed with unaccusative verbs in the future time/tense.

A few words about agreement pattern in terms of  $\phi$ -features are in place. In all the present, past, and future tense sentences above an agreement pattern arises where the subject agrees with the verb. Though, it has been an established fact that verbs in the past tense Pashto constructions agree with the object, not with the subject. Thus, this substantiates the morphological sub- hypothesis that agree relation between T and the relevant nominal for nominative Case assignment gets visible in Pashto, though not necessarily on T, as in all these cases it gets visible on V, and agree between *v* or Voice and the relevant nominal for accusative Case assignment remains invisible in Pashto.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we looked at the assignment of structural Case, especially nominative and accusative Cases, in unaccusative verb Pashto constructions from a minimalist perspective. We observed that in Pashto, unlike English and some other languages, the same verb can serve as unaccusative or as transitive. In the present tense unaccusative constructions, the structural Case to external arguments was assigned by T, through  $\phi$ -features agreement between T and the external argument. The normal tendency in Pashto constructions has been that the external arguments in the past tense Pashto constructions receive accusative Case, while the internal arguments are assigned nominative Case. However, in section 5 we saw that the external arguments possessed nominative Case, assigned by T, thus pointing to the fact that in unaccusative constructions accusative Case cannot be assigned at any stage. As such no need was felt for introducing Voice functional category in the Pashto past tense unaccusative constructions; unlike other Pashto past tense constructions where it is believed that the  $[u\phi]$  of  $v$  are withheld by Voice. In the future tense/ time unaccusative constructions the same pattern, i.e. T assigning nominative Case, prevailed, as is the case with other Pashto constructions in the future and present tenses. Also, the three derivations/ tree diagrams proposed for the three tenses were able to render the correct surface word orders for all the constructions in the three tenses.

All this points to the fact that the minimalist assumptions of Case assignment, namely,  $\phi$ -features agreement between T and the relevant nominal resulting in assigning nominative Case to that nominal, and  $\phi$ -features agreement between  $v$  or Voice and the relevant nominal resulting in assigning accusative Case to that nominal, hold equally good for Pashto language unaccusative constructions. Thus all the hypotheses propounded and the derivations suggested for structural Case assignment in Pashto unaccusative constructions stand substantiated and empirically justified. In addition, all the verbs showed agreement with the subjects in the unaccusative constructions, thus substantiating our morphological hypothesis, namely, that in Pashto agreement between  $v$  or Voice and the relevant nominal for accusative Case assignment is invisible, while agreement between T and the relevant nominal for nominative Case assignment is visible; however, this agreement does not necessarily get visible on T, rather in almost all cases it gets visible on  $v$  or V or both.

This paper also shows some areas that need further research, such as, the fact that the nouns and pronouns in the external argument position in the past unaccusative constructions show different Case morphology when seen in the context of the rest of the constructions in the past tense. Our solution for this has been that  $v$  in unaccusative verbs is defective, in terms of  $[u\phi]$  features, hence unable to assign

accusative Case. In other past tense Pashto constructions it is the Voice category that assigns accusative Case, however, there are no Voice categories in unaccusative constructions, therefore, at no stage the chance of accusative Case assignment arises. The Case will be nominative in the unaccusative verb constructions whether the argument is internal or external and the tense is either past or present or future. However, an independent cross-linguistic research on this topic would be a welcome addition.

Similarly, no doubt that in the syntactic component the agreement between a functional category, e.g. T and the relevant nominal is in terms of person, number, and gender features, while in the morphological component in majority of cases the visible agreement between T and the relevant nominal is in terms of person, number and gender; however, in some cases the visible agreement is only in terms of person and number and agreement in terms of gender is not visible. That why is it so, can prove an interesting research enterprise for those who are interested in syntax morphology interaction. Moreover, we left the topic about  $\theta$ -roles inconclusive on the point that whether the argument of an unaccusative verb in Pashto can be a goal or not, due to space limitations and its obvious irrelevance for our purposes. However, it can prove a challenging research topic for those who have interest in thematic roles and  $\theta$ -theory.

## 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> Waziri Pashto as its name indicates is a sub-variety of Pashto, spoken by the Wazir tribe, mostly living in North Waziristan, South Waziristan, Frontier Regions of Bannu and the newly created tehsil/ sub-district in Bannu district called Wazir Bagh.
  - <sup>3</sup> *The Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH)*: Identical thematic relationships between items are represented by identical structural relationships between those items at the level of D-structure.
  - <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 *masdar* which can be roughly translated as the infinitive, is the base form of the verb in Pashto. This form of the verb is characterized by the morphological marking of  $\text{J}$  at the end of the word. This is similar to the English alphabet L in its phonetic realization. However, Tegey & Robson (1996) came up with the idea that the infinitive is not the base form of the verb; rather different verbs have different base forms, having different endings. So, following the majority of the grammarians, our verb will have the base form *wardal*, while following Tegey & Robson (1996) our verb will have the base form *wareg*. On a personal note, we think that the formulation of Tegey & Robson (1996) may have some sophistication but the formulation of the rest of the grammarians has the advantage that it is very easy to be learnt. However, to avoid any controversy and to give a comprehensive picture, we have given both forms of the verb.

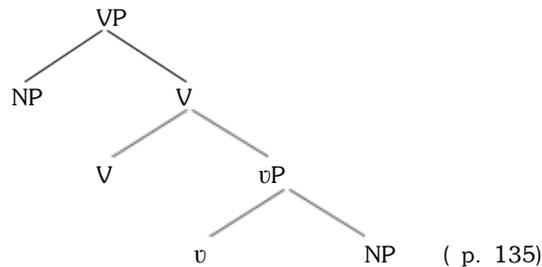
- <sup>5</sup> Hierarchy of Projection Principle is an innovation on the part of Adger (2004). This is what he says about Hierarchy of Projection:

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, 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 round brackets show that they are optional.

- <sup>6</sup> Following Adger (2004), we would use the symbol \* within brackets to show strong features. Of course, we would not use it outside the bracket as this symbol is also being used by grammarians for unacceptable/ ungrammatical constructions.
- <sup>7</sup> It would be better that the whole paradigm for strong Pashto personal pronouns is given, notwithstanding the fact that another paradigm for clitic pronouns or pronominal clitics exists, but they are irrelevant here:

Type of the pronoun	as subject	as object	as object of preposition
1S	<i>ə</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>ma</i>
1PL	<i>moong</i>	<i>moong</i>	<i>moong</i>
2S	<i>thə</i>	<i>tha</i>	<i>tha</i>
2PL	<i>thaso</i>	<i>thaso</i>	<i>thaso</i>
3S.M (distant)	<i>hagha</i>	<i>haghə</i>	<i>haghə</i>
3S.F (distant)	<i>hagha</i>	<i>haghay</i>	<i>haghay</i>
3PL (distant)	<i>hagoi</i>	<i>hagoi</i>	<i>hagoi</i>

3S.M (near)	<i>day</i>	<i>də</i>	<i>də</i>
3S.F (near)	<i>do</i>	<i>day</i>	<i>day</i>
3PL (near)	<i>doi</i>	<i>doi</i>	<i>doi</i>

- <sup>8</sup> Pashto grammarians do not agree among themselves whether Pashto has future tense or not. Clearly, there is a modal clitic *ba* in the future tense constructions in Pashto that differentiates present tense constructions from the future tense. We do not fall into the controversy whether future tense exists in Pashto or not. However, to satisfy both sides, we will give and analyse Case assignment in the so-called future tense /time constructions. That's why I have used tense/time instead of tense.
- <sup>9</sup> The terms adjunct, adjunction, adjoin, etc. have been the topic of a lot of discussion during the last three decades. We will try to keep ourselves away from the thorny issues involved with these topics. We will only restrict ourselves to the use of adjunction/adjoin in the sense that when an adjective/adjunct merges with a nominal it is not a pure merge in the sense that we find, for example, between a verb and a nominal, where the valuation of features and in most cases theta role assignment is involved; rather, it is a sort of merge where neither the valuation of features takes place, nor there is an assignment of theta-roles. Moreover, as adjuncts cannot be the heads of their constructions, therefore, whenever an adjunction/adjoin occurs the adjunct does not project, rather, the new formed structure is only the extension of the old structure, as for instance: an adjunction/adjoin of an adjunct to an NP will be an extended NP.

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