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CASE MATTERS FOR CHUKCHI NP STRUCTURE

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM

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This paper focuses on the basic syntax of noun phrases in Amguema Chukchi. We are going to show that the case feature that a noun phrase bears has impact on: a) incorporation of adnominal dependents; b) scrambling of adnominal dependents that are realized as free words; c) constituent order in noun phrases.

**JEL Classification:** Z.

**Keywords:** noun phrase, syntax, Chukchi
1. Introduction

Quite expectedly, nouns seem to be heads of noun phrases in Chukchi. For example, nouns always host case markers which reflect the external syntactic relation of noun phrases, whereas other NP constituents (adjectives, demonstrative pronouns, quantifiers, etc.) only do so in marked contexts. Then we should expect the internal structure of NPs to remain the same with a proviso of a case concord possibility therein.

This does not hold, however. Chukchi NPs violate the “morphosyntactic locus” rule formulated by Arnold Zwicky [1985]. Syntax of absolutive and oblique noun phrases in Chukchi (or, rather, in the variety of Chukchi I studied) is drastically different, and this is not due to case concord.

The question this paper focuses on goes as follows: why should the case matter at all?

My data comes from two fieldtrips to the village of Amguema, Chukchi Autonomous District, in 2017–2018, with a team of researchers from HSE. As far as I know, it is the first project on documentation Chukchi done collectively. Amguema is one of the few Chukchi inland villages (and presumably the largest of those); it is built around a reindeer Kolkhoz farm. It is situated on the Chukotka peninsula and thus represents the eastern but not the easternmost variety of Chukchi.

In many respects Amguema Chukchi is different from the variety where the data of several renowned typologists who worked on Chukchi (Vladimir Nedyalkov, Maria Polinsky, Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, etc.) come from. For example, it lacks a productive antipassive derivation, which is crucial for some typologically oriented accounts of Chukchi argument encoding (Polinsky & Nedyalkov 1987, Kozinsky et al. 1988), syntactic ergativity (Polinsky 2016), relativization (Polinsky 1994) etc. This may be due to the fact that the aforementioned scholars mostly worked with Chukchi-speaking linguists working at St. Petersburg (Pëtr Inenliqej, Vladimir Raŋtalan), who were presumably speakers of westernmost varieties of Chukchi. However, Telqep, a south-western variety of Chukchi described in a corpus-based grammar of Michael Dunn (Dunn 1999) is much closer to Amguema Chuckhi, e.g. it lacks productive antipassive.

In general, my paper raises the issues partially covered in the research of Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1995). However, my primary focus will be on the Amguema data which are different in many respects.

Case matters for the following aspects of NP morphosyntax in Chukchi, which will be subsequently discussed: expression of number as opposed to morphological number neutrality...
2. Nominal morphology and the expression of number

Chukchi possesses two sets of nominal case suffixes, which are traditionally called “animate” and “in-animate” declensions. Proper nouns attach animate declension case suffixes, inanimate nouns make use of the inanimate declension, and common human nouns can employ both. (Genitive is not tradi-itionally recognized as a case and is sometimes described as an adjectivizing derivation; see however Kozlov 2018 for agruments in favour of its casehood).

Table 1. Chukchi nominal inflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Inanimate nouns</th>
<th>Animiate nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>-∅ / -η / -ŋə</td>
<td>-t / -ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG</td>
<td>-(t)e</td>
<td>-ne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>-k(ə)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>-ŋətə/-etə</td>
<td>-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>-jpa/-ŋapə/-epə</td>
<td>-jpa/-ŋapə/-epə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORI</td>
<td>-ŋəjit</td>
<td>-ŋəjit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROL</td>
<td>-(n)u</td>
<td>-jekwe (+vh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from this table, animate declension distinguishes singular and plural forms for all cases except the Equative. However, inanimate declension suffixes (which is far more frequent) are number-neutral for all cases save the Absolutive:

(1)  a. mat-ekwen-mak ū̄ŋəŋqot-ŋəpə
     1PL.A-go.away-1PL.O T.-ABL
     1. ‘We went away from Tymnelqot.’
     2. * ‘We went away from the Tymnelqots (i. e. Tymnelqot and his kin).’
b. mat-ekwen-mək təmnelqotsə-r-ɣəpə
   1PL.A-go.away-1PL.O T.-AN.PL-ABL
1. ‘We went away from the Tymnelqots (i.e. Tymnelqot and his kin).’
2. * ‘We went away from Tymnelqot.’

c. mat-ekwen-mək elya-ŋaj-ɣəpə
   1PL.A-go.away-1PL.O white.hill-ABL
1. ‘We went away from the white hills.’
2. ‘We went away from the white hill.’

However, oblique nouns are only number-neutral from the point of view of morphology. Syntactically, they seem to retain a [+plural] feature, which shows itself through case concord within the NP and argument indexing on the verb.

In the sentences (2a–c), which are headed by a transitive verb -jʔo- ‘come to, reach’ (a very useful tool for eliciting transitive sentences in a community whose members hate to speak about killing and even breaking!) the A-participant is marked with the Ergative. Ergative is an oblique case, and it means that the form qlawəl-a [man-ERG] can be in principle translated as ‘man’ or ‘men’. However, the sentences (2a–c) are not ambiguous, as the number of the A-participant is consistently indexed on the verb, singular in (2a–b) and plural in (2c). Moreover, in (2b–c) the -ɬʔ- participle agrees with its head in φ-features, but chooses the animate declension rather than the inanimate (and regularly so, as it refers to an animate entity). In such cases, the participle chooses a number form according to the semantic number of the head.

(2) a. wak?o-twa-lʔ-a qlawəl-a əryatək r-ena-jʔo-ɣʔe
   sit-RES-ATR-ERG man-ERG tomorrow FUT-3SG.A.1SG.O-reach-TH
   ‘The man who is sitting will visit me tomorrow.’

b. wak?o-twa-lʔ-ə-na qlawəl-a əryatək r-ena-jʔo-ɣʔe
   sit-RES-ATTR-AN.ERG man-ERG tomorrow FUT-3SG.A.1SG.O-reach-TH
   ‘The man who is sitting will visit me tomorrow.’

c. wak?o-twa-lʔ-ə-ʔə-rə-k qlawəl-a əryatək na-ra-jʔo-ɣəm
   sit-RES-ATTR-AN.PL-ERG man-ERG tomorrow 3PL.A-FUT-reach-1SG.O
   ‘The men who are sitting will visit me tomorrow.’

So in this respect, the case of the head only matters for the morphology of number and does not have any deeper syntactic consequences.
3. Incorporation of adnominal dependents

Chukchi has incorporation. In particular, some adnominal dependents sometimes incorporate into head nouns.

For each class of adnominal dependents, the rules of incorporation are different, but all of them have to be formulated wrt the case of the head. The same opposition is relevant there: Absolutive vs. all other cases.

For example, adjectival roots can always incorporate into head nouns, but in absolutive NPs they may also appear in a “stative” circumfixal shell ⼦-…-qin:

(3)  

a. ｎə-ɣtin-qin  newəsqet  ekwet-ɣʔi  
　ST-beautiful-ST.3SG  girl.ABS  go.away-AOR.3SG

b. ɣətin-newəsqet  ekwet-ɣʔi  
　beautiful+girl.ABS  go.away-AOR.3SG

‘The beautiful girl went away.’

(4)  

　ST-beautiful-ST.3SG  girl-ERG  dog-DIM.ABS  take.away-AOR.3SG

b.  *nə-ɣtin-qin-e  newəsqet-e  ?ettʔə-quej  rəɬəmənaw-nen  
　ST-beautiful-ST.3SG-ERG  girl-ERG  dog-DIM.ABS  take.away-AOR.3SG

c.  OK ɣətin-newəsqet-e  ?ettʔə-quej  rəɬəmənaw-nen  
　beautiful+girl-ERG  dog-DIM.ABS  take.away-AOR.3SG

‘The beautiful girl took the dog away.’

Numerals (as well as possessive pronouns such as ɣəm-nin [I-AN.GEN] ‘my’) are complementarily distributed wrt case: they have to surface as separate phonological words in the Absolutive, and to incor-porate in the oblique cases:

(5)  

a.  jet-ɣʔe-t  manyətnken  ᵇorawelʔa-t /  *məɣətnʔ+ʔorawelʔa-t  
　come-TH-3PL  10  person-ABS.PL  10+person-ERG

‘Ten people have come.’

b.  manyət-ʔorawelʔa-ta /  *manyətken  ᵇorawelʔa-ta  ne-tiŋu-ɣʔe-n  
　10+person-erg  10  person-erg  3PL.A/S-pull.out-TH-3SG.O

‘Ten people pulled out a little pro.’
Demonstratives (as well as yet other quantifiers, e.g. -mək- ‘many’, ehlwelin ‘different’, etc.) are obligatorily realized as separate phonological words in the Absolutive, and can either incorporate or be realized as separate phonological words in the oblique.

(6) a. ṇotqen ɬoweer-ən/*ŋutinɬoweer-ən weɾiwet-γʔi
   this milk-ABS this+milk-ABS sour-TH.3SG
   ‘This milk has gone sour.’

   b. ṇotqen newsqet-e ren-nin ʔətʔəqaj-qaj
      this girl-ERG bring-3SG.S.3SG.O dog-DIM.ABS
      ‘This girl has brought the dog.’

   c. ṇotqena newsqet-e ren-nin ʔətʔəqaj-qaj
      this.OBL girl-ERG bring-3SG.S.3SG.O dog-DIM.ABS
      ‘Idem.’

Finally, participles, genitives, or relational adjectives never incorporate:

(7) a. epeqej-nin sayǝt-ta/*apaqaj-nena-sayǝt-ta
    grandmother-AN.GEN sister-ERG grandmother-GEN-sister-ERG
    ‘grandmother’s sister (did that)’

   b. tɑŋne-ra-kena-t nenene-t/*tɑŋne-ra-kena-nanana-t
      foreign-house-REL-PL child-PL foreign-house-REL-child-PL
      ‘someone else’s children’

Here is the summarizing table:
## Tab. 2. Rules of adnominal dependent incorporation in Chukchi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dependent class</th>
<th>oblique cases</th>
<th>Absolutive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>possible</td>
<td>obligatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualitative adjectives</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numerals</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive / genitive pronouns</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>qot</em> ‘some, another’</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstratives</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>elwełʔin</em> ‘different’</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-<em>mak</em>- ‘many’</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genitives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relational adjectives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>awalʔo</em> ‘all’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question is: why on earth the external syntactic relations of the head are relevant for its dependents?

The following observation can be made on the basis of Table 2:

(i) Oblique cases tend to incorporate more than the Absolutive;

(ii) The classes of adnominal dependents in (but only partially) adhere to the “cartographic hierarchy” of adnominal dependents:

\[
\text{referential slot} \prec \text{quantification slot} \prec \text{lexical slot}
\]


Note that quantifiers do not form a uniform class but are rather dissipated between the three classes, and pronominal genitives behave differently from nominal genitives).

(iii) Only non-branching adnominal dependents can ever be incorporated

We adopt here the phrasal vs. non-phrasal distinction introduced by Dryer (1992), who argued that what really mattered for word order generalizations was not head vs. dependent status of a syntactic node, but rather its ability to attach dependents. The latter is a parameter logically
independent of headness (what we recognize a head of a construction may be theory-dependent; non-phrasal syntactic nodes include both heads and pronominal dependent XPs who cannot attach dependents by trivial reasons.

Indeed, the incorporated elements are quantifiers, demonstratives, numerals and possessive pronouns, which cannot attach their own complements or modifiers. Note that in Chukchi, degree modifiers (‘slightly’, ‘very’, ‘really’, ‘approximatively’) are grammatical prefixes rather than, e.g., adverbs:

(9) ᵃɤkʷə-ɭ ya-qaj teɣ-ŋ ust?-uʔe-le-qin teɣ-ŋ u-ke-e-qin
stone-SING-DIM-ABS.SG GOOD-ST-BLACK-ST.3SG GOOD-ST-SMOOTH-ST.3SG
‘It was a very black and a very smooth stone.’

(10) muri ȵə-liyɨ-ȵɨn-ɨn-muri
we ST-INTS-ST-young-NP.1PL
‘We were really young.’

Genitives (11) and relational adjectives (12) which may have their own dependents and modifiers never incorporate. (Note that one of the major function of Chukchi relational adjectives is encoding part-whole relations).

(11) [[epeq-ej-ȵɨn] sakett-en]  wala
grandmother-GEN sister-GEN knife.ABS
‘a knife of grandmother’s sister’

(12) [[epe-ȵɨn] wala-kən] jəqjuɟ-ʔən
grandfather-AN.GEN knife-REL handle-ABS.SG
‘a handle of grandfather’s knife’

Another argument for the relevance of branchability is the distribution of the expressions ənŋin ‘such, this way’ / ənŋin wa-lʔ-ən [such be-ATR-ABS.SG] ‘being such’. In general, ənŋin modifies VPs (13a) or is used predicatively (13b), while ənŋin wa-lʔ-ən modifies NPs (14):

(13) a. ənŋin n-en-ʔatsa-qen
such ST-3SG.S-wait-ST.3SG.O
‘He waited this way’
b. əŋqen əŋən sinit-kin əŋpəsʔatɣəɣ-ən
   this such own-REL old.days-ABS.SG
   ‘Such were his old days.’
(14) ɣəmnan ɣəmo əŋən *(wa-ɬʔ-ən) anqatw-ən
     I-AN.ERG dunno such be-ATR-ABS edible.root-ABS
     ‘I don’t know such an edible root.’

It turns out that adjectives realized as separate phonological words in a “stative”
circumfixal shel can be modified by əŋən, while incorporated adjectives can not (it is only əŋən
waɬʔən that is allowed, which suggest NP rather than AdjP modification):
(15) minkə ɣənan kur-ɣʔe-ɬ əŋən*(wa-ɬʔ-ən) para-par]
     where you.AN.ERG buy-TH-2SG.S3SG.O such ST-fresh-ST.3SGbutter~ABS.SG
     ‘Where have you bought such fresh butter?’

(16) [[əŋən *(wa-ɬʔ-ən)] tor+para-ta] kəkwat+kawkaw
     such be-ATR-ERG fresh+butter-ERG dry+bread.ABS.SG
     awn-a-ena-rke-ɬʔə-k-a
     PROH-NEG-INV-anoint-ATR-NEG-ERG
     ‘Don’t butter the dry bread with such fresh butter.’

It seems that while separate-word adjectives do attach modifiers, while incorporated
adjectival stems do not.

3. Word order in NPs

3.1 Absolutive

In the Absolutive, Chukchi noun phrase exhibits certain properties of non-configurationality.
Both head-final and head-initial orders are attested (17a–b).
(17) a. ɣə-nin ɬʔu-ɬqəɬ qnut koka-tset-joɬɣə-ɬ
     you-AN.GEN see-DEB-ABS.SG like pot-put-CONT-ABS.SG
     ‘Your face is like a hot pad.’
b. əɬʔəɣə-ɬ ɣəm-nin qora-ɣənreq-ɬʔ-uvw ɣ-ɬit-lin
     father-ABS.SG I-AN.GEN reindeer-herd-ATTR-EQU PF-be-PF.3SG
     ‘My father was a reindeer herder.’
The order of the dependents is not fixed:

(18) a. ŋotqena-t na-ɣt in-qine-t newəsqeɣ-ti ]NP ɣəm-nin ɣeqke-t
    this-PL ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL girl-PL I-GEN dauther-ABS.PL
b. OK na-ɣt in-qine-t ŋotqena-t newəsqeɣ-ti ]NP ɣəm-nin ɣeqke-t
    ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL this-PL girl-PL I-GEN dauther-ABS.PL
c. OK newəsqeɣ-ti ŋotqena-t na-ɣt in-qine-t ]NP ɣəm-nin ɣeqke-t
    girl-PL this-PL ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL I-GEN dauther-ABS.PL
d. OK newəsqeɣ-ti ŋotqena-t na-ɣt in-qine-t ]NP ɣəm-nin ɣeqke-t
    girl-PL this-PL ST-beautiful-ST.3-PL I-GEN dauther-ABS.PL

‘These beautiful girls are my daughters.’

Moreover, dependents do not have to be adjacent to their heads (which does not seem to have consequences for the information-structure, intonation, etc.)

(19) was’a-nen ɣəməkaɣtə jet-ɣʔi tumyətum
    V.-AN.GEN I.DAT come-AOR.3SG friend.ABS
    ‘Vasya’s friend came to me.’

(20) ajwe ?əttʔ-ə-qeq ye-ɣi ntew-ɬɨ n-ilɣə-qin
    yesterday dog-DIM.ABS.SG PF-run.away-PF.3SG ST-white-ST.3SG
    ‘Yesterday the white dog ran away.’

### 3.2 Oblique cases: head & dependent order

Such liberty, however, is only allowed for the Absolutive NPs. In oblique cases, adnominal dependents have to be adjacent to their heads, and be situated to the left of it (12a, 13a). They cannot appear to the left of their heads (12b, 13b) or be scrambled away from them (12c, 13c).

(21) a. atlon krismə-kin masəkwə-k mumkəl-tip-ɣʔi
    s/he holiday-REL shirt-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG
    ‘She sewed a button to her holiday shirt.’
b. `atlon məskəwə-k *krismə-kin mumkəl-tip-γʔi
   s/he shirt-LOC holiday-REL button-pierce-AOR.3SG
   ‘She sewed a button to her holiday shirt.’

c. *krismə-kin aʔlon məskəwə-k mumkəl-tip-γʔi
   holiday-REL s/he shirt-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG
   ‘She sewed a button to her holiday shirt.’

(22) a. nə-le-jyəm was’a-nen kəwlorw-a
   ST-go-NP.1PL V.-AN.GEN car-ERG
   ‘I went by Vasya’s car.’

b. ?nə-le-jyəm kəwlorw-a was’a-nen
   ST-go-NP.1PL car-ERG V.-AN.GEN
   ‘Idem.’

c. *was’a-nen nə-le-jyəm kəwlorw-a
   V.-AN.GEN ST-go-NP.1PL car-ERG
   Expected meaning: ‘I went by Vasya’s car.’

3.3 Oblique cases: constituent order in NPs

Moreover, the order of constituents in oblique NPs is far more strict than in the Absolutive ones. Several word orders are strictly banned, in particularly those in which genitives or relational adjectives are followed by demonstrative pronouns:

(23) a. ətlon ŋotqena krismə-kin məskəwə-k mumkəl+tip-γʔi
   s/he this.OBL holiday-REL shirt-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG
   ‘She sewed a button to this holiday shirt.’

b. *ətlon krismə-kin ŋotqena məskəwə-k mumkəl+tip-γʔi
   s/he holiday-REL ətton.OBL pyəxə-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG
   Intended meaning: ‘Idem.’

(24) a. ətlon ŋotqena sakett-en məskəwə-k mumkəl+tip-γʔi
   s/he this.OBL sister-GEN shirt-LOC button-pierce-AOR.3SG
   ‘She sewed a button to this shirt of sister’s.’
b. *ətlon sakett-en ŋotqena məsəkwə-k mumkel+tip-ɣʔɪ
s/he sister-GEN this.OBL shirt-LOC button+pierce -AOR.3SG

Intended meaning: ‘Idem.’

The dependents which can be realized as separate phonological words in the oblique cases, i.e. genitives, participles, relation adjectives and demonstratives yield the following hierarchy:

(iv) PTCP > Q > DEM > GEN, REL > PTCP

This patterns with a relatively strict stem order in nominal complexes with incorporated nouns:

(25) a. ŋəron-əlyʔ-əttʔəqaj-a na-jʔo-ɣəm
3-white-dog-ERG 3PLA-reach-1SG.O

b. *elɣə-ŋəron-əttʔəqaj-a na-jʔo-ɣəm
white-3-dog-ERG 3PLA-reach-1SG.O

‘Three white dogs came to me.’

(26) a. ŋutin-iɬgɨʔ-əttʔəqej-e na-jʔo-ɣəm
this.INC-white-dog-ERG 3PLA-reach-1SG.O

b. *iɬgɨ-ŋutin-əttʔəqej-e na-jʔo-ɣəm
this.INC-white-dog-ERG 3PLA-reach-1SG.O

‘These white dogs came to me.’

(27) a. ŋəren-ɣəmak-ekke-te na-jʔo-ɣəm
2-INCl-son-dog-ERG 3PLA-reach-1SG.O

b. ??/ʔ ɣəmak-ŋəren-ekke-te nadjʔo-ɣəm
I.INC-2-son-dog-ERG 3PLA-reach-1SG.O

‘My two sons came to me.’

The resultant stem order is the following:

(v) DEM > NUM > POSS > QUAL.ADJ

We presumably behold the ongoing grammaticalization of configurationality in Chukchi (for a similar account of syntactic evolution for ancient Indo-European languages see Luraghi (2010)). Note that the majority of oblique cases goes back to postpositions or non-finite verbs (for example,
the Dative clearly goes back to a verb with the meaning ‘go to’, and the Ablative to one with the meaning ‘take off’. So what had previously been non-finite forms or PPs and thus natural islands for scrambling changes syntactic status but retains scrambling properties.

4. Lack of harmony

The incorporation hierarchy (vi) (=Table 2) and the word order hierarchy in oblique NPs (vii) are not harmonic:

(vi) \[GEN, REL, PTCP < Q, DEM < NUM, PRON.GEN < ADJ\]

(vii) \[? PTCP > Q, DEM > GEN, REL > PTCP\]

Quantifiers and demonstratives should precede genitives and relational adjectives (vi) but also are more prone to incorporation (vii).

Let us take a pair of modifiers:

- quantifier \(qoɬ\) ‘some, another’, which can incorporate in the oblique cases;
- relational adjective \(emnuŋ\-kin\) [tundra-REL], which never incorporates.

However, by (vii), \(qoɬ\) should precede \(emnuŋ\-kin\) in the oblique cases. It turns out that (vii) matters not only for separate-word dependents, but also for incorporated ones.

In a canonical case, both \(qoɬ\) and \(emnuŋ\-kin\) surface as separate phonological words:

(28) \[ena\-jʔo-ɣʔe qutə-ne emnuŋ-kin ?orawet\?a-ta\]

\[1SG.O.3SG.A\-reach\-TH some-AN\-ERG tundra-REL person-ERG\]

‘Some person from tundra visited me.’

\(Qoɬ\) can incorporate when expressed alone, and \(emnuŋ\-kin\) can not:

(29) a. \[qole+ʔorawet\?a-ta\]

\[some+person-ERG\]

b. *\[amŋo\-kena-ʔorawet\?a-ta\]

\[tundra-REL+person-ERG\]

However, one cannot incorporate \(qoɬ\) and modify the resultant compound with \(emnuŋ\-kin\) simultaneously:
It seems to be due to the hierarchy in (vii), which thus matters not only for the order of constituents within an NP, but, more general, to the order of lexical items which are semantic modifiers of a noun, be they realized as separate phonological words or incorporate into the noun. Note that if we directly incorporate the stem *emŋun- ‘tundra’ without the relational adjectivizer, the grammaticality is restored again (as the rule in (vii) is respected):

(31)  

\[
\text{ena-j\text{-}q\text{-}e} \quad \text{qol+amŋon+ʔorawetl\text{-}ata}
\]

1SG.O.3SG.A-reach-TH some+tundra+person-ERG

‘Idem.’

The behaviour illustrated in (28–31) is not unique for qoɬ and relational adjectives. These facts also hold for each pair of adnominal dependent classes which have different relative position in (vi) and (vii) (for example, demonstrative pronouns and genitives).

5. Conclusions

These facts hint that the rules of incorporation (morphology) and those of linearization (syntax) are neither of a totally different nor of the same nature.

On the one hand, the oblique NPs are “tighter” than the NPs in the Absolutive, and this “tightness” both concerns syntax and morphology. First, more lexical items have to be realized as bound rather than free morphemes (i. e. incorporate); second, the constituent order (i. e. the order of separate phonological words) is much more strict in the oblique than in the Absolutive. Finally, the order hierarchy in (vii) concerns both separate-word adnominal dependents and incorporated stems.

On the other hand, the two hierarchies in (vi) and (vii) contradict each other, and this is presumably due to the fact that branchability is important for incorporation of adnominal dependents but lesser so when they are expressed by separate phonological words.

And yet we are left with the question we raised in the beginning. Why does case matter? Why do the NPs in the Absolutive differ so drastically from the NPs in the oblique cases? We suggested a diachronic explanation in the end of Section 3: the oblique cases emerged from the PPs
and non-finite forms which may have been islands for scrambling. Is this explanation exhaustive? Does it have any alternatives?

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