CASE THEORY

Difference between intransitive and unaccusative verbs
Intransitives: no object argument, but accusative Case can be assigned → cognate object possible
Unaccusatives: accusative Case cannot be assigned

Accusative Case can only be assigned in structures containing a light verb → Accusative Case is assigned by the light verbal head.

Difference between *morphological* (= visible) and *abstract Case*;
Morphological Case-marking reduced/suppressed in Modern English, but not in Old English, cf.:

	NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE + DATIVE	GENITIVE	
SINGULAR	*cild*	*cildes*	*cilde*	'child'
PLURAL	*cildru*	*cildra*	*cildrum*	

The grammar we are building has a modular structure: it contains distinct interacting components or modules. The modules considered so far:
1) X'-theory: the component of the grammar that regulates phrase structure.
2) Theta theory: the component of the grammar that regulates the assignment of thematic roles to arguments. **Thematic Criterion**: every theta-role has to be assigned to an argument and every argument has to be assigned a theta-role. One-to-one correspondence between theta-roles and arguments.
3) Case theory: accounts for some of the formal properties of overt DPs and integrates the traditional notion of Case into the grammar.

English case system: overt distinction between NOMINATIVE and ACCUSATIVE can be found only in the pronoun system: *he/him, she/her* (with several examples of Case syncretism: *you, it*).

Morphological vs. abstract Case (in English abstract Case is often not morphologically realized; abstract Case is part of universal grammar: **Them/They/Mary/The students to pass the exam is important:* no case assigner → ungrammatical sentence)

Distributional data:
NOMINATIVE: DP in the subject position of finite clauses
ACCUSATIVE:
     (1) object DP of a transitive verb (or cognate object of an intransitive verb)
     (2) subject DP of infinitival subordinate clauses
     (3) DP complement of a preposition
→ prepositions assign ACCUSATIVE Case to their DPs, they Case-mark the DP.
→ACC Case is also assigned in transitive and intransitive (see cognate objects) constructions, but never in unaccusative structures. If there is no thematic light verb, there is no ACC Case. It is the head of the thematic vP that assigns ACC Case to the object.
Explains **Burzio's Generalisation**: **if a verbs fails to theta-mark an external argument it does not assign accusative Case to its object** (e.g. passivization)

The structural condition for accusative Case assignment is government.

Government:
A governs B if and only if
(i) A is a governor;
(ii) A c-commands B;
(iii) no barrier intervenes between A and B.
where
(a) governors are the lexical heads (V, N, P, A) and tensed I;
(b) maximal projections are barriers (except non-finite IP).

C-command
A c-commands B if and only if A does not dominate B and every X that dominates A also dominates B.

Simpler definition for government: a head governs its sisters and its sister's descendants up till a certain point (see ECM vs. finite embedding later).

NOMINATIVE SUBJECTS: subjects of finite clauses
NOMINATIVE case is assigned by virtue of the specifier-head agreement between the subject DP and finite INFL. Only finite I can assign nominative case, if there is no finite inflection in the clause, nominative case is not available.

ACCUSATIVE SUBJECTS: subjects of infinitival clauses:
For him to attack John would be surprising.
Can infinitival *to* be a case-assigner? *Him to attack Bill would be illegal.*
                               I prefer very much him to go now.
You either insert *for*, or omit the subject. *FOR* = prepositional complementizer, therefore accusative case-assigner. Infinitival *to* never assigns either Nominativa or Accusative Case.
For he to attack Bill was illegal.

CASE FILTER: Every DP must be assigned abstract Case.

MOVEMENT TRANSFORMATIONS
Sentences have two levels of syntactic representation:
D(eep)-structure: this level encodes the lexical properties of the constituents of the sentence. It represents the basic argument relations in the sentence.
S(urface)-structure: reflects the actual ordering of the elements in the surface string, and their Case forms.
Theta-roles assigned before movement, Case after it.

The two levels of syntactic representation are related to each other by means of movement transformations: D-structure → Movement transformations → S-structure

THE INFLECTION PHRASE (BESE pp. 213-219, 233-237)

Apart from the elements required by the verb (see argument structure and thematic structure/subcategorisation frame in BESE), a simple sentence contains functional elements as well (similarly to NPs which need specification for e.g. definiteness, see the DP analysis). Functional verbal category: inflection (understood in a broader sense based on complementary distribution facts. Present/past tense marker never in the presence of modals → they target the same structural position, the head position of the IP appearing on top of the verbal projection vP or VP)

Inflections: modal auxiliaries, *-ed*, *-s*, Ø, infinitival *to*

Inflections define the finiteness of the clause they introduce. A finite inflection introduces finite clauses, the non-finite inflection infinitival *to* introduces non-finite clauses. Non-finite clauses are always embedded, simple sentences are always specified for tense.

Auxiliaries Finite forms? Nonfinite forms? Aux in questions, negation: **operator** function
1. a) Modals: ***shall/should, will/would, can/could, may/might, must***: always followed by the uninflected base form of the verb, always finite, no non-finite forms
    b) Others: ***have*** + ***be*** = **aspectual auxiliaries***; do* = **dummy auxiliary** (non-modals, can be inflected → not inflections!!!, they have both finite and non-finite forms)
2. Systematic functions of Modals: parallel scales of strength in two dimensions:
    a) Deontic modality (authority; obligation > permission);
       must/need, shall > should > may > can.
    b) Epistemic modality (necessity/probability > possibility); conditional. **Past**: M+*have*
       must > will > should > may > might > can; should/would, could, might

***-ed*, *-s*, Ø:** tense markers, always finite.
Modals: non nonfinite forms → always finite (**to must*, **musting*)
***to*:** non-finite inflection, complementary distribution with modals and *–ed, -s*

infinitival *to*: non-finite inflection
in embedded clauses with or without a visible subject (in finite clauses the presence of the subject is obligatory, moreover, it has to be in Nominative Case). When the subject is present it is in Accusative Case, the presence of *for* is obligatory. *It is important (for John) to pass the exam.*

Inflections: modal auxiliaries, *-ed*, *-s*, Ø, infinitival *to*
Belong to the same category (complementary distribution)

The functional projection associated with the verb is the Inflection Phrase (IP). The complement of IP is always verbal, vP (transitive, intransitive, multiple complement verbs) or VP (verbs taking a theme argument only, unaccusatives and ergatives with no agent). The specifier of the IP is **the canonical subject position: finite I assigns nominative Case to the subject of the sentence** (finite clauses always have a nominative subject, a subject can be nominative only in a finite clause → (only!) finite I assigns nominative Case)