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Vocative agreement in Latvian and the principle of morphology-free syntax[1]

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Latvian grammars state that the form of adjectives modifying vocatives in Latvian can be determined by morphological rather than syntactic case: a special vocative ending *-o* is claimed to be possible only when the vocative controlling agreement has a special form distinct from the nominative. This would contradict Zwicky's principle of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax, as normally only the morphosyntactic feature value of the noun should be visible to the adjective, not the way in which it is realised. It has been suggested, on the other hand, that the vocative is not really a case, and that typologically speaking it is not a likely agreement feature. The aim of the article is, then, to examine how vocative agreement actually works in Latvian, and how the apparent exception to the general principles ruling agreement can be explained. First, the degree of integration of the vocative in the Latvian case system is examined (in comparison with Lithuanian), and it is suggested that the zero endings characteristic of Latvian vocatives (as a result of phonetic development) could have been reinterpreted as truncation, and that a similar truncated ending was created for the adjective through borrowing of the accusative ending. As truncated vocatives tend to be asyntactic (often being incapable of adjectival modification), it is suggested that the extension of the truncated form to the adjective was not mediated by the regular mechanisms of agreement but by what is tentatively described as 'vocative smear'—the phonologically driven spread of the vocative feature of truncation to the surroundings of the vocative noun.

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1. The problem stated

This article is about an interesting pattern of agreement claimed to exist in Latvian. It concerns the way in which Latvian adjectival modi-

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fiers agree with a head noun in the vocative singular. In the Latvian Academy Grammar, the rules are formulated as follows (Bergmane *et al.*, 1957, 434).

Some Latvian nouns have dedicated forms for the vocative singular, whereas other nouns use the nominative singular form instead. If the vocative has a nominative ending, the adjective has a nominative ending as well, e. g.,

(1) *mīļ-ais* *dēl-s!* 'dear son!'
dear-VOC = NOM.SG.M son-NOM.SG
cf. *man-s* *mīļ-ais* *dēl-s*
my-NOM.SG.M dear-NOM.SG.M.DEF son-NOM.SG
'my dear son' (NOM)

(2) *jauk-ā* *pasaul-e* 'O beautiful world!'
beautiful-VOC = NOM.SG.F.DEF world-NOM.SG
cf. *šī* *jauk-ā* *pasaul-e*
DEM.NOM.SG.F beautiful-NOM.SG.F.DEF world-NOM.SG
'this beautiful world' (NOM)

If, on the other hand, the noun has a special form for the vocative, then its adjectival modifier may show two parallel forms, identical either with the nominative or with the accusative, e. g.,

(3) *man-s* *mīļ-ais* *dēliņ!*
my-VOC = NOM.SG.M dear-VOC = NOM.SG.M.DEF son.DIM.VOC
alongside
man-u *mīļ-o* *dēliņ!*
my-VOC = ACC.SG dear-VOC = ACC.SG.DEF son.DIM.VOC
'dear son!'

(4) *man-a* *mīļ-ā* *māmiņ!*
my-VOC = NOM.SG.F dear-VOC = NOM.SG.F.DEF mother.DIM.VOC
alongside
man-u *mīļ-o* *māmiņ!*
my-VOC = ACC.SG dear-VOC = ACC.SG.DEF mother.DIM.VOC
'dear Mummy'

The formulations cited here imply that the combination of the accusative-like form of the adjective with a nominative-like form of the noun is impossible:

(5) **mīļ-o dēl-s*
dear-VOC.SG son-VOC = NOM.SG
'dear son!'

In the examples given here, it will be noted that a possessive pronoun used in such vocative noun phrases also assumes an accusative-like ending. The adjectives have endings different from those of the nouns and the possessive pronouns, e. g., nom. sg. fem. *-ā* for the adjective as opposed to *-a* for the noun and the possessive pronoun. This is because the Latvian adjective distinguishes definite and indefinite forms, the definiteness of the noun phrase being reflected in the choice of the definite form of the adjective. Vocatives are treated as inherently definite in Latvian, and adjectivals modifying vocatives are always in the definite form. A final remark to be made here is that the use of an accusative form to agree with a vocative is not inherently plausible, so I will rather say that the forms in *-u* and *-o* are vocatives formally identical to the corresponding accusatives; why an accusative-like form should appear here is a problem I will address further on.

Ultimately the rules formulated here go back to Endzelin-Mühlenbach (1907, 55), where it is stated that "if the noun has a special vocative form, then the adjective may also (that is, as an alternative for the nominative form—A.H.) assume the accusative form". Interestingly, Endzelin's Latvian Grammar (1951, 399) does not contain any statement to this effect, and it even lists the counterexample *mīļo kungs* 'dear Sir', where the adjectival ending *-o* is used with a nominative form of the noun. Both the counterexample and the author's failure to repeat the rule stated in the 1907 grammar suggest that Endzelin had in the meantime rejected the rule which he had at least endorsed as co-author of the 1907 grammar. But the possible existence of counterexamples does not fundamentally alter the situation: even if there is only a significant predominance of cases where the type of agreement described in the grammars is observed, the fact is worrying enough. That the rule could have been fabricated by Mühlenbach or Endzelin is unlikely. Both are noted for their philological accuracy, having been trained as Classical philologists. Moreover, their 1907 grammar was not intended to be prescriptive—at most one could point out a certain bias in favour of the language of the folk songs, which they considered to be models of genuine and unadulterated Latvian syntax. They would

not have invented morphosyntactic rules, however. Their statement concerning vocative agreement must therefore reflect a regularity they had observed in the living language rather than a rule they wanted to impose on the speakers.

The type of agreement formulated by Mühlenbach & Endzelin (1907) and repeated in the Academy Grammar is strange in that it violates Zwicky's principle of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax (cf., e. g., Zwicky 1996), vigorously advocated of late by Corbett (cf. Corbett 2009). According to this principle, only the morphosyntactic values of the noun should be visible to the adjective, not the sequences of phonemes by which these are realised. Students familiar with the declension classes of many Indo-European languages will not be surprised to find agreement patterns like Latin *bon-i milit-es* alongside *fort-es vir-i* etc. Zwicky's principle of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax predicts that there can be no natural language with agreement patterns like *bon-i vir-i* but **bon-es milit-es*, where the choice of endings would be determined not by declension class but by the phonological substance realising the morphosyntactic features of the agreement controller. This principle is not necessarily obvious even to trained philologists, as Mühlenbach and Endzelin's adherence to the rule expounded above shows. Besides, what has been called radical alliterative agreement has been reported from several languages (Corbett 2006, 88–90). The following example from Arapesh (Torricelli family, Papua New Guinea) shows so-called *-s*-agreement: the noun *balus*, being a loanword from Tok Pisin, lacks the inherent gender feature which every native word has, and agreement has to be realised using a phonological feature rather than an abstract morphosyntactic feature of the agreement controller (the example is from Dobrin 1998):

(6)	*nebebe-s-i*	*balus*	*sa-naki*	*Ukarumpa*
	very-large-'s'-ADJ	airplane	's'-came.from	Ukarumpa

'A very large airplane arrived from Ukarumpa.'

Corbett, a staunch advocate of the morphology-free syntax principle, suspends his judgement on such apparent exceptions to the principles of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax, expressing the hope that ampler data on the functioning of this type of agreement will facilitate an assessment in the course of time.

With reference to the Latvian vocative, on the other hand, there are more problems apart from the apparent violation of the morphology-free syntax principle. The rules stated above refer to agreement in case features, but is the vocative a case in the first place? This has been called into question by several linguists. And, regardless of whether we regard the vocative as a case or not, we must also answer the question of whether the vocative can be an agreement feature. Only after formulating at least a preliminary answer to these questions can we address the problem of evaluating the alleged Latvian vocative agreement pattern at the light of what we know about possible patterns of agreement.

2. The vocative as a case

The vocative is a special case, if it can be recognised as a case at all. It is not clear, as some authors point out, that the vocative has any syntactic function (Daniel & Spencer 2009, with references). If it hasn't, then it lacks a defining property of the category of case, which has been defined as "a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads" (Blake 2001, 1). If the vocative is a case, then it must behave like other cases, that is, be assigned to a noun phrase by the syntactic context, and then distributed somehow, through agreement rules, within the noun phrase. If we are not sure that the vocative is a case, we have no guarantee that it will be an agreement feature, as case can be argued to be (though cf. Corbett 2006, 133–135 for discussion), and it has been suggested (Daniel & Spencer 2009, 633) that the vocative is not a very likely agreement feature typologically, even though instances of vocative agreement are attested.

But from a morphological point of view vocatives do not, in an obvious way, stand apart from the case systems of languages. They differ, as Daniel and Spencer note, as to the degree of their integration in the morphological system. Some vocatives are formed with endings parallel to those of other cases, cf. Georgian, where the vocative is particularly well-integrated and shows agreement (Daniel & Spencer 2009, 633). But special vocative forms are also attested in languages where nouns do not otherwise distinguish case (Blake

2001, 8); among Indo-European languages, the Bulgarian example is well known. Let us look, therefore, how well the vocative is integrated in the grammatical systems of the living Baltic languages, Lithuanian and Latvian.

3. The vocative in Baltic

Lithuanian would be an example of a relatively well-integrated vocative case. Only singular nouns have a vocative distinct from the nominative in Lithuanian, but it is distinguished rather consistently with the aid of non-zero endings analogous to those of all other cases. Historically the Lithuanian vocative continues the Indo-European vocative, which consisted of a pure stem. Synchronically, however, the final segment of what is historically a pure stem can be interpreted as a distinct vocative ending, e. g., *tėv-e* 'father' (VOC) is opposed to *tėv-as* 'father' (NOM) (the historical segmentation would be voc. *tėv-e-ø* vs. nom. *tėv-a-s*, *-e-* and *-a-* being different apophonic grades of the thematic vowel), and the same can be said about voc. *sūn-au* 'son' and nom. *sūn-us* (historically *sūn-au-ø* and *sūn-u-s*, with *-au-* and *-u-* as different apophonic grades of the suffix).

A special case is that of proper names. Masculine names in *-as* take a vocative in *-ai*, e. g., *Jon-ai* 'John', and this rule extends to certain common nouns treated as proper names, e. g., *tėtuk-ai* 'Dad'. For this ending no historical explanation is available; Endzelīns (1948, 116 = 1982, 504) describes it as a particle. It is certainly not inherited from Indo-European. It is not unusual for vocatives of proper names to display special endings, e. g., in Polish hypocoristic feminine names take the irregular vocative ending *-u* instead of the regular *-o* (e. g., *Aniu* from *Ania*, hypocoristic form of *Anna*). Apart from that, there is nothing special about the vocatives in *-ai*: they have regular, non-zero, paradigmatic endings.

Beyond the domain of proper names, Lithuanian also has a number of vocatives that cannot be explained by regular phonetic development, and that also stand out among case forms in that they have zero endings, a feature otherwise unknown in Lithuanian declension, where even nominative singular forms nearly always have a non-zero ending. These vocatives have evidently arisen from truncation, i. e.,

shortening not induced by regular phonetic development. They are frequent in the case of diminutives, e. g.,

(7) *berniuk*, *tėtuk* from *berniukas* ‘boy’, *tėtukas* ‘Dad’,
(8) *mamyt*, *dukryt* from *mamytė* ‘Mum’ and *dukrytė* ‘little daughter’.

Proper names may also display such a zero ending even if they contain no diminutive suffix. This is already attested in the following example from Donelaitis (late 18th century):

(9) *Ak, Adom, tu pirm-s žmog-us*
Oh Adam.VOC 2SG.NOM first-NOM.SG.M man-NOM.SG
išdykusi-o sviet-o!
profligate-GEN.SG.M world-GEN.SG
‘Oh Adam, you first man of this profligate world!’

Vocatives derived in this way from proper names differ from other vocatives, including those derived with zero endings from diminutives, in that they can enter no syntactic relationships, e. g., they cannot be modified by an adjective (11), whereas this is normal for a vocative derived with a zero ending from a diminutive (12):

(10) *brang-usis Adom-ai!*
dear-NOM.SG.M.DEF Adam-VOC
(11) **brang-usis Adom!*
dear-NOM.SG.M.DEF Adam.VOC
(12) *brang-usis berniuk!*
dear-NOM.SG.M.DEF boy.VOC

These two classes of vocatives with zero endings differ in that those derived from diminutives are the only possible forms (a vocative **berniuke* is hardly used), whereas in the case of proper names there is one regular, paradigmatic vocative form with a non-zero ending, which can enter syntactic relations, and another one that is irregular both morphologically and syntactically.

Forms like *Adom* and *berniuk* are evidently both non-paradigmatic forms showing historically non-motivated shortening or truncation. The example of forms like *Adom* shows that such truncated vocatives are deviant not only morphologically, but also syntactically.

The Latvian vocative endings are historically identical with the Lithuanian ones, but Latvian having undergone a more rapid phonetic development, they show a considerably greater degree of phonetic erosion. Whereas the Lithuanian vocatives with zero endings are the result of irregular truncation, superficially similar Latvian forms are often the result of a regular phonetic development, viz. the loss of short final vowels.

The most paradigmatic Latvian vocatives are those with nominatives in *-is* and *-us*: here we find the endings *-i* and *-u*, as in *brāli* 'brother' and *Marku* 'Mark'; these are shorter than the nominatives in *-is* and *-us*, but they are not obvious instances of truncation; on the other hand, the form *Pēter* 'Peter' (instead of the expected *Pēteri*, nominative *Pēteris*) looks like a truncated form.

A distinct vocative with zero ending is available for some masculine nouns in *-s*, e. g., *cilvēk*, vocative of *cilvēk-s* 'man, human', though the majority has no special form, cf. *kungs* 'Sir' (NOM and VOC). Most feminine nouns with the vocalic nominative endings *-a* and *-e* also have vocatives identical with the nominative, with the exception of a small group of nouns consisting mainly of kinship terms, e. g., *mās* 'sister' from *māsa*, *māt* 'mother' from *māte*. Just as we have observed in Lithuanian, but much more regularly, we find zero endings in diminutives, e. g.,

(13) *draudziņ* (*draudziņš*, DIM of *draugs* 'friend')
(14) *māsiņ* (*māsiņa*, DIM of *māsa* 'sister')
(15) *puisīt* (*puisītis*, DIM of *puisis* 'lad')
(16) *tantīt* (*tantīte*, DIM of *tante* 'aunt')

In addition to diminutives, many other suffixal nouns have zero endings as well, more specifically all agent nouns with the endings *-tājs* and *-ējs*:

(17) *skolotāj!* 'teacher'
(18) *braucēj!* 'driver'

In Latvian this zero ending need not necessarily result from truncation, as it can be accounted for historically: the Proto-Baltic endings were *-e* and *-a*, and these short vowels would normally have reduced to zero. The loss of final short open vowels in regular paradigmatic forms is illustrated by *ved* 'leads' alongside Lithuanian *veda* 'id.'. In

principle, then, *tēv* 'father.voc' and *māt* 'mother.voc' could be called products of a regular phonetic development, but alongside these we find historically unwarranted instances of truncation such as *Pēter* (this name inflects like *brālis*, so that we would expect **Pēteri*). We should also note that the zero ending is in some instances accompanied by a prosodic change, viz. the shift from even to falling tone, as in *màt* 'mother.voc' alongside *mãte* 'mother.nom'. This is certainly an irregular development due to the specific intonation pattern of vocatives, and we can put this alongside the unmotivated zero endings as evidence for non-paradigmatic behaviour of vocatives.

All the forms discussed until now have a common feature: they do not have specific vocative endings but seem to result from shortening of the nominative ending. One form stands out from the rest: it is *biedri* 'comrade' which stands alongside a nominative *biedrs*. As the general rules would predict either *biedrs* or *biedr*, this form is apparently exceptional in that it adds an *-i* not present in the nominative or in any abstract stem form we could postulate. However, nouns in /Crs/ often insert a vowel *-i* which is now considered substandard but was once general: *katrs* 'every' was once pronounced *katris* and counted as dissyllabic in poetry (cf. Endzelīns 1922, 5 = 1979, 182). The form *biedri* can therefore be characterised as a trace of this former system and, alongside a nominative *biedris*, can be regarded as an instance of subtraction of *-s* as well. The retention of *biedri* alongside the nominative *biedrs* can be ascribed to a phonotactic constraint: there are no word-final sequences of the type -TR# (T = obstruent, R = sonorant) in Latvian.

Thus, even though basically the Latvian vocatives can in many instances be described as regular developments from forms resembling those of modern Lithuanian (in a few instances, like Latvian *brāli* and Lithuanian *broli*, the endings are identical), phonetical developments have changed the character of the Latvian vocatives. Basically, vocatives are now, to the extent that they are distinct, shortened or truncated nominatives. When viewed as a unified process of truncation, the differences between declension classes with regard to the derivation of the vocative disappear: what would otherwise appear as different endings determined by declension class (e. g., *-i*, *-u* or *-ø* for masculine nouns) receives a uniform treatment. This makes the Latvian vocative

less case-like than that of Lithuanian: the need of positing an abstract case feature is stronger if the existence of declension classes leads to the lack of uniform exponency, as argued by Spencer and Otoguro (2005), cf. Daniel and Spencer (2009, 627) for the vocative.

Unlike certain Lithuanian vocatives, which are, as we have seen, asyntactic, Latvian truncated vocatives are not anomalous syntactically and can freely take modifiers. We can therefore distinguish several degrees of integration of Baltic vocatives into the morphological and syntactic structure of the language: some are perfectly integrated (Lithuanian *sūnau*), others are integrated syntactically, but not morphologically (Lithuanian *berniuk,* Latvian *draudziņ*), still others remain morphologically and syntactically unintegrated (Lithuanian *Adom*).

4. Vocative agreement in Latvian

Let us now consider the nature of vocative agreement in Latvian. Before we can start out on a discussion of the facts we must add a few details not mentioned in the introductory part of this article.

First, a not unimportant question is whether the adjectival ending *-o* is used only as an agreement form or whether it can also be used in nominalisations of the type 'my dear'. The grammars say nothing about this. The most frequent forms seem to be nominatives:

(19) *man-s* *mīļ-ais* 'my dear (masc.)'
my-VOC = NOM.SG.M dear-VOC = NOM.SG.M.DEF

(20) *man-a* *mīļ-ā* 'my dear (fem.)'
my-VOC = NOM.SG.F dear-VOC = NOM.SG.F.DEF

But examples of forms in *-o* can be found as well:

(21) *No tevis, man-u mīļ-o, spiež man*
from.you my-VOC.SG dear-VOC.SG force.PRS.3 1SG.DAT
šķirties, ko es pavisam ne-spēju
part.INF what.ACC 1SG.NOM at.all NEG-be.able.PRS.1SG
iedomāt.
imagine.INF
'They force me to part from you, my dear, which I can't imagine at all.' (Kaudzītis brothers, *Mērnieku laiki*)

The adjectival form in *-o* (or the cluster of possessive pronoun and adjective) can also follow the noun rather than precede it:

(22)	*Tētiņ*	*man-u*	*mīļ-o* 'my dear dad' (BW 32041)
	dad.VOC	my-VOC.SG	dear-VOC.SG.M.DEF

As far as the case value of this adjectival ending is concerned, grammarians are unanimous in calling it an accusative ending. This could be taken to mean no more than that the ending was borrowed from the accusative, for nowhere in the grammars do we find the assertion that the accusative can be used as a vocative. If the ending was borrowed there must probably be some reason for it. A fact one could think about in this context is that, word-final short vowels being amenable to devoicing and loss in Latvian, the vocative *draudziņ* and the accusative *draudziņu* will often sound alike. This could have led to the vocative being reanalysed as an accusative, but there is no evidence that this has actually happened. In careful pronunciation the accusative will always appear as *draudziņu*, but this form is never used as a vocative.

The interesting question is, of course, how the agreement is established. If the vocative were a case like others, we would expect the whole noun phrase to be assigned vocative as a syntactic case (cf. Spencer's 2006 distinction between s-case and m-case); this syntactic case could then be realised as nominative in the case of nouns lacking a dedicated vocative: such nouns would then be vocative in terms of s-case but nominative in terms of m-case. The form of the adjective, however, is not determined lexically, as it is with nouns: any adjective can be either in the nominative or in the accusative-like vocative form. The major problem is that it is determined not by the case value of the noun (this would always be vocative), but by its m-case.

		m-case adjective	m-case noun	
(23)	*mīļais brāli*	NOM	VOC	'dear brother'
(24)	*mīļais kungs*	NOM	NOM	'dear Sir'
(25)	*mīļo brāli*	VOC	VOC	'dear brother'
(26)	**mīļo kungs*	VOC	NOM	'dear Sir' (dispreferred)

But if the vocative is not a real case, and it is not assigned syntactically, there is no reason to attribute the noun phrase a syntactic case

in the sense in which Spencer (2006) uses this term. Still, there must be some internal syntactic relationships within a vocative phrase like *my dear friend*, and they will probably be pretty much the same as in any other noun phrase. It does not greatly matter, therefore, whether we regard the vocative as a value of the category of case or not: just to avoid the term 'case', we could say that a noun phrase like *my dear friend*, when used as a form of address, is assigned 's-vocative', and that the head of this phrase, and possibly some of its dependents, may be assigned 'm-vocative' at the morphological level.

The difference between vocative phrases and other noun phrases is allegedly that vocative phrases do not receive their case feature from the syntactic context. This, however, could be said of the case features of many noun phrases. Noun phrases functioning as verbal complements are obviously assigned their case features by their governing heads. It is not obvious, however, that adjuncts are assigned their case features by the syntactic context. To the extent that they are not introduced by prepositions, adjuncts contain what has traditionally been called semantic case (cf. Kuryłowicz 1949, who also distinguishes between governed and non-governed case; for a discussion cf. Blake 2001, 31–34); They have their place in the semantic structure of the sentence but it is not easy to find a syntactic case assigner. Generative Grammar, which is understandably hostile to non-syntactically assigned case, has recourse to devices like null (phonologically empty) prepositions as case assigners to adjuncts (cf. Bresnan & Grimshaw 1978, McCawley 1988). Larson's alternative proposal (Larson 1985), according to which adverbial expressions are lexically specified to assign case to themselves, comes pretty close to the notion of semantic case; whether for every type of adverbial it will be possible to define a closed class of lexemes realising it is a question deserving a separate investigation. The idea that generative case theory needs some notion of semantic case has been articulated by Babby (1991).

In the case of the vocative, several of the solutions mentioned here seem to work. On the one hand, proper names and a number of other lexemes could, for instance, be specified as assigning vocative case to themselves if they are not structurally assigned nominative case; on the other hand, one could posit vocative prepositions (traditionally they would be called particles) such as Greek *õ* in *õ phíle Krítōn* 'dear

Crito' to govern a vocative; in most instances, in most languages, this preposition would have no phonetic realisation. But the notion of a vocative as a kind of semantic case would seem to be more convincing than either of the two versions of assigned case mentioned here.

There is thus no very strict line of division between the case assignment of vocatives and that of adjuncts. Now most adjuncts are, of course, connected semantically to the rest of the sentence, whereas vocatives are more loosely attached, at the level of discourse structure. But this line of division is not a neat one, as adjuncts may also be discourse-related. I cite the following examples of speech-act related adjuncts from Huddleston & Pullum (2002, 773–4):

(27) *Frankly, it was a waste of time.*
(28) *If you must know, I wasn't even short-listed.*

Of course, case is not normally used to encode discourse-oriented or speech-act-oriented adjuncts, and to the extent that it is (we might think of such instances as the Latvian locative *īsumā* 'in brief, to be brief'), we will probably be inclined to assume lexicalisation. The vocative would therefore be exceptional in that it is a discourse-oriented case[2]. Daniel (2008) observes that if the vocative is, generally speaking, weakly integrated in grammatical structure, it is, at any rate, integrated in discourse structure.

The conclusions we have reached until now are the following: vocative phrases are syntactically isolated, but not much more so than discourse-oriented adjuncts. The vocative is distinct from other cases because of this syntactic isolation, but it could be viewed as being at the end of a certain continuum: grammatical cases > semantic cases > discourse-oriented cases. Vocative noun phrases may have some specific features (actually some vocatives cannot occur in phrases), but basically they are similar to other noun phrases. As far as morphology is concerned, vocatives oscillate between well-behaved paradigmatic case forms (Lithuanian, with certain exceptions) and forms displaying types of marking that lie outside the usual stock of morphological means.

[2] A reviewer of this article suggests that the *dativus ethicus* could be another instance of a discourse-driven type of case assignment.

I would therefore like to venture that there are no *a priori* considerations that would compel us to reject standard patterns of agreement within vocative phrases, or to describe vocative agreement as unexpected. We should be prepared to expect agreement of adnominal modifiers with vocatives to agree in the same way as all other adnominal modifiers. On the other hand, vocatives can also be syntactically deviant, e. g., we have seen that some Lithuanian truncated vocatives are not amenable to adjectival modification. This is in itself already a deviation from the principle of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax. Perhaps, then, we should not be surprised if such non-integrated vocatives show other signs of deviation from the principles of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax as well.

5. Explaining Latvian vocative agreement

What would agreement in vocative phrases be like on the assumption that it follows the general principles of agreement? This can be illustrated from Latin. The syntactic case is vocative, but when a special (morphological) vocative is lacking, the (morphological) nominative is used. This may result in the following combinations:

		adjective	noun	
(29)	*care amice!*	VOC	VOC	
(30)	*reverende magister!*	VOC	NOM	
(31)	*nobilis domine!*	NOM	VOC	cf. *mīļais brāli*
(32)	*benevolens lector!*	NOM	NOM	cf. *mīļais kungs*

The Latvian counterparts given here for comparison would represent the language system of a speaker who does not use the adjectival forms in *-o* (provided such speakers exist). The remaining options attested in Latvian are:

(33)	*mīļo brāli*	VOC	VOC
(34)	?*mīļo kungs*	VOC	NOM

These cannot be compared to the Latin constructions (31) and (32) because the choice of nominative or vocative is not lexically determined: any adjective can take either form. If we accept construction (34) cited in Endzelin's 1951 grammar, then the two forms (*-ais/-ā* and

-*o*) are in free variation and there is no fundamental problem: there is always agreement, but the realisation of morphological vocative in the adjective is optional. The real problem arises when this choice is determined by the morphological case of the noun.

A reviewer of this article suggests that the deviant character of (34) results from the fact that *kungs* is simply a nominative and therefore is unable to assign vocative to the adjective, whereas *brāli* is a vocative capable of optionally controlling vocative agreement. It is true that nominatives are often used instead of vocatives even when these are available. Nominative and vocative are then in free variation. An example would be colloquial Polish, where the nominative can be used instead of the vocative:

(35) *Cześć,* *Piotr!*
hello Peter.NOM
(36) *Cześć,* *Piotrze!*
hello Peter.VOC
'Hello, Peter!'

If the nominative is used rather than the vocative, we would expect adjectival modifiers to be in the nominative as well. But Latvian does not have such free variation. Either a special vocative is used, or we have a form identical with the nominative. Even if we state clearly that this nominative-like form is actually a nominative, not a nominative-like allomorph of the vocative, it is still a nominative morphologically only. Syntactically, it must be vocative in order to assign vocative to the adjectival modifier, as in the Latin example (30). There is no obvious reason to posit a difference between Latin and Latvian and to say that Latin *magister* in (30) and *lector* in (32) are vocatives whereas Latvian *kungs* in (34) is a nominative. We will say, therefore, that both Latin *magister* and Latvian *kungs* are nominatives in term of m-case and vocatives in terms of s-case. Admittedly, Latin has also isolated instances of nominatives used instead of vocatives and accompanied by adjectives in the nominative. An example often cited in the grammars is

(37) *audi tu, populus Albanus* (Livy i. 24, 7)
'hear, thou people of Alba'

This construction is puzzling in that the form *populus* actually replaces a lacking vocative *popule*, which is of late attestation and was

evidently not available in the classical period (Hofmann, Leumann & Szantyr 1997, 23–24). This would make it even more natural to expect a construction like **populus Albane*, with a morphological nominative syntactically behaving as a vocative, as in (30). Why this does not occur is not clear, but the authors of the grammars suggest that such constructions as in (37) are special as the nominatives are actually appositions rather than forms of address (Hofmann, Leumann & Szantyr 1997, *ibid.*). Such instances are, at any rate, exceptional in Latin.

Should we, in interpreting Latvian nominative-vocatives like *mīļais kungs* in (24), take the Latin situation in (37) as an analogon, or rather that in (30)? The assumption that Latvian simply uses the nominative instead of the vocative, and this nominative will be a nominative syntactically as well, would gain more plausibility if it were possible to use a nominative also in those cases when a distinct vocative is available, say

(38) **mīļais dēliņš!*

In that case we would say that there is a morphosyntactic rule, not constrained by any facts of paradigmatic morphology, to the effect that a nominative can always be used instead of the vocative. This rule would be optional wherever a dedicated vocative is available and obligatory where it is not available. But as constructions like (38) do not seem to occur, the more natural assumption would be that whenever a person is addressed the vocative is assigned as a syntactic case, and that this syntactic case is realised by the nominative as a morphological case if a dedicated vocative is not available. This should enable the adjective to be assigned vocative, and we would expect the dedicated vocative form to be at least allowed as an option regardless of the morphological case of the noun. What remains to be explained is why this happens only when a morphological vocative occurs.

In fact, we could say that this is not agreement, but something different—something that can be described in terms of phonology rather than of syntax and morphology. Non-morphological devices can, for example, be observed in the derivation of 'new vocatives' in Russian (cf. Daniel 2008). These consist, basically, in truncation, e. g., *Jura*, hypocoristic form of *Jurij* 'George', is shortened to *Jur*. But such forms are specific in that they may retain voicing in word-final position,

whereas this is generally precluded by Russian rules of sandhi, e. g., *Serëža* is shortened to [ʂiɾɔʒ]. No rule of Russian morphology could yield such a form because the result of any morphological process yielding a voiced obstruent followed by a zero ending would be subsequently subjected to a phonotactic rule of devoicing, cf. *vod* /vot/, genitive plural of *voda* 'water'. The formation of new vocatives must occur somewhere at the phonological level. Similarly, in Latvian, we could imagine some phonological operation spreading over several words in the vocative phrase. Let us call it 'vocative smear', a term reminiscent of the 'feature smear' of prosodic phonology (cf. Sommerstein 1977, 54–69).

Viewed as a phonological process, vocative smear would, of course, involve the spread of identical phonological segments, not abstract case features. A vocative phrase like Greek *Eúmai-e sybõt-a* 'swineherd Eumaeus' (Odyssey *o* 525, from a nominative *Eúmai-os sybót-ēs*) would not correspond to this notion of vocative smear because it entails an abstract case feature realised by two different endings. Now this phonological marker of the vocative need not necessarily take the shape of a phoneme or phoneme cluster; truncation is also an option. In this sense the Latvian vocative, which we have characterised above as consisting in truncation, would be a marker amenable to the smear we have just characterised. But in what sense could the adjectival ending *-o*, traditionally described as an accusative ending, be regarded as a result of truncation? Probably in the sense of being sibilantless, as noted above. The deletion of the sibilant *-s* or *-š* (and, in some instances, also the vowel preceding it) is the common feature of many, though not all, Latvian vocatives. In the case of adjectives, however, the process is more complex, and instead of **labai cilvēk* (or something of the kind) we find *labo cilvēk*. At a first glance, this suggests that more is involved than just truncation, but why the accusative should have been selected *qua* accusative (that is, as an extension of its accusative semantics) is also unclear. I suggest, therefore, that the form in *-o* was simply selected among the historically available forms as one satisfying the need for a sibilantless form. Instead of truncating the nominative ending, which would perhaps have produced something like **labai* alongside the nominative *labais*, Latvian resorted to the procedure of borrowing of inflection.

The notion of 'borrowing of inflection from other cases' is used by Kulikov (2009, 452–4), who cites the example of the genitival endings used for the accusative in Slavonic. The mechanism of this borrowing is not properly understood yet; in many instances it is probably motivated by functional similarity of the cases involved, but in this particular instance it does not *a priori* seem probable that case functions were involved at all: a phonetic factor seems more plausible.

It should be noted that though the productive rule is truncation, Latvian has actually invented no vocative forms, only extended the scope of what seemed to be the productive rule: *tēv*, *māt*, *brāli* are historically regular vocatives from **tēve*, **māte*, **brālī*, and the rule has been extended by applying the truncation rule a second time to nouns that should have retained a final vowel, like *puisīt* from *puisīti*, where *-i* is from a long **-ī* (Common Baltic final long vowels are shortened in Latvian, but do not normally reduce to zero). In the case of adjectives no such model was available, or rather, in order to find a model it became necessary to look among the endings of oblique cases. Among the oblique cases the accusative was obviously the most eligible in that it was the nearest, least-oblique case; and it provided a sibilantless ending that conformed to the truncation principle which, in the case of masculine nouns, deleted the sibilant characteristic of the nominative. Languages without a vocative substitute it not only with the nominative, but also with the accusative, e. g., in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic either the nominative or the accusative are used after the vocative particle *yā*, according to whether the noun is further modified or not (Daniel & Spencer 2009, 630–631). Once established for masculine nouns, the rule could have been extended to feminine nouns, for which the original motivation was not present (the nominative endings of the adjective being sibilantless). This extension was no doubt facilitated by the fact that the adjectival accusative ending *-o* is used for both masculine and feminine gender. The claim that the selection of the ending *-o* had a purely phonological motivation would be still more convincing if it could be shown that it operated regardless of declension class, but Latvian adjectives (unlike Latvian nouns) do not distinguish declension classes.

A reviewer of this article points out that the truncation of vocatives is probably caused by the characteristic vocative chant and should

therefore apply only to NP-final syllables. One would not expect it to spread to modifiers, but to the extent that it actually would spread, it would have to be morphologised first. This is, of course, a valid point. But truncated vocatives do not seem to be a feature of noun phrases at all: to the extent that they are syntactically specific, they are by being asyntactic, i. e., they are isolated vocative nouns that often cannot be modified. Combinations like **dorogoj* Jur are rejected by native speakers of Russian and a cursory search I carried out in the Russian National Corpus (http://www.ruscorpora.ru) yielded no hits of this type. This situation is reminiscent of what we saw in Lithuanian, cf. (10), (11). Truncated forms may become morphologised, and this process of morphological integration seems to go in hand with syntactic integration, cf. (12), where the endingless vocative has become a paradigmatic form capable of adjectival modification. At this point, we also expect the agreement pattern to conform to the general principles obtaining for agreement in noun phrases in general.

The intermediary stage represented by forms like Lithuanian *Adom* is of particular interest here. Could their unamenability to adjectival modification, which is also a deviation from the principle of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax, be somehow connected with the one from which we started our discussion? If a connection exists, it could be of the following kind. In modern Latvian the truncated vocatives have become morphologised, and there do not seem to be any instances of asyntactic truncated vocatives comparable to Lithuanian *Adom*. But in the period of their expansion the new truncated vocatives might have been asyntactic as well, and the relationship with adjectival vocatives co-occurring with them may have been appositional. In such a configuration we could imagine the truncation characteristic of the vocative spreading phonetically, in the guise of what I have just called vocative smear, from noun to adjective. If this was the case, then the adjective would have assumed its new vocative ending *-o* not through agreement but as an appositional head. This is not contradicted by the facts, as the adjectival vocatives in *-o* can still be used when the adjective functions as a head.

The unusual pattern of agreement which arose from this process should have been eliminated when the new adjectival vocative became morphologised: the result should have been a relationship of free

variation between the forms in *-ais / -ā* and the forms in *-o*. This will perhaps be achieved in course of time, and Endzelin's example *mīļo kungs* seems to indicate occasional onsets of this process. However, by a kind of inertia, the pattern requiring phonetic correspondence between adjective and noun has remained at least strongly predominant. An analogon for this could be seen in the behaviour of vocatives like Lithuanian *Adom*, which, attested already in Donelaitis, have remained asyntactic to this day.

6. In conclusion

The thoughts and conjectures contained in this article rest on the assumption that the pattern of agreement described by Mühlenbach & Endzelin (1907) and repeated in subsequent grammars is an authentic language fact rather than an invention of grammarians. That it might be an authentic fact is suggested by another instance of apparent deviation from the principles of phonology-free and morphology-free syntax, viz. the existence of apparently asyntactic truncated vocatives. Both instances of deviation are probably apparent rather than real, and they seem to be connected with the specific status of vocatives. The deviant properties of vocatives probably originate at phonological level (phonological derivation of vocatives) and are then morphologised. Syntactically, phonological vocative derivation might apply to isolated phonological words; when these vocatives are morphologised, they cease to be syntactically and morphosyntactically visible and behave like any paradigmatic case form. But there seem to be transitional stages that defy our understanding of how the levels of phonology, morphosyntax and syntax should be correlated.

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Abbreviations

ACC — accusative, ADJ — adjective, DAT — dative, DEF — definite, DEM — demonstrative, DIM — diminutive, F — feminine, GEN — genitive, INF — infinitive, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, PRS — present, SG — singular, VOC — vocative

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