

## EPP versus Case

### 1 What does Case do?

- Determine the morphological shape of argument DPs
  - morphological case

- Regulate the distribution of overt DPs
  - abstract case

Three Stages in the use of Case:

- (1) Stage 1: Lecture on Government and Binding onwards

The Extended Case Filter:  $*[_{NP} \alpha]$  if  $\alpha$  has no Case and  $\alpha$  contains a phonetic matrix or is a variable. (Chomsky (1981):175)

- a. Overt DPs are defective. They need to be case licensed.
- b. Particular heads do case-licensing in particular configurations.
- c. Case is the motivation for movement. If a DP needs case, it moves to a location where it can get case. If such a movement is illegal or there is no such location, the structure is ungrammatical.

- (2) Stage 2: Minimalist Inquiries (Chomsky (1998), Chomsky (1999))

- a. Overt DPs are defective. They need to be case licensed.
- b. Particular heads do case-licensing via Agree.
- c. Case is not the motivation for movement (though in principle it could be).
- d. Movement is motivated by independent EPP features.

Implicit assumption made in Stages 1 and 2: even though the abstract case feature does not need to have an overt realization, if there is overt realization of case, it is determined by the abstract case feature.

Despite their differences, Stage 1 and Stage 2 require that DPs need to be case-licensed. If the DP is not case-licensed, the structure containing it crashes.

Classic cases explained by Case Licensing:

- (3) Distribution of overt subjects in infinitival clauses: case is taken to not be generally available in the [Spec,TP] of a non-finite clause.

- a. \*It is unfortunate John to be sick.  
(It is unfortunate for John to be sick.)
- b. \*John to be sick is unfortunate.  
(For John to be sick is unfortunate.)
- c. \*John tried Bill to leave.  
(John wants Bill to leave/John believes Mary to be innocent.)
- d. John believes [Mary to be innocent].  
Mary<sub>i</sub> is believed [t<sub>i</sub> to be innocent].  
\*It is believed [Mary to be innocent].

The idea is that PRO (the null pronoun that often appears in the subjects of infinitival clauses) not being an overt DP does not require case. A further assumption that is needed is that PRO cannot be governed. Together these assumptions derive to a significant extent the distribution of PRO.

- (4) Complements of A/N:
  - a. John is fond \*(of) olives.
  - b. Kate is the queen \*(of) Bethesda.
- (5) Location of Overt DPs:
  - a. [My computer]<sub>i</sub> was stolen t<sub>i</sub>.
  - b. Heather<sub>i</sub> appeared t<sub>i</sub> in Bill's dream.
  - c. \*John<sub>i</sub> seems that t<sub>i</sub> is sick.

## 2 Stage 3: Case is not in the Syntax

### 2.1 Abstract Case is not enough

Abstract Case does not directly determine Morphological Case (Marantz (1991), McFadden (2004), Bobaljik (2005)). It is not clear that given syntactic structure, we need an abstract mediating feature (but see Legate (2008) who argues for the continued relevance of abstract case for the realization of morphological case).

### 2.2 Getting rid of DP Licensing via Case

Abstract Case does not regulate the licensing or location of Overt DPs. (McFadden (2004))

- (6) a. Issues of location are determined by EPP considerations.
- b. 'Case Licensing' reduces to unrelated properties regulating:
  - i. the distribution of overt and covert complementizers
  - ii. conditions on the associate of *it*: *it* needs a CP associate.

(7) Distribution of Complementizers

- a. I would like (for) him to buy the book.
- b. I believe (that) he bought the book.
- c. [\* (For) him to buy the book] would be preferable.
- d. [\* (That) he bought the book] was unexpected.

idea: (7c) needs *for* not for case reasons but for whatever reason (7d) requires *that*.

(8) *seem* only takes a non-finite TP complement.

- a. \*It seems [for John to be sick].  
→ subcategorization of *seem* is not satisfied, control infinitivals have to be CPs
- b. \*It seems [PRO to be on edge lately].  
→ subcategorization of *seem* is not satisfied
- c. \*It seems [John to be sick].  
→ subcategorization of *seem* is satisfied, but *it* cannot have a TP associate

(Unlike *believed/likely*, the clausal complement of *seem* cannot appear in subject position.)

(9) *likely* can take both non-finite CPs and TPs.

- a. It is likely [for John to win].  
→ *it* has CP associate
- b. \*It is likely [John to win].  
→ *it* needs CP associate, has TP associate
- c. [For John to win] is likely.  
→ complement of *likely* can raise to subject position
- d. \*[John to win] is likely.  
→ complement of *likely* can raise to subject position, but then overt C is needed
- e. John<sub>i</sub> is likely [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> to win].  
→ TP can't raise. Hence its subject is available for raising.

What blocks '\*It is likely [PRO to win]'

(10) *unfortunate* takes only CPs.

- a. It is unfortunate [for John to have to leave].  
→ *it* has CP associate
- b. \*It is unfortunate [John to leave so early].  
→ *it* needs CP associate, has TP associate  
(Question: what rules out a null C<sup>0</sup> CP structure as in *It is unfortunate (that) John left so early.?*)
- c. It is unfortunate [PRO to leave so early].  
→ *it* has CP associate, control infinitivals have to be CPs
- d. [For John to have to leave] is unfortunate.  
→ complement of *unfortunate* can raise to subject position
- e. \*[John to win] is unfortunate.  
→ complement of *unfortunate* can raise to subject position, but then overt C is needed

- f. [PRO to have to leave so early] is unfortunate.  
→ control complement of *unfortunate* can raise to subject position
  - g. \*There is unfortunate to be a party tonight.  
→ *unfortunate* can only take infinitival CP complements.
- (11) *believe* takes infinitival TPs and not infinitival CPs:
- a. Gina believes Ron to be innocent.  
→ *believe* has TP complement.
  - b. \*Gina believes for Ron to be innocent.  
→ *believe* has CP complement
  - c. Ron<sub>i</sub> is believed [<sub>i</sub> to be innocent].  
→ *believed* has TP complement.
  - d. \*It is believed [(for) Ron to be innocent].  
→ if complement is TP, *it* has wrong associate.  
→ if complement is CP, *believed* has CP complement
  - e. \*It is believed [PRO to be innocent].  
→ PRO needs CP, *believed* cannot handle a CP.

## 2.3 The Essential Contrasts

- (12) *it* can never have an infinitival associate with an overt subject without a *for*:
- a. \*It seems [(for) John to win].
  - b. It is likely [\* (for) John to win].<sup>1</sup>
  - c. It is unfortunate [\* (for) John to have to leave so early].
  - d. \*It is believed [(for) John to win].
- (13) possibility of *for*-less infinitival with overt subject depends upon embedding predicate:
- a. Jeremy believes [(for) Mary to be innocent]./\*Jeremy believes [PRO to be innocent].
  - b. Jeremy wants [(for) Mary to win]./Jeremy wants [PRO to win].
  - c. \*Jeremy tried [(for) Mary to win]/Jeremy tried [PRO to win].
- (14) *it* can have a PRO-subject infinitival associate depending upon the matrix predicate:
- a. \*It seems [PRO to win].
  - b. \*It is likely [PRO to win].
  - c. It is unfortunate [PRO to have to leave so early].
  - d. \*It is believed [PRO to win].
- explanation probably lies in the domain of implicit arguments and control

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<sup>1</sup>A more natural example perhaps: *If no cars are present, it is twice as likely for there to be no cars at the next time instant as it is for there to be one car.*

## 2.4 Challenges for Case Theory

### Mysterious Licensors

- (15) a. John remembered (\*for) Frank buying the beer.  
b. (\*For) Frank buying the beer was unexpected.  
c. (\*For) Frank being too sick to move, John had to buy the beer.

### Default Case

- (16) Me and John are going to the store.

### Pseudo-Passives

- (17) [This bed]<sub>i</sub> has been slept in t<sub>i</sub>.

## References

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