

Rethinking Structural Case: Partitive Case in Sakha

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Abstract: The Sakha language has a special partitive case used only on nonspecific direct objects in imperative sentences. This is neither a canonical structural case, nor a canonical inherent case. We show that its basic properties can be explained within a configurational case theory by assuming that partitive is unmarked case assigned to any NP within the VP complement of v_{Imp} , a special v head found only in the scope of imperative (Jussive) heads and a few semantical similar items. This theory is briefly contrasted with one in which partitive is assigned by agreement with a special v , and one in which partitive is the feature V copied onto a nearby NP.

1. Introduction

Within the generative program, Case theory has normally gotten started by making a sharp distinction between so-called structural cases, like nominative and accusative, and inherent or semantic cases, like locative, ablative or instrumental, syntactic theory being more integrally concerned with the structural cases. However, it is not clear that this distinction is so well-defined, or that the boundaries between the two phenomena have necessarily been drawn in the right place.

As a case in point, consider the so called partitive case in Sakha, expounded by the suffix *-tA*. A relic of the Old Turkic locative case, in Sakha this is a very specialized case, used only on some objects of verbs in imperative sentences, as in (1) (Stachowski and Menz 1998: 421, 429).¹

- (1) a. *Kiliep-te sie.*
bread-PART eat.IMP
'Eat some bread.' or 'Eat some of the bread.'
- b. *Kinige-te atyylas.*
Book- PART buy. IMP
'Buy any book.' (Not: #'Buy some of the book.')

This partitive is certainly not on the list of normal structural cases, apparently having little in common with nominative and accusative. On the contrary, it is used in a semantically well-defined context (imperatives), where it expresses a kind of semantic notion (an indefinite having narrow scope with respect to the imperative operator). However, it is not a canonical inherent case either, in that it doesn't express the equivalent of a PP in English, nor is there a particular thematic role associated with it. Syntactic structure seems relevant to the partitive, in that it is found only on direct objects, not on subjects or indirect objects. Sakha's partitive is thus rather far from the prototypes for both structural case and inherent/semantic case. It could be a hint that this traditional distinction needs to be rethought, and along with it the basic principles of case assignment themselves.

In this short paper, we discuss how the major properties of partitive case in Sakha can be analyzed within a theory in which much of case assignment is configurational—determined by an NP's syntactic position with respect to other grammatical elements—not by agreement with designated functional heads (the structural case prototype) or by theta-role assignment from particular lexical heads (the inherent/semantic/lexical case prototype). In doing this, we extend our earlier theory of structural case in Sakha (Baker and

¹ Abbreviations used in the glosses of Sakha examples include the following: 2sS, second singular subject; 3sS, third singular subject; ABL, ablative; ACC, accusative; AOR, aorist; DAT, dative; FUT, future; IMP, imperative; NEG, negative; PART, partitive case; PASS, passive; PL, plural; PROS.PTPL, prospective participle.

Vinokurova 2010, hereafter B&V) to this very specialized case. More specifically, we propose that there is a special functional head in imperative clauses that we call v_{Imp} . This is a special flavor of the v /Voice head that is licensed semantically in imperative sentences (and a few others), and as such it is a phase head that triggers the spell out of its VP complement. What is special about v_{Imp} is that it stipulates that any NP not otherwise marked for case within the spelled-out VP gets a special unmarked case, namely partitive. On this analysis, partitive in Sakha finds a place alongside nominative, which is the unmarked case for NPs inside a spelled out TP in many languages, and genitive, which is the unmarked case for NPs inside a spelled out DP in some languages. This is similar to Baker's (2015: 140-145) analysis of partitive case in Finnish, except that partitive is only assigned in the complement of this one particular v head in Sakha, not in the VP complement of any v head, as in Finnish.

2. Partitive case in Sakha in context

One telling reason for saying that partitive in Sakha is a special kind of structural case is that it participates in alternations. Sakha is a differential object marking (DOM) language: definite or specific objects are marked with accusative case; nonspecific indefinite objects are unmarked for case (morphologically indistinguishable from nominative; see Vinokurova 2005, B&V). Interestingly, both of these possibilities can also be found in imperatives, alongside the partitive option in (1), each with what seems to be its usual semantic value:

- (2) a. *Kilib-i sie.*
 bread-ACC eat.IMP
 'Eat the bread.'
- b. *Kiliep sie.*
 bread eat.IMP
 'Eat bread.'

So Sakha actually has a three-way rather than a two-way DOM distinction in this limited grammatical environment, with (1a), (2a), and (2b) all possible. (2a) is quite different semantically from (1a): here the object has a definite or specific reading, whereas in (1a) it has a partitive or nonspecific indefinite reading. The bare object in (2b), however, is very close in meaning to the partitive objects in (1a,b); it

also has what is broadly speaking a nonspecific indefinite meaning.²
We return to this below.

Sakha also has explicit partitive constructions, which it shares with other Turkic languages, including Turkish (see Kornfilt 1990, 1996 for detailed discussion of the Turkish analogs). In these constructions, the NP expressing the whole from which the part is taken bears ablative case, *not* partitive case. If a nominal head expressing the part is overt, as in (3a), it bears a normal direct object case—accusative or (in imperatives only) partitive. The nominal head of this partitive construction can also be null, giving a kind of bare partitive construction, in which it looks like the direct object itself has ablative case. In the spirit of Kornfilt’s studies, we assume that this is a relatively straightforward variant of the construction in (3a), which happens to have a null head.

- (3) a. *Jablaka-ttan ikki-ni/ikki-te sie.* (**Jablaka-ta...*)
apple-ABL two-ACC /two-PART eat.IMP (*apple-PART)
‘Eat two of the apples!’
- b. *Jablaka-ttan sie!*
apple-ABL eat.IMP
‘Eat some of the apple/apples.’

Like (2) and unlike (1), these expressions of the object are equally possible in ordinary declarative sentences. Calling the *-tA* case marker in (1) “partitive” might now seem like a bit of a misnomer, since the case is not used in explicit partitive constructions like (3a), and since some examples with partitive case do not naturally have a partitive translation (e.g., (1b)). However, this is the term now used in Sakha grammar studies, and the case does express partitive meanings in some examples (e.g., (1a)); it also does have similarities with the

² An anonymous reviewer asks how exactly a bare NP object like the one in (2b) differs semantically or pragmatically from a partitive object like the one in (1a), given that both have narrow-scope indefinite readings. Unfortunately, we cannot give a fully helpful or insightful answer; it is hard to articulate a clear and consistent difference. One possible hint is that (1a) with partitive case seems to imply that there should be some bread left over (perhaps so that the speaker can eat some too), whereas (2b) allows the addressee to eat all the bread.

Finnish partitive. Therefore, we maintain this terminology here.³

It is also worth noting that (as far as is known) the direct object of any transitive verb in Sakha can bear partitive case if the conditions are met: if the clause is imperative, and the object permits a nonspecific indefinite reading. In this sense, partitive case is no less a structural case than overt accusative or bare accusative is. The use of this case is limited syntactically, but not lexically, in contrast with standard instances of inherent case.

3. Partitive case as case for NPs inside VP

With these comparisons in mind, we now build our case that partitive is an unmarked case assigned to NPs that stay inside VP in imperative clauses.

The possibility of (2a) in particular tends to point away from an alternative idea within the configurational case theory, according to which what is special about imperatives is that they have some special kind of covert subject, one with distinctive grammatical features of some kind. One might imagine a variant of a dependent case theory (Marantz 1991) in which an NP has partitive case if and only if it is c-commanded in the local domain by another NP that has these special features. But this alternative view makes it rather mysterious why accusative case on the object is also an option in imperative clauses. B&V argue in detail that accusative case in Sakha is the result of the object being locally c-commanded by an ordinary NP subject. It is far from clear, then, how c-command by the same subject could cause both accusative case on the object in (2a) and partitive case in (1).

Another objection to a view in which partitive is a special dependent case is the fact that imperatives in Sakha can have normal overt subjects as well as covert ones. Although these overt subjects have no obvious special features, the object can still be partitive. (4a) shows this with an overt NP serving as the addressee, as is possible in all varieties of English; (4b) shows it with a kind of third person

³ An older term for this case, used for example by Otto Boehtlingk in the mid 19th century, was “accusative indefinite.”

imperative, where the addressee is exhorted to have a third person expressed as the subject accomplish some act, as is possible in some idiolects of English (Zanuttini 2008).

- (4) a. *Masha salamaat-ta sie.*
Masha porridge-PART eat.IMP
'Masha (you) eat some porridge!'
(command addressed to Masha)
- b. *Masha salamaat-ta sie-tin.*
Masha porridge-PART eat-IMP.3sS
'Have Masha eat some porridge!'
(command addressed to someone other than Masha)

We conclude, then, that Sakha's partitive is not a specialized type of dependent case.

The examples in (4) also suggest that it is only the direct object that can be partitive in an imperative; overt subjects are nominative, as in other clauses. This is true even if the agentive subject of the imperative is an indefinite nominal, semantically compatible with partitive, as shown in (5) (see also (12) below on the nonagentive subjects of unaccusative verbs).

- (5) *Oqo-(#to) yllaa-tin!*
child-(*PART) sing-IMP.3sS.
'Have a/any child sing!'

Put in structural terms, it is only an NP inside VP (that is not otherwise case marked, e.g. with dative) that can be partitive. This fits our idea that partitive is an unmarked case for NPs in a VP domain.

The idea that partitive is a case for NPs inside VP fits the observed facts in another respect as well. The interpretative properties of partitive objects suggest that they remain inside the VP, in that they get only weak indefinite readings. For example, in a negative imperative, the partitive object can only be interpreted as an existential that takes narrow scope with respect to negation (as well as with respect to the imperative operator itself).

- (6) *Kiliiep-te sie-me.*
bread-PART eat-IMP.NEG.2sS

Only: ‘Do not eat any bread at all.’

[IMP [Neg [∃x bread (x) [you eat x]]]]

(Not: ‘Make sure there is some bread that you don’t eat.’)

This is quite different from a command with an accusative object, where the object does have (the equivalent of) wide scope with respect to negation.

(7) *Kilieb-i sie-me.*

bread-ACC eat-IMP.NEG.2sS

‘Do not eat that bread.’ Bread (x) [IMP [Not [you eat x]]]

(‘There might be other bread around which you do eat, but not THAT bread.’)

This fits well with the idea that NPs that shift out of VP and get strong readings in accordance with Diesing’s (1992) Mapping Hypothesis come into the domain of the subject and are assigned dependent accusative case in Sakha. In contrast, NPs that stay inside the VP and receive weak indefinite readings get partitive case. This also explains the fact that proper names and nominals with a demonstrative cannot be in partitive case when used as the direct object of an imperative verb in Sakha:

(8) **Sargy-ta/*bu kinige-te bul.*

Sargy-PART/this book-PART find.IMP

‘Find Sargy/this book!’

These nominals are intrinsically definite, so they have to move out of VP and receive accusative; they never remain in the VP-internal position where partitive is assigned.

It is worth recalling in this connection that the reading of the partitive object is very similar to the reading of the bare object (see (1a) and (2b)). This is also seen by comparing (6) with (9), where the object definitely stays inside VP; the two naturally receive the same English translation, because the structures are the same in this regard.

(9) *Kiliep sie-me.*

bread eat-IMP.NEG.2sS

‘Do not eat (any) bread.’

[IMP [Neg [∃x bread (x) [you eat x]]]]

Although bare NPs and NPs with partitive case are very similar in meaning, there is a clear structural difference between them. Bare objects have to be strictly left-adjacent to the verb in Sakha, whereas partitive objects can be separated from the verb by an adverb or resultative phrase, as seen in (10).⁴

- (10) a. *Kumaaqy-ta/*kumaaqy xoruopka-qa ug-uma.*
 paper-PART/*paper case-DAT put-NEG.IMP
 ‘Don’t put any paper(s) in the case!’
- b. *Kiliep-te/*kiliep türgennik sie!*
 bread-PART/bread quickly eat.IMP
 ‘Eat some bread quickly!’

For this and other reasons, Baker (2014) argues in detail that bare objects in Sakha are the result of pseudo-incorporation applying between the head of the direct object and the verb. This requires strict linear adjacency in Sakha (and in other languages in which the verb does not move to T, according to Baker). In contrast, partitive objects are not pseudo-incorporated, and do not need to be next to the verb, either because a lower resultative phrase intervenes (in (10a)), or because the object has undergone short scrambling within VP over a VP adverb, as in (10b). This then gives an account of the three-way distinction among objects in Sakha: objects that undergo object shift out of VP are accusative; objects that are pseudo-incorporated with the verb either do not undergo case marking at all (because they are “hidden” inside the verb) or have their case feature deleted; objects that stay in VP but do not incorporate get partitive case. These structural distinctions correspond to semantic distinctions given Diesing’s Mapping Hypothesis and the special semantics that goes with pseudo-incorporation (see Dayal 2011).

The examples in (10) also show that having partitive case on the object in Sakha is perfectly compatible with there being other material inside the VP. That is true for directional/resultative phrases like ‘in the case’, which are lower than the object in syntactic structure. It is

⁴ Kornfilt (1990, 1996) shows that bare ablative-partitives like (3b) also must be strictly adjacent to the verb in Turkish, like bare objects. This confirms that the so-called ablative partitives should have a different sort of analysis from objects with partitive case in Sakha.

also true for goal/recipient phrases which are higher than the object in syntactic structure, as shown in (11) (see Baker and Vinokurova 2010 on higher goal NPs with structural dative case in Sakha).⁵ (11a) shows this for a goal intrinsically selected by the verb ‘give’, (11b) for a freely added benefactive expression.

- (11) a. *At-tar-ga ok-kut-una bier-din-ner.*
horse-PL-DAT hay-2sP-PART give-IMP-3pS
‘Have them give the horses some of your hay.’
- b. *Miexe kiliep-te atyylas.*
me.DAT bread-PART buy IMP
‘Buy me some bread.’

This is theoretically significant for distinguishing a view in which partitive is unmarked case assigned when VP is spelled out from a Chomsky-style analysis in which partitive case is assigned to the object by a special *v* found in imperative clauses. The goal phrases in (11) intervene structurally between *v* and the theme, which should block *v* from entering into Agree with the theme. If partitive case assignment depended on Agree, it should be blocked in (11), contrary to fact. In contrast, our proposal that partitive is unmarked case for any NP inside VP that is not already case marked correctly predicts that partitive is possible in (11), since this assignment rule does not depend in any way on details about where the NP is relative to other VP-internal items.

Overall, then, it is precisely those NPs that are generated inside VP (objects as opposed to subjects) and that stay inside VP (nonspecific indefinite objects as opposed to specific/definite objects) that get partitive case in imperatives. Thus our core proposal that partitive is a case for NPs inside VP that are not otherwise case marked fits the facts well.

This raises the question of what happens with the theme arguments of unaccusative verbs. Like direct objects, these are generated inside VP, under standard assumptions. Hence, one might expect that

⁵ We thank an anonymous reviewer for asking about (11) and pointing out its potential theoretical significance.

unaccusative subjects could get partitive case, in contrast with unergative subjects ((5)). In fact, this is impossible in Sakha, as shown in (12).

- (12) a. *Morkuop-(*ta) üün-niin!*
carrot-(*PART) grow-IMP.3sS
'Let some carrots grow.'
- b. *#Oqo-to yaldy-ba-tyn.*
child-PART get.sick-NEG-IMP.3sS
Not OK as 'Don't let any child get sick!'
(OK as 'Don't let his child get sick', with *-to* =3sP)

This fact fits with our hypothesis as long as we assume that Sakha has a strong EPP feature, such that some suitable NP must move to Spec TP (or at least to Spec $v_{\text{Imp}}\text{P}$; see fn. 8). Since the theme is the only NP in these unaccusative structures, it must be the one to move. This takes the theme out of VP, bleeding partitive case assignment, just as object shift out of VP does. In contrast, unaccusative subjects can get partitive case in Finnish, because in that language EPP properties are absent or can be satisfied in other ways (see Baker 2015: 142 and references cited there).⁶

4. The structure of imperative clauses

The major remaining question, then, is how to relate the fact that NPs inside VP get a special partitive case in imperatives only to the overall syntax of imperative clauses. On the latter topic, we take as our starting point the theory of the syntax of imperatives in Zanuttini (2008) and Zanuttini, Pak and Portner (2012), a theory with crosslinguistic aspirations which fits well with the basic facts about Sakha. On this view, imperative clauses have a special Jussive head that is not present in other clause types. This head has intrinsic interpretable second person features that relate to the fact that imperatives are enjoined on the addressee of the utterance in a special way. The head is assumed to be high in the clausal structure, above TP

⁶ Unaccusative predicates also allow their subjects to have the bare ablative partitive in Turkish, according to Kornfilt (1990, 1996)—another difference between the two so-called partitive constructions.

and most of the rest of the functional structure of the clause. In Sakha, this fits with the fact that the imperative operator in an example like (6) necessarily has scope over negation: (6) means ‘you have the obligation not to eat bread’, not ‘you don’t have the obligation to eat bread’. Similarly, Sakha has a special future tense imperative seen in (13); here imperative has scope over the future tense.

- (13) *Kinige-te atyylah-aar.*
book-PART buy-FUT.IMP.2S
‘You have an obligation (now) to buy a book in the future.’
(Not: ‘In the future, you will have an obligation to buy a book.’)

Furthermore, according to Zanuttini (2008), if T in an imperative clause has person agreement features of its own, it can license a subject distinct from the addressee; this is what we find in examples like (4b) in Sakha. However, T in imperative clauses can also lack a person agreement feature. In that case, the Jussive head can itself agree with the subject, endowing it with its intrinsic second person feature. In this way, a null second person pronoun can be licensed in the subject position of imperatives even in the absence of rich agreement, as in examples like (1), and a second person reading can be imposed on a nominal that otherwise would not have one, as in (4a). Overall, then, Zanuttini’s theory of the syntax of imperatives is a good fit for Sakha.

But there is a significant problem when it comes to the licensing of partitive case in Sakha imperatives, since the Jussive head is too high in the clause to trigger this case on the direct object in any contending theory of case assignment. Clearly Jussive should not be able to assign partitive to the object under Agree, because the subject intervenes structurally between the two. But essentially the same problem arises for our view that partitive is an unmarked case assigned at Spell out. One could stipulate that Jussive is a phase head, and that partitive case is assigned to un-case-marked NPs inside its spelled-out complement. But the complement of Jussive is (at least) TP, which also includes the subject, and partitive is not possible on the subject (see (5) and (12)). Moreover, Jussive embeds a TP that itself contains a normal vP structure. Since v is a (hard) phase head in Sakha, which spells out its VP complement but does not provide an unmarked case for NPs inside that complement, NPs inside VP that are not otherwise case-marked are forced to undergo pseudo-incorporation, showing up as bare

nominals. By the time the derivation reaches the Jussive head, then, there should be no object NP visible inside its complement to get partitive, VP already having been spelled out. Therefore, Jussive could have no direct case marking effect on the VP-internal object.

Therefore, we are led to propose that the structure of imperative clauses in Sakha is a bit more complex. We suggest that Sakha has a special flavor of *v*, called v_{Imp} , which is licensed in the scope of the Jussive head, as expressed in (14).

- (14) v_{Imp} is licensed only in the semantic scope of Jussive or a similar operator.

Semantically v_{Imp} introduces an agent and says that that agent is obligated to perform the predicate expressed by its VP complement. Like other *vs*, it triggers the spell out of its VP complement. However, this *v* is special in that it supplies partitive case as an unmarked case for that complement. This is stated explicitly in (15).

- (15) Assign Partitive to an NP not marked for case in the domain spelled out by v_{Imp} .

Then the result follows that partitive case is licensed on direct objects that remain inside VP in Sakha, but not on agentive subjects or on direct objects that move out of VP to get a strong/definite/specific reading.⁷

Possible independent evidence that imperatives in Sakha involve a special *v* head as well as Jussive is the fact that there seems to be interference between imperatives and the most obvious overt *v*/Voice head in the language, namely the passive morpheme *-IIIŋ*. Passives

⁷ One might think that positing v_{Imp} in addition to Jussive would also make possible a view in which v_{Imp} assigns partitive case to the direct object under Agree. However, this view would find it difficult to explain why accusative objects are also possible in imperatives (see (2a)), since the normal accusative-assigning *v* would not be present in imperatives, by hypothesis. Our configurational account readily accommodates both: if the object stays inside VP, it gets unmarked partitive case when VP is spelled out; if it moves out of VP, it gets dependent case by being locally c-commanded by the subject (see (21)). (For another problem with this alternative, see the discussion of (11).)

formed with this morpheme cannot be used in the imperative; hence (16) is ungrammatical.

- (16) **Tal-ylyn!*
choose-PASS.IMP
'Be chosen!' (e.g., for some honor or prize)

This contrasts with English, where passive imperatives are grammatical under certain conditions (e.g., *Be examined by a doctor!*). We can account for this if we say that v_{Imp} and v_{Pass} compete for the same v position in Sakha, and only one can be used at a time.⁸

Since (14) is semantic in nature, it allow for the possibility that other heads might be close enough in meaning to Jussive to semantically license a v_{Imp} projection, and hence partitive case on the object. In fact, Sakha also has certain so-called necessitive constructions, in which partitive case can be observed on the object. An example is (17).

- (17) *Kiliep-te aʁal-uax-xa naada.*
bread-PART get-PROS.PTPL-DAT necessary
'It is necessary to get some bread.' (Stachowski and Menz 1998: 429)

Our rough idea about this is that the adjective *naada* 'necessary' is similar enough semantically to the functional head Jussive that it too can license a v_{Imp} projection in its scope.

We also do not say precisely how close v_{Imp} must be syntactically to Jussive (or *naada*) in order to be licensed. Here we have in mind an analogy with negative polarity items (NPIs) licensed in the scope of negation: in some languages, the NPI must be in the same clause as the licensing negation, but in others the NPI can be at some distance, within an embedded clause (e.g., English: *I don't want to eat anything*). v_{Imp} licensing in Sakha seems to be like NPI licensing in

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In contrast, unaccusative verbs are possible as commands: *öl-ö oʁus!* ('die quickly!' spoken to a bug), *yaldj-ima* (get.sick-NEG.IMP 'Don't get sick!'). These do not need any special v to suppress an agent argument. Apparently the theme argument can move from inside VP to the Spec $v_{\text{Imp}}P$ position in sentences like these.

English in this respect. Thus, all speakers allow an imperative matrix clause to license partitive inside the embedded clause in nonfinite control-like complements, as shown in (18).

- (18) *Kiliep-te sii-r-gin umnu-ma!*
 bread-PART eat-AOR-2s.ACC forget-NEG.IMP
 ‘Don’t forget to eat some bread.’

Some speakers even allow Jussive in the matrix clause to license v_{Imp} inside a fully finite complement clause, permitting partitive case on the object of the embedded clause as in (19), whereas for other speakers this is ruled out.

- (19) *Masha kiliep-(%te) atyylah-ya dien eren-ime.*
 Masha bread-PART buy-FUT.3sS that hope-NEG.IMP
 ‘Don’t hope that Masha will buy any bread.’

In contrast, nobody allows a matrix imperative to license partitive case on the subject of an embedded clause in a sentence like (20).

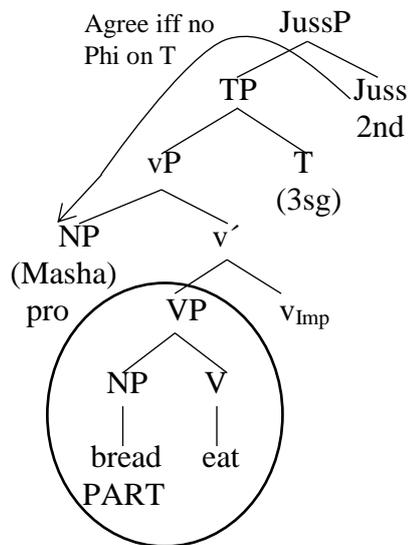
- (20) *Masha-ny byrdax-(*ta) ust-uak-a dien eren-ime.*
 Masha-ACC mosquito-(*PART) bite-FUT-3sS that hope-NEG.IMP
 ‘Don’t hope that a(ny) mosquito bites Masha.’

We can account for this curious pattern using the idea that Jussive doesn’t license partitive NPs directly; rather it licenses v_{Imp} , which in turn triggers the assignment of partitive case locally inside its complement. On the one hand, if Jussive in (20) licenses v_{Imp} in the embedded clause, then the embedded subject is not in the complement of this v_{Imp} , so it cannot be partitive. On the other hand, if Jussive in (20) licenses v_{Imp} in the matrix clause, then the subject is in the c-command domain of v_{Imp} , but it is already spelled out on the CP phase headed by *dien* ‘that’, so it cannot get partitive in those circumstances either.⁹ The distribution of partitive NPs in embedded clauses can thus be accounted for using (14).

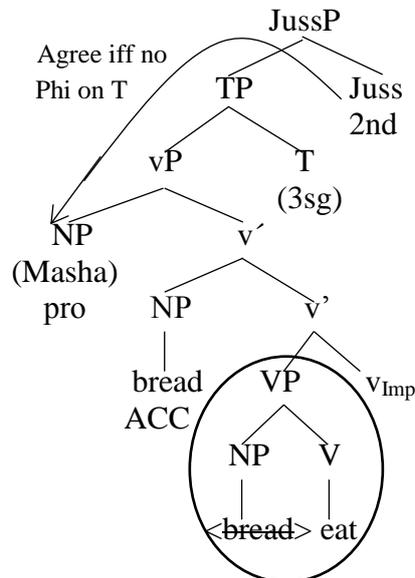
⁹ There is one other possibility: the embedded subject could shift to the edge of the CP phase. This is possible in Sakha, resulting in accusative subjects in many kinds of clauses (Vinokurova 2005, B&V). But we assume that CP actually extraposes out of VP as well. This takes the subject at the edge of CP outside the domain of partitive case assignment within the matrix clause, so these subjects can get accusative but not partitive.

We summarize our proposal for Sakha imperatives in (21). (21a) is the structure of a simple imperative with an indefinite object, which gets partitive when the VP complement of v_{Imp} is spelled out. (21b) is the structure of an imperative with a definite object that moves out of VP and gets accusative because it is c-commanded by the subject inside the same phase. Either construction can have a third person subject licensed by agreement with T, or a second person subject licensed by Jussive if T does not bear agreement. It is also possible for a NP inside VP to pseudo-incorporate with V, in which case it surfaces as a bare noun adjacent to the verb. This accounts for all the major versions of the imperative in Sakha.

(21) a.



b.



5. Final Remarks

Sakha is not the only language thought to have a special unmarked case for NPs inside VPs. One analog is Baker's (2015: 140-145) analysis of partitive case in Finnish; see also Baker (2017) for a similar analysis of the so-called accusative indefinite case in Evenki. But there is a significant theoretical difference: in Finnish, partitive case can be assigned within any VP, so partitive case has a much wider distribution, and is found in declarative clauses as well as in imperatives. We are led to say, then, that all vs license partitive on NPs inside their complement in Finnish, whereas only the special head v_{Imp} does so in Sakha.

This difference is theoretically interesting because it seems to point away from Pesetsky's (2013) attractive proposal that case features are not a separate kind of feature provided by Universal Grammar, but rather category features copied onto an NP from a nearby head. At first glance, Baker's (2015) theory of partitive seems similar to this: saying that partitive is an unmarked case assigned within VP could be recast as saying that partitive case is the V feature being copied onto NP inside VP. But this possible equation does not carry over so well to Sakha, given that in Sakha partitive case is not assignable in all VPs, but only in the VP complements of one particular v-like head. This issue for Pesetsky's view is further compounded by the fact that Sakha allows accusative as well as partitive on direct objects, so it has two distinct cases associated with dependents of VP, and they cannot both plausibly be copies of the same V feature. Of course there may well be ways to enrich Pesetsky's theory so that it could account for the Sakha partitive—maybe even ways that are not intrinsically more complex than how we have enriched our configurational theory in (14)—but one would have to evaluate specific proposals carefully to see if they succeed in retaining what is initially attractive about Pesetsky's proposal, and whether the enriched proposal more or less converges with ours.¹⁰

¹⁰ For example, an anonymous reviewer suggests that maybe v_{Imp} transfers its category feature to V, the head of its complement, and this affects the nature of the V feature transferred to the object, with the composite [$v_{\text{Imp}} + V$] feature on NP being realized as partitive. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to consider what consequences this richer theory of composite category features might have within

In contrast, our version of the configurational approach to case assignment does have the resources to handle partitive case in Sakha—both the fact that it adds to the other possibilities for case marking direct objects in the language, rather than replacing one of them, and the fact that it is limited to one very specific type of clause. Partitive case in Sakha can thus be treated as a structural case, as long as structural case is rethought along configurational lines.

Acknowledgements

We thank the participants in the May 2016 MA lectures in the linguistics program at the North East Federal University in Yakutsk for their judgments and input, as well as Ken Safir, Viviane Deprez, the participants of the Syntactic Theory at Rutgers group, participants at a symposium on case at MIT in February 2017, and two anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions. Special thanks to Christina Tikhonova for additional Sakha judgments. Any errors are our responsibility.

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