

## The distribution of subjects in non-finite clauses: an account without Case

In recent versions of Minimalism, the role of syntactic Case has been greatly reduced in favor of the EPP. E.g. according to Chomsky (2001), it is the EPP that forces *John* to raise in 1, with Case serving only to render *John* ‘active’ for the operation. What does remain of the old Case Filter has been retained largely to account for the treatment of subject positions in embedded clauses. However, in this paper I will argue that the assumption of syntactic Case offers no real insight here either, and that a theory making full use of the EPP and other independently necessary principles of selection provides a better account of the data. To begin with, the claim (Chomsky and Lasnik, 1993; Martin, 2001) that the clausal complement in 1 does not check Case, while that in 2 checks null Case and that in 3 checks normal (non-null) Case, does nothing more than restate the distribution of raising, PRO and overt DP subjects (as noted also by Hornstein, 1999; Manzini and Roussou, 2000). The postulation of such Case-types has no independent support, least of all from the morphology, given that PRO can be assigned the same morphological cases as an overt DP (cf. 4 from Sigurðsson, 1991, where PRO controls dative agreement on a secondary predicate). Furthermore, there are sets of data that the Case-based theories do not even describe correctly. For instance, it is argued that an overt subject is possible in the non-finite complement of a verb like *believe* (cf. 5), because this subject can check its Case by raising to Spec-Agr<sub>O</sub> or Spec-vP in the matrix clause. However, overt subjects are licensed in the complement of verbs like *want* as well, yet as Martin (2001) himself notes, the relevant tests show that these subjects do **not** raise into the Case-checking position of the matrix clause. Martin is thus led to claim that overt subjects can check null Case in such instances, a move which undermines the whole null/non-null Case distinction and forces him to make further dubious assumptions to recreate its effects. Case-based theories also have no ready account for the distribution of subjects with clausal gerunds, especially when the gerundival clause is itself in subject position, as in 7.

A detailed consideration of facts such as these will lead me to the proposal that we should abandon the idea that DPs require Case-licensing. I will instead develop a theory where the regulation of subject positions depends on the interactions of the EPP with locality restrictions, selection, and the interpretation of PRO. For example, the properties of the complement of *seem* are restricted by the fact that this verb projects no external argument which could satisfy the matrix EPP. Sentences are thus ruled out where the EPP goes unsatisfied (cf. 8), or the operation which allows its satisfaction is itself illicit (e.g. I will argue that in 9, A-movement of *John* from a finite CP violates the Phase-Impenetrability Condition as well as Relativized Minimality, and that in 10, the complement clause is not a proper associate for expletive *it*). An analogous proposal will be made for standard instances of ECM. What remains then is to account for the alternation between PRO and overt DP subjects. Note then that in every instance where PRO is possible, an overt subject is possible as well, as long as we include examples with an overt *for*.<sup>1</sup> I will thus argue, taking seriously the idea that there is no Case requirement on DPs, that overt subjects are in fact generally licit in non-finite clauses, and that what actually needs to be accounted for is when *for* must be overt, and when it can be omitted. That this does not simply reduce to the Case-licensing needs of overt subjects is shown by the fact that *for* is optional in sentences like 11a. Indeed, as discussed by Pesetsky and Torrego (2001) and exemplified by 11 - 13, the distribution of *for* to a large extent mimics that of the complementizer *that*, which clearly cannot be attributed to the Case-marking needs of the embedded subject. Finally, building on much previous work, I will trace the heavy restrictions on the distribution of PRO to constraints on the operation of control.

- (1) John<sub>*i*</sub> seems [<sub>*t<sub>i</sub>*</sub> to be sick].
- (2) John tried [PRO to have fun].

<sup>1</sup>It is true that certain verbs strongly prefer to take a control complement, such as *try*, because their meaning strongly implicates the involvement of the subject in the embedded action, but this is a semantic constraint, not a syntactic one.

- (3) It seems that John is sick.
- (4) Að PRO batna veikin einum er erfitt.  
to PRO:DAT recover the-disease alone:DAT.MASC is difficult  
'To recover from the disease alone is difficult.
- (5) John believed Frank to be sick.
- (6) John wanted Frank to be sick.
- (7) a. Him missing the meeting was a problem.  
b. PRO missing the meeting was a problem.
- (8) \*Seems John to be sick.
- (9) \*John<sub>i</sub> seems [<sub>CP</sub> (that) t<sub>i</sub> is sick].
- (10) \*It seems John to be sick.
- (11) a. I would like (for) him to buy the book.  
b. I believe (that) he bought the book.
- (12) a. Who<sub>i</sub> would you like (\*for) t<sub>i</sub> to buy the book?  
b. What<sub>i</sub> would you like (for) him to buy?  
c. Who<sub>i</sub> do you think (\*that) t<sub>i</sub> bought the book?  
d. What<sub>i</sub> do you think (that) he bought t<sub>i</sub>?
- (13) a. [\*(For) him to buy the book] would be preferable  
b. [\*(That) he bought the book] was unexpected.

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