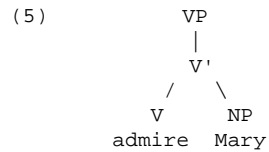# Towards a 'Minimalist' Theory of Case
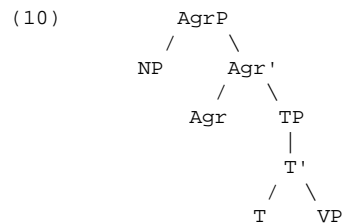## Howard Lasnik

I. Case and Government

(1) α governs β if every XP dominating α also dominates β and
     vice versa: XPs are 'barriers' to government.

(2) Case assignment requires government.
(3) a The object of a transitive verb is Accusative.
     b The subject of a finite clause is Nominative.

(4) V governs its complement

(5)   VP
              |
              V'
            /   \
          V   NP
       admire   Mary

(6) 'Infl' governs its Specifier.
(7) John will win

(8)   IP
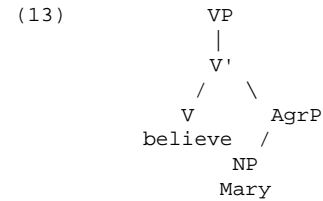   /   \
         NP   I'
               / \
             I   VP
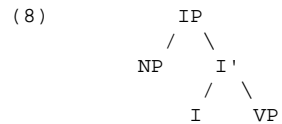
(9) On the 'split Infl' hypothesis, with Tense and Agreement
     each heading its own projection:

(10)   AgrP
          /   \
        NP   Agr'
               /   \
            Agr   TP
                     |
                     T'
                    / \
                  T   VP

II. Questions about Government

(11) The subject of the infinitival complement of certain verbs
     is Accusative. IP, unlike other XPs, is not a barrier to
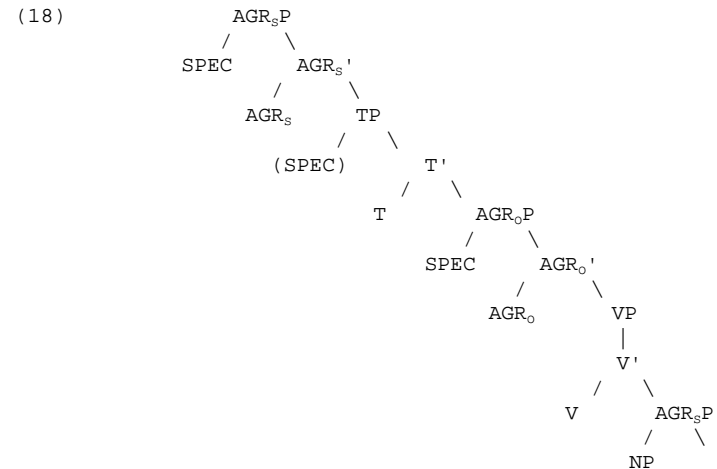   government. V 'exceptionally' governs into IP:

(12) ... believe Mary to be a genius

(13)   VP
                |
                V'
              /   \
            V   AgrP
        believe   /   \
                  NP
                 Mary

(14) Configuration of Accusative checking: V-<u>Complement</u>
(15) Configuration of Nominative checking: <u>SPEC</u>-AGR
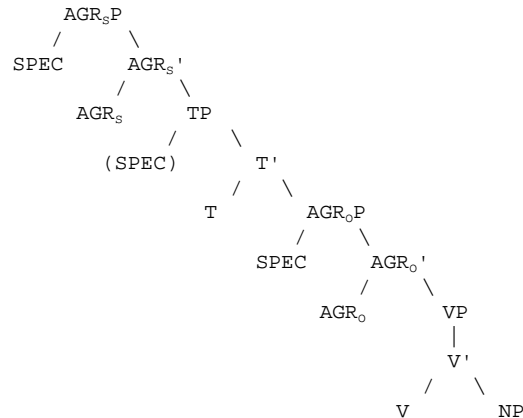(16) Configuration of 'Exceptional Case Marking': ???

III. A 'Minimalist' Answer

(17) Another 'split' in Infl: In addition to subject agreement
     (AGR_s), object agreement (AGR_o). Then ECM can, via NP
     movement, also be assigned in a SPEC of AGR configuration:

(18) AGR_sP
                 /   \
            SPEC AGR_s'
                     /   \
                AGR_s TP
                          /   \
                     (SPEC)   T'
                              /   \
                            T AGR_oP
                                   /   \
                               SPEC AGR_o'
                                       /   \
                                  AGR_o VP
                                              |
                                              V'
                                            /   \
                                          V AGR_sP
                                                 /   \
                                               NP

(18) Now Accusative, Nominative, and ECM are all assigned in X'-
     configurations: Head-Complement for the first, SPEC-head
     for the others.

(19) But now we can do even better: If ECM is SPEC-head,
     standard Accusative can be as well (and should be, since
     there is no known morphological or other difference between
     them).

```
(20)              AGR_sP
                 /    \
              SPEC    AGR_s'
                     /    \
                 AGR_s     TP
                         /    \
                    (SPEC)     T'
                             /    \
                            T      AGR_oP
                                  /    \
                              SPEC     AGR_o'
                                      /    \
                                  AGR_o     VP
                                            |
                                            V'
                                          /    \
                                         V      NP
```

(21) We have seen a good conceptual argument for this approach,
     and in a minute, we will see powerful empirical evidence
     for it. But first, we have to deal with a seemingly
     devastating empirical problem.

(22) *I Mary believe to be a genius
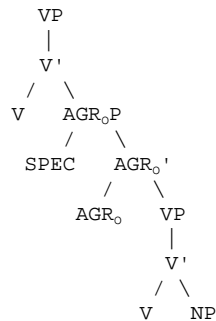(23) *We Mary admire

(24) Two possible solutions:
     a. The NP moves, but in LF, so you can't hear the movement
     (like QR, or WH-movement in Chinese).
     b. The NP moves, and the V moves to a still higher
     position.
(25) One additional 'split', the 'split VP hypothesis' could
     make solution (b) work.

```
(26)          VP
              |
              V'
            /   \
           V    AGR_oP
               /    \
            SPEC    AGR_o'
                   /    \
               AGR_o     VP
                         |
                         V'
                       /   \
                      V     NP
```

IV. Evidence for the AGR_o Theory
    A. C-command phenomena

(27) i. Y is in the domain of X only if Y is c-commanded by X.
     ii. X c-commands Y iff the first branching node dominating
     X also dominates Y.

(28)   The lawyers criticized each other
(29) *Each other criticized the lawyers

(30)   ?The DA proved [the defendants to be guilty] during each
       other's trials
(31)   ?The DA [accused the defendants] during each other's
       trials
(32) ?*The DA proved [that the defendants were guilty] during
       each other's trials

(33)   No one saw anything
(34)   *Anyone saw nothing
(35)   The DA accused [none of the defendants] during any of the
        trials
(36)   ?The DA proved [none of the defendants to be guilty]
        during any of the trials
(37) ?*The DA proved [that none of the defendants were guilty]
        during any of the trials

     B. Ellipsis

(38)   VP Deletion:
(39)   John accused Bill and Mary will [~~v accuse Bill~~] too

(40)   V Deletion?:
(41)   John accused Bill and Mary will ~~accuse~~ Susan

(42)   The DA proved the first defendant to be guilty and the
       Assistant DA will ~~prove~~ the second defendant ~~to be guilty~~
(43)   More than just V can be deleted, but seemingly not the
       entire VP, in this construction (called 'Pseudogapping').
       Further, superficially, it seems that what is deleted is
       not even a constituent.

(44) An analysis of Pseudogapping: Raise the 'remnant' NP to
     SPEC of AGR_o, and delete the 'lower' VP that it has left
     behind:

```
(45)                AGRₛP
                   /    \
                 NP      AGRₛ'
               Mary     /    \
                     AGRₛ     TP
                           /     \
                       (SPEC)     T'
                               /    \
                              T      VP
                            will     |
                                     V'
                                   /   \
                                  V    AGR_oP
                                 /       \
                              SPEC       AGR_o'
                                        /    \
                                     AGR_o     VP
                                               |
                                               V'
                                             /   \
                                            V     NP
                                         accuse  Susan
```