

Today

L2 Syntax Lecture 7: Case

Robert Truswell

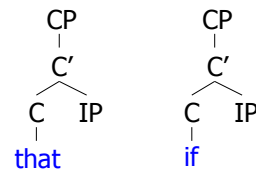
- Recap on CPs and DPs
- Case: differentiating subject and object
- Case in English
- Case in other languages

Today's reading

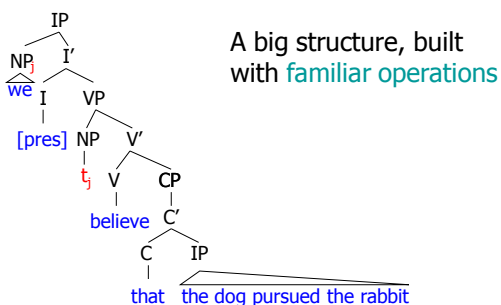
- Santorini & Kroch, ch.8 (up to and including "Case features" section)
- <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~beatrice/syntax-textbook/ch8.html>
- Links from WebCT and from the course website.

Complex Sentences

1. We believe **that** the dog pursued the rabbit
2. They wonder **if** he left



Building a complex sentence

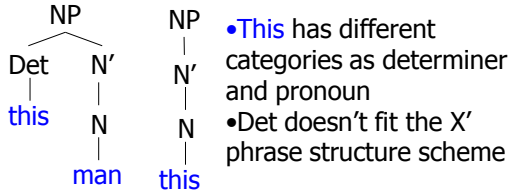


A closer look at determiners

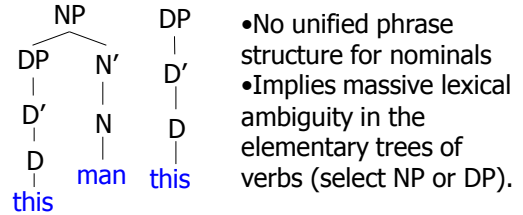
Determiners can appear

- pre-nominally
 - the man, a dog
- pro-nominally
 - we, you, they, this, that, them
- some do both
 - we Brits, this dog, them bones
- and some noun phrases don't need them
 - rice, sand, dogs

One possible solution



Another possible solution

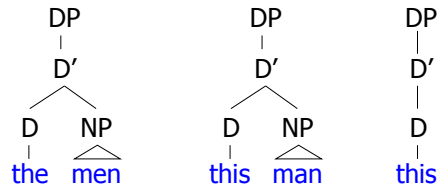


A better solution

- Determiners are a third **functional head**
- Some take an NP complement
 - this gets you the **pre-nominals**
- Some don't take a complement
 - this gets you the **pro-nominals**

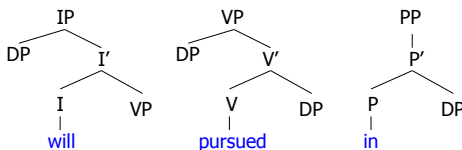
The things we call "noun phrases" are in fact **Determiner Phrases (DPs)**, which may contain an NP

Different Ds



All substitute into DP substitution nodes

Accommodating DPs

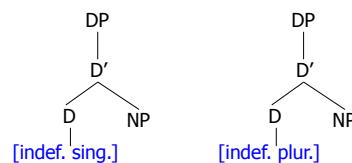


Silent determiners

What about

- They ate **rice**
- **Dogs** pursue **cats**

These are DPs with a **silent D**



The sentence/noun phrase parallel

[_{IP} The man visited]

[_{DP} The man's visit]

(1) [_{DP} He] upset me

(2) [_{DP} The man] upset me

(3) [_{DP} The man's visit] upset me

The sentence/noun phrase parallel

[_{IP} The man visited]

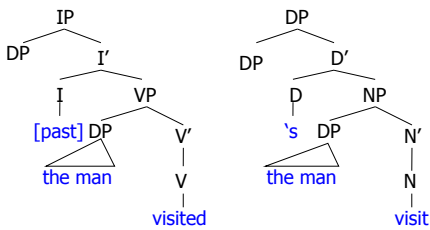
[_{DP} The man's visit]

Both describe similar situations

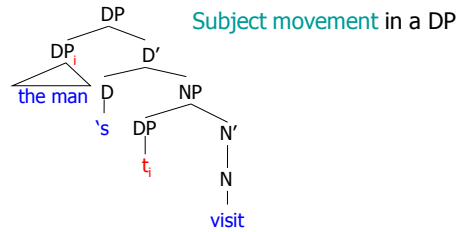
- An **event** of "visiting"
- The **Agent** of this event is *the man*

These should have the same type of structure

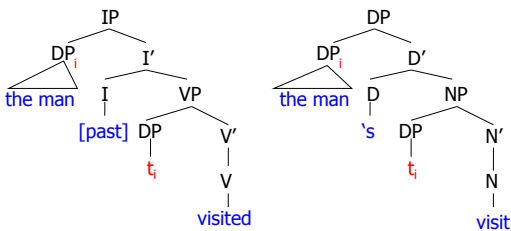
The sentence/noun phrase parallel



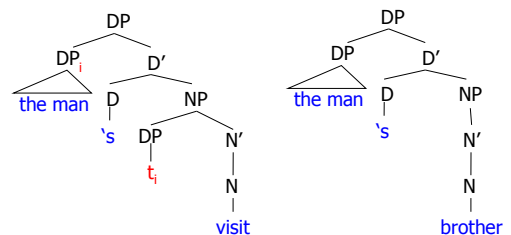
The sentence/noun phrase parallel



The sentence/noun phrase parallel



Event nominals and object nominals



DPs: a summary

- Some pronouns do dual duty as determiners
- We want a uniform treatment of “noun phrases,” whether pronouns or full NPs
- Do this by introducing a new functional head: D
- D projects a DP
- Some varieties of D take a complement NP

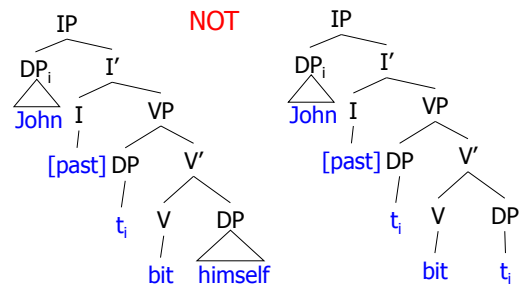
So where are we?

- Generate an **infinite set of strings** based on a **finite set of rules** operating over **constituents**
- Better conception of sentence and noun phrase structure (**CP, IP, DP**)
- **Parallels** between structure of **sentences** and **noun phrases**

Still to do

- Major outstanding problems are all to do with **movement**
- Very powerful tool for **rearranging constituents**
- Need to understand **reasons why constituents move**
- Need to understand **when movement is and isn't possible**

An example



The proposal in brief

- A lot of movement relates positions where **thematic roles** are assigned to positions where **case** is assigned.
- One instance of movement on the previous slide was illegitimate because it didn't match this description

Case marking in English

1. The man bit the dog
 2. The dog bit the man
 3. **He** bit it
 4. It bit **him**
- 3rd person male pronoun:
- **he** when **subject**
 - **him** when **object**

Case marking on English pronouns

Subject form	Object form
I	me
you	you
he, she, it	him, her, it
we	us
you	you
they	them
Nominative	Accusative

Case marking in English: Genitive

Nominative = subject

Accusative = object

Genitive = Subject of DP

1. I have a dog. **My** dog ...
2. He has a cat. **His** cat ...
3. They have money. **Their** money
4. The man has a house. **The man's** house

Case marking on English pronouns

Nominative	Accusative	Genitive
I	me	my
you	you	your
he, she, it	him, her, it	his, her, its
we	us	our
you	you	your
they	them	their

Examples

She chased him

NOM. **ACC.**

They slept

NOM.

It burned them

NOM. **ACC.**

We sell it to them

NOM. **ACC.** **ACC.**

Examples for full noun phrases

The woman chased the man

NOM. **ACC.**

The cows slept

NOM.

The sun burned the Scottish tourists

NOM. **ACC.**

The lecturers sell exam papers to students

NOM. **ACC.** **ACC.**

Summary so far

- English DPs are marked for **case** (Nominative, Accusative, Genitive)
 - Nominative: subject of tensed sentence
 - Genitive: subject of DP
 - Accusative: Objects and everything else
- This usually doesn't alter the surface form (only pronouns show case in English)
- Other languages have much richer case systems

Case marking in German

- **der** Mann **beisst** **den** Hund
the.NOM man bites the.ACC dog
"the man bites the dog"
- **der** Hund **beisst** **den** Mann
the.NOM dog bites the.ACC man
"the dog bites the man"

Case marking in German

- **den** Hund **beisst** **der** Mann
the.ACC dog bites the.NOM man
"the man bites the dog"
- **den** Mann **beisst** **der** Hund
the.ACC man bites the.NOM dog
"the dog bites the man"

Case marking in German

German has four cases:

Nominative: subjects

Accusative: most direct objects

Dative: indirect objects, direct objects of some verbs, objects of prepositions

Genitive: possessors, direct objects of some verbs

The forms of all DPs (not just pronouns) depend on case, gender, and number

More complex systems

- There are languages with many more cases (up to about 20)
- But probably every language you know contains the same cases (**Nominative**, **Accusative**, **Genitive**) as a core, and we will concentrate on these
- There is another common system (based around **Ergative** and **Absolutive** cases), but we won't cover that in this course.

Case and thematic roles

Cases sometimes look like thematic roles

e.g., subjects tend to be agents, objects tend to be themes

She thumped him
NOM. ACC.
AGENT THEME

Case and thematic roles

Cases sometimes look like thematic roles

Goal θ -role: place to which the Theme moves

Dative case: often assigned to noun phrases bearing the Goal θ -role

Location θ -role: place where action is situated

Locative case: assigned to noun phrases bearing the Location θ -role

But they aren't identical

The difference between case and thematic role

He melted the ice
 NOM. ACC.
 AGENT THEME

The ice melted
 NOM.
 THEME

The ice was melted by him
 NOM. ACC.
 THEME AGENT

The difference between case and thematic role

It seems he melted the ice
 NOM. NOM. ACC.
 ? AGENT THEME

He seemed to melt the ice
 NOM. ACC.
 AGENT(??) THEME

Case and Grammatical Function

- Case marks grammatical function
 - Subject takes **Nominative** case
 - Subject of DP takes **Genitive** case
 - Object and everything else takes **Accusative** case
- Structures like passives disrupt the relationship between θ -role and grammatical function

Case assignment

- This suggests that the distribution of Nominative, Accusative, and Genitive is based on syntactic structure (**structural case**)
- Other cases (Locative, Ablative, etc.) are closely tied to θ -role (**inherent case**)

Case on objects

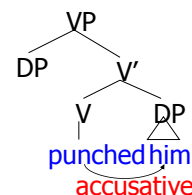
A clue from German: case of objects differs according to verb

- **die** Frau unterstützen
 the.ACC woman support
 "to support the woman"
- **der** Frau helfen
 the.DAT woman help
 "to help the woman"

Verbs **assign case** to their complements

Assigning Accusative case in English

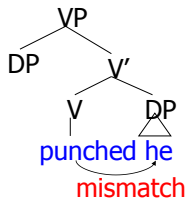
Verbs in English assign Accusative case to their complements



Object must appear in Accusative form

Assigning Accusative case in English

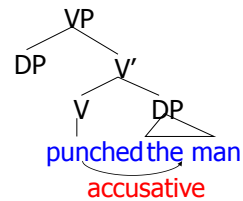
Verbs in English assign Accusative case to their complements



Object must appear in Accusative form

Assigning Accusative case in English

Verbs in English assign Accusative case to their complements



Accusative case assigned in Head-Comp configuration

P also assigns Accusative case

- I walked [_{PP} towards him]
- *I walked [_{PP} towards he]
- I am proud [_{PP} of him]
- *I am proud [_{PP} of he]

Accusative case also assigned in Head-Comp configuration.

Accusative case assignment: summary

- Accusative case assigned by V and P
- Head-Complement configuration
- Object DP must have correct case
- Mismatch causes ungrammaticality
 - * I punched he
 - * I am proud of he

Nominative case assignment

Subjects must appear in Nominative case

- I punched him
- *Me punched him

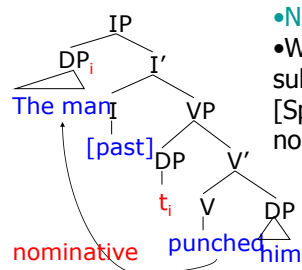
How is Nominative case assigned?

Two possibilities:

- V also assigns Nominative case
- I assigns Nominative case

Could V assign nominative?

- Option 1: V assigns NOM to DP in [Spec, IP]

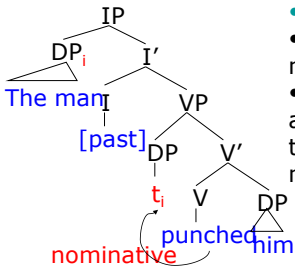


• Non-local

• Why would V wait until subject has moved to [Spec, IP] to assign it nominative?

Could V assign nominative?

- Option 2: V assigns NOM to DP in [Spec, VP]



- Local, but:
- Why would the subject move to [Spec, IP]?
- It's not always the argument in [Spec, VP] that receives nominative Case

Could V assign nominative?

- Option 2: V assigns NOM to DP in [Spec, VP]

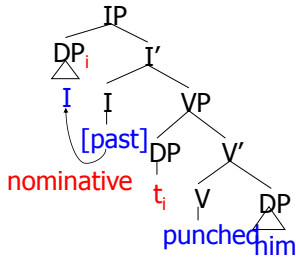
• The man_i [_{t_i} punched him]
 NOM ACC
 AGENT THEME

• He_i [was punched t_i]
 NOM THEME

- More on this next time

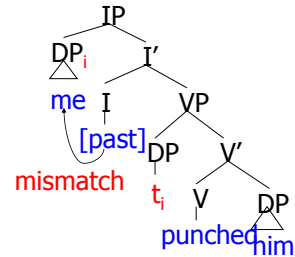
Nominative case assignment

I assigns Nominative case



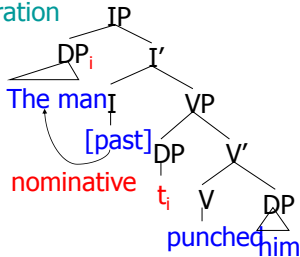
Nominative case assignment

I assigns Nominative case



Nominative case assignment

Nominative assigned in Head-Specifier configuration



Nominative case assignment: summary

- Nominative case assigned by I
- Head-Specifier configuration
- Subject DP must have correct case
- Mismatch causes ungrammaticality
 * me punched him

The claim (next lecture)

- **Thematic roles** are assigned where DPs originally substitute in to the tree (**base positions**)
- **Case** is assigned in positions where DPs end up **after any movement**

Case: a summary

- Case is a way to mark grammatical function
 - subject, direct object, subject of DP, ...
- Accusative Case is assigned by V and P to their complements
- Nominative Case is assigned by I to its specifier
- Case and θ -role are vaguely related
 - but passives disrupt the relationship between θ -role and grammatical function
 - Inherent cases are closer to θ -role than structural cases (Nom, Acc, Gen)

Next

Monday's lecture:

- explaining movement in terms of case and thematic roles