Nominative Subject or Object, what is the difference?

The present paper investigates quirky subject and Case shift phenomena. An illustration from Russian is given in (1)-(2). These examples represent psychological constructions with Experiencer-Object (EO) verbs (in Bouchard's 1995 terms) *nadoest*' (to bore) (1) and *udivit*' (to surprise) (2). In (a), a non-nominative argument (Experiencer) occupies the [Spec, T] position (dative (DAT) in (1) and accusative (ACC) in (2)), whereas a nominative one (NOM) is located in situ. In (b), the arguments are shifted: NOM is in [Spec, T], and DAT/ACC follows the verb. Note that (a) and (b) have the same interpretation; both imply a neutral reading.

- (1) a. Avtoru nadoela eta kniga.
 author-**DAT** bored this book-**NOM**"This book has bored the author."
- b. Eta kniga nadoela avtoru.this book-NOM bored author-DAT"This book has bored the author."
- (2) a. Avtora udivila eta kniga. author-ACC surprised this book-NOM "This book has surprised the author."
- b. Eta kniga udivila avtora. this book-**NOM** surprised author-**ACC** "This book has surprised the author."

In Russian, the Case shift phenomenon is lexically constrained. The alternations shown in (1)-(2) cannot have a neutral reading with Experiencer-Subject (ES) psychological verbs, such as *ljubit'* (to like) in (3), nor with non-psychological verbs, for example *kupit'* (to buy) in (4).

- (3) a. * Etu knigu ljubil avtor.
 this book-ACC liked author-NOM
 "The author liked this book."
 OK: "It was the author who liked this book."
- b. Avtor ljubil etu knigu. author-**NOM** liked this book-**ACC** "The author liked this book."
- (4) a.* Etu knigu kupil avtor.
 this book-ACC bought author-NOM
 "The author bought this book."
 OK: "It was the author who bought this book."
- b. Avtor kupil etu knigu. author-**NOM** bought this book-**ACC** "The author bought this book."

Finally, the data in (5) use weak crossover effects permitting to discover the position (A or _) of the fronted accusative NP in (2a)-(4a). An EO construction (5a) does not exhibit such effects (given its ungrammaticality); thus, an accusative NP has moved to an A-position, i.e. [Spec, T]. On the other hand, ES and non-psychological constructions (5b) and (5c), respectively, instantiate the weak cross over effects. In this case, the accusative fronting results in the substitution to a category higher than T^{0max}.

- (5) a.* Svoego i avtora udivljaet ka_daja kniga i. (cf. 2a) his:REFL author-ACC surprises every book-NOM

 "Every book i surprises its i own author."
 - b. Svoju i knigu ljubit ka_dyj avtor i. (cf. 3a) his:REFL book-ACC likes every author-NOM
 "His i own book likes every author i."
 - c. Svoju i knigu pokupaet ka_dyj avtor i. (cf. 4a) his:REFL book-**ACC** buys every author-**NOM**"His i own book buys every author i."

Quirky subjects and alternations illustrated in (1)-(2) are attested exclusively in morphological Case languages (Ura 2000; for subjects of Icelandic psych-verbs see Platzack 1999). This fact can be attributed to the property of these languages to allow a flexible word order. This argument leaves the fundamental question (6) without explanation.

(6) Why is there free word order in morphological Case languages? Why do morphological Case languages exist at all?

Some particular questions (7) also arise from the data presented in (1)-(4).

- (7) a. Why can DAT/ACC arguments occupy the [Spec, T] position in constructions with EO psych-verbs?
 - b. Why is Case shift possible with EO psych-constructions but impossible with ES and non-psychological constructions?

In response to the question (6), we propose the parameter (8) specifically for morphological Case languages.

- (8) *Morphological Case Parameter:* morphological Case languages are those where:
 - a. Structural Cases of T and of v are all weak;
 - b. EPP feature of T is strong.

We attribute the restriction on the Case alternations to the lexical parameter (9). The contrast between EO (1, 2) and ES (3) Russian psych-verbs is due to the different definitions of EPP. EPP is associated with [+D] feature in case of the EO psych-verbs and with [+person] feature in case of the ES psych-verbs. The presence of the [+person] strong feature in v of the latter type of verbs is motivated by an independent observation that these verbs cannot form an impersonal construction (unlike EO psych-verbs).

(9) v of a psychological verb has a strong EPP feature

In order to provide a unified analysis to the data in (1)-(4) we assume the multiple specifiers hypothesis and the Minimal Link Condition (MLC) (which includes the Equidistance Condition) (Chomsky 1995:356). The derivations in (10) show how the arguments are structurally distributed in course of the feature checking operations. In (a) (a construction with an EO psych-verb), NP1 (Obj) moves to v attracted by the strong [+D] feature and creates an inner Spec; then NP2 (Subj) is merged creating an outer Spec. Both arguments are equidistant from T, thus either NP1 or NP2 can move to check the strong [+D] feature (EPP) of T. Note that the Case does not trigger pied-piping given (8b). In (b) (a construction with ES psych-verb), the [+person] strong feature of v triggers the movement of NP1 (which must be animate); then the same strong feature of T attracts the corresponding feature of the argument being the most prominent in person hierarchy, i.e. Experiencer. If NP1 is Experiencer, it moves to [Spec, T]. In (10c) (a construction with a non-psychological verb), v does not have any strong features, and NP1 remains in situ. Given MLC, only NP2 (Subj) can move to [Spec, T] to check the [+D] strong feature of T.

(10) a.
$$[_{TP} \text{ Spec } [_{T'} \text{ T } [_{iP} \text{ NP}_2 [_{v'} \text{ NP}_1 [_{v'} v [_{VP} \text{ V } t_1]]]]]]]$$

c.
$$[_{TP} \ Spec \ [_{T'} \ T \ [_{vP} \ NP_2 \ [_{v'} \ v \ [_{VP} \ V \ NP_1]]]]]]$$

The proposed analysis is based crucially on the feature strength. The data presented in (1)-(4) is problematic for elimination of feature strength from UG (Chomsky 1998).

Bibliography:

Bouchard, Denis. 1995. *The semantics of syntax. A minimalist approach to grammar*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Chomsky, Noam. 1995. The Minimalist Program. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Chomsky, Noam. 2000. Minimalist inquiries: the framework. In *Step by step*, ed. R. Martin, D. Michaels, and J. Uriagereka. Camridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Platzack, Christer. 1999. The Subject of Icelandic Psych-Verbs: a Minimalist Account. Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax 64:103-115.

Ura, Hiroyuki. 2000. Checking theory and grammatical functions in Universal Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press.