Case Shifting as Peeling and Some of the Consequences

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The following two facts hold of the morphology of Czech declension: (i) the form for accusative (ACC) case can be properly contained in an instrumental (INS) form (Table I); (ii) nominative (NOM) can never be syncretic with INS unless ACC is as well (the *A-B-A generalization, cf. Bobaljik, 2006). Both of these facts can be captured if the structure of the cases in question is modeled as depicted in (1a,b,c).

In (1), the features of ACC are a proper subset of the features of INS, providing an explanation for (i). The structures in (1) also provide a basis for deriving the generalization (ii): if there is a common exponent for NOM and INS, the same exponent is going to appear in ACC, because ACC is in between these two in terms of structural complexity.

The present paper takes the hierarchy in (1) as a starting point and examines its implications for syntax. More specifically, I adopt the so-called Peeling Theory of Case proposed by Starke (unpublished work). In this theory, DPs are base-generated case-marked. When they move up the tree, they strand one case-shell in each movement step (2). The prediction that the Peeling Theory and the case decompositions in (1) give is that depending on the position of the DP in the tree, it`s case shifts from INSTR to ACC and subsequently to NOM.

One example of such a triplet is provided in (3). (3a) is a passive sentence with the external argument (EA) in INS. I adopt the analysis of passive proposed in Collins (2005) where the EA is base-generated in Spec,vP in both passive and active. In the passive sentence, the EA stays in situ. If Collins is right, the INS marking of the EA follows from the decomposition (1) and the Peeling Theory.

In (3b), there is a matrix ECM verb *vidět* `see` that selects an infinitival clause. I propose that the EA of the infinitive undergoes one movement step thereby switching from INS to ACC. (3c) is a passive variant of (3b), where the EA of the infinitive rises to Spec,TP, peels off the ACC case shell and surfaces as NOM.

Another paradigm worth noting is in (4a,b). Here, the object of the preposition (Ground) is INS if the P is locative and ACC if the P is directional. For the difference between LOC and DIR Ps I adopt an analysis by Svenonius (2004) where DIR Ps (5b) contain more structure than LOC Ps (5a). More specifically, the DIR Ps contain a `TO` Path head. I propose that the Ground rises in the DIR PPs and peels off the INS case shell to become ACC (cf. (6a,b) for some evidence for the movement from Dutch, taken from denDikken, 2003).

It is interesting to note in this respect that if the Path head is `VIA` (realized as a prefix *pro-* on the verb), the Ground stays in INS (7a,b). So there is a correlation between the shift from INS to ACC and the phonological realization of the PATH head: the case shifts from INS to ACC only if the Path head is null.

Similar facts hold for the complement of the verb *zajímat se* `wonder`. The complement CP is either introduced by a *+wh* overt head or by a *+wh* phrase, but never by both (so-called Doubly Filled COMP Filter, see 8a,b,c). Starke (2001) proposes a theory where the Doubly Filled COMP Filter follows from the fact that there is only one position for the *+wh* feature that can be supplied either by a head or by a moved phrase (in the traditional sense).

Taking the parallel seriously, I propose that the feature Y corresponds to Path (9). If there is peeling (=movement), the `TO` Path is supplied by the moved phrase. If there is a `VIA` Path contributed by a separate head, there is no movement and hence no shift from INS to ACC. This solution: (i) gives an explanation for the pattern (7a,b,c) and (ii) potentially reduces the stipulation needed to cover the case hierarchies (1a,b,c).

References:
Bobaljik, J. (2006): *The ABCs of comparative suppletion*. Handout of a talk in Tromsø, May 18, 2006.
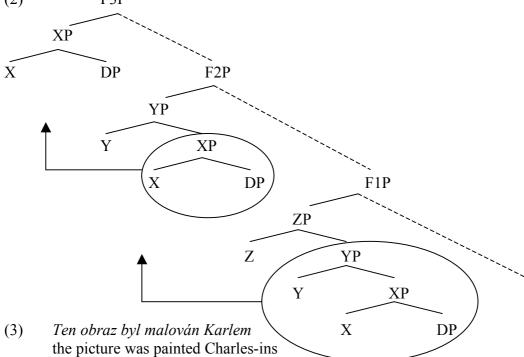Collins, Ch. (2005): A smuggling approach to the passive in english.Syntax 8(2),81-120.
den Dikken, M. (2003): *On the syntax of directional and locative adpositional phrases*. Ms. CUNY.
Starke, M. (2001): *On the non-existence of specifiers and the nature of heads*. Ms:NY

Table I: Morphological subset relations of cases in Colloquial Czech

	pradigm *muž* ,man', plural	paradigm *kuře*, ,chicken', plural	paradigm *kost*, ,bone', plural	paradigm *stavení*, ,building', plural
NOMINATIVE	muž-i	kuřat-a	kost-i	staven-í
ACCUSATIVE	muž-e	kuřat-a	kost-i	staven-í
INSTRUMENTAL	muž-e-ma	kuřat-a-ma	kost-i-ma	staven-í-ma

(1a)   NOM = [X [DP]]
(1b)   ACC = [Y [X [DP]]]
(1c)   INS = [Z [Y [X [DP]]]]
(2)   F3P

(3)   *Ten obraz byl malován Karlem*
          the picture was painted Charles-ins
(3b)   *Petr viděl Karla malovat ten obraz*
          Peter saw Charles-acc paint the picture
 (3c)   *Karel byl viděn malovat ten obraz*
          Charles-nom was seen paint the picture
 (4a)   *před / pod / za / nad / mezi   něčím*
          in front of / under / behind / above / between something-ins   -LOCATIVE
(4b)   *před / pod / za / nad / mezi   něco*
          in front of / under / behind / above / between something-acc -DIRECTIONAL
(5a)   [Place [K [DP]]]   (5b)   [TO-Path [Place [K [DP]]]]
 (6a)   *Jan sprong in de sloot*   ambiguous: locative or directional
          Jan jumped in the ditch
(6b)   *Jan sprong de sloot in*   unambiguous: directional only
          Jan jumped the ditch in
(7a)   *Petr pro-šel za pohovkou*   (7b)   *Petr pro-šel za pohovku*
          Peter VIA-went behind sofa-ins   Peter VIA-went behind sofa-acc
(8a)   *Zajímalo mě, zda (on) přišel*   (8b)   *Zajímalo mě, kdo přišel*
          I wondered whether (he) came   I wondered who came
(8c)   **Zajímalo mě, kdo zda přišel*
          I wondered who whether came
(9)   Y = `TO` PATH