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**Ileana Paul**  
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**PSEUDO NOUN INCORPORATION AND  
DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING:  
OBJECT LICENSING IN DAAKAKA**

Jens Hopperdietzel  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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## PREFACE

The 26th Annual Meeting of the Austronesian Formal Linguistics Association (AFLA 26) was held on May 24-26, 2019 at the University of Western Ontario (Canada). The programme consisted of 24 presentations in addition to four plenary talks by Juliette Blevins, Vera Hohaus, Marian Klamer and Becky Tollan. This volume includes 13 papers from the conference.

As conference organizer, I received generous support from a variety of sources. Financial support came from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Research Western, the Joint Fund (Research Western, SOGS, SGPS), the Theoretical and Applied Linguistics Lab, the Canadian Linguistic Association, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Graduate Program in Linguistics and three departments (French Studies, Modern Languages and Literatures, and Anthropology). The conference would not have been possible without the student volunteers (Sonia Masi, William Tran, Caylen Walker and Kang Xu), plus several others who helped out at the registration desk. Finally, I am grateful to the Department of French Studies for administrative support.

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Ileana Paul  
University of Western Ontario

## PSEUDO NOUN INCORPORATION AND DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING: OBJECT LICENSING IN DAAKAKA\*

Jens Hopperdietzel  
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
jens.hopperdietzel@hu-berlin.de

In Daakaka (Oceanic, Austronesian), verbs exhibit object marking that is related to the syntactic size of its object (nP vs. DP; cf. von Prince 2015). In this paper, I argue that this kind of DOM is an instance of pseudo-noun incorporation – a phenomenon that is well-established for related Polynesian languages (e.g. Massam 2001 on Niuean). In addition, based on the observation that the object marker occurs also on prepositions and inalienable possessed nouns, I propose a unified account that takes object marking in Daakaka as the spell-out of an abstract feature [uD] that ‘activates’ nominal licensing on (potentially) secondary licensors across domains (Voice, Poss and *p*; Kalin 2018).

### 1. Introduction

In the Oceanic language Daakaka, transitive verbs may exhibit differential object marking (DOM) that seems to be sensitive to the specificity of the object (von Prince 2015, Kalin 2018, Aissen 2003). In (1), only the specific object *kava ente* is cross-referenced by the object marker on the verb, while the unspecific object *kava* is not cross-referenced and gets an unspecific, number-neutral interpretation.

- (1) a. *Ma min kava.*  
REAL drink kava  
‘S/he drinks kava.’
- b. *Ma min-i kava ente.*  
REAL drink-OM kava DEM  
‘S/he drinks the kava.’ (von Prince 2015: 55)

In this paper, I provide evidence that DOM in Daakaka is actually not determined by semantic features but by the syntactic size of the object. Significant evidence comes from the fact that objects which are headed by the unspecific quantifier *tus-wa* ‘any’ are obligatorily cross-referenced on the verb (2) (von Prince 2017).

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- (2) *Bong mwe min \*(-i) kava tuswa?*  
 Bong REAL eat -OM taro NONSPEC  
 ‘Did Bong eat any kava?’

Crucially, the distribution of the object marker is not reduced to direct objects, but also occurs on prepositions and on inalienable possessed nouns (von Prince 2016).

- (3) a. *beleem ente*  
 door DEM  
 ‘this door’
- b. *beleem-ane wap ente*  
 door-OM cave DEM  
 ‘the entrance of the cave’ (von Prince 2015: 170)

Based on these observations, I will argue that (i) the ‘Melanesian’ language Daakaka exhibits pseudo noun incorporation (PNI), a phenomenon widely attested for the Polynesian subgroup (e.g. Collins 2017 on Samoan, Massam 2001 on Niuean and others) and (ii) the object marker is the spell-out of an abstract feature [uD] that ‘activates’ abstract case licensing by (potentially) secondary licenser across domains.

## 2. Differential Object Marking in Daakaka

The endangered language Daakaka (West-Ambrym, Northern/Central Vanuatu, Oceanic) is spoken by a relatively small community (roughly 1,000 speakers) on the island of Ambrym. The data presented in this paper comes primarily from already available sources like a detailed grammar (von Prince 2015) and extensive corpus data (von Prince 2013) which are enriched by additional elicitations.

### 2.1. Typological Background

The basic word order is Subject – Verb – Object (SVO) with the verb and its object always adjacent to each other. It shows mood-prominent TMA-marking with preverbal inflection (von Prince 2015). Verbs exhibit differential subject agreement sensitive to animacy and number (Hopperdietzel 2018) and DOM. With respect to case marking, nouns are not marked overtly for case (neutral case assignment). Below, the basic clause structure is given.

- (4) (Topic) (Subject) SM+Mood Verb(-OM) (Object)
- (5) [*Vyaven nyoo ente*] *ya-m kuk-ane* [*dom pe~pyo ente*].  
 woman 3PL DEM 3PL-REAL cook-OM yam RED~white DEM  
 ‘The women cooked the white yam.’

2.2. Differential Object Marking in Daakaka

Differential object marking (DOM) is a widely observed phenomenon in which objects split in whether they are marked or not (Aissen 2003, Bossong 1991, Silverstein 1976 and many more). The type of DOM has been observed to vary from language to language including case marking or object agreement. Commonly, these splits are related to animacy and/or specificity of the object and DOM languages differ with respect to which scale(s) determine DOM, and where along the scales the cut off is made.

(6) Animacy

1/2 > 3 Pronoun > Name > Human > Animate > Inanimate

(7) Specificity

Pronoun > Name > Definite > Specific Indefinite > Nonspecific

In Daakaka, many transitive verbs have been described to cross-reference the specificity of their objects (von Prince 2015): In (8a), the transitive verb *min* ‘drink’ occurs in its bare form together with an unspecific object *kava*. In contrast, if the object is specific – as indicated by the demonstrative *ente* –, the verb is derived by the object marker *-i*.

(8) a. *Bong mwe min kava.*

Bong REAL drink kava  
‘Bong drank kava.’

b. *Bong mwe min-i kava ente.*

Bong REAL drink-OM kava DEM  
‘Bong drank this kava.’ (von Prince 2015)

As in other Austronesian languages, determiners may be silent in Daakaka (cf. Paul 2016 on Malagasy). If objects that lack an overt determiner combines with transitive verbs that exhibit object marking, the presence – or absence – of the object marker gives rise to a particular interpretation: If the object marker is absent, the object is interpreted as unspecific (9a); if the object marker is present, the object gets a specific interpretation (9b).

(9) a. *Ma min kava.*

REAL drink kava  
‘He drinks kava.’

b. *Ma min-i kava.*

REAL drink-OM kava  
‘He drinks the kava.’ (von Prince 2015: 55)

The object marker is not sensitive to the phi-features of the object but shows remarkable allomorphy idiosyncratically determined by the root. The most common and (synchronically) only productive object marker is *-(a)ne* (10). Crucially, this allomorph also occurs outside of the verbal domain (cf. section 4).

- (10) a. *Mwe yas webir.*  
 REAL steal breadfruit  
 ‘She stole breadfruit.’/‘She is a breadfruit thief.’
- b. *Mwe yas-ane webir ente.*  
 REAL steal-OM breadfruit DEM  
 ‘She stole the breadfruits.’ (von Prince 2015: 60)

A more restricted allomorph of the object marker is an augmented form of the root in which the vowel of the last syllable is repeated after the final consonant.

- (11) a. *Ma min kava.*  
 REAL drink kava  
 ‘He drinks kava.’
- b. *Ma min-i kava.*  
 REAL drink-OM kava  
 ‘He drinks the kava.’ (von Prince 2015: 55)

In other cases, the object marker also affects the morpho-phonological structure of the root. In (12), the allomorph of the object marker is not only marked by the suffix *-se* but also by a lowering/lengthening of the vowel of the final syllable.

- (12) a. *Angela mwe tewes tan.*  
 Angela REAL swipe ground  
 ‘Angela swept floors.’
- b. *Angela mwe towaase tan ente.*  
 Angela REAL swipe.OM ground DEM  
 ‘Angela swept this floor.’

Additionally, many verbs exhibit root suppletion in the context of a definite object.

- (13) a. *Bong mwe en webir.*  
 Bong REAL eat taro  
 ‘Bong ate taro.’
- b. *Bong mwe ane webir ente.*  
 Bong REAL eat.OM taro DEM  
 ‘Bong ate this taro.’

Furthermore, a small class of verbs mark not the presence, but the structural absence of specific objects with the suffix *-p* (von Prince 2015: 34).

- (14) a. *Nge mon mwe sye-p~sye-p.*  
 3SG also REAL RED~slice-OM  
 ‘It [the unicorn fish] also cuts.’ (generically; von Prince 2013: 1929)
- b. *Sye wotop ø-an vi!*  
 slice breadfruit CL-3SG.POSS white.man  
 ‘Cut the papayas (lit. breadfruit of white man)!’ (von Prince 2015: 34)

The table in (15) provides an overview over the various allomorphs of the object marker (von Prince 2015: 56).

Object marker	Root	Root-OM	Meaning
= <i>(a)ne</i>	<i>doko</i> <i>kuk</i> ...	<i>doko-ne</i> <i>kuk-ane</i> ...	‘pull’ ‘cook’ ...
(CV <sub>1</sub> C)-V <sub>1</sub>	<i>lung</i> <i>min</i> ...	<i>lung-u</i> <i>min-i</i> ...	‘wrap’ ‘drink’ ...
<i>-se</i>	<i>vyo</i> <i>ves</i> ...	<i>vyo-se</i> <i>vyaa-se</i> ...	‘carry’ ‘kick’ ...
suppletive	<i>eli</i> <i>en</i> ...	<i>kii</i> <i>ane</i> ...	‘dig’ ‘eat’ ...
<i>-p</i> (unspecific)	<i>sye</i> <i>liye</i> ...	<i>sye-p</i> <i>liye-p</i> ...	‘cut’ ‘take’ ...

### 2.3. The Size of the Object

The data presented so far suggest that DOM in Daakaka is sensitive to the semantic category of specificity, i.e. only specific objects induce object marking. This hypothesis predicts that in the case of objects overtly marked for non-specificity, the verb should lack object marking. Crucially, von Prince (2017) describes the existence of such a marker for Daakaka. The indefinite quantifier *tuswa* ‘any, a’ only allows for an unspecific interpretation.

- (16) *Wotop tuswa mwe pwer?*  
 breadfruit UNSPEC REAL stay  
 ‘Is there any/\*some breadfruit (left)?’ (von Prince 2017: 127)



Under the hypothesis that DOM is sensitive to specificity, we would expect that the object marked by the unspecific quantifier *tuswa* does not trigger object marking on the verb. This prediction is not borne out by the data. Instead, the object marker co-occurs with *tuswa*.

- (17) a. \* *Bong mwe en webir tuswa?* UNSPECIFIC INDEFINITE  
 Bong REAL eat taro NONSPEC  
 Intended: ‘Did Bong eat any Taro?’
- b. *Bong mwe **ane** webir tuswa?*  
 Bong REAL eat.OM taro NONSPEC  
 ‘Did Bong eat any Taro?’

Thus, the example in (17) indicates that it is not specificity that triggers object marking, but the syntactic size of the object. Support for this claim comes from objects combined with relative clauses (18) and demonstratives (19) which are traditionally related to the presence of D-layer and trigger object marking on the verb.

- (18) a. \* *Bong mwe en webir mw-i ló.* RELATIVE CLAUSE  
 Bong REAL eat taro REAL-COP two  
 Intended: ‘Bong ate two pieces of taro.’
- b. *Bong mwe **ane** webir mw-i ló.*  
 Bong REAL eat.OM taro REAL-COP two  
 ‘Bong ate two pieces of taro.’
- (19) a. \* *Bong mwe en webir ente.* DEMONSTRATIVES  
 Bong REAL eat taro DEM  
 Intended: ‘Bong ate this taro.’
- b. *Bong mwe **ane** webir ente.*  
 Bong REAL eat.OM taro DEM  
 ‘Bong ate this taro.’

Further, object marking is sensitive to number irrespectively of specificity (20). Assuming an extended nominal projection, this pattern suggest that object marking is sensitive both the presence of a D- and Num-layer (cf. Alexiadou et al. 2007).

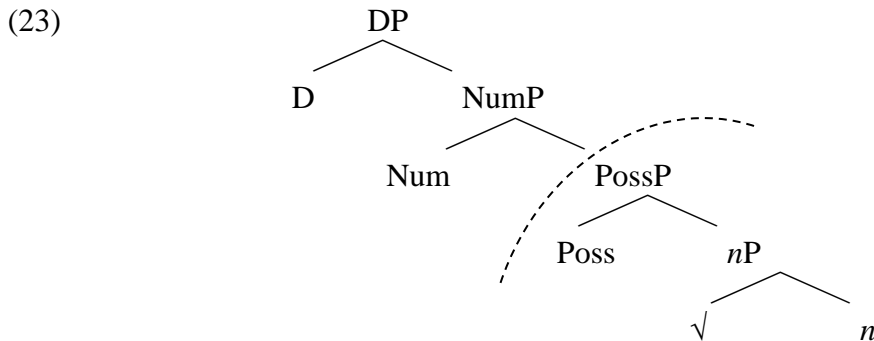
- (20) a. \* *Bong mwe en ó nyoo.* NUMBER MARKING  
 Bong REAL eat coconut PL  
 Intended: ‘Bong ate coconuts.’
- b. *Bong mwe **ane** ó nyoo.*  
 Bong REAL eat.OM coconut PL  
 ‘Bong ate coconuts.’

Crucially, however, the lack of object marking does not imply that the object is incorporated into the verb (cf. Massam 2009, Baker 1988). The object can be modified by possessor (21) and adjectival phrases (22) without triggering object marking as long as the object gets a unspecific/indefinite (number neutral) interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

- (21) *Bong mwe en webir ø-e Byongkon.* POSSESSION  
 Bong REAL eat taro CL2-LINK Byongkon  
 ‘Bong ate Byongkon’s taro.’ (as a general rule, or: some taro that belongs to Byongkon; von Prince 2015: 55)

- (22) *Bong mwe en webir pe~pyo.* ADJECTIVAL ATTRIBUTES  
 Bong REAL eat taro RED~white  
 ‘Bong ate white taro.’ (von Prince 2015: 55)

In sum, the data presented in this section suggests that object marking in Daakaka is not determined by the semantic feature of specificity, but by the syntactic size of the object. Assuming an articulated structure of the DP (Alexiadou et al. 2007), I propose that the presence of high functional projections such as DP or NumP trigger object marking, while lower functional projections such as *nP* or PossP do not.



### 3. Differential Object Marking and Pseudo Noun Incorporation

The type of DOM described for Daakaka has been observed for a number Oceanic languages of the ‘Melanesian’ and Micronesian subgroups under the terms *semi-transitivity* or *transitivity discord* (Næss 2013 on Äiwoo, Margetts 2008 on Western Oceanic, Sugita 1973 on Micronesian languages and others). In the following, I will argue that the properties of this type of DOM in Daakaka mirror another well-established case of DOM in Polynesian languages, namely differential case marking in pseudo noun incorporation (PNI).

<sup>1</sup> Recently, it has been highlighted that in some languages also phrasal constituents might be incorporated into verb (van Urk 2019, Barrie & Mathieu 2016). However, there is no evidence for the incorporation of structurally reduced phrasal objects in Daakaka as these objects must follow all types of verbal suffixes.

3.1. PNI in Oceanic Languages

Within syntactic literature on Oceanic, PNI has been described primarily for Polynesian VSO languages (Massam 2001 on Niuean, Medeiros 2013 on Hawai'ian, e.g. Collins 2017 on Samoan). In these languages, PNI exhibit the following canonical features:

Firstly, PNI-ed objects lack case marking. For example, in Samoan, which exhibits ergative-absolutive case alignment, the regular object *le pepe* gets tonal absolutive case, while the subject is marked by the ergative case marker *e* (24a) (Zuraw et al. 2014). In contrast, the PNI-ed object in (24b) is unmarked for case and the subject gets tonal absolutive case like in intransitive clauses (Collins 2017).

- (24) a. *Sa tausi e le teine le pepe.* SAMOAN  
 PST care ERG ART girl ART baby.ABS  
 ‘The girl took care of the baby.’
- b. *Sa tausi pepe le teine.*  
 PST care baby ART girl.ABS  
 ‘The girl took care of babies.’ (Collins 2017: 12)

Secondly, while regular objects are located in a clause final position (25a), PNI-ed objects undergo movement together with a verb to a clause-initial position (25b).

- (25) a. *Sa tausi pea e le teine le pepe.* SAMOAN  
 PST care continually ERG ART girl ART baby.ABS  
 ‘The girl went on taking care of the baby.’
- b. *Sa tausi pepe pea le teine.*  
 PST care baby continually ART girl.ABS  
 ‘The girl went on taking care of babys.’ (Collins 2017: 12)

Crucially, no syntactic material such as adverbial modifiers may intervene between the verb and the PNI-ed object.

- (26) *Sa tausi pea pepe le teine.* SAMOAN  
 PST care continually baby ART girl.ABS  
 ‘The girl went on taking care of the baby.’ (Collins 2017: 12)

Thirdly, PNI-objects are phrasal constituents. Thereby, they are not incorporated into the verb as they allow adjectival modification (27) or coordination.

- (27) *Ne inu kofe kona a Mele.* NIUEAN  
 PST drink coffee bitter ABS Mele  
 ‘Mele drank bitter coffee.’ (Massam 2001: 158)

Based on these observations, PNI-ed objects have been treated as reduced nominal structures that lack (at least) a D-layer (Collins 2017, Levin 2015, Massam 2001).

3.2. Daakaka-type DOM is PNI

In contrast to other closely related Polynesian PNI-languages, Daakaka does not exhibit overt case marking which makes PNI harder to detect. However, the striking parallels in between DOM in Daakaka and DOM in Polynesian languages suggests that DOM in Daakaka is a reflex of PNI:

Firstly, as observed for PNI languages, the objects which are not cross-referenced on the verb must be adjacent to the verb and cannot be moved. In contrast, DP-objects may be topicalized by fronting to a clause-initial position (von Prince 2015: 273).

- (28) a. *ó ente<sub>i</sub> Bong mwe **ane** \_\_\_\_\_<sub>i</sub> .*  
 coconut DEM Bong REAL eat.OM  
 ‘This coconut, Bong ate (it).’
- b. \**ó Bong mwe en \_\_\_\_\_<sub>i</sub> .*  
 coconut Bong REAL eat.  
 Intended: ‘Coconuts, Bong ate.’

Secondly, objects in both Oceanic PNI and DOA in Daakaka exhibit a structurally reduced, but phrasal DP as they allow, for example, for adjectival modification (cf. section 2.3) The reduced morphosyntactic structure gives also rise to an unspecific, indefinite, number neutral interpretation (Krifka & Modarresi 2016, Dayal 2003).

Thirdly, DOA in Daakaka and DCM in Polynesian PNI languages are both sensitive to the morphosyntactic size of the object. In case-marking PNI-languages, structurally reduced objects do not get case marked and in an object marking language like Daakaka, they do not trigger object marking on the verb.

In sum, the underlying morphosyntactic properties of PNI in Daakaka and Polynesian PNI-languages pattern alike, but the languages differ in the kind of DOM that results from the structure.

(29)

	<b>PNI-Case</b> (e.g. Samoan)	<b>PNI-OM</b> (e.g. Daakaka)
Differential...	case marking	object marking
linear adjacency	✓	✓
phrasal XP	✓	✓
reduced DP	✓	✓
number neutral	✓	✓

#### 4. The Distribution of the Object Marker across Domains

In the previous sections, I have shown that the object marker shows up on transitive verbs that take DP-objects. However, von Prince (2015) observes that the occurrence of the object marker is not restricted to transitive verbs in the verbal domain, but is also attested in other environments even outside the verbal domain.

##### 4.1. Unaccusative Verbs

Some stative unaccusative verbs like *nak* ‘be.ready’ undergo a stative-causative alternation in that they function as transitive change-of-state verbs (30). Crucially, in the causative use, the internal argument is cross-referenced on the verb by the object marker *-ane*, while in its stative use, the verb occurs in its bare form (see also Franjeh 2012 on object marking in closely related North Ambrym).

- (30) a. *Mees ma naknak.*  
 Food REAL RED~ready  
 ‘The food is ready.’
- b. *Ya-m nak~nak-ane mees mo nok.*  
 3PL-REAL RED~ready-OM food REAL finish  
 ‘They prepared the food.’ (von Prince 2015: 61)

Thus, the object marker is not restricted to mark the size of the object in transitive verbs, but encodes more general instances of transitivity in the verbal domain.

##### 4.2. Prepositions

Outside of the verbal domain, the object marker appears on many prepositions. For example, the locational adverb *pesili* ‘nearby’ can be used prepositionally in that it introduces a DP argument. In this function, the preposition is suffixed by the object marker *-ane* (von Prince 2015: 61).

- (31) a. *Na-m ling-i dal-uk nyoo pesili.*  
 1SG-REAL put-OM egg-1SG.POSS 3PL near  
 ‘I laid my eggs nearby.’
- b. *Ko-m tinyo pesili-ne lee swa.*  
 2SG-REAL stand near-OM tree one  
 ‘You stand close to a tree.’ (von Prince 2015: 61)

Although most prepositions do not alternate with an adverbial use, several prepositions nevertheless end obligatory on *-(a)ne*: *mya-ne* ‘with, to’, *(a)ne* ‘with’, *meto-ne* ‘from’, *ku-ane* ‘at the home of’ (von Prince 2015).

### 4.3. Possession

The object marker also occurs in the nominal domain (von Prince 2016, 2015). Here, the object marker co-occurs with DP possessors that are in an inalienable relationship with the possessum. In (32a), the unpossessed noun *bura* ‘blood’ occurs in its bare form. If an inalienable possessor (here: *vyanten ente* ‘this person’ is introduced in the structure, *bura* is suffixed by the object marker (32b).<sup>2</sup>

- (32) a. *bura ente*  
blood DEM  
‘this blood’
- b. *bura-ne vyanten ente*  
blood-OM person DEM  
‘this person’s (own) blood’ (inalienable; von Prince 2016: 70)

In contrast, alienable possessors are introduced by additional morphosyntactic material that is sensitive to both the class of the possessed noun and the phi-features of the possessor. Crucially, alienable possessors do not trigger object marking.

- (33) *bura ø-e vyanten ente*  
blood CL2-LINK person DEM  
‘this person’s (animal) blood’ (alienable; von Prince 2016: 70)

Thereby, the choice of morphological marking of possessors give also rise to a specific alienable/inalienable interpretation (32b/33).

### 4.4. (Interim) Summary

To summarize the distribution of the object marker, the marker occurs across domains: (a) in the verbal domain to mark the presence of DP-objects, (b) in the nominal domain to cross-reference inalienable possessors on the possessed noun, and (c) in the prepositional domain on prepositions derived from adverbial particles.

## 5. Object Licensing across Domains: Towards a Unified Account

In this section, I aim to present a unified account of object marking across domains in Daakaka. Based on the assumption that DP arguments – in contrast to *nP* arguments – have a higher licensing need (Kalin 2018, Levin 2015, Massam 2001, van Urk 2019), I will tentatively argue that object marking in Daakaka is the spell-out of a successful feature checking operation of a DP argument by a potential secondary licenser in its respective domain (i.e. Voice, D, p; cf. Kalin 2018).

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<sup>2</sup> In addition, von Prince (2016) observes a class of *transitive* nouns that obligatory combine with an inalienable possessor without being marked by the object marker.

### 5.1. The Licensing of DPs

The following argumentation is based on some more general assumptions: Firstly, I will assume some version of a licensing requirement for nominal arguments.

- (34) Vergnaud Licensing (cf. Pesetsky 2014, Vergnaud 1977/2008)  
Nominal arguments must be licensed during the syntactic derivation.

Usually, nominal licensing has been attributed either to the assignment of theta roles or abstract Case. Although I am agnostic about the nature of nominal licensing here, I will follow the general tradition of linking nominal licensing to the assignment of abstract Case (cf. Sheehan & van der Wal 2018, Kalin 2018, Baker 2015 and others).<sup>3</sup>

However, recent work suggests that not all nominals exhibit the same licensing needs: While DPs need to be licensed for abstract case, several authors have argued that *n*Ps are licensed in a different way – e.g. under adjacency (van Urk 2019, Levin 2015, Baker 2014) – or do not need to be licensed at all (Longobardi 2008, Massam 2001, Szabolcsi 1987).

- (35) Revised Vergnaud Licensing (Levin 2015, Massam 2001)  
Only DP arguments must be licensed during the syntactic derivation.

Secondly, Kalin (2018) highlights an asymmetry in DP licensing dependent on the relative height of the argument in the derivation: While the highest ranked argument is obligatorily licensed by T, all other DPs need to be licensed by a secondary licenser (e.g. Voice) that only becomes available in the presence of a lower DP (cf. Rezac 2011, Bobaljik 1993, Levin & Massam 1985). Commonly, the activation of secondary licensing has been analyzed as either an economy calculation or as a last resort operation (cf. Kalin 2018). In this paper, I will propose that secondary licensing is actually based on a feature checking operation that activates the potential licensing functions of a respective functional head.

- (36) Secondary Licensing (syntactic)  
A functional head that may function as a secondary licenser in a given domain (e.g. verbal, nominal, prepositional etc.) carries an unchecked ‘activation’ feature [uD]. A checking of this feature by a DP ‘activates’ the secondary licenser which then assigns case to the embedded DP.

Thereby, nominal licensing comprises two distinct checking operations, namely the checking of the ‘activation’ feature [uD] on the secondary licenser which then enables the secondary licenser to license abstract Case on the DP.

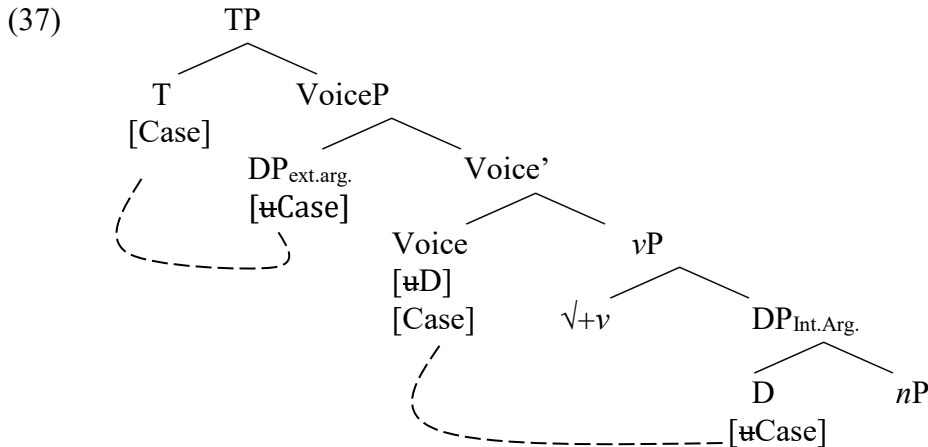
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<sup>3</sup> Note that abstract Case licensing is distinct from morphological case assignment (and phi-feature agreement). In contrast to abstract case, morphological case has been shown to take place post-syntactically (Bobaljik 2008, McFadden 2004, Marantz 1991 and others).

It is important to remark that the postulation of an ‘activation’ feature [uD] is not related to phi-agreement which might be located on the same functional head. While I assume that the checking of [uD] is part of the syntactic derivation, phi-agreement has been shown to take place post-syntactically after the assignment of morphological case (Bobaljik 2008, McFadden 2004, Marantz 1991 and others).<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2. Object Marking in Daakaka as the Spell-out of [uD]

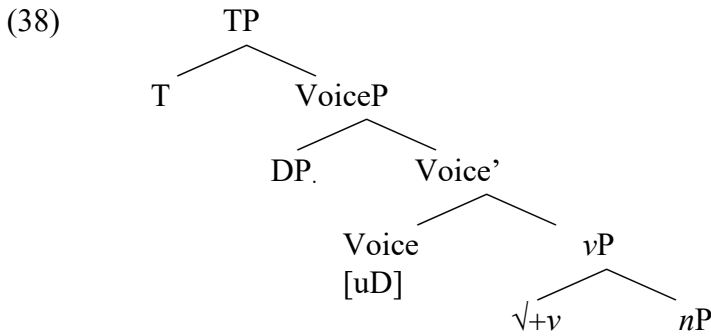
First, I turn to object marking in the verbal domain. In the case of a transitive configuration, the internal DP-argument is merged as the complement of the verbalizer  $v$ , while the external DP-argument is merged in the specifier of a separate Voice projection (Alexiadou et al. 2006, Kratzer 1996). As Voice is a potential secondary licenser in Daakaka, it carries an unchecked ‘activation’ feature [uD] that gets checked by the internal DP-argument. This ‘activates’ the Case feature on Voice that licenses Case on the internal argument. Crucially, the checked [uD]-feature is spelled out as object marking. In contrast, the external DP-argument gets licensed by the obligatory licenser T which does not need to be ‘activated’. Therefore, T does not carry an unchecked ‘activation’ feature [uD].



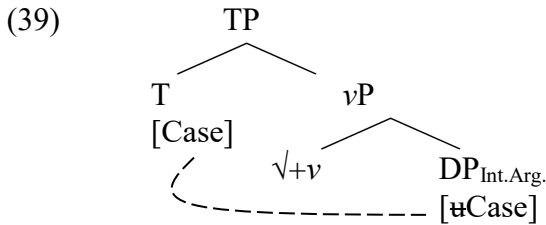
In the case of PNI, the verbalizer takes an nP-complement which lacks a D-layer and do not need to be licensed for Case (Massam 2001). As Voice is merged to introduce the external argument, it searches for a DP in its c-command domain. Crucially, Voice fails to find a DP as PNI-ed objects are of the wrong syntactic type. As a result, the ‘activation’ feature remains unchecked. While unchecked [uD] is not overtly realized in most environments, in combination with some roots it is spelled out as *-p* (14) (Halpert 2015, Preminger 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Instead, the checking of [uD] might be relatable to the idea of distinct active Voice heads in that transitive active Voice would be the ‘activated’ variant of (intransitive) active Voice with the former carrying a checked [uD]-feature and the latter carrying an unchecked [uD]-feature.





In addition, I assume that unaccusatives lack a Voice projection as they do not introduce an external argument (e.g. Alexiadou et al. 2015, von Stechow 1996).<sup>5</sup> In this case, the internal DP-argument is licensed by the obligatory licenser T and no secondary licenser is merged to the structure.



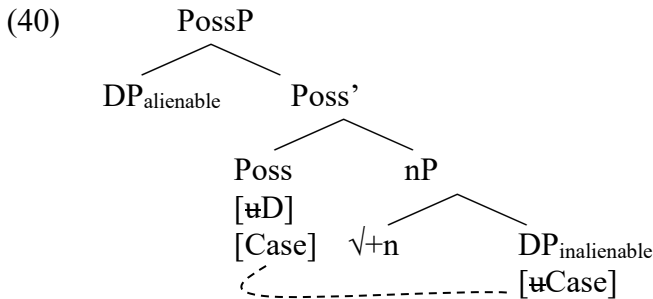
In sum, I have argued that object marking in Daakaka is related to the ‘activation’ of the (secondary) licensing features on Voice due to the presence of an (internal) DP-argument in its c-command domain. Thereby, object marking is naturally linked to structural transitivity.

### 5.3. DP-licensing across Domains

In the nominal domain, different types of possessor DPs have been argued to be merged in different structural positions: While inalienable possessors are merged as complements of *n*, alienable possessors are merged in the specifier of PossP (Myler 2016, Tomioka & Sim 2007, Alexiadou 2003). In that, the configuration of possessor DPs in the nominal domain mirrors the configuration of DP arguments in the verbal domain. Based on the observation that possessors are available in reduced PNI structures (21), I assume that possessor DPs are licensed low in Daakaka presumably by Poss. As possessor DPs are optionally merged into the structure, I take Poss to function as a secondary licenser in the nominal domain that carries an unchecked ‘activation’ [uD] feature – in parallelism to Voice in the verbal domain. In the presence of an unlicensed inalienable possessor DP, [uD] gets checked and ‘ac-

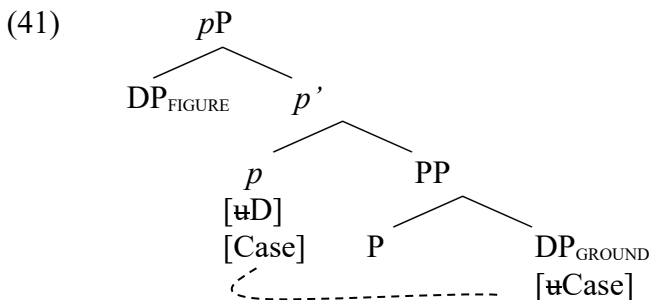
<sup>5</sup> Note that my proposal is also compatible with the assumption of the presence of an expletive voice head in unaccusatives structures (Kastner 2017, Schäfer 2008 and others). As expletive Voice does not introduce an additional DP, it ‘knows’ that the internal argument will be licensed by T. Thus, there is no need for [uD] on expletive Voice.

tivates' the licensing function of Poss. The checked [uD] feature on Poss is spelled-out as the object marker *-ane* (40).



In contrast, alienable possessors do not trigger object marking on the possessed noun as they are introduced in Spec, PossP. Therefore, I suggest that inalienable and alienable possessors are licensed in different ways: inalienable possessors are licensed by Poss and alienable possessors are licensed by other means.

In the prepositional domain, Svenonius (2003) argues for two argument positions: While *ground* DPs are merged as the complement of P, *figure* DP are introduced in the specifier of *p*. This, again, mirrors the transitive structure of the verbal and nominal domain. As *figure* DPs are licensed outside of the prepositional domain, it has been argued that *ground* DPs are licensed within the prepositional domain (presumably *p*; Richards 2017). As DPs embedded under *p* are invisible for an outside probe (cf. Alexiadou et al. 2014), I suggest *p* to be a secondary licenser that carries an ‘activation’ feature [uD] that gets checked by the embedded DP. Consequently, checked [uD] is spelled-out as object marking on the preposition.



In sum, I have proposed that the object marker is the spell-out of an abstract licensing feature [uD] that in the presence of an unlicensed DP in its c-command domain gets checked and ‘activates’ the licensing functions of the respective functional head on which it is located on (Voice, Poss, *p*). Thus, the object marker tracks structural transitivity across categories.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The data presented here could provide further evidence for an unified analysis of argument-introducing heads across domains as proposed in Wood & Marantz (2017) who argue that Voice, Appl/Poss and *p* can be reduced to a single head *i*\*.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that DOM in Daakaka is not sensitive to semantic features of the object (like Animacy or Number) but to its syntactic size: Only DP objects trigger object marking on the verb, while structurally reduced nP objects are not cross-referenced. Thereby, I have shown that Daakaka exhibits PNI, a phenomenon well-established for related Polynesian languages. Based on the distribution of object marking across the verbal, nominal and prepositional domain, I have proposed that the object marker in Daakaka is the spell-out of an ‘activation’ feature [uD]. This feature is located on every functional head that may function as a secondary licenser, i.e. its licensing function has to be ‘activated’ first (contra obligatory licensing by T) and in this way, object marking can be used to track transitive structures across domains. However, as the internal structure of DPs and especially pPs in Daakaka is barely understood yet, future research is strongly needed.

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