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Locative Case vs. Locative Gender

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An influential idea in syntactic theory has been that category oppositions are reducible to other modules of the grammar such as Case theory and can be eliminated from the \bar{X} component of UG. Comparing the syntax of locatives in English and Chicheŵa, I will show that this is a misconception. Case, even construed quite abstractly, is a typologically parochial system that cannot replace the basic categorial opposition between NP and PP.¹

1 Locatives in English

The syntactic distribution of locative PPs in English has very complex properties which have stimulated a great deal of theorizing about Universal Grammar.

1.1 Not in Subject/Object Positions

It is well known that locative PPs in English cannot in general appear in subject or object positions, such as that of the subject immediately preceding the VP in (1a), that of the object adjacent to the V in (1b), that of the object understood as the subject of an infinitive in (1c), or that of the object of a preposition like the passive *by* in (1d):

- (1) a. (*In) San Jose makes me happy.
- b. I like (*in) San Jose.
- c. I expect (*in) San Jose to please me.
- d. I'm pleased by (*in) San Jose.

Instead, locative PPs appear in non-subject and non-object positions. For example in (2a) the PP is an oblique complement to a verb following its NP object, and in (2b) it is a sentence adjunct:

- (2) a. I left my car *(in) San Jose.
- b. *(In) San Jose, I keep my car in the garage.

1.2 Extraposed or Topicalized

Although locative PPs do not generally appear in subject or object positions, they can be interpreted as filling those argument positions indirectly, in two ways. The first is by means of extraposition. In (3a-c), the PP is extraposed and is related to the subject or object positions which it cannot occupy through the intermediary pronoun *it* (Fillmore (1968)).

- (3) a. It makes me happy in San Jose.
- b. I like it in San Jose.
- c. I expect it to please me in San Jose.

The second means of interpreting a non-NP as filling a subject or object position is by topicalization (Kaplan and Bresnan (1980/1982), Stowell (1981), Kaplan and Zaenen (1989: 33-37)). Topicalization is known to ignore certain category differences. For example, topicalized sentential *that* complements, which are non-nominal in English (Emonds (1976)) (though not of course in all languages), can be interpreted as filling subject or object positions which they cannot occupy directly:

- (4) a. That he might be WRONG, he didn't THINK of __ .
- b. *He didn't think of that he might be wrong.
- Cf. He didn't think of the fact that he might be wrong.

In the same way, the inverted PP locative in English can be indirectly interpreted as filling the subject position by topicalization (Stowell (1981), Bresnan and Kanerva (to appear), Bresnan (1990)):

- (5) a. On THIS wall I expect __ will be hung a picture of Leonard PABBS.
- b. In San Jose __ lived a woman.

1.2.1 Subject Properties

Let us consider three pieces of evidence that the PPs in (5) are indeed related to the subject position. Further evidence is discussed in Bresnan and Kanerva (to appear) and Bresnan (1990).

Subject Extraction First, the presence of the complementizer degrades the extraction, as observed by Bresnan (1977) and Stowell (1981):

- (6) On THIS wall I expect (*that) __ will be hung a picture of Leonard PABBS.

This degradation is of course characteristic of subject extraction in English:

- (7) A picture of Leonard PABBS I expect (*that) __ will be hung
on THIS wall.

The topicalization of nonsubjects, whether they are locatives as in (8a) or objects as in (8b), is not degraded by the presence of a complementizer:

- (8) a. On THIS wall I expect (that) a picture of Leonard PABBS will
be hung __ .
b. A picture of Leonard PABBS I expect (that) they will hang __
on THIS wall.

Subject Raising Second, the inverted locative undergoes subject raising (Postal 1977):

- (9) a. On this wall __ is likely to be hung a portrait of our founder.
b. On this wall I expect __ to be hung a portrait of our founder.

In both these examples the locative PP plays the role of the raised argument, the subject in (9a), the object in (9b). Because only the *subject* of the infinitival complement can be raised (Bresnan and Kanerva (to appear)), this is very strong evidence that the locative PP is interpreted as a subject in these examples.

Tags Third, in tag questions, an assertion is followed by a tag consisting of an auxiliary verb and a pronoun. The tag is a reduced question based on the form of the assertion, and the pronoun must match the features of the (surface syntactic) subject of the assertion:

- (10) a. Mary fooled John, didn't she/*he?
b. John was fooled by Mary, wasn't he/*she?

In general, it is difficult to combine tags with locative inversion. However, Bowers (1976: 237) cites examples of tag questions such as (11) to argue *against* the subject status of the postposed NP in locative inversion.

- (11) In the garden is a beautiful statue, isn't there?

The fact that the inverted NP argument is not the antecedent for the tag pronoun here is evidence that it cannot be the syntactic subject. The hypothesis that the inverted locative is the topicalized subject would explain this situation.²

1.2.2 Topic Properties

Though they may be interpreted indirectly as subjects, there is evidence that the inverted locative PPs are not actually in the phrase structure position of the subject, but are topicalized.

Auxiliary Inversion One piece of evidence is that auxiliary inversion with them is impossible:

- (12) a. Do you remember? *Did on the wall hang a Mexican serape?
- b. *Was among the ruins found a skeleton?

This follows from the analysis of these inverted PPs as topicalized out of the subject position, given Falk's (1983) analysis of auxiliary inversion (Bresnan (1990)).

Raising Asymmetries Another piece of evidence is the word order asymmetry shown by locative PPs with subject- and object-raising verbs. Unlike NPs, inverted locative PPs cannot be raised objects, as shown in (13a), although they can be raised subjects, as shown in (13b):

- (13) a. *I expect on this wall to be hung a portrait of our founder.
- b. On this wall is likely to be hung a portrait of our founder.

This asymmetry follows directly from the topicalized subject analysis. Only finite complements have a position for topicalized phrases. In (13a) the position of the PP following the verb is inconsistent with topicalization, because it precedes a nonfinite complement; in (13b) the position preceding the verb is consistent with topicalization, because it precedes the entire finite clause. The same is true in (9b), where the PP position in front of the finite clause is consistent with topicalization, while the within-clause function of the PP is that of a raised object, the same as in (13a).

Thus topicalization, like extraposition, permits locative PPs to be interpreted indirectly as filling subject or object argument positions which they cannot directly occupy.

1.3 No Subject-Verb Agreement

Even where locative PPs are interpreted as subjects, they cannot condition verb agreement. Instead, the verb agrees with the inverted NP:

- (14) a. In the swamp was/*were found a child.
- b. In the swamp *was/were found two children.

In summary, locative PPs in English cannot occupy subject or object positions, although they can be indirectly interpreted as subjects or objects by extraposition or topicalization. Even when they are related to the subject argument, however, they never determine the number agreement of the verb.

1.4 A Case-Theoretic Explanation

Following Stowell (1981), it has been widely assumed that the categorial difference between NP and PP is not basic in the \bar{X} component, but is derived from Case properties. Stowell argues that all of the positions which PPs can occupy in English phrase structure are positions where case is *not* assigned: at the periphery of the sentence in extraposed or topicalized positions, or as obliques or adjuncts, which do not receive case from the verb. NPs appear in the complementary set of environments. This difference correlates with the fact that the head of a PP is itself a Case assigner, while the head of an NP is not. Thus Stowell (1981: p. 146) proposes the Case Resistance Principle: categories that assign Case cannot receive Case. In this way a primitive categorial difference between NP and PP can be eliminated from Universal Grammar. The \bar{X} component of grammar is thus category-neutral. As undifferentiated maximal projections, PPs can occupy subject or object positions as well as NPs, provided only that they move out before Case is assigned at S-structure.

There are four problems with this theory of the distribution of locative PPs. First, it provides no explanation for the contrast between (15a,b):

- (15) a. In San Jose __ lives a woman.
 b. *In San Jose __ pleases me.

If topicalization in (15a) removes the PP from the subject position, where it would receive Case, why can it not do the same in (15b)? Stowell (1981: 268–9) notes this problem and makes the *ad hoc* proposal that reconstruction in Logical Form is obligatory for PPs, though not for sentential complements (cf. (4)). Under reconstruction, the locative PP in (15a) would appear in its original position as an oblique postverbal argument of *live*, where it is not assigned Case by the verb; but the PP in (15b) would appear in the subject position, where it would be assigned Case, violating the Case Resistance Principle. (This account also assumes that the Case Resistance Principle holds at Logical Form.)

The second problem with the Case Resistance theory of the distribution of locative PPs is that it provides no explanation for the verb agreement pattern in locative inversions. If the locative PP occupies the subject position, why does the verb agree with the inverted NP? This must simply be stipulated. The chain theory of inversion (Burzio (1986)), which is designed to unify the treatment of agreement and inversion, is inconsistent with the the locative being the subject, for reasons discussed by Bresnan and Kanerva (1989: 20–22).

The third problem is that the Case Resistance theory provides no explanation for the appearance of some PPs in NP positions, as in the examples in (16):

- (16) a. *Under the chair* is a nice place for the cat to sleep.
 (Stowell (1981: ex. (27a), p. 268))
 b. He had spent *from eleven to one* at his church.
 (Jespersen (1927: 5ff) cited by Jaworska (1986))

- c. They considered *after the holidays* to be too late for a family gathering. (Jaworska (1986: ex. (16b), 359))

Stowell (1981: 268) suggests that the contrast between (16a) and (15b) “is due to a special property of copular constructions which permits nominative case to be absorbed or deflected away from the subject position.” However, Jaworska (1986) shows that the phenomenon of PPs in NP positions is not restricted to copular verbs, contrary to Stowell. She cites examples (16b,c) as evidence; in both of these examples, the locative PP is in a position where Case is assigned by a main verb which is not copular. The possibility of analyzing these PPs as dominated by an NP is not available on the Case Resistance theory of categories, because in the \bar{X} component, all phrases are endocentric and PP and NP are undifferentiated as to category.

The fourth problem is that Case—even abstract Case—is a typologically parochial system. It has nothing to do with the distribution of locative phrases in the Bantu language Chicheŵa, for example. To illustrate this point, let us now turn to the syntactic distribution of locatives in Chicheŵa.

2 Locatives in Chicheŵa

The syntactic distribution of locatives in Chicheŵa differs radically from what we see in English.

2.1 In Subject/Object Positions

Locatives in Chicheŵa freely occur in the subject and object positions of semantically compatible verbs. Thus the Chicheŵa counterparts of ungrammatical English examples like (1a,b,d) are perfectly grammatical.³

- (17) a. Ku San José kú-ma-ndi-sangalâts-a.
 17 San Jose 17 SB-PRS HAB-1 SG OB-please-IND
 ‘It pleases me in San Jose, (Being in) San Jose pleases me.’
- b. Ndí-ma-kónd-á ku San José.
 1 SG SB-PRS HAB-love-IND 17 San Jose
 ‘I like it in San Jose.’
 (Cf. Ndí-ma-ku-kônda ku San José.)
- c. Ndí-ma-sangalats-ídw-á ndí ku San José.
 1 SG SB-PRS HAB-please-PASS-IND by 17 San Jose
 ‘I’m pleased by (being in) San Jose.’

The locative phrase is a subject in (17a), an object in (17b), and the object of the preposition ‘by’ in (17c), which is the passivized version of (17a).

Moreover, the locative objects pass the classical locative object tests for Bantu—object marking on the verb, passivization, and word order (Hyman and Duranti

(1982)). We can see this in the possibility of the object marker in (17b). Further evidence is given in Bresnan and Mchombo (1989).

Whereas the English locative phrases can only be indirectly related to subject/object positions through extraposition and topicalization, the Chicheŵa locatives can directly occupy the subject/object phrase structure positions. Thus in these examples the locatives have exactly the same word order positions as ordinary, nontopicalized arguments of a verb or preposition. Bresnan and Kanerva (to appear) show that inverted locatives as well are clearly nontopicalized: subject raising of locatives in Chicheŵa, control of nonfinite phrases, and the interactions of locative subjects with *in situ* questions clearly rule out obligatory topicalization of the locative from subject position.

2.2 Noun Modifiers

Locative complements to nouns also show a difference in distribution. In arguing for the nominal status of locatives in Chishona, Myers (1987: p. 85) points out that like other NPs which (in GB terms) need Case, locative-marked nouns cannot be complements to nouns without insertion of the associative (“genitive”) marker. The same is true in Chicheŵa:

- (18) a. ku mu-dzi kw-âthu
 18 3-village 18-our
 ‘at our village’
- b. A-na-fík-á ku mu-dzi kw-âthu.
 2S-REC PST-arrive-IND 18 3-village 18-our
 ‘They arrived at our village.’
- c. *mw-aná ku mu-dzi kw-âthu
 1-child 18 3-village 18-our
 ≠ ‘a child at our village’
- d. mw-aná w-á ku mu-dzi kw-âthu
 1-child 1-ASSOC 18 3-village 18-our
 ‘a child from our village’

As we see in (18d) an associative marker must intervene between the head noun and the locative phrase modifier. The associative marker itself has been analyzed by Myers (1987) as a preposition that allows variable gender inflection.

2.3 Subject-Verb Agreement

Most strikingly, locative subjects in Chicheŵa induce obligatory subject-verb agreement. This is illustrated in example (17a), where the class 17 locative verbal prefix *ku-* agrees with the locative noun class marker *ku* of the subject *ku San Jose* ‘in San Jose’. Chicheŵa verbs have an obligatory subject agreement prefix

position preceding the tense/aspect prefix. Tonally, morphologically, and syntactically, the three alternative locative subject prefixes are indistinguishable from the other subject agreement prefixes of the verb. Bresnan and Kanerva (1989: 29) show that exactly the same agreement properties hold for inverted locatives. There is no difference in agreement between ‘basic’ locative subjects, as in (17a), and locative subjects derived by passivization or locative inversion.

2.4 Adjuncts

While locatives in Chicheŵa differ from English locative PPs in appearing in subject/object positions, failing to appear as noun modifiers, and inducing subject-verb agreement, they resemble English locatives in other ways. For example, the Chicheŵa locatives in (19a,b) are adjuncts parallel to the English examples given in (2a,b).⁴

- (19) a. Ndi-na-síy-á gálímoto y-ânga ku San Josê.
 1 SG SB-REC PST-leave-IND 9 car 9-I-SG POSS 17 San Jose
 ‘I left my car in San Jose.’
 (Cf. *Ndi-na-kú-síyá gálímoto ... ’)
- b. Ku San Josê ndí-ma-súng-á gálímoto y-ángá
 17 San Jose 1 SG SB-PRS HAB-keep-IND 9 car 9-I-SG POSS
 m’ garâji.
 18 5 garage
 ‘In San Jose I keep my car in the garage.’

2.5 Locative Inversion

Also as in English, locatives in Chicheŵa can be the oblique complements of intransitive or passive verbs and undergo locative inversion, as discussed in detail by Bresnan and Kanerva (1989):

- (20) a. A-lendô-wo a-na-bwér-á ku-mu-dzi.
 2-visitor-2 those 2 SB-REC PST-come-IND 17-3-village
 ‘Those visitors came to the village.’
- b. Ku-mu-dzi ku-na-bwér-á a-lendô-wo.
 17-3-village 17 SB-REC PST-come-IND 2-visitor-2 those
 ‘To the village came those visitors.’
- (21) a. Mw-âna a-na-péz-édw-á kú-dâmbo.
 1-child 1 SB-REC PST-find-PASS-IND 17-5 swamp
 ‘The child was found in the swamp.’
- b. Ku-dâmbo ku-na-péz-édw-á mw-âna.
 17-5 swamp 17 SB-REC PST-find-PASS-IND 1-child
 ‘In the swamp was found the child.’

There are extensive parallelisms between locative inversion in English and Chicheŵa (Bresnan (1989, 1990)).

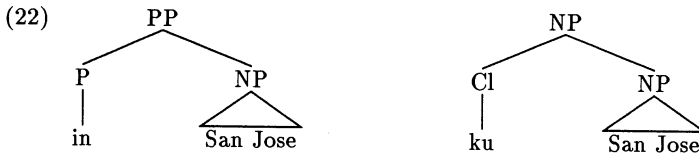
In sum, Chicheŵa locatives have the syntactic distribution patterns of both NPs and PPs in English.

2.6 No Case Resistance

In English the distributional differences between subjects and objects versus adjuncts and noun modifiers corresponds to a difference in the phrase structure and categorization of constituents: only the NPs appear in subject/object positions; PPs appear in the adjunct and modifier positions. Hence it appears possible to reduce the categorial difference to the distributional difference, deriving the opposition between NP/PP from the Case Resistance Principle. But in Chicheŵa, as we have seen, there is no such correspondence between syntactic distribution and categorial structure. Despite the fact that Chicheŵa locatives have the distribution of both PPs and NPs in English, their categorial structure is completely invariant (see Bresnan and Mchombo (1989) for further evidence). There is simply no evidence for categorial ambiguity. Put in another way, Case plays no discernable role in determining either the distribution or the internal structure of locatives in Chicheŵa.

3 The Categorization of Locatives

How then can we explain the contrasting syntactic distribution and agreement properties of locatives in the two languages? All of the above factors point to one salient difference in the phrase structure of locatives in the two languages: in English they have the structure of PP, a nonnominal category; in Chicheŵa they have the structure of NP:



As we have seen, this basic categorial difference is *not* reducible to Case, though it might be reducible to other constructs such as grammatical functions (Bresnan (1982)). For example, NPs could be defined as the only categories that can occupy subject and object positions in surface structure (Bresnan (1990)).⁵ This is why the English locative phrases, not being NPs, must be extraposed or topicalized to peripheral positions in order to be interpreted as subject or object arguments in the underlying functional structure. In contrast, Chicheŵa locative phrases, being NPs, can directly occupy subject and object positions. Finally, the features of subject-verb agreement are inherently nominal features. Hence the Chicheŵa verb will show agreement with its NP subjects, including the locatives, while

the English verb can never show agreement with locative PPs. Deictic features such as proximity are distinguished in locative pronouns (*here, there*), but person, number, and gender—the universal categories of verb-argument agreement—are lacking. This is why expletive subjects derived from locative pronouns (such as existential *there*) do not determine the number of the verb:

- (23) a. There are/*is infinitely many prime numbers.
- b. There is/*are one even prime number.

—while expletives derived from personal pronouns (such as *it*) do:

- (24) a. It is/*are my friend that we have to consider.
- b. It is/*are my friends that we have to consider.

Like the locative pronoun *there*, locative PPs are not morphologically categorized for agreement features (though the NP object of the preposition may be). Hence, they can never determine the number of the verb.

Thus all of the differences between locatives in English and Chicheŵa point to a basic categorial opposition between PP and NP—one that cannot be reduced to Case properties.

3.1 Gender vs. Case

Why then are locatives NPs in Chicheŵa and PPs in English? I believe that this difference stems from a profound typological difference in the grammatical systems within which locatives are categorized in the two languages: case versus gender. Note that grammatical gender need not be sex-based. Gender refers to genus, and sex is but one categorization into kinds. In Chicheŵa, locatives are not cases, but gender classes; that is, they are part of a system that signals contrasts between grammatical categorizations of people, things, locations, qualities, and the like—kinds of things (*genera*), designated by NPs (Orr and Scotton (1980), Bresnan and Kanerva (1989: Appendix 1), Bresnan and Mchombo (1989)). Their nominal categorization explains the greater freedom with which locatives are distributed in Chicheŵa syntax. In English, in contrast, locatives are PPs, and the categorial distinction between NP and PP reflects a basic case-like opposition of direct and indirect arguments. Consequently, locatives in English are syntactically excluded from direct argument (NP) positions. This accounts for their narrower syntactic distribution compared to Chicheŵa, and it is the key to understanding the different agreement patterns in locative inversion in the two languages.

Gender, like person and number, is universally a category of subject-verb agreement across languages. From the categorization of locatives as genders, the possibility of locative agreement of the verb follows at once. The idea of locative genders is alien to speakers of European languages, but the evidence in support of it internal to Bantu is overwhelming. Chicheŵa has a system of eighteen gender classes, including classes which are associated with animates, plants, artifacts,

and their plurals (although the classes are largely formal). Each of these classes has special forms for verb agreement as well as nominal concord. For example, there are eighteen different classes of determiners, of quantifiers, of pronouns, of adjectives, and of other modifiers, as well as of subject and object prefixes to the verb. Among these eighteen gender classes are the three locative classes. Europeans often think of genders as partitioning the set of noun stems of a language into mutually exclusive classes; in Chicheŵa, in contrast, only a few noun stems are inherently locative in class, and virtually any noun can take a locative class marker, creating a shift in meaning. This use of gender can be compared to sex gender in some European languages, which is much less productive, but still available for semantic shifts, as in Italian *ragazzo* 'boy', *ragazza* 'girl'. The appearance of the locative gender markers outside an inner class prefix is not exceptional; other Bantu gender class prefixes such as diminutive and augmentative share this property (Bresnan and Mchombo (1989)).

In sum, locatives are grammatically categorized as genders in Chicheŵa. Gender is a system for distinguishing kinds of things, designated by NPs, and is a universal category of verb agreement.

In contrast to gender, indirect or oblique case is very generally incompatible with verb agreement: in languages which permit indirect case subjects, the verb ceases to agree with the subject; it either assumes an invariant form or agrees with the highest-ranking direct case argument in the argument structure, which may be a nominative *object*, as in Icelandic (Thráinsson (1979), Andrews (1982), Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson (1985)) and Hindi (Mohan (1990)). Thus the analysis of the English locative PP as an indirect argument provides some insight into the pattern of agreement of the verb that appears with locative inversion in (25a): the verb cannot agree with the locative subject, which is an indirect argument, so it agrees with the theme object, which is the highest-ranking direct argument in the argument structure (Bresnan and Kanerva (1989), Bresnan (1990)).

The indirect case analysis also explains further facts that the Case Resistance theory failed to account for. In (25a) the PP cannot appear in the subject NP position, but can be interpreted as the subject through topicalization. Why doesn't the same mechanism work in (25b)?

(25) a. In San Jose __ lives a woman.

b. *In San Jose __ pleases me.

The solution is evident from our present perspective. Indirect case arguments are universally associated with specific semantic roles. Indeed, the oblique cases of traditional grammar are *named* by semantic role: "instrumental," "ablative," "locative," and the like. English verbs that take locative arguments lexically associate indirect case with their locative (PP) roles and direct case with other (NP) roles.⁶ In this way the verb *lives* in (25a) differs crucially from the verb *pleases* in (25b): *lives* has a locative role in its semantic argument structure; *pleases* does not. As used in (25a), the verb *live* does not mean merely to exhibit the characteristic signs of life, but to inhabit or occupy a place in the world, to reside

somewhere. In this use, living is construed as a relation between an individual and a place. Pleasing is also a two-place relation, but neither of its two roles is locative. Assuming that indirect case is lexically associated with locative roles, *lives* can take an indirect case (PP) argument; *pleases* lacks such a role and takes only direct arguments. It then follows that the PP as an indirect argument cannot be related by topicalization to direct arguments without producing an inconsistency of case attributes. (Following Kaplan and Zaenen (1989) and Bresnan (1990), I am assuming that topicalization identifies the topic with the grammatical function of the gap at the level of functional structure, where case government is also defined.)

Finally, I note that further support for this hypothesis comes from considering the properties of those PPs in English that *do* appear in NP positions:

- (26) a. *Under the chair* is a nice place for the cat to sleep.
(Stowell (1981: ex. (27a), p. 268))
- b. He had spent *from eleven to one* at his church.
(Jespersen (1927: 5ff) cited by Jaworska (1986))
- c. They considered *after the holidays* to be too late for a family gathering. (Jaworska (1986: ex. (16b), 359))

Unlike the inverted locative PPs, these PPs can appear in object positions, as in (26b,c), allow subject auxiliary inversion, as in (27a), and permit tag-formation with a personal pronoun, as in (27b,c):

- (27) a. Is *under the bed* a good place to hide?
- b. Under the bed is a good place to hide, isn't it?
- c. Between six and seven suits her fine, doesn't it?

Moreover, these examples allow plural verb agreement when they are conjoined in subject position,⁷ in contrast to inverted locative PPs:

- (28) a. Under the bed and in the closet *are* good places to hide.
- b. *In San Jose and in Los Angeles *live* a woman.

In all these respects these examples behave like nominal phrases, not PPs. The simplest analysis is simply that they are place or time NPs whose missing nominal heads are pragmatically interpreted as instances of ellipsis:

- (29) [_{NP} (a place) [_{PP} *under the bed*]],
[_{NP} (a time) [_{PP} *between six and seven*]].

This analysis can also explain why these examples have an elliptical flavor and are best in contexts in which the semantics require or the context presupposes a place or time argument. For example, (26a) explicitly predicates being a place of the subject; in (26b) the verb *spend* implies a temporal object; in (26c), the predicate complement also implies a temporal object. If we substitute these same PPs into our original examples (1a-c), where the semantics do not impose a temporal or locative interpretation on the subject or object, the results are much worse:

- (30) a. ??Under the chair makes me happy.
 b. ??I like from eleven to one.
 c. ??I expect after the holidays to please me.
 d. *I'm pleased by under the bed.

Finally, this analysis can explain the following type of contrast, due to Kaisse (1985: p. 40).

- (31) a. Under the bed /z/ a great place to hide.
 b. In San Jose */z/ a great restaurant.

As Kaisse observes, voicing assimilation of the reduced form of *is* is possible when the pre-clitic phrase occupies the subject position, but not when it appears in the fronted position of topics or interrogatives.⁸

We find, then, that these PPs that can occupy NP positions show the complete cluster of properties lacking in the locative PPs considered earlier: they occupy object as well as subject positions, need not be topicalized, and they allow subject-auxiliary inversion, tag questions with personal rather than locative pronouns, and subject-verb agreement. The fact that the agreement property coincides with the NP-distributional properties strongly supports the analysis proposed here. Locatives are PPs in English, NPs in Chicheŵa. The structural opposition between NP and PP in English is tied to an abstract case-like opposition between direct and indirect arguments, and this explains the restricted distributional and agreement patterns of locatives in this language. But the NP/PP opposition is not tied to Case in Chicheŵa. The radically different distributional and agreement patterns we see in Chicheŵa follow from the categorization of locatives as gender classes in that language.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen that English and Chicheŵa differ typologically in the categorization of locatives as genders, expressed as NPs, or as indirect cases, expressed as PPs. These results suggest that it may be a mistake to represent the

underlying levels of grammar universally in terms which, like Case government, appear to be typologically parochial.

Africanists have often commented on the tendency to impose European categories of grammar inappropriately on African languages (e.g. Welmers (1973), Clements (to appear), Mufwene (1989), Bresnan and Moshi (1990)). Although it may be an unavoidable and even useful human tendency to categorize the unknown in terms of the familiar, this tendency is not harmless in the context of the universalist conception of generative grammar. It can lead to a kind of intellectual colonization of languages under the banner of Universal Grammar—and to the consequent impoverishment of our understanding of the nature of language and mind.

5 Notes

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²For detailed discussion of alternative analyses, see Bresnan (1990).

³I have found no object-raising verbs in Chicheŵa corresponding to (16c).

⁴Note that the locatives in these examples do not have object properties, as indicated by the impossibility of the object marker in (19a).

⁵The converse is not true: nonsubject and nonobject positions can be occupied by NPs, as is the adverbial position in *We work every day*.

⁶As noted above, a subclass of these verbs, including *enter*, *cross*, *pass*, take NP (direct) locative arguments.

⁷I am grateful to Janet Fodor for bringing this observation to my attention.

⁸Thanks to Carlos Gussenhoven for these examples.

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