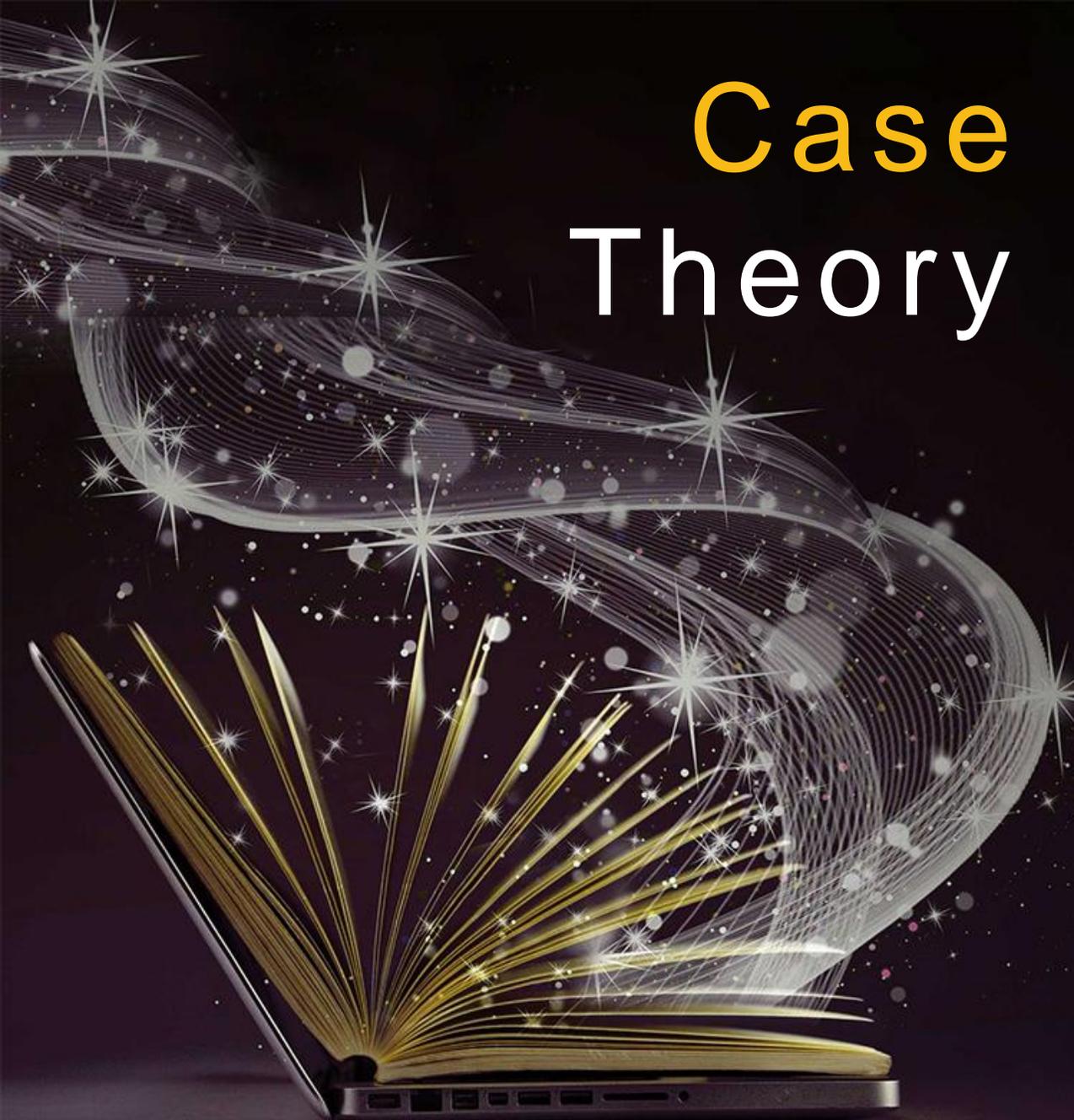




Case Theory in Minimalist Program (MP)

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Case Theory

- 01 Introduction in **CT**
- 02 **Abstract** Case
- 03 The **Case filter**
- 04 **ECM** Constructions
- 05 Summary



Introduction in **Case Theory**

Introduction

Case Theory in GB / MP

Case Theory in GB/Minimalism is about the distribution of NPs, not about the morphological form per se.

In this theory, 'abstract case' plays a central role in being one of the driving forces of movement, uniting a variety of transformations (passive, raising, unaccusative etc.), and in regulating alternation between overt and unpronounced subjects in non-finite clauses.

Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2011:44

Introduction

Case Theory in GB / MP

Morphological case is a **parameter** as it does not apply to all languages, while abstract Case is a universal **principle**. Because in such case grammatical functions are indicated with morphosyntactic features.

Introduction

Principles and Parameters

Principles:

universal constraints on
the form of languages

provided by UG,
invariant

Parameters:

points where languages
choose from among limited
options

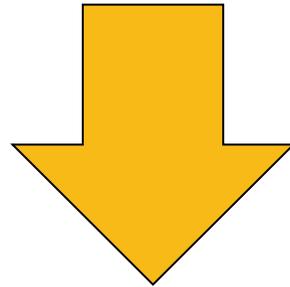
provided by UG,
variable

Introduction

Universal Grammar

Universal Grammar (UG)

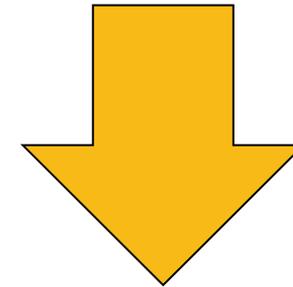
Simplicity
Uniformity



capacity

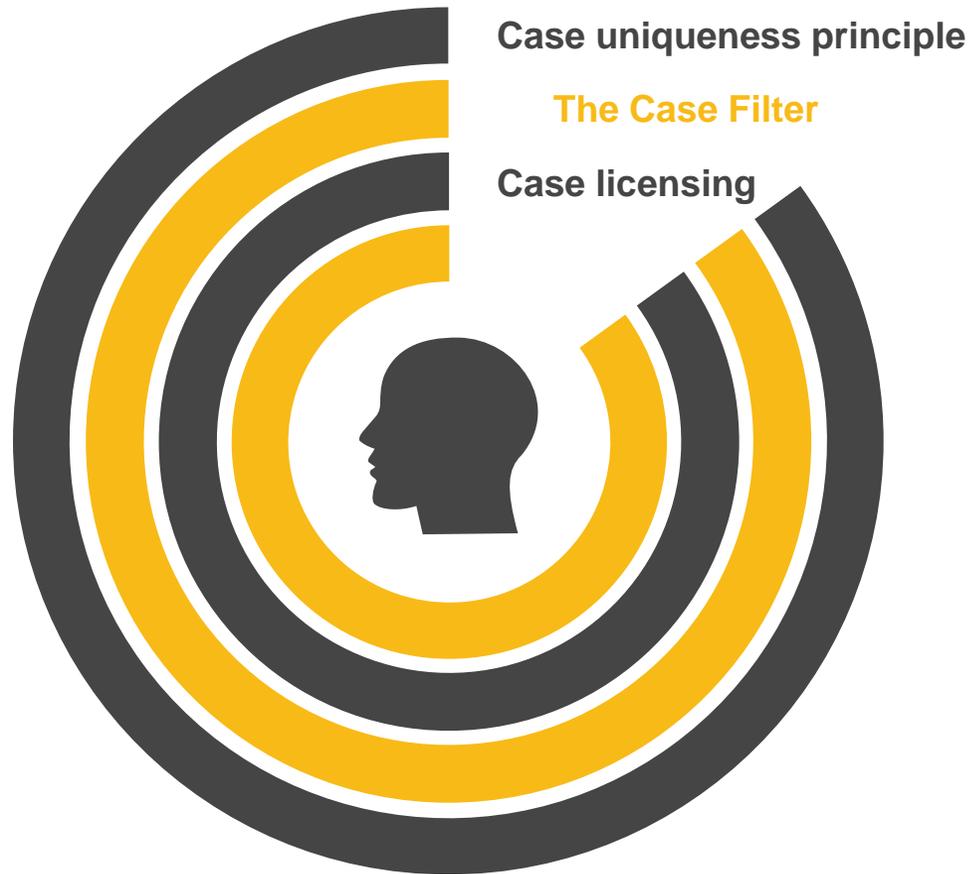
Particular languages

Complexity
Diversity



cross-linguistical variation

Introduction



Case uniqueness principle

DP may receive only one case

The Case Filter

Every nominal argument must be assigned case

Case licensing

Every instance of case must be properly licensed



Abstract Case

Case

Case Theory in GB / MP

Standard **definition** of case:

Inflectional category of nominals, which typically marks their relation to other constituents of a clause.

Case

Case Theory in GB / MP

Case is associated with **grammatical function (GF)**
in the sentence:

subject > object > possession > indirect object

Polinsky & Preminger 2014

Case Theory in GB / MP

MORPHOLOGICAL CASE

Morphological case is the surface case form which is assigned to a DP depending on its surface position within a sentence.

Case Theory in GB / MP

MORPHOLOGICAL CASE

Morphological case has covert or overt markers.

Case Theory in GB / MP

MORPHOLOGICAL CASE

Morphological case shows variations in argument structure.

A - subject of transitive verb

S - subject of intransitive verb

P(O) - object

Case Theory in GB / MP

ABSTRACT CASE

All Noun phrases undergo case assignment, but this is not always realized at surface structure.

Case Theory in GB / MP

ABSTRACT CASE

According to Case uniqueness principle all DPs must receive **only one** case.

According to the Case filter principle **all DPs must assign case**. If DP cannot assign case, it must undergo the transformation called **DP movement** to satisfy Case requirements at the deep-structure level.

Case Theory in GB / MP

ABSTRACT CASE

“One standard way of implementing the Case filter is by using a mechanism known as feature checking.

The Case filter becomes a requirement that a noun be close enough to a Case assigner to check that the noun has the right features. The noun must be close to its Case assigner.”



The Case filter

Case Theory in GB / MP

THE CASE FILTER

In English every nominal argument must be assigned either **nominative** or **accusative** case.

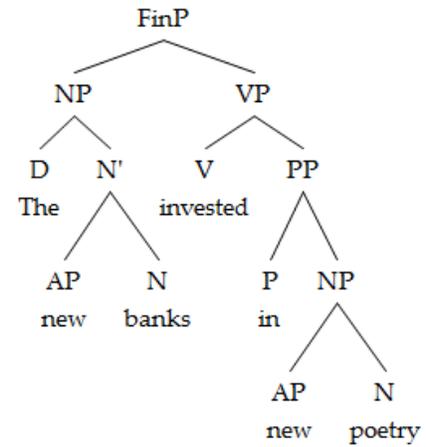
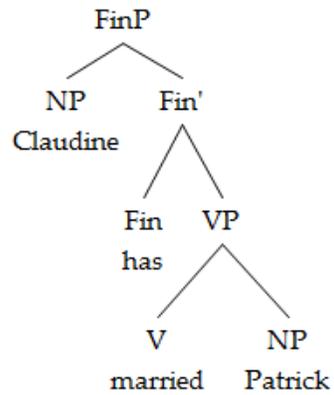
The Case Filter

CT determines which case can appear in which position.

Case Theory in
GB / MP

As all DPs assign case this means that case is a property of nominal constituent that is assigned to it by a particular syntactic head.

(1) S → NP VP
 VP → V (NP)
 NP → (D) N
 D → {ყველა | სხვა | a | the}
 N → {ბიჭი | ბიჭები | dog | cats}
 V → {აივლის | ჩაუარა | sleep | smiled | slept}



CASE ASSIGNMENT BY HEADS



Different **heads**
responsible
for
Case
assignment

Finite clause subjects need to be assigned nominative Case by **T(Fin)** – [NOM]

Objects need to be assigned accusative Case by a verb or preposition. So, **V, P** are responsible for assigning accusative Case [ACC]

Possessors need to be assigned genitive Case by **D**'s [GEN]

Case assignment

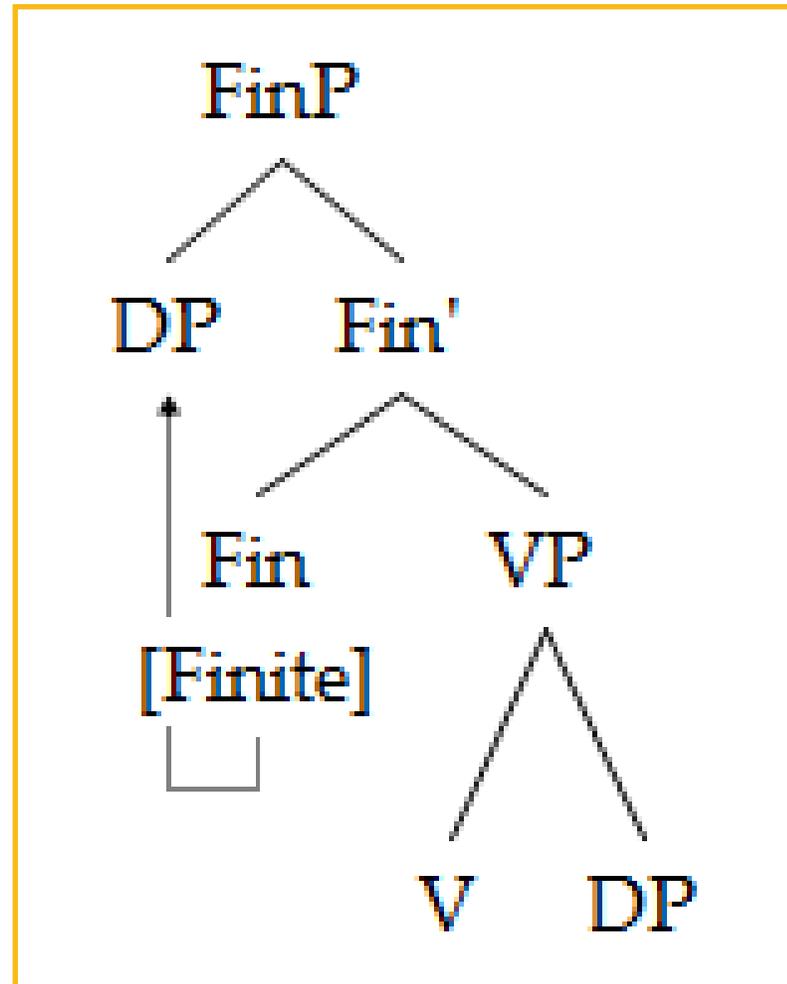
Case Theory in GB / MP

**Him visits Mary and Martin.*

The example is ungrammatical because *him* should be *he*. *Him* is in the subject position in T[Fin]P, where it can only receive nominative case, not accusative case.

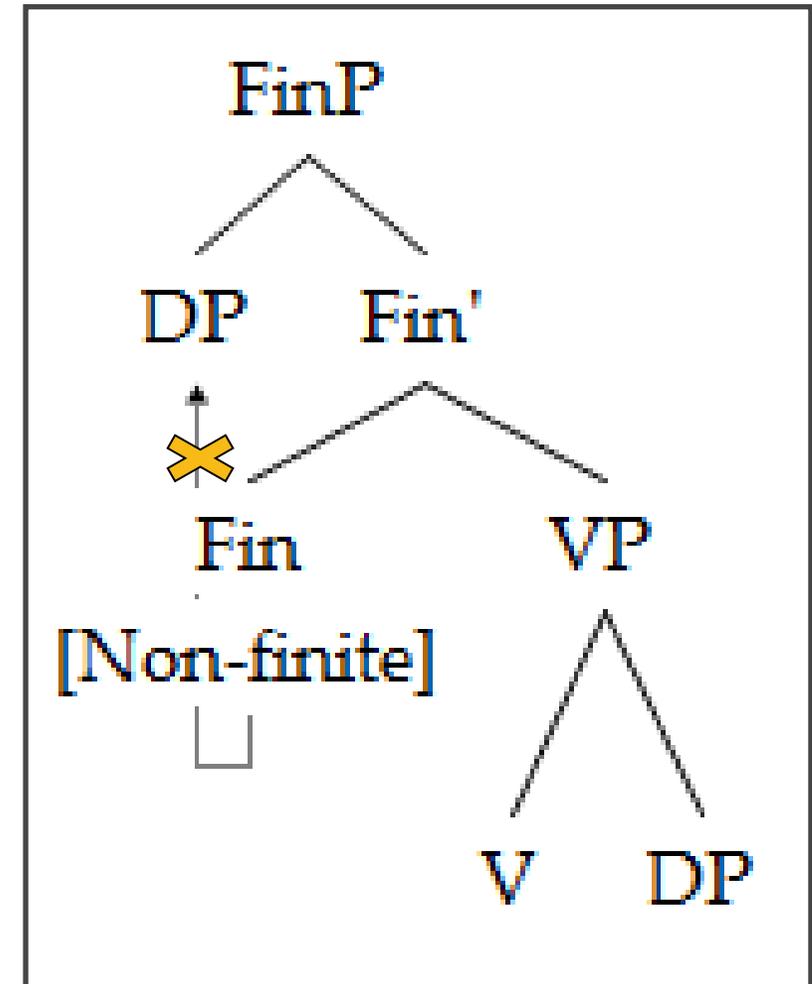
Case assignment

(2)



Assigns Nom Case to DP

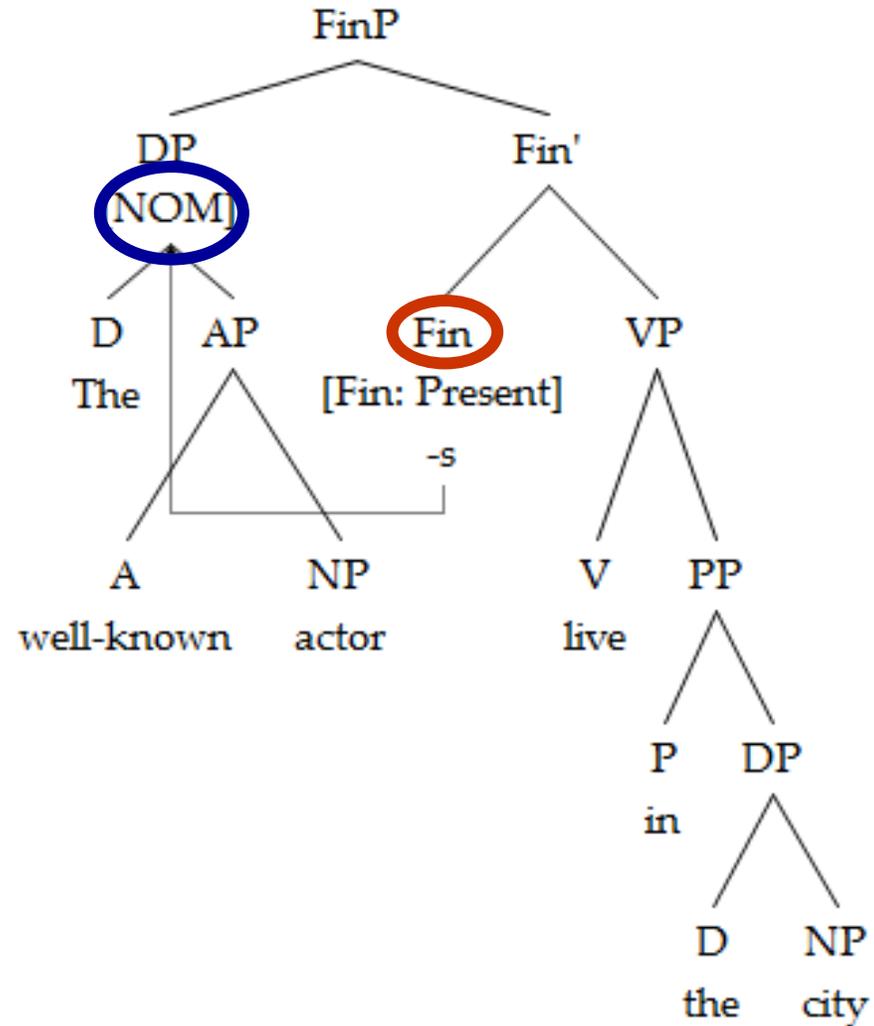
(3)



Does not assign Nom Case to DP

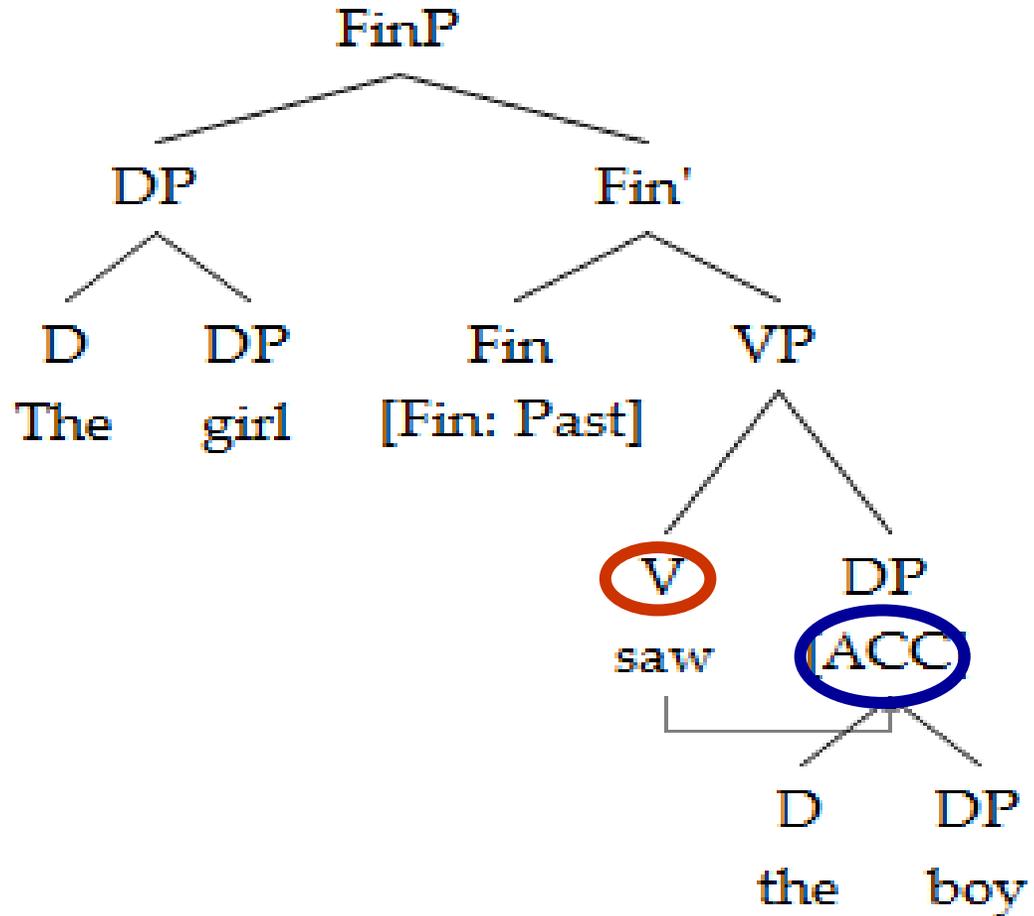
Nom. Case assignment

(4)



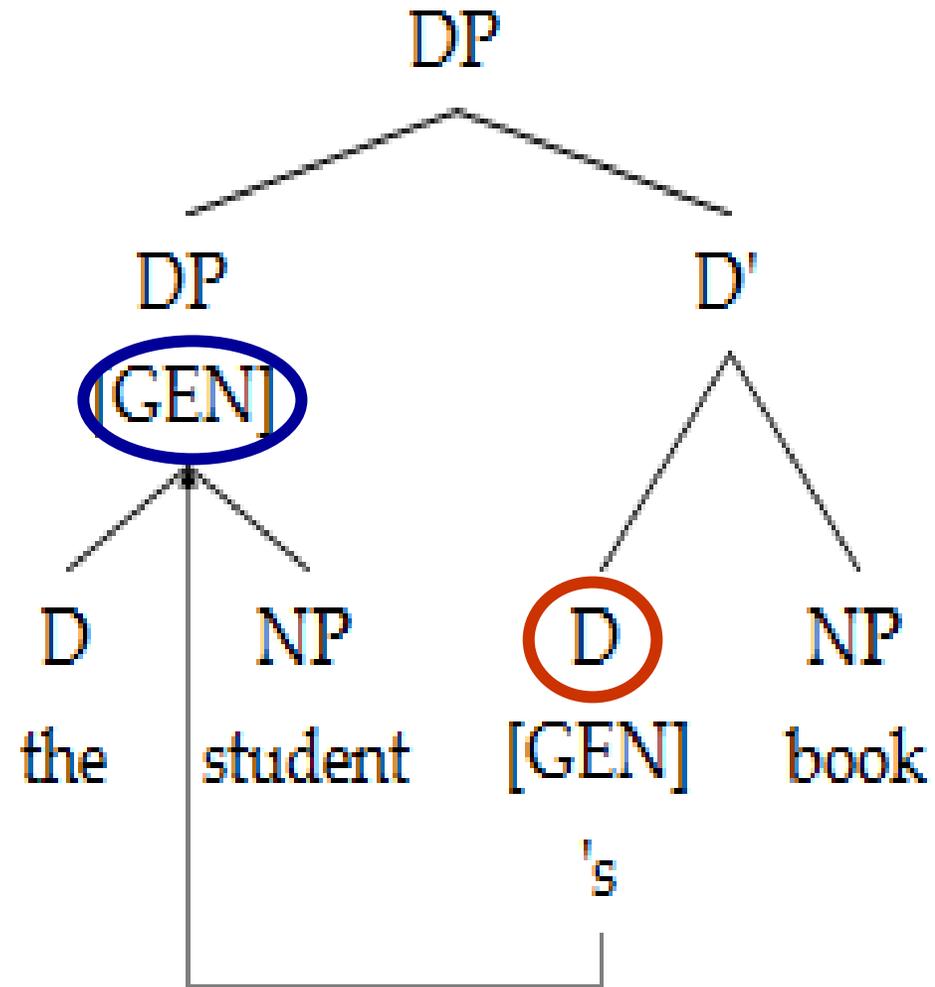
Acc. Case assignment

(5)



Gen. Case assignment

(6)





ECM constructions

Case Theory in GB / MP

PUZZLING DISTRIBUTION OF LEXICAL NP SUBJECTS OF INFINITIVAL CLAUSES

- (7) a. Leo decided [(**Lina/himself*) to leave].
b. Leo believed [Lina to be a genius].
c. Leo decided [for Lina to leave].
d. For Leo to win would be great.
e. **Leo to win would be great.*

Case Theory in GB / MP

PUZZLING DISTRIBUTION OF LEXICAL NP SUBJECTS OF INFINITIVAL CLAUSES

decide type verbs limit the lexical subject to PRO

believe type verbs permit Case assignment
across a non-finite clause boundary.

**Case Theory in
GB / MP**

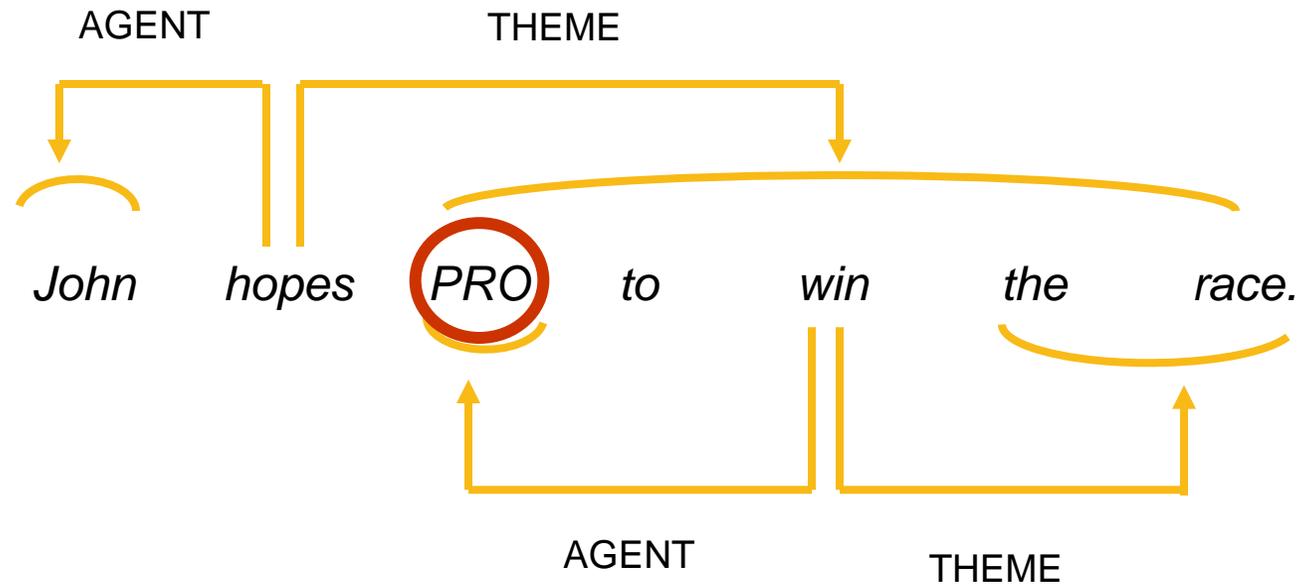
**PUZZLING DISTRIBUTION OF LEXICAL NP
SUBJECTS OF INFINITIVAL CLAUSES**

(8)

a. Mary believed/considered/reported [John/*PRO
to have loved her].

b. Mary tried/intended/managed/desired
[*John/PRO to go abroad].

(9)



The *hope* construction has an empty subject PRO in the infinitival clause.

The *hope* construction is known as a **control construction**.

CASE ASSIGNMENT BY HEADS

SUMMARY



Different
res

ass

Finite clause subjects need
to be assigned nominative

Merge with:	Case assigned:	Examples:
[V], [P]	accusative	<i>him, her, Mary, the man</i>
[Fin] ([T], [I])	nominative	<i>he, she, Mary, the man</i>
[Non-finite]	no case	PRO

assigned genitive case by
's [GEN]

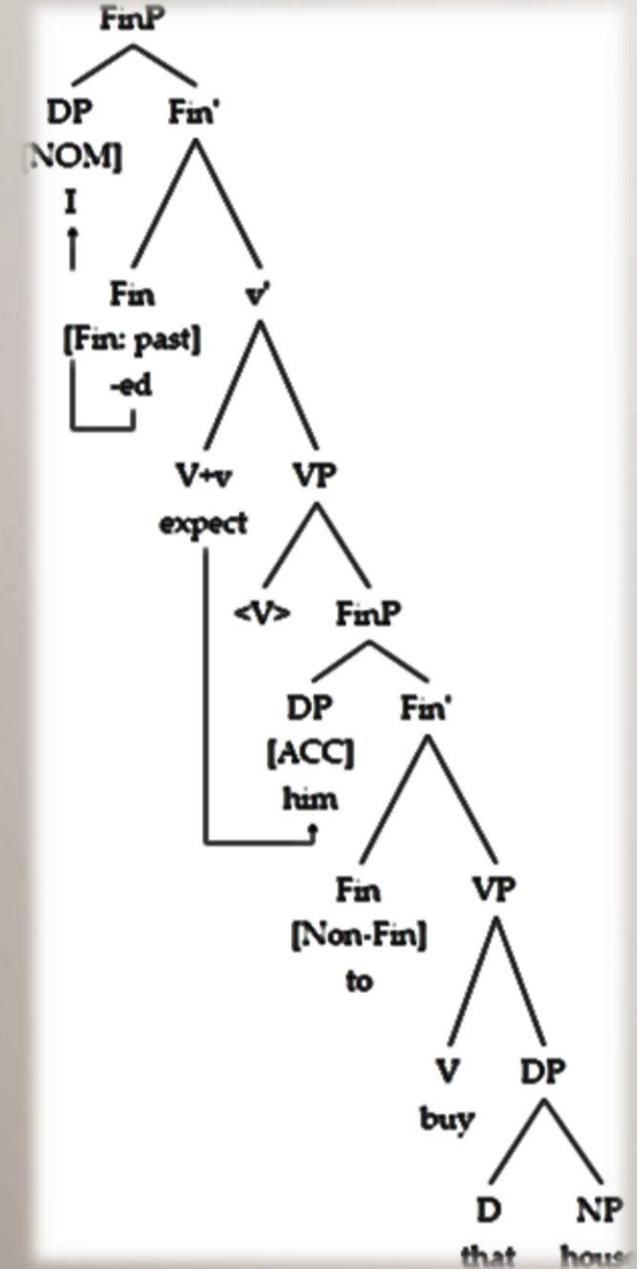
**Case Theory in
GB / MP**

**PUZZLING DISTRIBUTION OF LEXICAL NP
SUBJECTS OF INFINITIVAL CLAUSES**

- (10) a. I saw [her kissing my boyfriend].
b. I expected [him to buy that house].
c. The police officer made [him tell the truth].
d. They had [her come and clean the house].

EXCEPTIONAL CASE MARKING

(11)



ECM

Exceptional Case Marking

Example:

*I wanted [him to make me understand
that puzzle]*

One needs to adopt as much structure for a particular language as this language provides evidence for.
(Koeneman and Zeijlstra 2017)

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