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Authors	Sigler, Michele
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Subject Positions in Standard Western Armenian

Michele Sigler

MIT

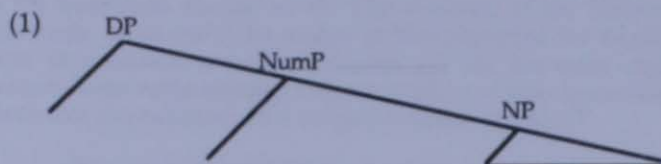
0. Introduction

The idea that both spec-TP and spec-AgrSP are subject positions, but for different types of subjects has been put forward for Icelandic, by Jonas (1994), Bobaljik and Jonas (1995), Vangsnes (1995), and for Celtic by Bobaljik and Carnie (1994). In this paper I explore subject positions in Standard Western Armenian (SWA) by examining properties of three types of nominal expressions that differ in terms of referentiality and specificity.¹ The first type is a morphologically bare NP that is nonreferential. The second is also morphologically unmarked. It is referential, but subject to certain interpretive restrictions. The third is morphologically marked and is specific. I argue that the three types of nominal expressions occupy different syntactic positions: sister to the verb, spec-TP and spec-AgrP, respectively. In the account proposed here, the arguments that move to spec-TP have the ϕ -feature number only, the arguments that move to spec-AgrSP have both person and number features, and the arguments that remain in VP, in sister to V, have no ϕ -features. I show that the differences in syntactic location of arguments can be traced to these differences in feature composition, in line with recent assumptions in the Minimalist framework (Chomsky 1993). In particular, my analysis relies heavily on the assumption that movement is motivated by the need to check ϕ -features (Chomsky 1993). I argue that the difference in interpretation is also linked to the difference in feature composition, saying roughly that featureless NPs are predicative; NumPs are nonspecific; and DPs are specific. Since I argue that AgrP is projected only when there is a DP subject, I am making essentially the same argument Runner (1994) makes, namely that specificity and AGR are linked.

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¹Standard Western Armenian is SOV in surface word order, has rich case and agreement system and allows pro-drop. It is the standard language spoken by Armenians whose origins are in lands of the Ottoman Empire. For more discussion of the issues addressed here, see Donabédian (1991) and Sigler (in preparation).

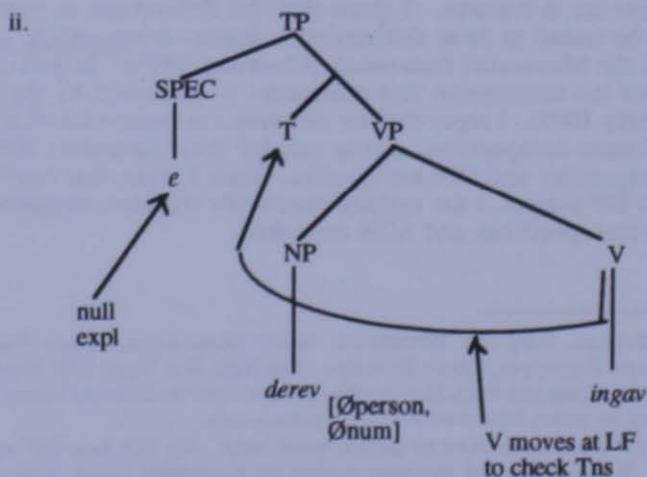
I will also assume a framework in which the ϕ -features are associated with heads inside an articulated DP, (1), adopting ideas of Ritter (1991, 1992).



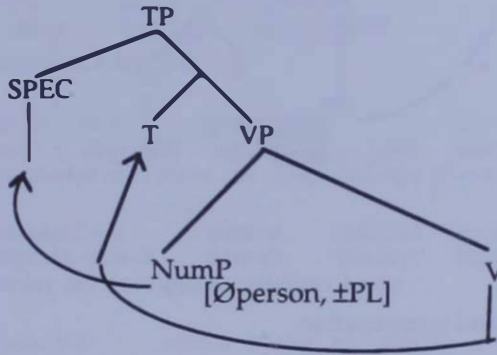
We consider each type of noun phrase in turn in sections one to three. In sections 2.2 and 2.3 I show how the proposed analysis accounts for an interesting construction in SWA in which indefinite plural subjects do not trigger plural agreement.

In (2) I outline the properties of the three types of nominal expressions and the claims that the analysis proposed makes about feature content and syntactic location.

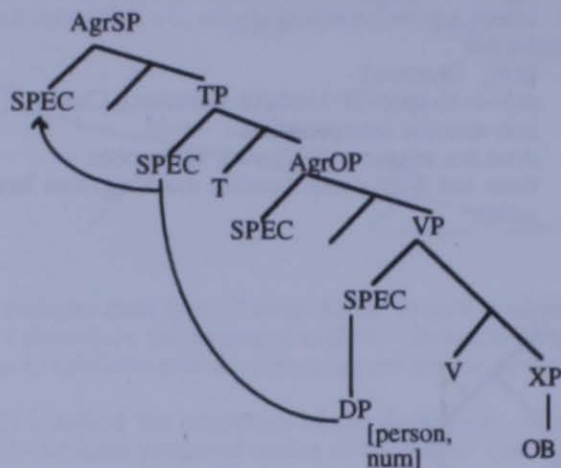
- (2)a. **Bare NP:**
- i. Maro-n namag gə-kəre-∅ gor
 M -dt letter imp-write-3s prog
Maro writes letters or *Maro is letter-writing*
- ii. dzar-e-n derev ingav
 tree-abl-dt leaf fall.aor.3s
From the tree there fell leaves or ... *there was a leaf-fall*
- iii. Maro-n yev Siran-ə pəzišg *-ner e-n
 M -dt and S -dt doctor-*pl be-3p
Maro and Siran are doctors
- ⇒ no ϕ -features; [\emptyset number, \emptyset person]
 ⇒ remain in VP; first complement to V
 ⇒ interpretation: predicative; neither singular nor plural
 ⇒ does not bear an article or plural marker



- b. NumP: vec ճիճ ingav
 six letter[-PL] write.aor-3[-PL]
 Six bottles fell
 => [±PL, ∅person]
 => moves to spec-TP to check [number], Case
 => non-specific interpretation
 => does not trigger subject-verb agreement
 => does not bear overt number marking; can bear indefinite article



- c. DP: vec usano՝r-ner-ə ճիճ-er-ə godre.c-in
 six student-pl-dt bottle-pl-dt break.aor-3pl
 The six students broke the bottles
 => [±PL, person]
 => - moves to spec-TP to check [number], Case
 - moves to spec-AgrP to check [person]
 => specific interpretation
 => triggers subject-verb agreement;
 V moves to check Tns in TP and Person in AgrSP
 => bears either plural suffix or article (definite or indefinite)



1. Bare NP arguments

1.1 Feature composition and interpretation

I claim that bare NPs do not have the feature [number].² One reason for saying this is simply that they do not have a plural or singular interpretation,³ except as conditioned by pragmatic factors. So in (3)a, it could be that Maro has written more than one novel, or that she is working on a particularly long one. Likewise in (3b), it is possible that the speaker would mean that he or she saw more than one chair, but it is not necessarily the case. Similarly with (3c); as there is more than one child, the normal interpretation is that there is more than one fig, but grammatically nothing prevents the interpretation where there is one fig or where *tuz* gets a mass interpretation.

- (3) a. Maro-n veb gə-kre-Ø
 M -dt novel imp-write-3s
Maro writes novel(s) or Maro is a novel writer
- b. tur-ə paci yev ator desa
 door-dt open.aor.1sg and chair see.aor.1sg
I opened the door and saw chair(s)
- c. bəzdig-ner-ə gananĉ tuz g-ude-n gor
 small-PL-dt green fig imp-eat-3p prog
The children are eating green fig(s)

²I am assuming that having [number] is a necessary condition for being specified for [person] since I do not see how a noun phrase that denotes a property, that is a [Ønumber] NP, can be specified for first, second or third person.

³Similar facts are found in Turkish (Knecht 1986) and Hindi (Mohan 1990, Dayal 1992), and Persian (Ghomeshi and Massam 1994). In these languages bare singular count nouns have an interpretation which is neither singular nor plural; the first two authors mentioned refer to it as the "incorporated" meaning.

1.2 Syntactic location of bare NPs

It seems to be the case that bare NP arguments must be internal arguments. The verbs in (3) are transitive and the bare NP is in object position. In (4) the verbs are unaccusative and passive. Again, the interpretation is not strictly speaking singular or plural. (4)a could report the falling of a single leaf or of many.⁴ In (4)b the presence of the adverb *mišd* 'always' forces a reading where the sentence refers to a plurality of ship sinkings, which, in the real world, would imply a plurality of ships. But as far as the grammar is concerned, I think it is correct to say that the bare NP *nav* itself does not refer to a plurality of ships.

- (4) a. d²ar-e-n derev ingav
tree-abl-dt leaf[#Ø] fall.aor.[#Ø]⁵
= *There was a leaf fall*
- b. mišd nav g-əngəxmi hon
always ship[#Ø] imp-sink_{UNACC} [#Ø] there
Ships always sink there or *Ship-sinkings always happen there*
- c. yergərašarZ-i-n aden-ə baduhan godre.c-av
earthquake-gen-dt time-dt window break_{UNACC} [#Ø]
= *During the earthquake windows broke*
- d. xohanoc-i-n meč-ə bənağ ned-v-ecav
kitchen-gen-dt in-dt dish throw-pass-aor[#Ø]
= *In the kitchen dish-throwing happened*

As we see in both (3) and (4), the bare NP is to the left of and immediately adjacent to the verb. This is a hard and fast rule. While noun phrases can be separated from the verb if they have either the definite article, indefinite article or the plural marker, bare NPs cannot. This is shown in examples (5) and (6).

- (5) a. [pp bənağ-i-s meč] [vp derev ingav]
dish-gen-lposs in leaf[#Ø] fall.aor.[#Ø]
There fell into my dish leaf/leaves
- b. *derev [pp bənağ-i-s meč] ingav
leaf[#Ø] dish-gen-lposs in fall.aor.[#Ø]

⁴ To avoid ambiguity, speakers usually use the indefinite article to indicate that one leaf has fallen. Note that *derev-mə* is still ambiguous as to whether it is specific or nonspecific.

derev-mə	ingav
leav-indef.art	fall.aor.3s
'a leaf fell'	

⁵This notation is meant to make explicit the fact that the NP has no number feature. That is, I do not propose a three-way feature system, +, -, Ø, rather, a nominal expression that has the number feature will be indicated as [_# ±PL] or, simply by *-pl* or *-s*.

- c. derev-mə/-ə/-ner [pp bənaɡ-i-s meʃ] inga-v /-n
 leaf-a /-dt /-PL dish-gen-1poss in fall.aor-3s /-PL
A leaf/the leaf/leaves fell into my dish
- (6) a. miʃd [vp nav g-əngəxmi] hon
 always ship[#Ø] imp-sink[#Ø] there
= Ship sinkings always happen there
- b. *nav miʃd g-əngəxmi hon
 ship[#Ø] always imp-sink[#Ø] there
- c. nav-er-ə miʃd g-əngəxmi-n hon
 ship-PL-dt always imp-sink-PL there
(The) ships always sink there

I take the fact that bare NPs must be immediately adjacent to the verb to indicate that they remain inside the VP, while non-bare noun phrases can move to a position outside VP.

The question arises as to how these bare NP arguments are licensed if they do not move to a Case-checking position. I want to argue that they do not get Case, and that this is not a problem because they do not need Case. Rather they are licensed in the same way as modifiers.⁶ In SWA, adjectives and adverbs occur to the left of (and are adjacent to) the element they modify, (7).

- (7) a. sev gadu-n b. Maro-n arak gə-vaze-Ø
 black cat-dt M -dt fast imp-run-3sg
'the black cat' *'Maro runs fast'*

Nominal modifiers likewise occur to the left of the element that they modify. Compare the behavior of bare NP modifiers in English and Armenian, (8). In both languages the nominal modifier must be a bare NP.

- (8) a. derev-*ner tap-adʒ-ə b. kirk-*ner dʒax-ov-ə
 leaf-*pl spill-pprt-dt book-*pl sell-subj.participle-dt
*the leaf fall, *the leaves fall* *the book(*s) seller*

It is interesting to note that in SWA not only can nominal expressions act like adverbials, but some adverbials can act like nominals. Consider the directional particles in (9)-(11). They share with adverbs and directional particles the property that when they are bare, they must be left-adjacent to the verb, but when they bear a suffix, they can be non-adjacent. The examples in (9) show that when both the directional particle and the argument of the verb are both bare, the sentence is out.

- (9) a. *[vp ʃiʃ var ingav]
 bottle down fell.aor.3
- b. *[vp maro-n aɣp turs hanec-Ø]
 Maro-dt garbage out displace.aor-3s

⁶Ghameshi and Massam describe bare nouns in Persian similarly: "In fact, the bare noun seems to modify the action described by the verb rather than function as an argument of it." (Ghameshi and Massam, 1994: 183).

The sentences can be salvaged by adding an article either to the directional particle or to the argument, as in (10) and (11). As indicated in the glosses, adding the article does cause a difference in meaning: when it bears the article, the directional particle is interpreted as referring to a location rather than a direction. Adding the definite article to the bare NP has the expected result of changing the argument from a non-referential NP to a definite, singular noun phrase.

- (10) a. var-ə [_{VP} šiš ingav]
 down-dt bottle fall.aor.3s
Down/stairs there fell bottle(s)
- b. Maro-n [_{VP} turs-ə arp hanec]
 Maro-dt out-dt garbage displace.aor.3s
Outside Maro threw garbage away
- (11) a. šiš-ə [_{VP} var ingav]
 bottle-dt down fell.aor.3s
The bottle fell down
- b. maro-n arp-ə [_{VP} turs hanec]
 Maro-dt garbage-dt out displace.aor.3s
Maro threw the garbage out

With the adverb *arak*, 'quickly' we see a similar pattern: when it is adjacent to V it can be bare, as shown in (12) but when it is not adjacent, it must have an article, as shown in example (13).⁷

- (12)a. baytum-e-n hedo nav-∅ / -ə/-mə / -er arak əngəkmec-av
 explosion-abl-dt after ship-∅ / -dt / -a / -PL quickly sink.aor-3s
*After the explosion *ship(s) / the ship / a ship / several ships sank quickly*
- b. *baytum-e-n hedo arak nav-∅ / -ə/-mə əngəkmec-av
 explosion-abl-dt after quickly ship-∅ / -dt / -a sink.aor-3s
- (13)a. baytum-e-n hedo arak-mə / *-∅ nav əngəkmec-av
 explosion-abl-dt after quickly-a ship sink.aor-3s
After the explosion ship(s) quickly sank = Soon after the explosion ship(s) sank
- b. *baytum-e-n hedo nav arak-mə əngəkmec-av
 explosion-abl-dt after ship quickly-a sink.aor-3s

In addition to the difference in word order we also find the expected difference in interpretation. When the adverb *arak* 'fast' is adjacent to V it means "in a speedy manner", while in a non-adjacent position *arak-mə* can have the sentential scope interpretation in which case it means "soon". This interpretation is expected if we assumed that the adverb adjoins to TP.

⁷In Standard Eastern Armenian as well the distribution of adverbs and bare nouns is similar. In this dialect the imperfect is expressed by a construction not found in SWA, involving an auxiliary verb (discussed in detail by Tamrazian 1994). The only elements that can intervene between the main verb and the inflected auxiliary in this construction are adverbs and bare NPs.

From the above we may conclude that bare elements are licensed in the sister to V position;⁸ to be licensed elsewhere additional features are necessary. These features are spelled out as articles or as the plural marker.

1.3 Bare NPs do not incorporate

While others have proposed that bare NPs are licensed by incorporating into the verb (Enç, Knecht 1986 (Turkish), Dayal 1992 (Hindi), Persian Ghomeshi and Massam 1994 (Persian)), in the analysis I propose here, bare NPs do not incorporate into the verb. The reasons for this are the following. In SWA it is not possible to strand non-incorporated material nor is it possible to merge the NP with the verb inside verbal morphology, (14).

- (14) *Siran-ə gə-tuz-ude-Ø compare with Siran-ə tuz g-ude-Ø
 S -dt imp-fig-eat-3s S -dt fig imp-eat-3s
 'Siran eats figs'

1.4 Phonological evidence that bare NPs remain in VP

Finally, there is phonological evidence that bare NP subjects remain in the VP. Stress in a VP with a bare NP argument must fall on the argument and not on the verb, (15a).⁹ This contrasts with the stress pattern in a sentence where the argument has a determiner or is overtly marked plural, (15b). In these sentences the stress can fall on the verb.

- (15)a. dʒar-e-n [vp derev ingav]
 tree-abl-dt leaf fall
 From the tree there fell leaves
- (15)b. dʒar-e-n xəncor-ner-ə [vp inga-n]
 tree-abl-dt apple-PL-dt fall.aor-3p
 The apples fell from the trees

Nespor, Guasti and Christophe (1995) argue that stress falls at the left edge of a phonological phrase in a left-recursive language (like SWA or Turkish) and on the right edge of a right-recursive language (like Italian or English).

Italian	Turkish	Armenian
secondo <u>me</u>	<u>benim</u> için	<u>indʒi</u> hamar
according 1s.acc	1s.gen for/about	1s.dat for
'according to me'	'for/about me'	'for me'

⁸The question as to why a bare NP can function as both an argument, in that it is assigned a θ -role by the verb, and yet is like a modifier, in that it denotes a property and not an individual, is too large to be addressed here. Ghomeshi and Massam (1994), Muromatsu (1995) and Sigler (in prep.) discuss these issues in more detail.

⁹Ghomeshi and Massam (1994:183) report a similar alternation in stress in Persian: stress falls on the last syllable of the verb stem if the object has a suffix, but on the object if the object is a bare NP. Similarly, Knecht (1986:) states that in Turkish stress can distinguish between specific and non-specific objects, even in the absence of articles: if the object is non-specific, stress falls on the object; if the object is specific, then stress falls on the verb.

The fact that stress must fall on the bare NP *derev* in (15)a, according to their generalization, suggests that it is at the left edge of the VP, thus providing further support for the claim that bare NPs remain in VP.

The evidence we have seen so far seems to justify saying that bare NP arguments do not move out of VP, but rather remain in their initial sister-to-V position. This is compatible with the assumption that arguments move in order to check ϕ -features, since, if we assume that there are no ϕ -features on the bare NP, we expect it not to move. We have also seen that the claim that bare NPs lack ϕ -features is supported by evidence from interpretation: we expect that a nominal that has no ϕ -features should be neither singular or plural, which seems to be the case.

2. NumP subjects

Ritter (1991, 1992) uses the term 'Num(ber)P' to refer to a projection within DP between N and D where the number specification is located. This enables her, among other things, to account for facts concerning the genitive constructions and number/gender morphology in Hebrew. I use the term to refer to noun phrases that have the feature number, but lack [person]. What I mean here by [number] is, intuitively, the feature that makes a nominal expression minimally capable of referring to an individual rather than a property.¹⁰ I say 'minimally' to capture the fact that in SWA there is a difference between a nominal expression that refers to a distinguishable individual and one that refers to an indistinguishable, or fungible entity. That is, there is a three-way distinction between NPs which refer to properties, NumPs which refer to indistinguishable individuals that have a property, and DPs, which refer to distinguishable individuals that have a property. Examples of the three types are given in (16). Since NumPs and NPs are both morphologically unmarked, I use a numeral in the NumP example, (16)b, to distinguish between them.

- (16) a. Maro-n kork gə-d²axe-Ø
 M -dt carpet imp-sell-3s
Maro sells carpets or Maro is a carpet seller
- b. Maro-n kəsan (had) kork d²axe-c-Ø
 M -dt 20 classifier carpet sell-aor-3s
Maro sold twenty carpets
- c. Maro-n kork-er-ə bidi d²axe-Ø
 M -dt carpet-PL-dt fut sell-3s
Maro will sell the carpets

2.1 Covert plurals

I refer to NumPs such as *kəsan kork* in (16)b as 'covert plurals.' Intuitively, these expressions are like mass nouns in that a mass noun refers to an entity that has subparts, but these subparts are not distinguishable from each other. In the same way that the kilos of sugar that Siran buys in (17)a are fungible, likewise the soldiers she sees in (17)b are

¹⁰Muromatsu (1995) argues that a classifier "individuates the concept" referred to by the bare noun. For Vangsnes (1995) number is the characteristic that a nominal expression must have in order to enter into scope relations. Both views are, I think, compatible with the definition given here assuming, as is plausible, that a classifier is the spell-out of [number], and that scope relations are defined over individuals.

indistinguishable subparts of the entity referred to by *čors zinvor*. Thus, although English speakers may categorize soldiers as countable entities, an intuition reflected in the grammar by the fact that the noun *soldier* must bear the plural marker when referring to more than one, the grammar of SWA treats a collection of them as a mass if the individual identities are unimportant in the context. On the other hand, when the identities of the subparts do matter, the plural marker is used. Compare (17)b, where the interpretation is 'some four soldiers' with (17)c, where the interpretation is 'four particular soldiers.'

- (17)a. Siran-ə dasə kilo šakar kəne-c-Ø
 S -dt 10 kilo sugar buy-aor-3s
Siran bought ten kilos of sugar
- b. Siran-ə čors zinvor desav
 S -dt four soldier see.aor.3s
Siran saw four soldiers
- c. Siran-ə čors zinvor-ner desav vor mer kyuɤ-e-n
 S -dt four soldier-pl see.aor.3s which 1p.gen village-abl-dt
 yeg-ad^z e-i-n
 com.aore-ppt be-pst-3p
Siran saw four soldiers that had come from our village

It is important to distinguish overt number marking from the feature [number]. The nominal expressions that I am calling NumPs do not bear overt number marking, although singular NumPs may bear the indefinite article suffix. As indicated by the contrast between (17)b and (17)c, the plural marker is used on plurals whose referents are individuals whose identities matter.¹¹

¹¹I use this informal description here because the label 'specific' can be used to describe some NumPs as well as DPs. In (i) for example, the covert plural refers to a subset of a group that has been mentioned, which would make it specific in the sense of Enç (1991). So not all specific noun phrases are overtly marked with the plural marker, although all overtly plural noun phrases are specific.

- (i) yerəgrašar z-i-n aden-ə təbroc-i-n meč^{*} haryur hoki gar
 earthquake-gen-dt time-dt school-gen-dt in 100 soul exist.pst.3s
 kəsan gin viravor-v-ecav
 20 woman wound-pass-3s.aor
 'During the earthquake there were a hundred people in the school. Twenty women were wounded'

2.2 Non-agreement sentences

An interesting construction in Armenian in which the distinction between NumPs and DPs plays a role is one I call the 'non-agreement' construction. In these sentences, (18), the verb does not display plural morphology even though its subject is in some sense plural. These non-agreement constructions are acceptable if the conditions in A are met.¹²

A. Non-agreement is possible when:

- (i) the subject is a NumP
- (iii) the verb is not transitive¹³

Consider the covert plural subject *karasun navag*, 'forty boat' in (18). The boats are forty in number, but their identity is not determined. The sentence asserts simply that there are forty boat-passings every day.

(18)¹⁴ amen or ays kanal-i-n meĉen karasun (had) navag g-ancni-Ø
 every day this canal-gen-dt through forty CL boat imp-pass-3s

- i. 'Every day there are forty boat-passings through this canal'
- ii. 'Every day there go through this canal forty boats'
- iii. 'Forty boats can pass through this canal every day' / 'It's a forty-boat canal'
- iii. *'Forty particular boats go through this canal every day'

This contrasts with the situation in (19) where plural is visible on the subject and on the verb in which case the subject refers to forty specific boats.

(19) amen or ays kanal-i-n meĉen karasun navag-ner g-ancni-n
 every day this canal-gen-dt through forty boat-PL imp-pass-PL

- i. 'Forty [particular] boats go through the canal every day'
- ii. 'Forty boats go through the canal every day'

2.3 Syntactic location of NumPs

We can safely say that NumP subjects move out of VP. VP adverbs can intervene between the subject and the verb, (20)a, showing that NumPs are not under the strict adjacency constraint that bare NPs are, (20)b.

(20) a. d²ar-e-n vec derev [vp gamac [vp t_{SUB} ingav]]
 tree-abl-dt six leaf[#-PL] slowly fall.aor.[#-PL]
 'Six leaves slowly fell from the tree'

b. *d²ar-e-n derev_i [vp gamac [vp t_i ingav]]
 tree-abl-dt leaf[#Ø] slowly fall.aor.[#Ø]

¹²Non-agreement with indefinite or displaced subjects is attested cross-linguistically: Modern Greek (Schneider-Zioga 1992), Turkish (Hachigian, p.c.), Russian (Pesetsky 1982), Berber (Ouhalla 1993), Arabic (Fassi Fehri 1989, Ouhalla, p.c.).

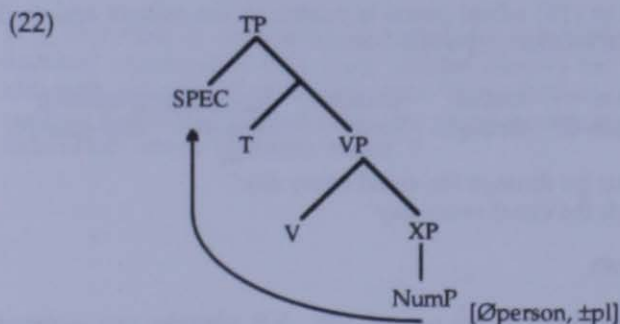
¹³I assume that unergatives are underlyingly transitive (Hale & Keyser 1993), to account for the fact that these verbs are usually not acceptable in non-agreement constructions (and are completely unacceptable in constructions where the sole argument is a bare NP).

¹⁴This example is adapted from one of Honcoop's (1995).

Another clue to the location of NumP subjects is supplied by sentential adverb facts. It seems to be the case that when sentential adverbs intervene between the subject and the verb, agreement is preferred, suggesting that the subject in (18) has moved beyond TP, to AgrSP.

- (21) a. hangard^Z [TP [VP vec sið inga-v]]
 suddenly six bottle fall-aor.3s
 = 'Suddenly there fell six bottles'
- b. vec sið hangard^Z [TP [VP t_{SUB} inga-pl / ??-y]]
 six bottle suddenly fall-aor.3p / -aor.[# -PL]
 = 'There fell suddenly six bottles'

On the strength of these facts, and similar claims for Icelandic (especially Vangsnes 1995), I conclude that [number] is checked when the NumP moves to spec-TP. Since NumPs do not have person features, these being associated with the head D, they cannot move any further. Since the verb does not show subject agreement, I assume that it too lacks [person] and so has no reason to move beyond T in the derivation. There is therefore no reason to posit the presence of AgrP, as neither the subject nor the verb has features that require checking there.¹⁵ The non-agreement sentences are thus derived from the structure shown in (22).



One helpful result of this analysis is that we can explain why transitive verbs do not occur in the non-agreement construction as follows. If we assume that the derivation of non-agreement constructions involves only one functional projection, TP, then there is only one structural Case-checking position available, namely spec-TP. Since transitive verbs have two arguments, one of them would not be able to check its Case and ϕ -features in a structure lacking AgrP. Thus we account for the correlation between

¹⁵The analysis proposed here relies on the availability of AGR, and in particular on the understanding that AGR_o and AGR_s are not distinct. The non-distinctness of AGR_o and AGR_s explains why it is that objects are licensed only when subject agreement is present (if there is no subject agreement, then there is no AGR_s, which by definition means that there is no AGR_o, so no place for an object). In the most recent proposals of Chomsky (1995) nominal features on V and T assume the role of AGR in licensing the verb's arguments. As I understand it, in this framework, there is no structural correlate to agreement morphology, therefore no possibility of a syntactic link between subject agreement on the verb and the possibility of licensing a specific object. The transitivity/agreement dependency would be reduced to a coincidence. For this reason, I retain the older articulated IP structure (Pollock 1989, Chomsky 1993).

transitivity and agreement exemplified in (23).¹⁶

(23)a. dasə arčig šiš-er-ə nedec-in / *-Ø
 ten girl bottle-PL.-dt throw-3 PL./-[#-PL.]
Ten girls threw the bottles

b. dasə arčig yega-v
 ten girl come.aor-[#-PL.]
There arrived ten girls

3 DP subjects

In this section we look briefly at subjects which are overtly plural and which differ in their interpretation, position and other syntactic properties from NumPs. I attribute these differences to the ϕ -feature [person], out of reluctance to introduce another feature ([\pm definite] or [\pm specific] for example) and because definite and specific subjects do not appear to have a different distribution in SWA. The feature [person] is associated with the head D and is checked when the subject is in a spec-head relation with AgrS.

In (24) we see that unlike covert plurals, overtly plural subjects trigger agreement on the verb. I assume that this is because the third person plural suffix (-er on the subject and -n on the verb) is the spellout of the abstract features [3, +PL].

(24)a. ækan-e-n vec šiš ingav
 table-abl-dt six bottle fall.aor.3[#-PL.]
'From the table there fell six bottles'

b. ækan-e-n vec šiš-er inga-n / *-v
 table-abl-dt six bottle-pl fall.aor-3[#+PL.] / *-3[#-PL.]
'Six [particular] bottles fell from the table'

In addition, DPs can occur to the left of TP adverbs, as we saw above in (21), indicating that they have moved to the specifier of a higher functional projection, which I assume is AgrSP.

Furthermore, DPs can be phonologically null, (25a) while NumPs cannot, (25b). Under the proposed analysis, this fact is explained by saying that only AGR licenses a null subject, while T cannot.

¹⁶We expect, given this analysis, that it should be possible for a transitive verb to be in a non-agreement construction if its object is a bare NP, since such an object would remain in VP. The data I have is not conclusive on this point. But there are speakers for whom sentences such as (i) are acceptable, and for all speakers (i) is preferred to (ii).

(i) vec gin Jaš g-epe-ɾ gor
 six woman food imp-prepare-pst.3s prog
Six women were preparing food

(ii) * vec gin irenc Jašə g-epe-ɾ gor
 six woman their food-dt imp-prepare-pst.3s prog
Six women were preparing their food

- (25) a. dasə gošig turs ned-v-ec-av
 ten shoe out throw-pass-aor-[-# -PL]
 =There were thrown out ten shoes
- b. pro turs ned-v-ec-av
 out throw-pass-aor-3s
 It/she/he/the garbage was thrown out
 *Ten [nonspecific] shoes were thrown out

4. Conclusion

I have presented data from Standard Western Armenian that support a view that has its origins in Diesing's (1992) Mapping Hypothesis. According to this view, adopting modifications and elaborations of Runner (1994) and Vangsnes (1995), the referential properties of a noun phrase are associated with heads in an articulated DP structure. The heads, in turn are associated with ϕ -features, and through these features the referential properties determine an argument's location in the sentence, under the assumption that movement is motivated by the need to check ϕ -features in sentential functional projections. Specifically, I have tried to show that the behavior of bare NP arguments and of non-agreeing subjects receives a straightforward analysis, assuming that the former has no ϕ -features at all, and the latter have the feature number only and that this feature is checked when the subject is in specifier-head relation with T.

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46, rue Rouelle
75015 Paris
France

sigler@mit.edu

