Verb phrases 2.

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Case, movement, and levels of representation

First, one must differentiate between morphological case and abstract Case. Abstract Case *can* appear as morphological case (in English, it only does on certain pronouns). English has two Cases: Nominative and Accusative.

CASE FILTER: Every overt DP must be assigned Case. Nominative Case is assigned by the finite inflection to its subject. Accusative is assigned by prepositions to their complements or by an agentive light verb.

BURZIO'S GENERALISATION: verbs that assign no θ–role to their subject cannot assign Case to their object. However, restrictions on θ–role assignment and the Case Filter cannot apply at the same time. We need two levels of representation: θ–roles are assigned at *d–structure* and the Case Filter works at *s–structure*. The latter is created from the former by moving constituents.

MOVE α: move anything anywhere. We have a very general movement operation and we have independent devices to constrain what it can do.

STRUCTURE PRESERVATION PRINCIPLE: no movement can alter the basic X-bar nature of any structure. Movement also leaves a trace coindexed with the moved element.

Transitive verbs

Transitives also involve light verbs as their Theme argument sits in the specifier of the VP. This is also supported by data from passivisation. Note that passive structures conform to Burzio's generalisation.

(1)   a.   Ann painted a picture.
       b.   A picture was painted.

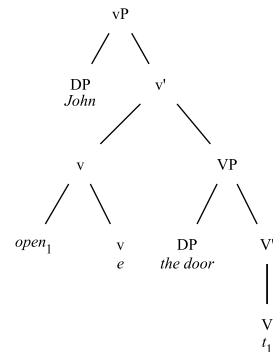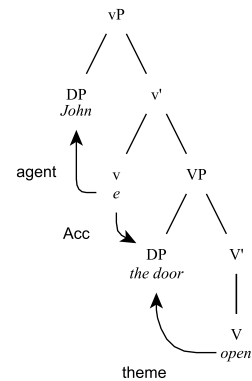Thus, we can come up with a structure similar to ergatives:

(2)   [$_{vP}$ [$_{DP}$ Ann] [$_{v'}$ *e* [$_{VP}$ [$_{DP}$ a picture] [$_{V'}$ paint]]]]

Multiple light verbs

What happens in (3)? There is an Agent and an Experiencer argument.

(3)   Joan upset the kids.

According to the UTAH, each of these gets its θ–role in the specifier of a vP; thus, there will be two vP-s on top of each other. The thematic verb first moves to the lower then to the higher one. Note that it seems that the VP "selects" the vP-s above it unlike other heads and complements. Accordingly, they are called the *extended projections* of the thematic verb. However, there is a hierarchical order among θ–roles:

(4)   Agent > Experiencer > Theme

Intransitive (unergative) verbs

They look like unaccusatives at first glance, but they are actually not.

(5)   a.   The man arrived.
        b.   The man smiled.
        c.   There arrived a man.
        d.   *There smiled a man.

First, the subject of (5-b) is not a Theme, but an Experiencer. Also (5-b) can appear with a *cognate object*.

(6)   a.   She smiled a happy smile.
        b.   *She arrived a swift arrival.

Therefore the experiencer is in the specifier of a vP at d–structure.

(7)   [$_{vP}$ [$_{DP}$ she] [$_{v'}$ e [$_{VP}$ smile]]]

Multiple complement verbs

Based on the previous discussion , it can be argued that the analysis of (8) also involves multiple light verbs.

(8)   Mary gave John some tea.

What we have to account for is the alternation between the *dative construction* and the *double object construction*.

(9)   a.   Bill sent a letter to Judy.
        b.   Bill sent Judy a letter.

The Goal argument must originate from the same position in both cases (UTAH). If there is a PP it can get Case at its original position; otherwise, it must move up to get Case from a light verb.

Reading

Theoretical background: *BESE* Ch 3.2 (pp. 101-120)
Verb types: *BESE* Ch 5.2.4-5.2.6 (pp. 172-184)

The event structure is more complex in (3), as well.

1. Joan did something
2. the kids experienced something
3. the kids were upset

Normally, we would like to associate one layer of the vP-shell with each sub–event.