

West Circassian bare nouns are full DPs

Evidence from nominal possession

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(\approx pseudo-noun incorporation)

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Diminished nominal structure in Samoan

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Sā tausi **e** le teine **le pepe**.

PST care **ERG** the girl **the baby**

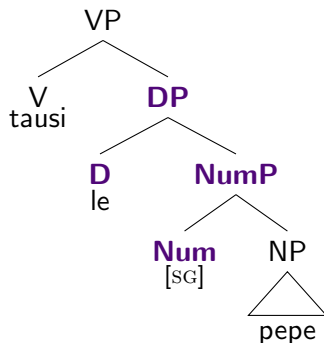
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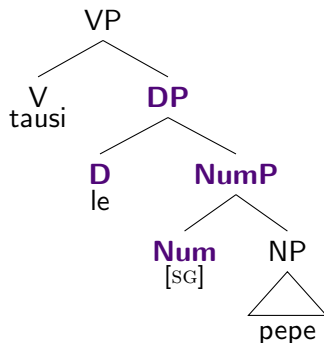
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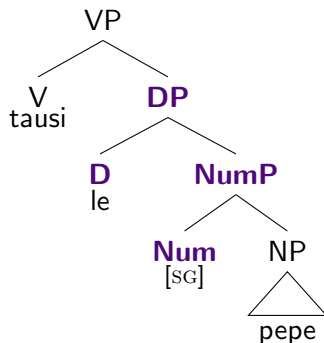
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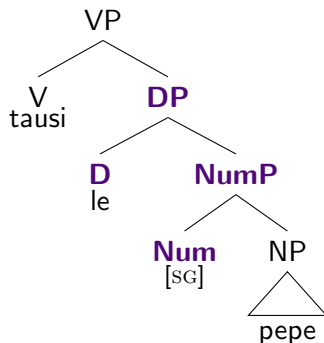
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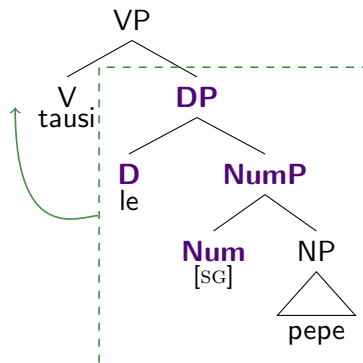
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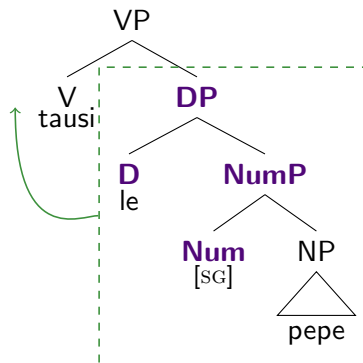
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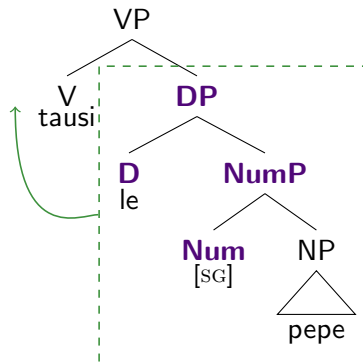
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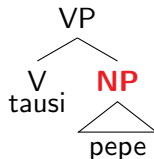


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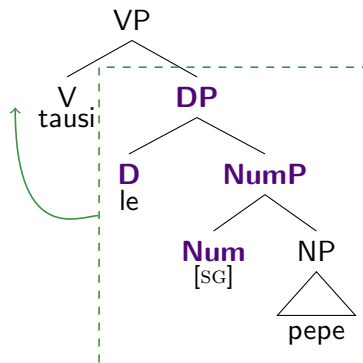
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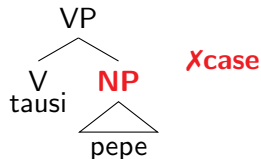


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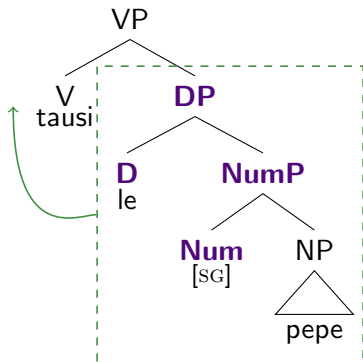
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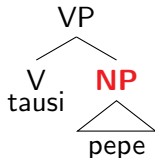


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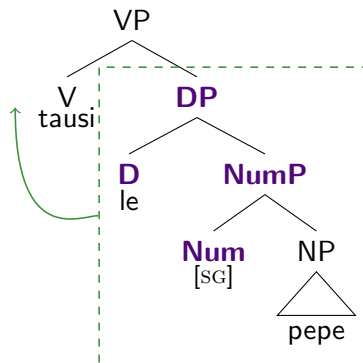
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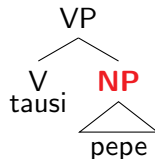


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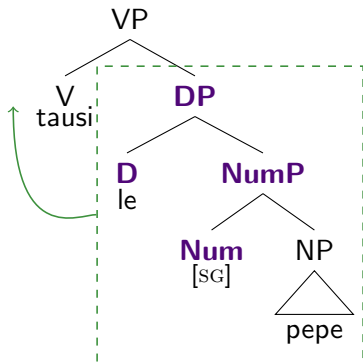
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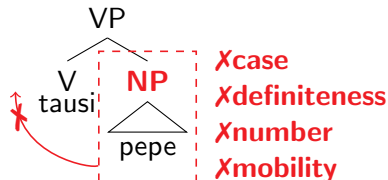


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Evidence: Presence/absence of NumP is diagnosable with local interaction between case markers and possessive morphology.

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Differential argument marking (Arkadiev and Testeleets 2019)

Number neutral DPs lack NumP

Conclusion

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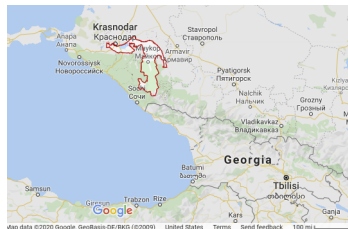
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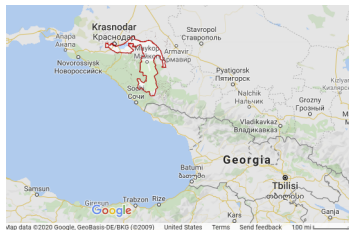
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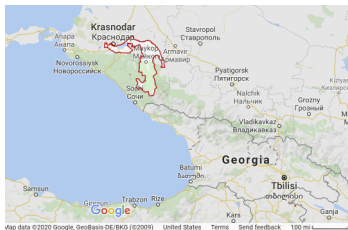
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****Note:** No new data since 2019; some generalizations are preliminary. Glosses and segmentation are simplified for exposition.

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Explanation: caseless nominals are NPs (=lack DP and NumP)

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tjetrad-pepč **wəs-jə-t^w** Ø-Ø-de-tə-B

notebook-every **poem-LNK-two** 3ABS-3SG.IO-LOC-stand-PST

‘In every notebook, there were two poems.’

(different in every notebook, $\forall > 2$)

(Arkadiev and Testelets 2019:733)

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- ▶ may antecede pronouns

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'The good doctor will cure you.' (Arkadiev and Testelefs 2019:729)

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ʔaze-deb^wə-m w-jə-be-χ^wəž'ə-š't
doctor-good-OBL 2SG.ABS-3SG.ERG-CAUS-recover-FUT

'The good doctor will cure you.' (Arkadiev and Testelefs 2019:729)

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doctor-good always-OBL 3ABS-3SG.ERG-DYN-CAUS-recover

'S/he is always treated by good doctors.' (Bagirokova et al. 2022:288)

Caseless nominals don't behave like pseudo-incorporation

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- ▶ no valency reduction
- ▶ trigger regular cross-reference marking

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Case study: Number neutrality (= absence of NumP) is independently observed in DP-sized nominals.

Roadmap

Background on West Circassian

Differential argument marking (Arkadiev and Testelelets 2019)

Number neutral DPs lack NumP

Conclusion

The proposal: Caseless nominals are DPs

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- ▶ Caseless nominals are full DPs.

The proposal: Caseless nominals are DPs

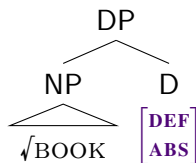
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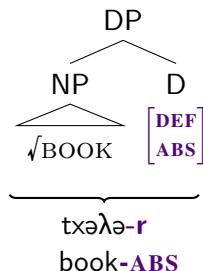
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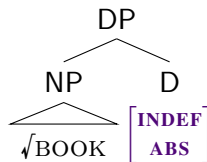
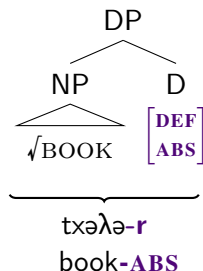
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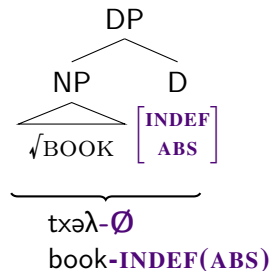
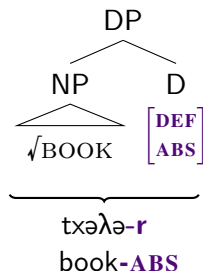
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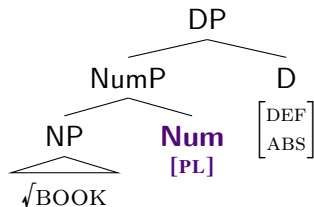
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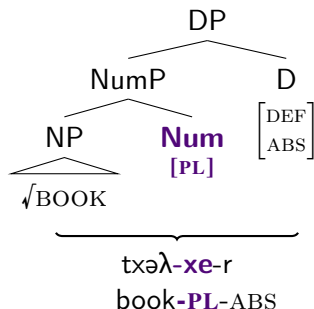
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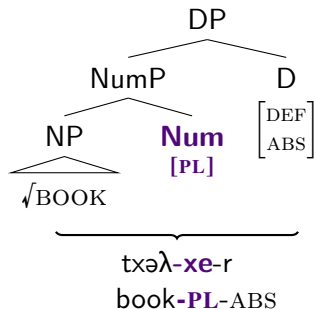
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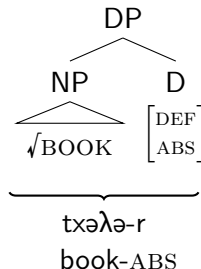
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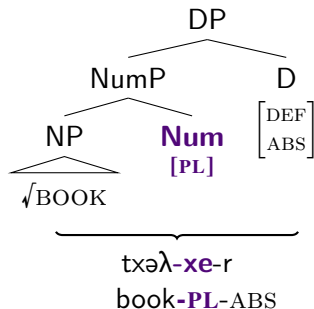
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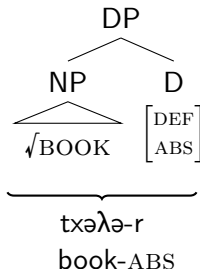
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“Singular” form:



Evidence from interaction between case and possession.

Morphologically conditioned allomorphs of D

(Arkadiev 2014; Bagirokova et al. 2022; also Peter Arkadiev's talk)

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Case exponence (= D) is affected by structurally adjacent heads.

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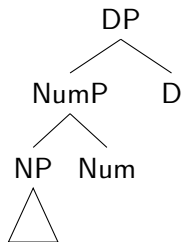
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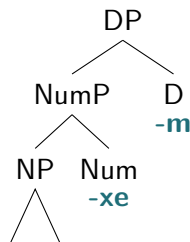
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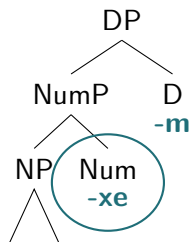
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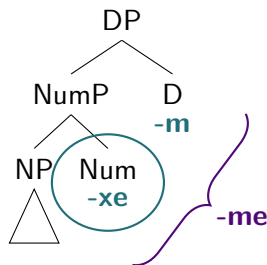
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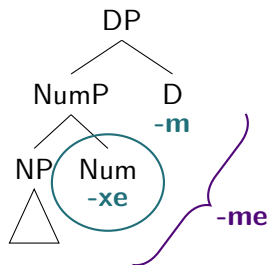
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(+ Another example in the Appendix.)

Case exponence conditioned by possessor

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“Singular” DP w/possessor: no overt case marking

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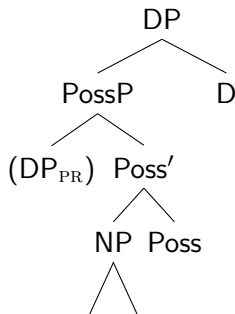
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- Possessor in Spec,PossP under DP

(Szabolcsi 1983, 1994)



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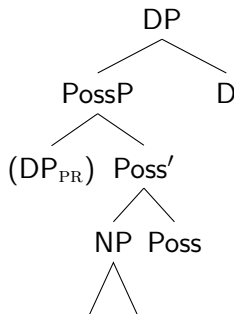
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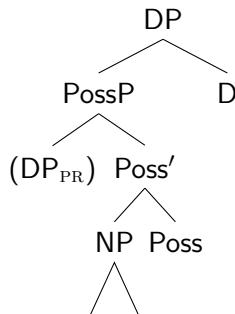
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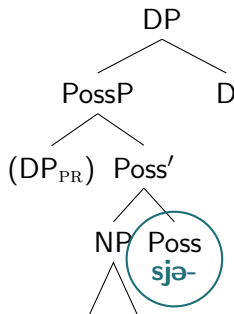
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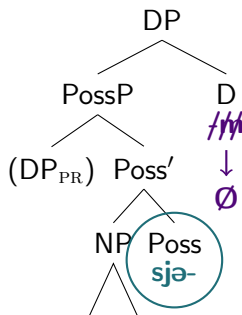
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Poss triggers allomorphy on D

D is unpronounced when adjacent to Poss.

Overt number disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

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Possessive + plural suffix: overt case marking

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Explanation:

Num intervenes between Poss and D

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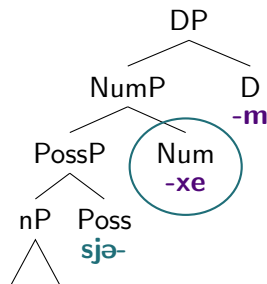
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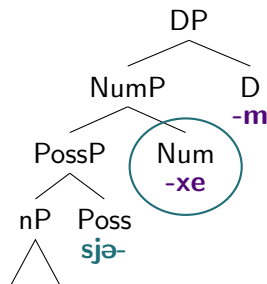
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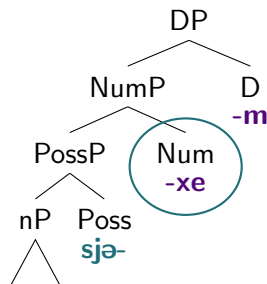
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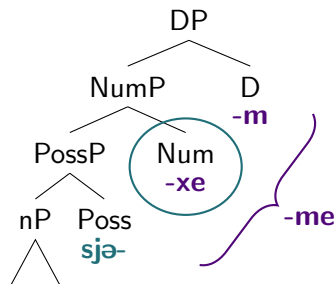
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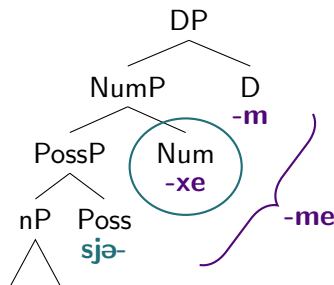
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Confirms: D and Num are adjacent, Poss is below Num.

Overt number disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

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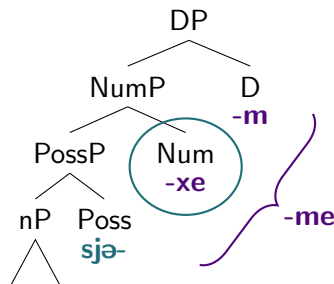
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+ Num scopes over Poss (**Appendix**).

Even unpronounced Num disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

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Possessive + numeral: overt case marking

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Possessive + numeral: overt case marking

jə-zə-šolk-žene-daxe-r

3SG.POSS-one-silk-dress-beautiful-ABS

‘one beautiful silk dress of hers’ (Lander 2017:84)

Even unpronounced Num disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

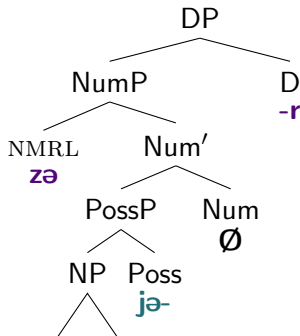
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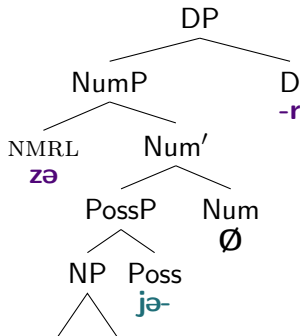
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Explanation:

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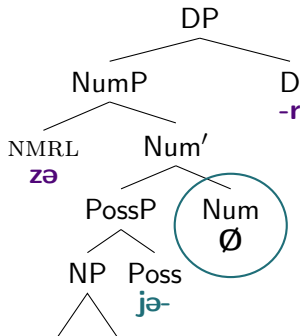
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Explanation:

- ▶ numeral zə is in Spec,NumP
- ▶ Num is unpronounced



Even unpronounced Num disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

Possessive + numeral: overt case marking

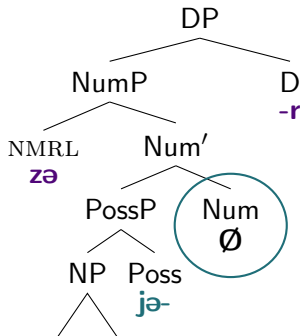
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Explanation:

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- ▶ Num is unpronounced
- ▶ unpronounced Num intervenes between Poss and D



Even unpronounced Num disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

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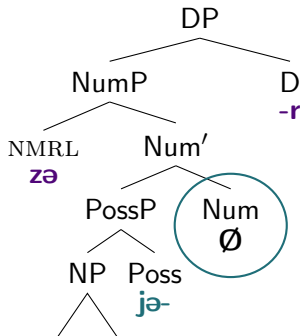
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- ▶ numeral zə is in Spec,NumP
- ▶ Num is unpronounced
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Generalization: If Num is present, Poss-D allomorphy is disrupted.

Even unpronounced Num disrupts Poss-D allomorphy

Possessive + numeral: overt case marking

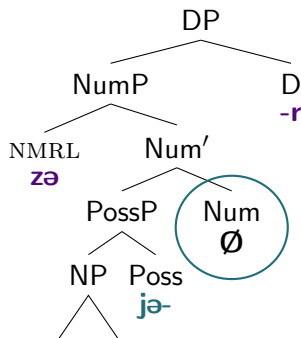
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- ▶ numeral zə is in Spec,NumP
- ▶ Num is unpronounced
- ▶ unpronounced Num intervenes between Poss and D



Generalization: If Num is present, Poss-D allomorphy is disrupted.

Confirms: In DPs without overt number, NumP is absent!

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No morphological number marking ⇒ **no NumP**

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...and other diagnostics are compatible with DP analysis (**Appendix**).

Background on West Circassian

Differential argument marking (Arkadiev and Testelefs 2019)

Number neutral DPs lack NumP

Conclusion

Main takeaway: they're all DPs

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Typological unusual pattern of **differential argument marking** in West Circassian can be analyzed as a paradigm of exponence on D.

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Typological unusual pattern of **differential argument marking** in West Circassian can be analyzed as a paradigm of exponence on D.

In a nutshell:

- ▶ Overt case marking = definite D
- ▶ Apparent absence of case = unpronounced D

The (non)correlation between NumP and DP

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Typical diagnostics for the absence of DP are unreliable.

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(See also: Wiltschko 2008; Kramer 2017; Martí 2020)

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Case study:

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Number neutrality (absence of NumP) implies absence of DP.

- ▶ **Our claim:** In West Circassian, full DPs may lack NumP.

(See also: Wiltschko 2008; Kramer 2017; Martí 2020)

- ▶ **Evidence:** Poss triggers allomorphy on D
only if NumP is absent.

DPs without NumP, NumPs without DP

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- ▶ We have argued that DPs may lack NumP.
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- ▶ Cross-linguistically, unmarked nominals frequently display mixed properties.
(e.g. Serdobolskaya 2015, discussion in Borik and Gehrke 2015)
- ▶ A one-size-fits-all solution is unlikely.

Thank you!

- ▶ West Circassian consultants: Svetlana K. Alishaeva, Saida Gisheva, Susana K. Khatkova, and Zarema Meretukova
- ▶ Audiences at: LingLunch at MIT, the LASER Workshop at Göttingen, and the CauLaGeNet talk series at CNRS / Paris-8

Appendix: Morphologically conditioned allomorphs of D

Case exponence (= D) is affected by structurally adjacent heads.

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č'ale-xe-**r**-jə pšaše-xe-**r**-jə ...
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‘The boys and girls ...’

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yard-OBL were dancing

'... were dancing in the yard.'

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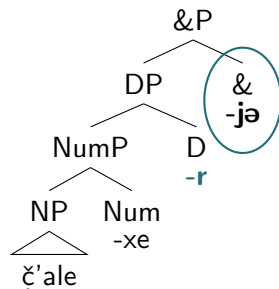
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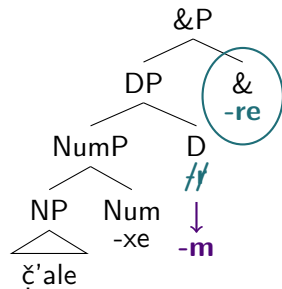
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Confirmation that Num is higher than Poss

Structure of DP: D > Num > Poss

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- ▶ Some definite/specific DPs are obligatorily caseless.
- ▶ Scope might not be a reliable syntactic diagnostic.

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- ▶ personal pronouns and proper names

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te **məjeq^wape** mə bzəlfəʋe-m jə-mašjəne-č'e
we(ABS) Maykop(OBL) this woman-OBL 3SG.POSS-car-INS
tə-qe-k^wa-ʋ
1PL.ABS-DIR-go-PST

'We went to Maykop in this woman's car.'

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- ▶ possessed nouns

a š^wəzə-m jə-č'ale dax-ew Ø-qe-š^we
this woman-OBL 3SG.POSS-son beautiful-ADV 3ABS-DIR-dance

'This woman's son dances beautifully.'

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Our data: caseless nominals **may** take wide scope

Caseless nominals may take wide scope

č'el-jə-š'-me txəλ Ø-q-a-hə-ɸ
boy-LNK-three-PL.OBL book 3ABS-DIR-3PL.ERG-bring-PST
'The three boys brought a book.'

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✓**Low scope:** each boy brought his own book ($3 > \exists$)

✓**Wide scope:** the three boys brought one book together ($\exists > 3$)

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NP-like properties of caseless nominals are not a challenge for a DP analysis:

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- ▶ DPs can be number neutral \Rightarrow DP can lack NumP.

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