Finding Subjects: Agreement, Case, & Articulated EPP

The Problem: Minimalist analysis (e.g. Chomsky 2008, Richards 2012) assumes that T probes its c-command domain to acquire ϕ features and assign NOM Case to a DP which then merges into SPEC-T. Alternatively, EXPL fills SPEC-T (1a). However, there are significant disparities in ϕ agreement and Case marking possibilities between T and a c-commanded DP on the one hand (as evidenced in expletive sentences (ES)), and T and a SPEC-positioned DP on the other (1b-e).

(1) a. There <u>are</u> books on the desk//Books <u>are</u> on the desk
b. There <u>is/?*are</u> a boy and a girl at the door//A boy and a girl <u>are/*is</u> at the door
c. There <u>has</u> to be hundreds of photos ... // Hundreds of photos <u>have/*has</u> to be ...
d. There <u>is</u> only <u>me</u> in that picture // Only <u>I</u> <u>am</u> in that picture
e. There<u>'s</u> books on the desk

Thus, probing based on ϕ agreement and Case marking is not a viable mechanism for deriving Spec-T-positioned subjects.

Related, and also ill-understood, is the phenomenon of 'short movement' toward but not to SPEC-T (2).

(2) a. There arrived a train//A train arrived
b. There is a train arriving (*a train)
c. There was someone arrested (*someone)
d. There was someone being (*someone) arrested (*someone)

The Analysis: Φ agreement and Case marking are not central to locating subjects. EPP features alone locate and move arguments. Following the work of Richards & Biberauer (2005), Rezac (2006), Deal (2009) and others, EXPL is inserted low, into the empty SPEC position of non-inchoative unaccusative verbs (Deal 2009). Utilizing Chomsky's (2001) observation that movement may have separate Agree and Merge aspects, EPP features are articulated into their Agree and Merge components; however, this articulation is **lexically idiosyncratic**—it is different for different verbalizing heads. *v*~ ('default little *v*'), the verbalizing head for non-inchoative unaccusative verbs (e.g. *arrive* or *be*), bears the feature (3).

(3) EPP for v~ : [uTheta$_{AGR}$, uD$_{MRG}$]

(3) says that *v*~ must agree (≠ ϕ agree) a true (theta-marked) argument, but may merge into SPEC-*v*~ either that argument or EXPL. The latter possibility allows *v*~ of *arrive* to agree *a train* and merge *there* (2a). In (2b), the higher *v*~ of *be* must agree a theta-marked argument. If the lower *v*~ of *arrive* has merged *there*, locality only allows [uTheta$_{AGR}$] of the higher *v*~ to access *there*, and the derivation fails. Therefore, in (2b), the lower *v*~ must agree and merge *a train*, so that the higher *v*~ finds the requisite argument to satisfy its [uTheta$_{AGR}$], explaining requisite short movement. (2c-d) are similarly explained.

T bears a Case-based EPP feature '[*u*nom]$_{AGR/MRG}$' meaning that it assigns NOM to the DP in the SPEC of the immediately preceding phase (possibly *there*) and merges it into SPEC-T. In ES, the associate DP is assigned default Case (1d). *There* may bear gratuitous ϕ features *3/sg*. If it does, ϕ agreement coincides with NOM Case marking (1c-e). If not, ϕ agreement must probe for the most local **lexically concrete** DP (1a-b).

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