Movement: a recap. Raising. D-structure and Theta Theory, S-structure and Case Theory
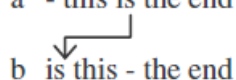
1   Movement – a recap

- Movement: a syntactic operation, the **displacement** of a constituent (phrase) within the sentence. We've already mentioned movement in connection with **constituency tests**: elements of the sentence that can be moved together form one constituent.
- **Two levels** of description of the sentence structure:
    - o   The structure of the sentence before movement takes place = a **D-structure**
    - o   The structure after movement = an **S-structure**
      ('D' and the 'S' originally stood for *deep* and *surface*)
- Based on the **direction** of the movement we have
    - o   leftward movement
    - o   rightward movement

- **Types of movement** we discussed so far**:**
    - o   passivisation
    - o   *wh*-movement
    - o   subject-auxiliary inversion in *yes-no* questions
    - o   extraposition
    - o   topicalisation

→ Identify the type of movement for each of the sentences in (1)–(5), and define for each whether it's a rightward or a leftward movement:

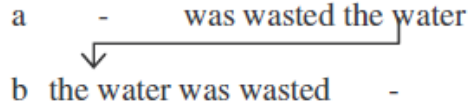**1)** _____

(1) *Is this the end?*

a - this is the end

b is this - the end

2) _____

(2) *The water was wasted.*

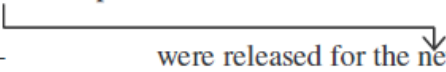a   -   was wasted the water

b the water was wasted   -

3) _____

(3) *What did they find?*

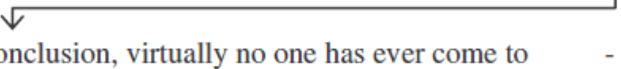what did they find –
∧_____|

4) _____

(4) *The plans were released for the new car park.*

a the plans for the new car park were released   –

b the plans   –   were released for the new car park

5) _____

(5) *This conclusion, virtually no one has ever come to.*

a   -   virtually no one has ever come to this conclusion

b this conclusion, virtually no one has ever come to   -

- • + A further type of movement is called **raising**:

6) Raising: a leftward movement **from a finite (= tensed) embedded (subordinate) clause to the main (or matrix)** clause (alárendelt mondatból a főmondatba)

- • In (6a), ***prices*** is the subject of a finite (= tensed) embedded (subordinate) clause [S2].
- • In (6b), ***prices*** became the subject of the main (or matrix) clause [S1]:

(6) a. [$_{S1}$ *It appears/seems* [$_{S2}$ *that* ***prices*** *are increasing*]].
    b. [$_{S1}$ ***Prices*** *appear/seem* [$_{S2}$ *to be increasing*]].

➔ *appear* and *seem* are '**raising-to-subject' verbs**: they allow for the raising of
    - the subject of a finite embedded (or subordinate) clause
    - into the subject position of the main (or matrix) clause

There are ***raising adjectives*** as well, like e.g. *likely* and *certain*:

(7) a. [$_{S1}$ *It is likely that* [$_{S2}$ ***Fred*** *will leave*]].
    b. [$_{S1}$ ***Fred*** *is likely* [$_{S2}$ *to leave*]].

➔ *believe* (and also, e.g., *prove*) are '**raising-to-object' verbs**: they allow for the raising of
    - the subject of a finite embedded clause
    - into the object position of the main clause:

(8) a. *[S1 I believe [S2 that **he** is a highly courageous man]].* → in (8a), **he** is the subject of a finite
embedded clause

b. *[S1 I believe **him** [S2 to be a highly courageous man]].* → in (8b), **he** became **him**, and became
the object of the main clause

> Construct one pair of sentences illustrating the phenomenon of raising with
> a *raising-to-subject* verb or adjective, and one pair with a *raising-to-object* verb.

- raising can also happen out of a number of clauses (from a deeply embedded clause):

(9)

a it seems [it is believed [it is unlikely [that Stan will steal diamonds]]]

b [e] seems [to be believed [to be unlikely [Stan to steal diamonds]]]

c Stan₁ seems [to be believed [to be unlikely [t₁ to steal diamonds]]]

2   D-structure and S-structure

- **D-structure** = the structure of the sentence before movement takes place
  - **Theta-role** (semantic role/thematic role) **assignment to arguments** happens at D-structure

- **S-structure** = the structure after movement
  - **Case assignment to arguments (nominative/accusative)** happens at S-structure

2.1   D-structure and Theta-theory

- The motivation behind movement:
There may be different principles that operate at the D-structure level and the S-structure level, and
  - a D-structure principle may require a constituent X to occupy a certain position,
  - an S-structure principle may require X to occupy a certain position,
  - and if these two positions are not the same then X will have to **move** from its D-structure position to the required S-structure position.

- A D-structure principle:

(10) **The Theta Criterion:** A theta-role must be assigned to one and only one argument, and an argument must bear one and only one theta-role.

- **Theta-role assignment to arguments** happens at the level of D-structure, and here is why we assume that:

- D-structure positions are more basic than S-structure positions: e.g., in a passive sentence, what sits in the subject position at S-structure is interpreted as the object of the verb and hence is assumed to occupy the object position at D-structure:

(11)   a.   S-structure: ***Ken*** *was fired*

↑

   b.   D-structure: *was fired* ***Ken***

- In (12), we have two sentences, S1 (*Ken is supposed*) and S2 (*to be fired*), and S2 is embedded to S1:

(12)   S-structure: [$_{S1}$ ***Ken*** *is supposed* [$_{S2}$ *to be fired*]]

- In (12), the subject of S1 is Ken, but we have the impression that Ken somehow (also) belongs to the verb *fired*

- So in D-structure (13), Ken is the object of S2:

(13)   D-structure: [$_{S2}$ *is supposed* [$_{S2}$ *to be fired* ***Ken***]]

→ (13) is the basic structure and (12) is derived from (13) (with *Ken* moving)

- But what is the theta-role (thematic role/semantic role) of *Ken* in the above sentences?

→ It has the PATIENT theta-role in all these sentences (even in (11a) and in (12)): the theta-role that it received from the verb **'fire'** in the D-structures (11b) and (13)
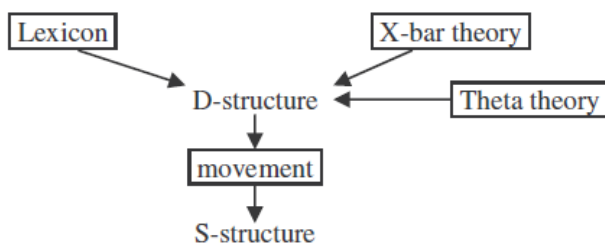   → the verb *suppose* has no effect on the theta-role of *Ken*

→ **Moved elements preserve their theta-role** (the semantic role that they receive from the verb they belong to at D-structure)

- So we say that **theta-role assignment happens at the level of D-structure**, and that D-structure **is a pure representation of thematic relations**

(14)   **The Theta Criterion:** A theta-role must be assigned to one and only one argument, and an argument must bear one and only one theta-role.

(15)

(Besides the Theta Criterion, Theta-theory involves sume further principles as well, cf. pp. 105-110 of the textbook)

4   S-structure and Case Theory

- **Case assignment** happens at the level of the S-structure.

- There are two notions of case, which partly overlap: morphological case and abstract Case.

1) Morphological case:
  o So far, we have been concerned with the concept of morphological case and have said that certain **personal pronouns have different case forms** in English:
    - nominative (alanyeset, *he*, *she*, *I, we*) is the case for subjects and
    - accusative (tárgyeset, *him*, *her*, *me* and *us*) is the case for direct and indirect objects

  o We are going to do some refinement: accusative is also the case for pronouns after prepositions in English. We'll say that
  - if a pronoun is the subject of a finite (tensed) clause it will be in the ***nominative*** case,
  - anywhere else it will be in the *accusative* case:

(16)   a. ***He*** has helped *her*
        b. ***I*** consider *him* [to be unkind **to** *us*]

2) Abstract Case:
We extend the notion of case to any DP and we'll say that in syntax, at an abstract level of description, not only the above personal pronouns but **every DP has a Case (either nominative or accusative)**, even when the distinction is morphologically not visible (with nouns and proper nouns it's not visible in English, but it is visible in other languages as, e.g., Latin, German, Russian or Hungarian etc. (*kalács – kalácsot; Szabolcs - Szabolcsot*). More formally, this requirement is described by a principle which is called the Case Filter:

(17) **The Case Filter: All DPs must be assigned Case.**

  o Subjects of finite clauses will be in the ***nominative Case*** (18), while anywhere else a DP will be in the *accusative Case* (19), (20) even when the distinction is morphologically not visible in English (*Ken* or *my husband* have the same form but different Cases in these sentences):

(18)   ***He/Ken/my husband*** *was fired.* → *He/Ken/my husband*: subject   → nominative Case
(19)   *The boss fired him/Ken/my husband*   → *him/Ken/my husband*: direct object → accusative Case
(20)   *This letter is* **for** *him/Ken/my husband* → *him/Ken/my husband*: complement of a preposition
                                                                      → accusative Case

  o The Case Filter is a principle that operates at the S-structure level: it is the S-structure position, and not the D-structure position, that determines whether a pronoun/DP will be in the nominative or in the accusative. Here is why we assume that:

    ▪ In the previous section we saw that in passive sentences, the argument that sits in the subject position at S-structure occupies the object position at D-structure:

(21)   a. D-structure: *was fired* **Ken**   (**Ken** = direct object)
          → *Ken* moves to subject position, so we get (21b):
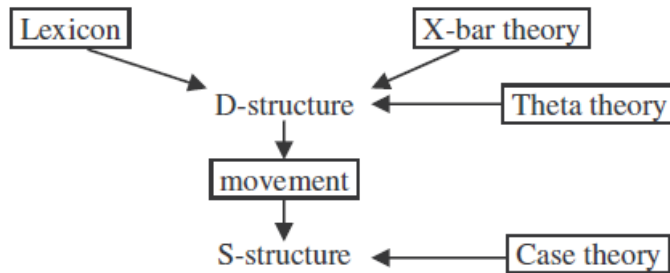   b. S-structure: **Ken** *was fired*   (**Ken** = subject)

    ▪ However, subjects of passive sentences are in the nominative case (cf. (18), (22)) (and not in the accusative, even if they are direct objects in D-structure):

(22)   **He** *was fired*
         (*Him was fired; *Was fired him)

➔ **What counts for the purposes of Case assignment** is not the position of the argument in the D-structure but its **position in the S-structure**: **DP-s receive a case (nominative/accusative) at S-structure**

(23) **The Case Filter: All DPs must be assigned Case.**

(24)

Exercise 5

Compare the grammatical functions and theta roles of the DPs in the pairs of sentences below. Comment on changes in either.

(1)   a Peter gave Mary flowers.
        b Peter gave flowers to Mary.

(2)   a The postman delivered the letters.
        b The letters were delivered.

(4)   a Peter noticed the scar on her ankle.
        b The scar on her ankle appeared small.

(5)   a Mary is easy to please.
        b Mary tries to please everybody.

(6)   a Who do you want to meet?
        b Who do you want to help?