In the standard account of case and agreement, both are checked in the syntax via an Agree relationship (Chomsky 2000). However, recent proposals have challenged this account. McFadden (2004, 2006) proposes that case is determined post-syntactically. Bobaljik (2007) argues that agreement is also determined post-syntactically, since agreement is dependent on case. Utilizing data from Icelandic, I show that case and agreement cannot be determined at the same level. Case is determined in the syntax, while agreement is determined at PF. Even though the central idea is that case and agreement are established in different modules, I argue that they cannot be completely divorced. I propose that the agreement process which occurs at PF builds on a previously established syntactic Agree relation. The core of the proposal is that only a Nominative that has received case from finite T˚ may trigger agreement on a finite verb. I argue that the Agree relation established in syntax is necessary, but not sufficient, for agreement.

Evidence that case and agreement are checked at different levels comes from the fact that in Icelandic, case and agreement are subject to different conditions. In Icelandic, finite verbs agree in person and number with Nominative DPs. In both (1a) and (1b) the Nominative receives case from T˚. However, the Nominative in (1a) triggers agreement, while the Nominative in (1b) does not trigger agreement. In (1b) the verb appears in the default 3rd person singular form. The crucial observation is that the intervening Dative in (1b) does not block case checking, but does block agreement checking.

Additional evidence for the division of case and agreement comes from dialect splits. When Nominatives appear pre-verbally, agreement is required. However, when Nominatives appear post-verbally, Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2007) report that there are three agreement dialects. In Dialect A, agreement is allowed with a post-verbal Nominative, except when a Dative intervenes between the verb and the Nominative, as shown in (1). In Dialect B, agreement is allowed with a post-verbal Nominative, irrespective of whether a Dative intervenes, as shown in (2). In Dialect C, agreement is not allowed with a post-verbal Nominative, irrespective of whether a Dative intervenes, as shown in (3). By situating case in the syntax and agreement at PF, my analysis captures the fact that agreement is subject to a greater degree of variation. There are dialect splits with respect to agreement, not case.

I argue that agreement builds on case and that PF has access to syntactic structure. The Nominatives in constructions such as (1)-(3) are potential agreement triggers because case is assigned by finite T˚. Dialectal variation arises because of different PF parameter settings. While the parameters of all three dialects are set to allow agreement with Nominatives, the dialects have different parameter settings regarding the position of the Nominative and linear intervention by a Dative. With respect to number agreement, the “Dative blocks” parameter is on in Dialect A and off in Dialect B. In Dialect C, the parameter allowing number agreement with a post-verbal Nominative is off. These parameter settings are shown in (4).

While dialects differ with respect to number agreement parameters, they all share the same person agreement parameter. I follow accounts in which third person agreement is actually the lack of agreement (e.g., Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2007)). Therefore, in all three dialects, the parameter allowing number agreement with a post-verbal Nominative is off, as shown in (5). My proposal accounts not only for the variation in number agreement, but also the lack of variation in person agreement.

Additionally, my account accurately predicts that no dialect allows number agreement in constructions such as (6). The Nominative in (6) is not a potential agreement trigger because case is not assigned by finite T, as shown in (7). Number agreement is only allowed in bi-clausal constructions when finite T˚ assigns Nominative. In these constructions, the dialects follow the same patterns as in mono-clausal constructions.

I have shown that while case and agreement are different, they are not completely independent. This analysis improves upon Bobaljik’s proposal in that it follows automatically from my system that agreement is dependent on case. Situating agreement at PF has the additional benefit of allowing for a stricter, narrower syntax, while capturing the variation in agreement.
(1) Dialect A
a. að henni líkaði/likuðu þeir.
   that her.Dat liked.3sg/3pl they.Nom
b. það líkaði/likuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir
   expl liked.3sg/*3pl one linguist.Dat these ideas.Nom (Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2007)

(2) Dialect B
a. að henni líkaði/likuðu þeir.
   that her.Dat liked.3sg/3pl they.Nom
b. það líkaði/likuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir
   expl liked.3sg/*3pl one linguist.Dat these ideas.Nom (Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2007)

(3) Dialect C
a. að henni líkaði/likuðu þeir.
   that her.Dat liked.sgl/3pl they.Nom
b. það líkaði/likuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir
   expl liked.3sg/*3pl one linguist.Dat these ideas.Nom (Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2007)

(4) Parameters for number agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Dialect A</th>
<th>Dialect B</th>
<th>Dialect C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dative blocks</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-verbal agreement</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) Parameters for person agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Dialect A</th>
<th>Dialect B</th>
<th>Dialect C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-verbal agreement</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) Dialects A, B, C
Mér hefur/hafa virst [mönnum líka þessir sokkar]
me.Dat have.3sg/*3pl seemed [the men.Dat to like these socks.Nom]
‘It has seemed to me that the men like these socks.’ (Jónsson, p.c.)

no case relation=no agreement relation

(7) [Dative T[-fin]verb*plural [Dat T[fin] Nom plural]]

References: