CASE ASSIGNMENT IN TAMIL

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Dedicated to :

MY PARENTS,

WIFE AND CHILDERN'S

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

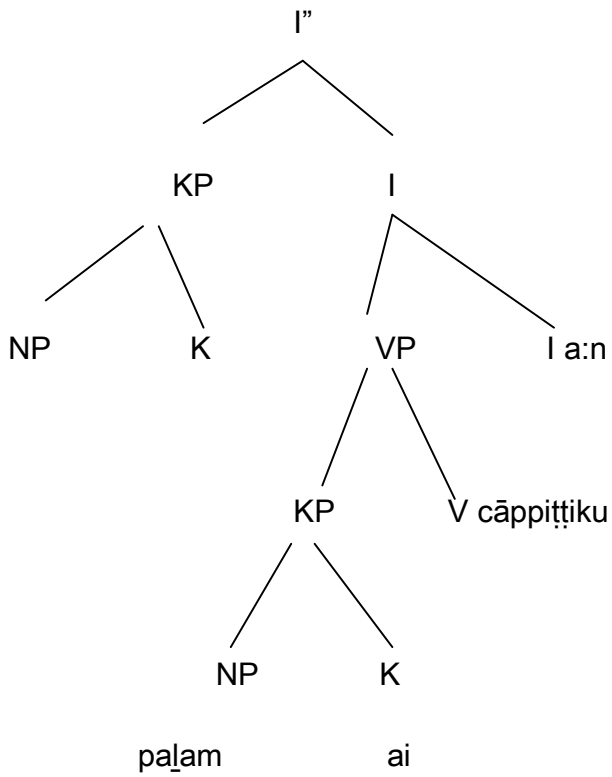
1.1 Case

Case is grammatical category which indicates the syntactic and semantic relationship existing between a noun and a verb or a noun and a noun in a sentence. In Tamil grammatical tradition, the word vēr̲r̲umai 'difference' is used as a technical term to refer to case. According to Tamil grammarians, case differentiates the relationships found between a noun and a verb or a noun and another noun in a sentence and it changes the function of the noun in the syntactic structure or a sentence. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) descries case as follows: "In inflected languages, one of the varied forms of a substantive adjective or pronoun, which expresses the varied relations in which it may stand to some other word in a sentence (e.g.) a subject or a sub object or a verb, attribute to another 'noun, object of preposition, etc". The above dictionary then adds the following statement" but, as many modern languages have nearly quire lost these variations of form case is sometimes loosely used for the relation itself whether indicated by distinct form or not". English being whether indicated by distinct form or not". English being one of the modern languages that have lost inflectional endings, the dictionary further notes that "substantives are commonly said to have three cases, nominative, objective and possessive. The former being merely relations and the later entirely formal. However, the Tamil language

being an inflectionally rich language, marls case relationships on nouns. Let us consider the following illustrations from Tamil:

1. rāmaṉ paḻattai c cāppiṭṭāṉ “Raman ate fruit”

In this sentence, raman “Raman” takes nominative case and paḻam “fruit” takes objective case. In phrasal level, this sentence is schematized in the following way.



Now let us consider the following Tamil illustration:

avaṉ kuyilaip pōla pāṭiṉāṉ ‘ he sang like a cuckoo’

In this sentence the postposition pōla “like” also occurs along with case phrase (KP). So one can safely say a postposition phrase is a phrase consisting of KP and a postposition. A KP has a case marker and an NP. In some languages, (for example English) the case relationship is realized in terms of preposition which will occur in isolation before the noun and in some other language, say, Tamil, the case relationship is realized by postposition which will also occur not only in isolation but also along with the case suffix. However, because of the following reasons one cannot bring the postpositions and the case markers under the same category.

1. Case markers are bound morphemes which cannot occur in isolation, but they can occur either in isolation or along with a case marker
2. Some of the postpositions take specifiers like nēr “ direct’ , entire ‘opposite’ and phrase of adverbial type. A case marker can never take a specifier. Let us consider the following illustration
3. vīṭṭiṟku nēr etir ‘ exactl opposite to the house’

   Similarly, postpositions are dealt with by the generative grammarians under a separate category

1.2 Case Marker and Postpositions in Tamil

Eight case suffixed or case markers are found in Tamil and they are named on the basis of their phonemic form or with serial number. They are 1. Nominative case 2.

Accusative case 3. Instrumental case, 4. Dative case 5. Sociative case, 6. Genitive case, 7. Locative case and 8. Ablative case.

1.2.1 Nominative Case

The uninflected form of the noun when occurring as the subjective of the sentence is said to be the nominative case. Nominative case is morphologically, syntactically and semantically an unmarked case. It takes only zero case suffix.

1.2.2 Accusative Case

The accusative case denotes the person or thing on which the action of the verb is performed. The accusative case is represented by the suffix –ai

1.2.3. Instrumental Case

The instrumental case expresses the tools used by the agent in order to perform the action of the verb. The suffix – āl is used as an instrumental case suffix

1.2.4 Dative Case

The dative case typically signifies an indirect object relationship or a range or meaning similar to the governed by the preposition “to” or “for” in English. The dative case markers in Tamil are –kku, ukku, and –ku.

1.2.6 Genitive Case

The Sociative case is identified on the surface level by the suffix “-oṭu” and “-ōṭu”. The Sociative case marker principally expresses the commutative function

1.2.6 Genitive Case

The term genitive refers to the possessor-possessed relationship that exists between two entities, denoted by two nouns. The markers representing the genitive cases are the postposition “uṭaiya” and the case markers “atu”, “ iṉ”.

1.2.7 Locative Case

The case suffix for locative case is that which identifies the location or spatial orientation of the state or action identified by the verb. The locative case suffix in Tamil is “-il”

1.2.8 Ablative Case

Ablative case is the grammatical case expressing removal, deprivation, direction from or source, etc. The term ablative is derived from the Latin word ablatitous meaning pertaining to, taking away or removing. The case suffix for ablative is “- iliruntu”

1.2.9 Postpositions

Postpositions are the particles which occur freely without any inflection. This type of particles expresses a relation between noun and verb or noun and noun. It shows the case relations such as instrumental, purposive, possessive, locative (place and time) and ablative. Among this relational meanings those of place and time are most prominent. Illustrations:

mēlum ‘with'

varai 'until'

mēl 'upon'

pōla 'like'

tavira 'except'

appuṟam 'afterwards'

kīḻ 'down'

vēṇṭi 'purpose'

1.3 Chomsky’s (1981) Views on Case

Chomsky in his GB model (1981) viewed the case aspect in a different way. According to him an NP derives case because it is governed and assigned by certain elements in the sentence. He wants to explain case phenomenon in a structural way. For this, he proposes a theory called as Case Theory in the GB model. In GB model case theory is an important sub-theory. Case in this model becomes one of the important sub-theories. In addition to the case theory, GB frame work contains several other sub-theories like the theta theory, bounding theory, binding theory, control theory, etc. The main use of the case theory within the GB framework is to explain various restrictions that on the face of it have little to do with case. Case theory interacts with other sub-theories to explain these restrictions. These sub-theories in turn contain several principles and parameters like the projection principle, binding principle, etc.

Certain notions, such as C-command and government, seem to be central to several of these theories.

We can identify different properties of a particular language by making use of these systems. And this case theory interacts with other subtheories in GB framework to explain language barriers.

1.4 General Theoretical Framework

Every child is born with intelligence. By making use of its intelligence a child acquires the core aspect of the language i.e. the grammatical knowledge of the language. When a child grows, it will be conditioned by the social and cultural factors which are learned by the child. These are considered as peripheral aspects of the language. Most of the studies related to sociolinguistics, pragmatics, behavioral studies, etc. Deal with subjects that form the peripheral aspect of language.

1.4.1 Core Aspect of the Language

For the past three decades several researches have been conducted in relation to the exposition to the core aspect of language. In 1957, Chomsky first published the book *Syntactic Structures* which established the notion of generative grammar.

In 1965, he published a book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. The explanation presented in that book came to be known as Standard Theory of transformational

genitive grammar. In this book he introduced the concept of semantic component, but he was unable to relate this component. So some semantic proposals began to be incorporated within the Chomskyan framework [eg. Katz and Postal (1963) and Katx and Foder (1964)]. In late 60's and early 70's generative semantics gained momentum. Scholars who were working in semantics argued that the syntattic structure of a language is governed and determined by semantic content. In the same period Chomsky (1970) published another known as Extended Standard Theory which refined most of the transformational rules. In 1981 Chomsky proposed another model popularly known as GB theory, named after his Lectures on Government and Binding (LGB). Some parts of the syntactic model have been since modified in his later works such as Knowledge of Language (1982) and Barrier (1986). Minimalist Program (1992) is Chomsky's recent model for the syntactic theory. Chapter IV of this model has been changed into Chapter V in 1996.

1.5 GB Theory

GB theory (1981) describes and explains how universal grammar is present in the human mind. Chomsky assumed in GB Theory that the child's universal grammar consists of certain sub-theories and each of these may be subjected to parametric variation. Core grammar of a given language is then derived automatically from the interaction of sub-theories of universal grammar with their parameter sets. The value of the parameter will be determined only by the individual language data.

The present work mainly deals with the case theory. So, case theory and its relates principles are described below.

1.5.1 Case / Theory

The GB model makes a distinction between morphological and abstract case. The distinction is motivated by the fact the the morphology may not always be transparent with regard to the abstract case of an entity. In some languages case is morphologically realized. In others it is not, but we assume that it is assigned in an uniform way whether morphologically realized or not (Chomsky 1986 a:74). In a language like English where he/him shows a morphological distinction by *john/john* does not, one must yet make a nominative/accusative distinction, abstract case is an important element in the syntax even when it may not be abstract case to all lexically realized NPs.

Case theory, like the other sub-theories of the GB framework, functions with the help of certain principles and parameters. Case filter, theta-criterion, visibility condition, adjacency and direction are some of the subcomponents of case theory which function as constraints to the assignment of case.

The case filter can be stated as follows:

"Every phonetically realized NP must be assigned an abstract case" (Chomsky 1986:30). Thus an NP which has a phonetic content and has no case is marked grammatical as a result of this filter.

The case filter interacts with other principles of GB particularly the theta-criterion. The theta-criterion is one of the three components of the theta-theory. It says "every grammatically functioning argument bears one and only one theta-role (agent, theme, etc.) and each theta-role is assigned to one and only one argument" (Chomsky, 1981a:38). Theta-marked positions contain phonetically realized NPs and therefore these positions must be assigned abstract case.

The case filter and theta criterion are linked together by the visibility condition. Chomsky (1986a) states that an NP can receive a theta-role only if it is an a position to which case is assigned or is linked to such a position. Two conditions (visibility condition) which are essential for an NP to be visible at the of logical form (LF) are as follows:

1. For an NP to be visible it should bear a theta-role
2. An NP can receive theta-role only if it is in a position to which case is assigned

The visibility condition is thus an amalgamation of the two sub-theories of GB, namely, the case theory and the theta-theory. According to Chomsky case assignment through case filters and visibility condition are language universals and are applicable to all languages.

There are certain parameters in the case theory, which are language specific. Case is assigned to an NP in English with a strict adjacency condition. The case assigner to the INFL must be adjacent to the subject NP which receives case from the former. Again, in English which is a head first language, the direction of case assignment is always to the right. The NP receiving case is always found on the right side of the case assigner. The adjacency condition is language specific and need not apply to all languages uniformly.

Case theory in GB is thus not independent but is interlocked with the other sub-theories and various principles and parameters. The sub-components of the case theory help in controlling the generation of ungrammatical sentences and also the proper assignment of case to all NP's in a sentence, including the subject NP.

1.6 Earlier Studies on Tamil Case System

Different models have been used in the past for studying the case system in Tamil. Some of them are reviewed below:

1.6.1 Tokkappiyar's Model

tolkāppiyar defines case system in three chapters, namely, vēr̲r̲umai iyal vēr̲r̲umai mayaṅkiyal and vili marapu. But Nannular defines the case only in few sentences in the II chapter of his work.

Tolkāppiyar says that there are only seven cases in Tamil in the earlier stages. In the succeeding cūtrās he says the vocative can also be included and hence the cases are eight in Tamil. He names the cases after the case suffixes.

'ai' en̲a peyariya vēr̲r̲umai

'atu' ven̲a peyariya vēr̲r̲umai

'kku' ven̲a peyariya vēr̲r̲umai

'in̲' en̲a peyariya vēr̲r̲umai

'atu' ven̲a peyariya vēr̲r̲umai

'kaṇ' en̲a peyariya vēr̲r̲umai

There is no case sign for nominative and vocative. Thus the six case suffixed found in Tamil are used to denote the cases in Tamil.

Caldwell follows Nannular, the medieval grammarian for explaining the case system and he calls the cases as first, second, third, etc. making use of numbers

In Sanskrit, the cases are defined as follows:

Prathama vibhakti – Nominative case

Dvitiya vibhakti - Accusative case

Trithiya vibhakti - instrumental case

Caturthi vibhakti - Dative case

Pancami vibhakti - Ablative case

Sasti vibhakti - Genitive case

Saptami vibhakti - Locative case

Sambodhana prathama vibhakti - vocative case

Tamil grammarians also name the cases making use of numbers, viz, I, II, III, etc. After carrying out a comprehensive study of the case system is Tamil language, Tamil scholars have come to the conclusion that there are possibilities in Tamil to have more cases and one should not restrict the cases only to eight. In Dravidian, it is seen that under one distinct case two different ideas have been brought out. The following illustrations reveal the possibility to have more cases in Dravidian:

1. In the fifth case called ablative case, according to Tamil grammarians, four different thematic roles namely, ablative, delimitative, comparative and causative are incorporated. It is peculiar to have only one case sign (i.e) '-in' to denote the four different aspects (or) themes cited above.

2. In Dravidian languages both the nominative case and the vocative case are not represented by case markers, Simply the position of nouns is used to determine the nominative case role of nouns. The vocative case is most probably identified through the lengthening of the final conconant and subsequent prolongation of the vowel. Thus the existence of two cases without any case marker or suffix can be convincingly argued. One can consider one more illustration to judge the argument establishing the existence of case without case markers. In the examples ārru nīr 'river water'. nāṭṭu vaḻakku ' rural talk' and 'kuḷattu mīṉ' pond's water there is no case marker between the two nouns which occur in compound form. Only the inflectional increment denotes the existence of case in the above instances. The increment morpheme ' attu' is found in between two nouns. Commentators say that the inflectional increment stands to represent the case affinity of nouns. Hence, one can say that this kind of case aspect may be named as inflectional case.

1.6.2 Modern Works

Sam Arul Raj (1981) gives a brief account of the approaches to case by traditional Tamil grammarians and Western grammarians. The works of Fillmore (1986), Anderson (1971), Nilsen (1972), Mccoy (1968), Chafe (1970) and Gruber (1976) are referred by Sam Arul Raj mainly to indicate the various approaches in the study of cases. Traditional works such as Tholkappiyam, vīracōḻiyam, nēmināṭam, naṉṉūl, etc., have also been reviewed briefly. In the fourth chapter Sam Arul Raj deals with the case

markers in Tamil and it helps in understanding the applicability of case theory in traditional approaches to grammar. Hitherto, nobody has given a full account of the case system in Tamil from semantic perspective. Sam Arul Raj lists verb as one place predicate, two place predicate and three place predicate on the basis of the deep cases such as agent, experience, patient, instrument, location, source and distinguished only on the basis of the distinctive definitions given by Fillmore (1969). Neither the relational case features not the syntactic contexts have been given to identify the deep cases. Further the surface and deep structure correclations have been neglected. The various aspects such Sociative, the distinction of case meanings and deep cases have not been dealt within this work. Natarajan (1989), Mecoy (1968) and Nilson (1972). Natarajan (1989) has given a detailed account of the case system of middle Tamil following the case grammar model. His description includes all cases or individual cases of caṅkam or middle Tamil. In the first chapter he describes briefly the Tamil grammarian's concept of case, Western grammarian's concept of case and has elaborately mentioned the existence and role of case markers and postpositions. Following the western grammarians view, he describes the following deep cases as they come under the nominative case. They are 1) Agent, 2) Patient, 3) Experience, 4) Cause and 5) Instrumental. Within the accusative case the following deep cases are described by Natarajan:

(1) Affected patient

(2) Unaffected patient

(3) Factative patient

(4) Congnate patient

Within the instrumental case he brings the following deep cases: Tool-instrumental, material instrumental, cause-agentive, etc. within the dative case he brings the following deep cases: Goal-benefactive goal, directional goal, experiences, purpose, cause, case meaning distribution, relative relation, dative of location, temporal, limitative, benefactive possession, etc. In Sociative case, the following deep cases appear: adnominal Sociative, principal actor, additive, symmetrical, accompanier, adverbial, limitative, manner etc. In the genitive case the following deep cases occur: alienable and inalienable, alienable possession, inalienable possession, views hip relation, part-whole relation, creater-created relation, actor-action relation, etc.

Under locative case the following deep cases are subsumed: location, source, goal, instrumental, cause, possessive, comparative, inclusive, general location, interior location, anterior location, medical location, posterior location, circumferential location and lateral location.

Ablative case according to Natarajan (1989) includes the following deep cases: niṉṟu, iṉniṉṟu, uḷ, mēl, kaṇ, talai, toṭṭu, mutal, etc.

For finding out each deep case, necessary syntactic tests are conducted and such tests are given at the end of each chapter. Postpositions affiliated to a particular case have also been mentioned. The limitation of Natarajan's work is that he has not dealt with the data drawn from the modern Tamil. Vasu (1987) concentrated on the task of finding the deep cases taking the modern Tamil data.

Vasu (1987) has studied the case system for modern Tamil following the models proposed by Fillmore (1968), McCoy (1968) and Nilson (1972). He has given a complete picture of the cases such as nominative case, accusative case, ablative case, Sociative case in Modern Tamil. A fact to be noted is that the inter-relationship between the nature of verbs and the functions of nominals in a sentence is very important is determining the meaning of a sentence. Keeping this view in mind, he further analyses the connection between deep cases and the basis source of verbs which is used to identify deep cases.

Apart from this, there are a few studies on case in modern Tamil which apply the principles of modern linguist theory. They are syntactic study of cases and the study of individual cases. They are reviewed here. Kothandaraman (1980) gives two types of definition for case:

(1) Case changes the function of nouns in the syntactic structure of a sentence.

(2) Case differentiates the relationship between the verbs and the nouns which occur in a sentence.

He mentions about postpositions which function as case suffixes and those which occur after the non-nominative forms. He classifies the postpositions on the basis of their occurrence. According to him, in Tamil the postpositions occurs after the second case suffix ‘ai’, the dative suffix ‘kku’ and the ‘caryai’. He points out that historically the postpositions are traceable to noun or verb as the case may be and he also believes that the specific case suffixes which are selected by the postpositions are predictable. Further he argues that atleast some postpositional phrases are the reduced forms of embedded clauses.

Different deep structure possibilities of geneitive constructions, etc. have been given with illustrations. According to him, agentive – objective, agentive-locative, agentive – factive, dative-factive, locative-agentive, etc. are some of the possible deep structure cases of the non-possessive type. He distinguishes alienable and inalienable possessive among the possessive constructions, Shanmugam, S.V. (1976) lists out the genitive suffix viz. - atu, uṭaiya, a and the zero forms with suitable illustrations. He explains that genitive co-occur with the verbal derivatives and they can be paraphrased with the verbal nouns when the genitives occur only with the other cases. In addition, he also speaks about inalienable and alienable possessions. According to him, the source of inalienable possession is the dative

phrase. The genitive phrases derived from the underlying accusative NP, dative NP, Sociative NP and ablative NP have also been illustrated with examples.

Mallika (1980) describes instrumental case in Tamil on the basis of Nilsen's model. According to her, instrumental, material, agentive and causative are deep cases marked by the suffix, '-āl' at the surface level. In identifying the deep cases Nilsen's case features are used, but she deviates from Nilsen in recognizing material as a deep case. The syntactic tests such as verbal incorporation test, with-what test, subjectivization test, passive test, and sentence with model verb and the semantic features + controller, + cause, +effect, +source, and +model are used to identify the deep cases. In short, her work is an attempt to make a syntactico- semantic study of the surface instrumental case in tamil.

Murthy (1997) deals with dative case on the basic of semantic and syntactic functions. He follows the models of Fillmore and Nilsen to show the various shades of meaning for dative case such as goal, direction,prossession, experience, benefaction, time, limit, purpose, relationship, suitability, comparison, cause, distribution, manner and agent of an action with suitable examples. Towards the end of his study, he points out some paraphrase sentences which according to him are not distinguishable.

Annamalai (1978) explains the conjunction and the conjunction case in Tamil. The difference between phrasal conjunction and sentence conjunction case to

denote Sociative case. It is argued by him that with the support of syntax the meaning of ‘principality’, ‘asymmetry’, ‘in addition to’ and ‘take along’ in conjunction case constructions can be identified.

Radhakrishnan (1975) analyses the genitive phrases in Tamil on the basis of their semantic and syntactic functions. He classifies genitive phrases into two groups, viz, possessive and non-possessive.

1.7 Basic Facts

In this part the basic facts related to Tamil syntactic structure which are directly relevant to this thesis have been take for analysis.

1.7.1 Word Order

The unmarked word in Tamil is SOV. In (1) for instance, the subject rāmaṉ ‘Raman’ is placed in sentence initial position, the object palam ‘fruit’ follows the subject , the verb cappiṭṭaṉ ‘ate’ follows the object.

1 rāmaṉ palaṭṭai c cappiṭṭaṉ

’ Raman ate fruit’

However , Tamil shows a relative freedom of word order. For example in (2) , the object palattai ‘fruit’ is placed in sentence initial position and thus precedes both subject ‘raman’ ,’Raman’ and verb cappiṭṭaṉ ‘ate’

2 paḷattai rāmaṉ cāppiṭṭāṉ

‘Raman ate fruit’

Nonetheless, there are certain constraints on this relative freedom of word order. For instance, in (3) the verb occurs in the initial and this sentence is starred.

3 cāppiṭṭāṉ rāmaṉ paḻattai

‘Raman ate fruit

In short, Tamil is an SOV language but shows a relative freedom of word order with certain constraints on this freedom.

1.7.2 Tamil: A Non-Configurational Language

Tamil with its seemingly free word order and rich case and overt AGR system is likely to be classified as a flat structured or non-configurational language. Saito (1985) lists the following superficial features as characteristic features of non-configurational languages.

(1) Free word order.

(2) The use of discontinuous expressions

(3) Free or frequent pronoun drop

(4) Lack of NP movement transformation

(5) Lack of pleonastic NPs (like it, there etc.)

(6) Use of a rich case system

(7) Complex verbs or verb-cum-AGR system

Some of the restriction on the free word order have been pointed out in (1.1). The second criterion does not apply to Tamil completely. Now let us consider the following illustration:

4.1. teriyavillai nāṉ eppaṭi eṉ cāviyait tolaittēṉ eṉṟu

‘ I don’t know how I lost my key’

nāṉ cāviyai eppaṭittolaittēṉ eṉṟu teriyavillai

‘ I don’t know how I lost my key’

4 (b) is the normal word order in Tamil. Through 4 (a) is perfectly acceptable, it will always be considered as a response to some stimulus. 4(a) is likely to be a part of some discourse. So 4(b) does seem to have certain context.

In small conversation sentences like 5 with pronoun drop is certainly possible.

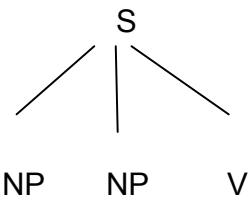
5 pōy viṭṭēṉ

‘ I have gone’

In certain constructions, NP-movement from caseless position to case marked position seems to be optional in Tamil and the pleonastic elements like it, there, etc are absent but all these are obligatory in English.

Now let us consider the following illustrations:

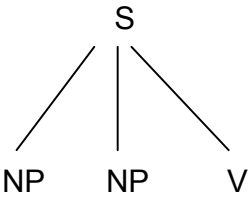
5 (i)



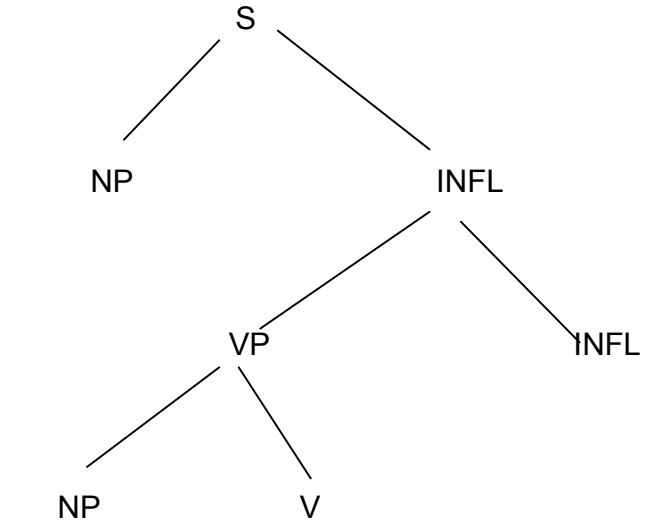
avaṉ oru puttakam paṭittāṉ

‘ He reads a book’

(ii)



(iii)



Oru paṭikkir

Puttakam

5(i) and 5(ii) show puttakam ‘book' the constituent structure and the constituent order of sentences. 5(ii) indicates the configurational structure of the same sentence. In 5(i) and 5(ii) there is no way identifying which NP is the subject of the sentence. So far as the constituent order is concerned, overt AGR on the verb shows that the subject is avan ‘he’. On the other nahd, 5(iii) is taken to be the appropriate D-structure (and also the S-structure) case and role assignment present no problems.

Tamil does have an overtly rich case-system. So the fourth criterion applies to Tamil. Apart from this, in Tamil, Comples-verb words or verb-cum-AGR system can be found. So the seventh certerion also applies to Tamil. Hence , Tamil language can be described as a configurational language.

1.7.3 Head Parameter

Tamil is a head-final language. Generally in Tamil sentences the verb follows its object and the tense follows the verb. The sentence (6) shows that the postposition follows its object chair.

6. paiyaṉ cēriṉ mēl uṭkārntuirukkāṉ ‘ The boy is sitting on the Chair’

However, the finite sentential complements of verbs and nouns follow their heads. This is illustrated in (7) :

7. peṇ coṉṉāl avalāl paṭa muṭiyum eṉru

' The girl told that she can sing '

The finite complement clause avalāl paṭa muṭiyum eṉru 'that she can sing' follows the verb coṉṉāl 'said ' in (7).

To summarize , Tamil is a head final language but the finite complements of verb and nouns follow their heads.

1.7.4 Base rules

Based on chomsky's (1981) model, the following rules and base rules for Tamil:

C" -> C' COMP V" -> V'N"

C' -> C" TOPIC N" -> N'N'

I" -> N" N" -> N'P"

C" P" -> P'NI

V" INFL

COMP -> (-WH)

INFL -> (+TENSE) (+PART)

+TENSE -> (+AGR)

X" -> (COMP Xr) X1 WEHRE XDB STANDS

FOR ANY PHRASAL CATEGORY

Xf -> (SPEC X) WHERE X IS NOT V

Xf -> (X SPEC) WHERE X IS V

After Chomsky's model, Pollock (1989) and other scholars reviewed the model and presented an elaborate model. Based on them, the following will be the base rules for Tamil language.

VP-> SPEC V		TP ->	ASSPP.T
V' -> TP" V		ASSP ->	SPEC ASP'
TP" -> SUBJ TP1		ASP1->	ASP
TP1 -> SPEC T'		MODP	-> SPEC MOD
T1 -> ASPP T		MOD	-> AUX MOD
ASPP -> SPEC ASP'		AUXP	-> SPEC AUX1
ASP1 -> VP ASP		AUX'	-> AGRNP AUX
VP-> SPEC V	AGRNP	->	SPEC AGRN'
V1 -> NP V	AGRN'	->	VP AGRN

VP -> SPEC V1

V -> NP V

TP -> KP T'

KP -> NP K

T' -> VP T

VP -> SPEC V

V' -> KP V

KP -> NP K'

K' -> NP K

Based on these rules, we can derive some important conclusions. They are listed below.

1. enru ‘that’ which seems to be the only complementizer that Tamil has, always occurs sentence finally in Tamil unlike in English.
2. The constituents that can remain in the ‘topic position’ in Tamil are NP, CP, PP and IP. But only one constituent can remain in this position.
3. In Tamil, COMP -> (-WH). But in English COMP IS (+WH).
4. The subject position in Tamil sentence is obligatory
5. The INFL expands in the following way.
6. INFL → (± TENSE) (± AGR) (± PART)
7. In Tamil, generally head of a phrase governs and assigns case to complement NPs.

2 G B THEORY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

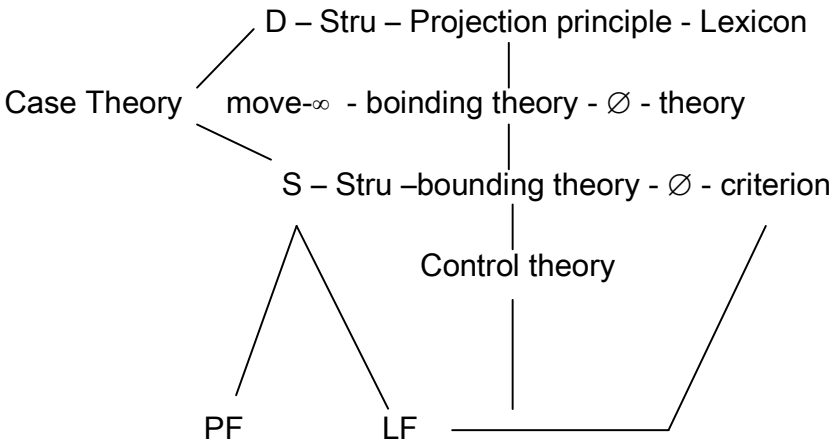
The objective of any grammatical study is to describe and explain how the universal grammar (UG) is present in the mind/brain of a person. According to Chomsky (1981), the universal grammar is present in the mind as a modular structure. The UG contains different sub-theories and each sub-theory contains certain universal principles and certain language specific parameters. These principles are endowed in the brain i.e., they are innate. They are not learned ones, Similarly, the parametric options also are provided in the language faculty itself. Only the value of the parameter is determined based on the individual language data. These individual language values of the parameters are set in the sub-theories of UG and produce a language structure of core grammar of a language.

A language contains a lexicon and computational system. For Chomsky (1988) the concept of parameter is applicable only to the lexicon, not to the computational system. He claims that each parameter refers to properties of specific elements of the lexicon or of categories of lexical items. So, according to Chomsky, there is only one human language apart from the lexicon.

Thus, for Chomsky (ibid, p 2), " language acquisition is in sense a matter of determining lexical idiosyncrasies. Properties of a lexicon too are sharply constrained by UG or other system of the mind/brain. If substantive elements (verbs, nouns, etc) are drawn from a iavariant universal vocabulary, then only functional elements will be

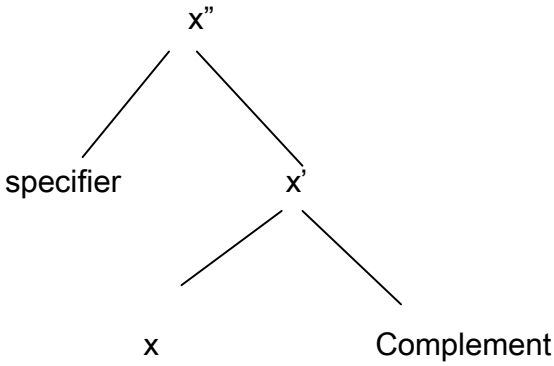
parameterized. Chomsky (1992: p 5,6) sticks to his above stand by saying "…. Variations limited to non-substantive parts of the lexicon and general properties of lexical items. If so, there is only one computational system and one lexicon"

2.2 GB model

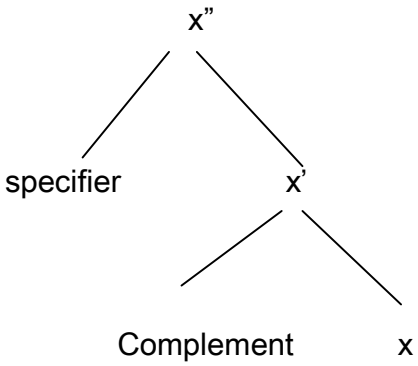


2.2.1 X-Bar Theory

This theory explains the properties of all types of phrases in the language through principles. This theory replaced the idiosyncratic syntactic rules. The central insight of this theory is that a sentence consisting of phrases with a common structure is just like cells with different functions and locations in the body that share the same structure. The claim of X-bar syntax is the following: Taking x to stand for any category (noun or verb) and the head and its complement are under one node (represented here as X[1)] and then this node and specified come under the height node (represented here as X").



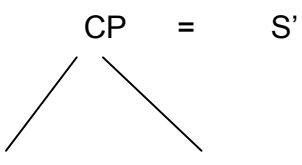
In Indian language (e.g. Tamil) the head takes its complement to its left; so the structure of a phrase in these language is as follows

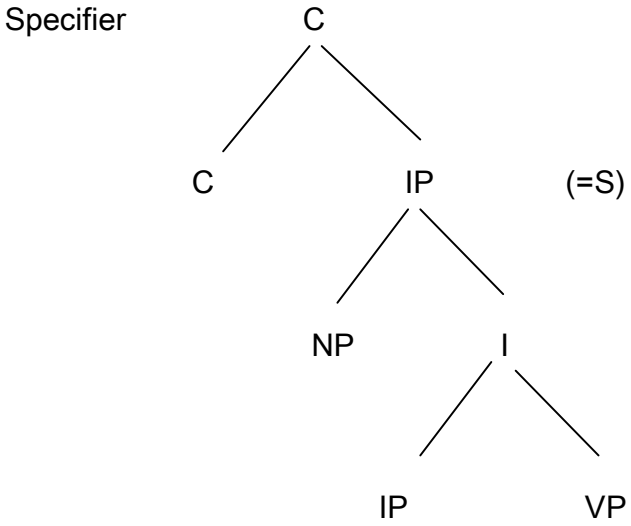


2.2.1.1 C P and IP

Every phrase (or construction) has a head. This is one of the universals of X-bar Syntax (Every construction is endocentric). The heads of NP,VP, AP and PP are N, V, A and P respectively. It is claimed that INFL is the head of S and COMP is head of S^f. So by generalizing the structure (3) to S and S^l, we get

3.





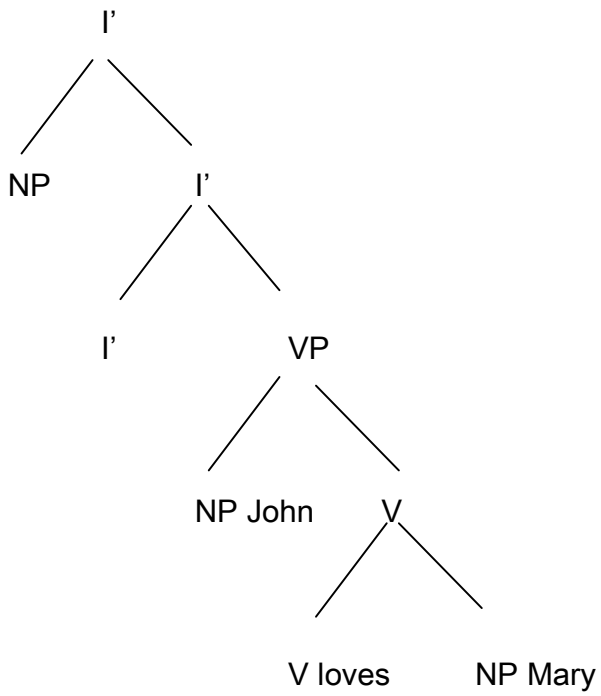
"I" stands for inflexion. "C" for COMP. "S" is now called as inflexion pharse (IP). "S" is called as COMP phrase (CP). C takes IP as complement, and "I" takes VP as complement. The NP in the specifier postion of IP is subject NP. The (empty) specifier of CP is tha position into which wh-phrase moves as for as English is concerned.

2.2.1.2 VP – Internal Subject Hypothesis

Every phrase has the structure (3), wherein the head position is obligatory and the specifier and complement position are optional are optional i.e., they may or may not be generated. Every pharse can potentially have a specifier position, and with that this position can be filled. Then the question whether VP can have such a position arises? And if so, what would be the pharse that fills that position? It has been claimed that the subject NP actually is generated in the

specifier position of VP and is moved into its surface position i.e., the specifier of IP (or SPEC,IP) in (3), in order for it to get case. This claim is known as the "VP – Internal subject hypothesis." Adopting it has the consequence that all the verb arguments are in fact generated within its maximal projection , namely, VP. By extension one can say that for every head its arguments must be liberated within its maximal projection. This seems to be intuitively correct. The underlying structure of (3) is (4).

4.John loves Mary

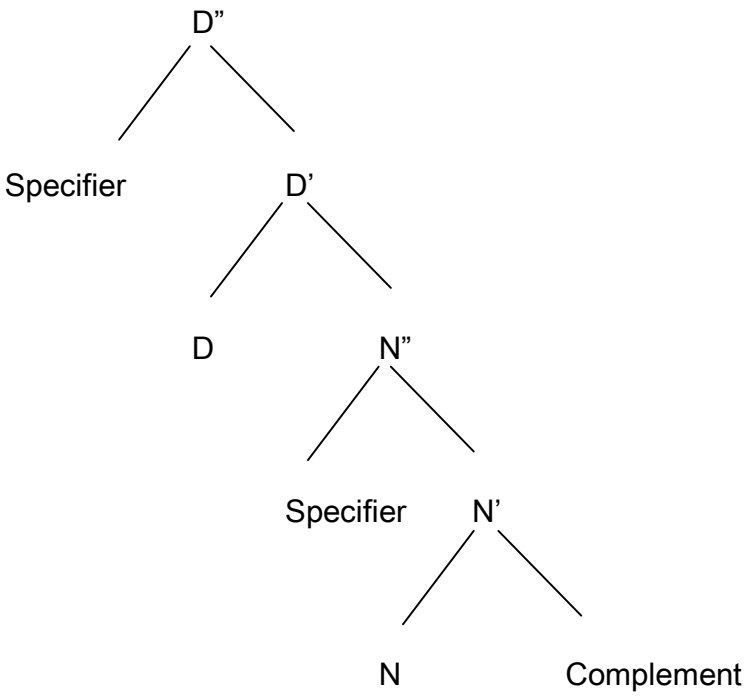


2.2.1.3 Determiner Phrase (DP)

The head of a phrase is a "simple element" i.e., non- phrasal- It is a lexical or a functional category- Examples of lexical categories are noun, verb, adiective

and preposition, since they head their maximal projections. Examples of functional categories are I and C, and they head IP and CP respectively. Infact , X bar-syntax claims that only the head is a simple element. A specifier or a complement may be in a maximal projection form and therefore they may be a pharse. Then what about the structure of NP shown in(5)? Is the determiner (article) a maximal projection ? It is not. It is a simple element and must therefore be the head of a phrase. A recent claim is that what we commonly call a noun phrase (NP) is in fact not headed by the noun , but by the determiner, and hence it has to be properly called as determiner phrase (DP). The structure postulated is:

5.



In this thesis we are not going into the analysis of the sentences with DP analysis. We are analysis the Tamil sentences with NP analysis only.

2.2.2 Projection Principle

This is concerned with how the lexical entries project onto the syntactic structure. The lexical entries not only contain details of their lexical category, meaning, etc. but also specification of the syntactic categories (complements) that they projects onto the structure of the sentence. For examples, the Tamil verb ’koṭu ’ “give” is followed by only two NPs (a) NP1 and NP2 ‘koṭu’ (-NP1 NP2). The verb pa:r “see” is followed by only one NP i.e. NP1 ‘pa:r’. Illustration

avaṉ rāmaṉukku oru pēṉā koṭuṭṭāṉ

‘He gave a pen to Raman’

Avan oru patam parttan

“He saw a picture”

In the first sentence the verb koṭu ‘give’ takes two NPs (i.e) rāmaṉukku ‘for Raman’ , oru pēṉā ‘on pen’. But in the second sentence, the verb pār “see” takes only one NP (i.e) paṭam “picture”. In this way the lexical entry for each verb permits only certain possibilities, not all possibilities.

Definition : Representations at each syntactic level (i.e) LF and D and S-structure, are projected in the lexicon, in that they observe the sub categorisation properties of lexical items.

2.2.3 ∅-theory

∅-theory concerns with the different semantic roles of the sentential constituents. Different semantic roles which could be identified (∅-roles) are agent, patient, goal, etc. (i) **Agent** refers to the person or thing carrying out the action, (ii) **Patient** refers to the person or thing affected by the action and (iii) **Goal** refers to the recipient of the object of the action.

Let us consider the following illustration: (i) rāmaṉ paḻam cītāviṟku koṭuttāṉ ‘ Raman gave fruit to Sita’. Here in this sentence, rāmaṉ ‘Raman’ is the agent, paḻam ‘ fruit’ is the patient and ‘cītāi’ is the recipient of the section

2.2.3.1 Conditions for ∅- role Assignment

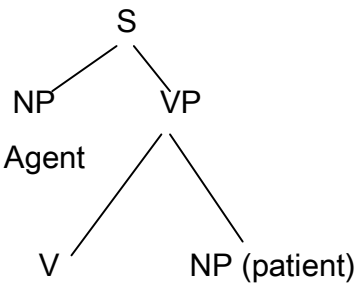
(i) ∅- roles assign only to a A-position and not to A position (i-e) items such as specifier and COMP cannot be assigned ∅-roles. (ii) the agent of an action is an external ∅-role only to those positions that conform to particular grammatical configuration of subject or object, (iii) the agent of an action is an external ∅-role that goes outside the maximal projection of the verb; the other ∅-roles such as goal or patient are within the maximal projection. So to explain the external, ∅-role of NPs, EPP (extended projection principle) is formulated.

Definition: Lexical requirements viz. categorical, sub categorization (thematic properties) and structural requirements viz. the requirement that a clause should have a subject must be uniformly satisfied at all syntactic levels. For example, if a transitive verb as

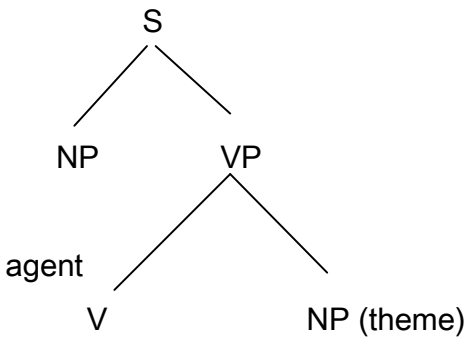
devour has an NP agent subject and an NP theme object at D-structure, then it must have the same subject and object at S structure also. Illustratin:

6.

D – S



S - S



2.2.3.2 ∅- Criterion

The main principle of ∅- theory is ∅- criterion, which requires each thematic role to be uniquely assigned. Each constituent denoting an argument just one ∅-role and each ∅--role is assigned to just one argument denoting constituent. The projection principle guarantees that the-criterion applies to LF, the level at which all the syntactic and lexical information relevant to semantic interpretation including ∅-role assignement is brought together.

2.2.4 Government Theory

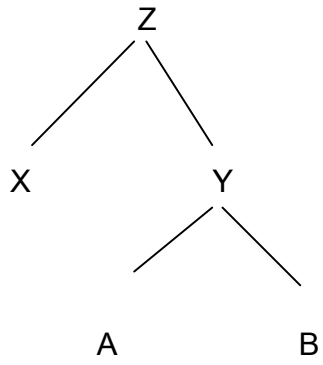
This plays a central part in the sub-systems of rules. It has roles to play in many other modules of language faculty such as case theory, binding theory, bounding theory, etc. This theory deals with matters such as the following ones:

1) What are the various governing elements or governors in a language?
2) What are the governors or the elements that are governed by other elements?
3) How does a governor govern its governed elements? The government theory involves notions such as C-command, governors, governed ones and barriers.

2.2.4.1 C-command

"X C-command Y if the first branching node dominating x dominates y, and x does not dominate y, nor y dominates x (A branching node is a node which braches into two or more immediate constituents") (Radford, 1988:115)

The above can be schematically represented as follows:



Here x and y mutually C-command each other. At the same time, x C-commands the daughter branches of y viz., the nodes A and B. However A and B cannot C-command x since the first branching node dominates A and B in Y while for X, it is Z.

2.2.4.2 Government

In the above representation, if x and y come under the same maximal projection (here z) then they mutually govern each other. On the other hand, through A and B are C-command by z, if y is a maximal projection, then x cannot govern A and B. Thus the maximal projection stands as a barrier for government of A and B by x.

The important different between C-command and government is, the C-command has only upper limit, government has the lower limit too.

2.2.5 Binding Theory

This theory is concerned with the relationship existing between different types of nouns in a sentence, It contains there principles:

1. An anaphor is bound within the local domain.
2. A pronominal is free from the local domain.
3. A referential expression should be free.

To illustrate let us see the following sentences:

7 (i) cītā taṉṉai t tāṉē aṭittukkoṇṭāḷ ‘

sita beat herself’

In the above sentence taṉṉai t tāṉē ‘herself’ is an anaphor. This anaphor has the antecedent cītā within its local domain (here within the clause).

7 (ii) cītā avaṉai aṭittāḷ

‘sita beat him’

In this sentence the pronoun avan ‘he’ pronominal. This pronominal has no antecedent within its local domain.

7 (iii) cītā cāppāṭu cāppiṭṭāḷ

‘ Sita ate meals’

In the above example, the local domain is defined as the immediate higher NP or S which helps to determine whether the concerned element is an anaphor or a pronoun

2.2.9 Bounding Theory

The various conditions places for transformations in the earlier generative grammars are now brought under the bounding theory. But the nature of the conditions of earlier models is different from this theory. In the earlier model conditions were placed for the structural descriptions which undergo transformation, but bounding theory puts conditions for the elements which move. If many movement are needed then the cyclic principle would be applied. This can be illustrated as follows:

8a. “ John might suspect that we will resign”.

In this sentence, if “might” moves to the complement position then the sentence would be grammatical. In other words, the ‘Aus’ of the main clause could move to the front, since it crosses only one node (IP).

“ Might John suspect that he will resign?” On the other hand, if the ‘Aux’ of the embedded clause “will” moves to the front, then the sentence would be ungrammatical, since it crosses more than one node, here two nodes (IP and CP).

8b. “ Will John might suspect that he resigh?”

From the above, it is clear that no constituent can move more than one node.

The following examples show the cyclic principle.

8c. “what did [[$_{IP}$ You say that [$_{IP}$ you would do -]]] ?”

This sentence has four IP’S “what” first comes to the specifier position of the second IP. Then it moves to the third IP and finally reaches the fourth IP. This is called as cyclic movement. This kind of cyclic principle makes this sentence as a “grammatical one”. The above examples are from Radford (1988. P 567-69).

2.2.10 Control Theory

This theory deals with the mechanism of recovering one specific type of category called “missed” nouns, Subjectless sentences are common in natural language. If the

agreement element is strong in a language, then the subjectless sentence would be possible. Otherwise this type of sentence is impossible. Let us consider the following sentence.

9.(i) John (i) wants [PRO[Jj] to leave]

(ii) John persuaded Bill^[Pro – to leave]

In both (i) and (ii) i= j, but in (i) **John** is the subject and in (ii) **Bill** is the object. In other words, want and persuade are subject and object control verbs respectively and are lexically marked as such.

Note: English non-finite verbs do not have any AGR inflection that will enable one to recover the subject. Anyhow the native speaker could easily recover the mission noun. This type of empty categories are symbolized PRO (referred as big PRO) in GB theory.

While analyzing some of the tamil sentences, PRO is present in governed position in Tamil. That means it is not PRO, it is pro only. Let us consider the following sentences!

10a. nāṉ (e) pōka virumpiṉeṉ " I wanted to go .

10b. nāṉ nāṉ pōka virumpiṉeṉ " I wanted (j) to go[!]

The embedded clause non-finite verb pōka "to go[f] has no overt subject argument. However, any native speaker of Tamil can recover it as nāṉ "I[1] in Tamil. If a sentence contains more than one clause but has the same subject, then the subject of non-finite

verb should be dropped. Otherwise, the sentence would be ungrammatical and unacceptable. So in Tamil, control theory works with 'PRO' and not with 'PRO'.

2.2.11 Movement

Move refers to the idea that any part of a sentence can be moved anywhere. However, move has some constraints (i.e.), elements can move only to certain locations and certain elements in a sentence only can be moved. Some of these restriction apply to all human languages. Some are parameters that vary within limits from one language to another. In terms of x-bar syntax movement involves elements which are maximal projections N" (NP) or elements with zero projection (V).

2.2.11.1 NP-Movement

It is the movement of NP's from A position to Non-marked A-position and it leaves NP-trace. Let us consider the following illustrations.

11. D-S seems [John to be happy]

    S-S John seems [t to be happy]

Here, the embedded clause subject "John" has no governor to get nominative case because of the infinitive nature of the embedded clause verb. But, the case filter says that no overt NP without case should occur. Hence the above NP "John" has to move to subject position of the main verb "seems" to get the nominative case. Otherwise, the sentence would be ungrammatical. Here in the above sentence "t^f is the NP-trace.

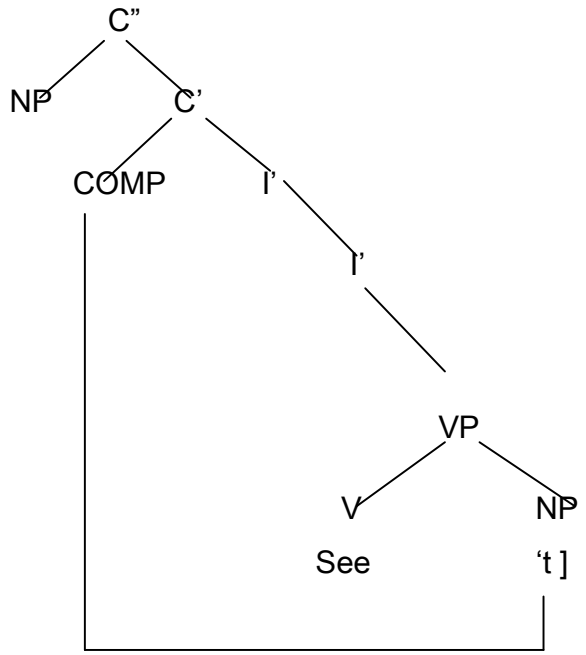
2.2.11.2 Wh-Movement

It is the movement of wh-phrases from A (Argument) position to the Non-A (argument) position of specifier of C, and it leaves Wh-trace (variable).

Let us consider the following illustration

12. D-S: You INFL see whom

S-S : Whom did you see t ?



From the above diagram, we understand that the NP whom in the VP at D-S level is moved to the COMP position in the S-S level and leaving a trace (i.e.), Wh-trace) in the S-S level.

2.2.11.3 V-Movement

V-movement is the movement of V to INFL or to the head of C. Let us consider the following example: 13. Susan likes tomatoes.

Generally the INFL(I) and its feature come to the left side of the verb in a sentence but in the surface sentence of English, these features are actually manifested on the right side of the verb.

In “Susan likes tomatoes” the S-ending of “likes” shows present tense and singular agreement. The GB account is that “there is a rule called R, which assigns the elements of INFL to the initial verbal elements of VP. It is a parameter of UG whether languages use rule R in the syntax or in the PF component.

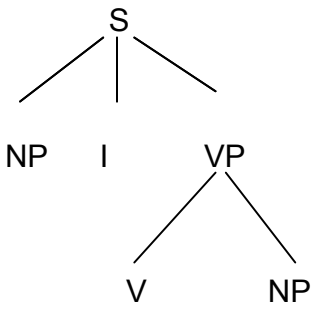
If the latter is the case, then the rule R changes the order and attaches the appropriate features to the end of the verb. However, the rule R explains nothing. It recognizes the issue but adds an adhoc rule to relate the feature of INFL in the right place.

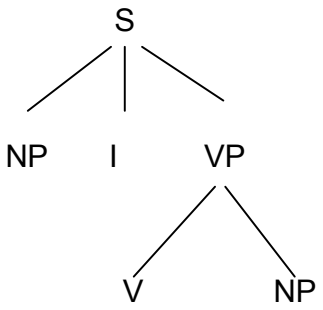
The barrier account reinterprets rule R as movement of the verb. The V is originally with VP. It moves to become part of INFL and to incorporate the relevant features.

The D-structure of the above sentence (13) to Susan I, v _ likes tomatoes

After the application of V-movement, the resultant superficial structure is as follows:

Susan Vp (like present singular) (tomatoes)





Susan Pre sai like tomatoes -> Susan likes tomatoes

Sing Singular

V movement brings the amalgamation of INFL and V within the theory in a less arbitrary fashion than rules R. One difference from rule R and from the earlier analysis from which it derives is that V moves to the left rather than INFL to the right.

2.2.12 Case Theory

The case theory in GB theory says that “every phonetically realized NP must be assigned (abstract) case” (Chomsky 1986:74). The above case filter will, thus, predict the ungrammatically of (i) and the grammatically of (2) given below:

1. rāmaṉ nalla

   “Raman good”

2. rāmaṉ vantāṉ

   “ Raman came”

In (I) there is no source of case on ‘good’ because nall ‘good’ being an adjective cannot assign nominative case to the subject NP rāmaṉ ‘Raman’ and hence it

becomes ungrammatical. But in the second sentence, vantāṉ ‘came’ has a source of case and hence it is grammatical.

2.2.12.1 The need for Case Filters

Like all other sub theories in GB, case theory also interacts with other sub theories and produce wellformed sentences. Now we will see how case theory interacts with 0-theiry.

2.2.12.2 Visibility Condition

Chomsky (1986) assumes an inherent association between case-marking and theta marking (semantic role assignment to arguments) and provides motivation for the existence of the case filters as a principle of universal grammar in terms of theta-marking.

2.2.12.3 Visibility Condition Definition

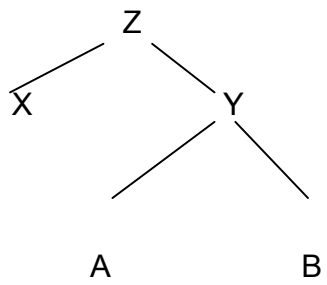
“ An element is visible for theta-marking only if it is assigned case (Chomsky 1986a:94). Since theta-roles or semantic roles are plausible primitive categories of the structure of language, in having their correction outside the structure of language, the visibility condition provides a potential explanation for the presence of the case filter in the grammar”.

2.2.12.4 Case Theory and Government

Government theory plays an important role for case assignment in GB theory. Case is assigned through government. Government is defied is C-command relation.

2.2.12.4.1 C-Command: Definition

X- C-commands Y iff the first branching node dominating X dominates Y, nor does Y dominate X (a branching node is a node which branches into two or more immediate constituency). This can be schematically represented as follows:



Here X and Y mutually C-command each other. At the same time, X C-commands the daughter branches of Y viz, the nodes A and B. However, A and B cannot C-command X, since the first branching node dominates A and B in Y while for X, it is Z.

In the above statement, Z (the head) does not C-command the specifier position of its projection, the C-command formulation of government cannot handle nominated case assignment through Spec-head agreement. In our study also we are adopting this proposal

Two other notions which enter the definition of government are ‘barrier’ and ‘minimality’. ‘barrierhood’ is defined in terms of blocking category (BC).

A is a blocking category if it is not LO-marked.

2.2.12.4.2 L-Marking

A is theta-marked by B if A is a complement of B. Having defined blocking category and the associated concept we are able to define a barrier

2.2.12.4.4 Barrier

A is a barrier for B if (i) or (ii);

(i) A is a blocking category, and A =£ - IP

(ii) A immediately dominates c , where c = blocking category. The last clause in the definition government relates to the minimality defined as in blow:

2.2.12.4.5 Minimality

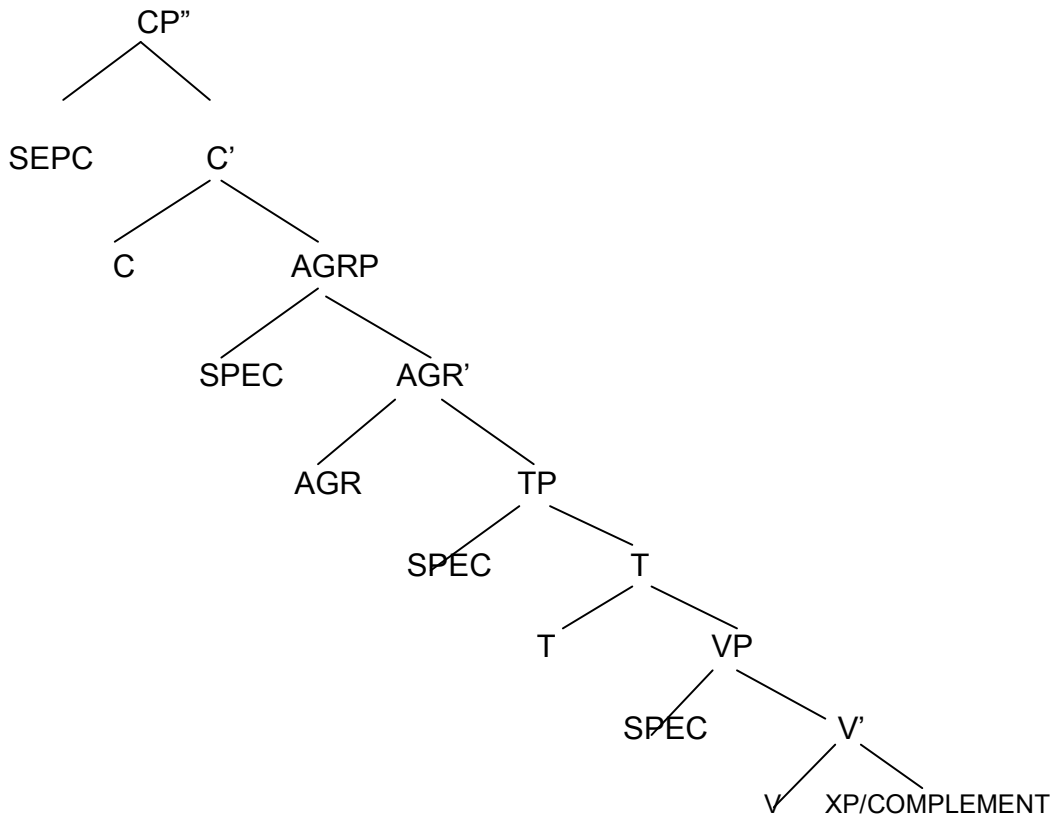
A governs B if there is no C separating A and B where C is a category of the level of A. Separation may be defined as follows:

2.2.12.4.5 Minimality

A governs B is there is no C separating A and B where C is a category of the level of A. Separation may be defined as follows:

2.2.12.4.6 Separation

C Separates A and B if it C-commands B but does not C-command A. The above stated definition can be illustrated as follows:



In (17) V, being a lexical category, theta-governs and L-marks its complement positions, Any phrase in this category. VP itself is a blocking category, and hence a barrier. Because T, being a functional, non-lexical category does not L-mark VP.

The C in (17) can govern the spec-AGRP position because the AGRP (ir., IP) although not L-marked, is a defective category with respect to barrierhood. The C, however, cannot govern the TP for the reasons of minimality, because the TP has closer governot of AGR.

As for CP in (17) it is a barrier because it dominates a blocking category namely AGRP.

2.2.12.4.7 Assignment of Case Through Government

In the following condition, an NP will get case 1. An NP gets case if it is in governed position and if the governor is a case assigner and 2. In specific ungoverned positions an NP may get case through exceptional case marking.

2.2.12.4.8 Configuration of Case Assignment

This issue can be broken down into two parts (a) what are the elements that assign case and what are the cases they assign?
(b) what king of relation that holds or must hold between a case assigner and a case assignee?

Generally –N categories like verb, preposition, tense and AGR assign cases, but sometimes +N categories such as adjective and noun may also assign cases under certain conditions. According to Chomsky (1981), the following cases are assigned by the following elements:

1. NP is nominative if governed by AGR.

2. NP is objective if governed by the web
3. NP is oblique if governed by P
4. NP is genitive in (NP-X bar).
5. NP is inherently case-marked as determined by the properties of its (-N) governor

So far, we have seen the various sub-theories of UG and its principles and parameters. Now, we will take case assigned parameters along and will see how it has been working for Tamil Language.

2.13 Case Assignment in Tamil

Every noun phrase should have some particular case and this case should be assigned by some elements in sentences.

3. NOMINATIVE CASE ASSIGNMENT

There are difference of opinion among scholars about assignment of nominative case to the subject NP in Tamil. Let us consider following sentences.

1 rāmaṉ cītāvai aṭittāṉ eṉṟu rāvaṇaṉ kēḷvippaṭṭāṉ

Ravanan understood Ram beat Sita

2 rāmaṉ cītāvai aṭittāṉ eṉṟu rāvaṇaṉ kēḷvippaṭṭāṉ

Ravanan understood Ram beat Sita

In the two sentences given above, the sentence (1) is grammatically correct, whereas the sentence (2) is not. Because the COMP in the S is missing. According to Chomsky, the complementizier 'that' will carry + tense features and the complementizer 'for' will carry (-) tense features.

This shows that the sentence (1) has 'that' complementizer 'enru'. So it carries the (+) tense feature from the matrix verb to the subject NP and assigns nominative case. But in the sentence (2) there is no 'that' complementizer and the tense element cannot carry the case from the matrix verb to the subject NP and assigns nominative case to the subject.

Now let us consider another construction which doesn't have 'that' complementizer (eṉṟu) but the sentence is grammatically correct.

3 rāvaṇaṉ (rāmaṉ cītāvai aṭittāthai) kēḷvippaṭṭāṉ

'Ravanan understood the news that Raman beat sita'

In this construction, the meaning of complementizer ‘en̲r̲u’ is recovered by the element ‘atai’ so the (+) tense element will pass through the ‘atai’ element and assigns nominative case to the subject NP.

Based on these three examples (1) (2) & (3) we can come to a conclusion that the COMP structure is likely to be “two slot gap”. The left slot is filled by either Zero marker or ‘en̲r̲u’ marker and the right slot is filled by ‘atai’ marker (or) other marker which gives meaning ‘that’

Now there arises one more problem, could we include the tag question marker ‘a:’ in the COMP Position or not? But it is not necessary to includes this a marker to ‘COMP’ structure because, it is not only occurring in COMP position but also it is occurring in other constituents also.

1. rāvaṇaṉ rāmaṉ cāppiṭṭāṉa en̲r̲u kēṭṭāṉ

   Ravanan asked whether Ram took food.

2. rāvaṇaṉ rāmaṉā cāppāṭu cāppiṭṭaṉ en̲r̲u kēṭṭāṉ

   Ravanan asked weather it was Ram who took food.

   So ‘a:’ marker is not always fixed in COMP position. This shows that ‘en̲r̲u’ or some other element in the COMP takes (-)wh – element only, but in English it will take (+) wh element.

Now let us consider the non-finite constructions in Tamil. An interesting feature of non-finite construction in Tamil is that this language allows a lexical NP marked nominative in the subject position of certain non-finite construction and there are also constructions where the subject NP is in the accusative case. The following illustrations explain the situation clearly.

4 a. nāṉ (ceṭi vaḷara) taṇṇīr ūṟṟiṉēṉ

i-nom plant-nom grow water pour +PNG

inf obj verb

'I poured water to grow the plant'

b. nāṉ avaṉai pārkka ceṉṟēṉ

I non he-acc see-went + PNG

Inf I went to see him.

In 4(a) the embedded subject gets nominative case. But in 4(b) the embedded subject gets accusative case. These illustrations shows that the embedded verb is not deciding the assignment of case to the embedded subject and there is a strong possibility for a PRO or lexical NP-(PRO) to occur in the subject position of the embedded sentence some illustrations are given below.

5 A. nāṉ [(e) eḻuntirikka] virumpukiṟēṉ

‘I wanted to get up’

b. nāṉ [(e) eḻuntirikka] muyaṉṟēṉ

‘ I tried to get up’

6. A. nāṉ [(e) eḻuntirikka] muyaṉṟēṉ

‘ I tried to get up’

b. * nāṉ [avan eḻuntirikka] muyaṉṟēṉ

‘ I tried him to get up’

The sentence (5) and (6) show, the occurance of PRO in the subject position. However in sentence (5) the PRO is alternate with an lexical NP ‘avan’ but in the sentence (6) the PRO is not alternate with an lexical NP ‘avan’. According to Chomsky ‘PRO’ is governed by the verb and in sentence a strong possibility or ‘pro’ to occur in the PRO position. Because ‘pro’ only occurs in governed position and it even be easily recoverablt also. So what we consider a ‘PRO’ in 5 and 6 is not a PRO at all, but it is ‘pro’ only. Let us go back to the sentence 4(a) and 4(b). In these sentences, how the embedded subjests set case is a problem for this, we assume, there is a tense operator position in COMP in both tensed and non-tensed clauses and the operator position in non tensed clause is unfilled. We further assume that the tense feature can percolate down from the matrix INFL to the operator position in COMP of the embedded clause in

COMPO of the embedded clause in infinite clauses (this option will not be available for the finite clauses since the operator position of the finite clause will be filled by the (+) tense feature, from here the feature further percolate down to the INFL node of the embedded clause. These tense feature assign case to the subject position of the infinitival constructions where there is an alternation between a lexical NP and a EC. This assumption suits well for all the non-finite constructions. In 4(a) the embedded verb is in intransitive form. So, it won't take object NP and it will only take subject NP. So the + tense in the matrix verb easily assigns nominative case to the subject NP, But is the sentence 4(b), the embedded verb is in the 'transtive form' so it will take both object NP and subject NP. In this case (+) tense in the matrix verb assigns nominative case to the subject NP (i.e., here in this sentence 'pro' will take Nominative case and matrix verb it self assigns objective case to the object NP 'avan')

Conclusion

From the forgoing discussion, it becomes clear that the assignment of nominative case to subject NP of the finite as well as non-finite clauses is done by the tense element occurring in the matrix verb.

4. OBJECTIVE AND DATIVE CASE ASSIGNMENT

4.1 Objective Case Assignment

According to Chomsky (1981:170) an NP is object if it is governed by a verb (V) with sub categorization feature (NP) i.e., a transitive verb. Example: John gave a book to Bill. In this construction, the NP “a book” receives object case from the verb.

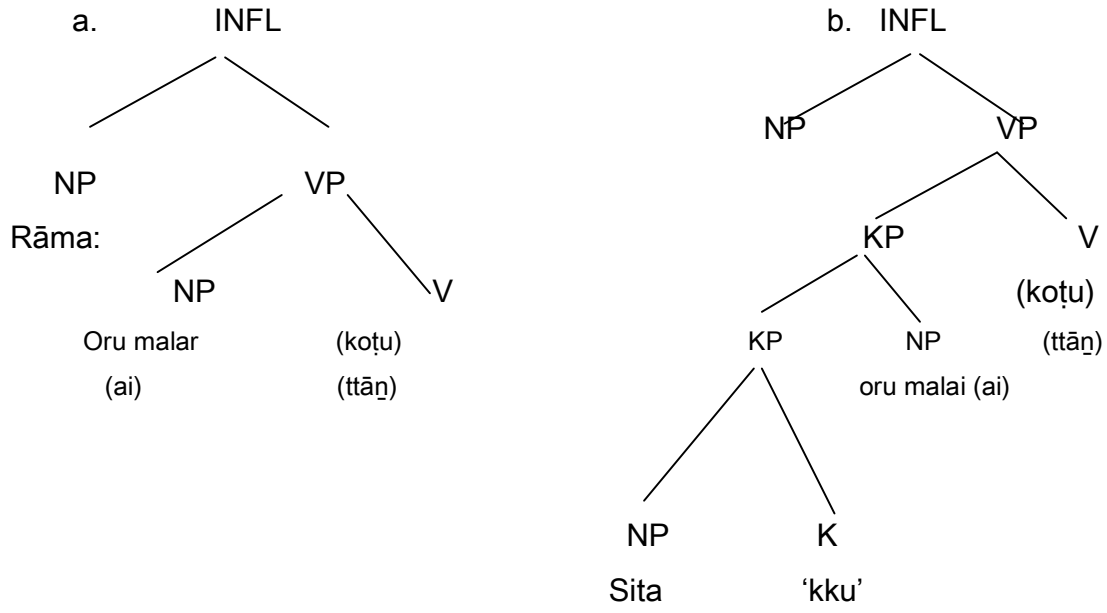
Geetha (1985) assumes the objective case and dative case are not assigned by the verb, but by the case markers themselves. She argues in Tamil that the verb is not a case assigner. Contrary to Geetha, Vimala Devi (1992) in her analysis says that the verb assigns Q-roles as well as case to the object NP and dative NP, because these two arguments ae internal arguments of a verb. However, while analyzing few sentences in Tamil, it is found out that the case marker assigns dative case and the verb assigns objective case. The arguments for the above hypothesis were given below.

a) rāmaṉ oru malarai koṭuttāṉ

   “Rama gave a flower”

b) rāmaṉ (oru malarai cītāvukku koṭuttāṉ)

   “Rama gave a flower to Sita”



Note: INFL – inflexion for the verb KP – Case Phrase

KI – Case Marker RC – Relative Clause

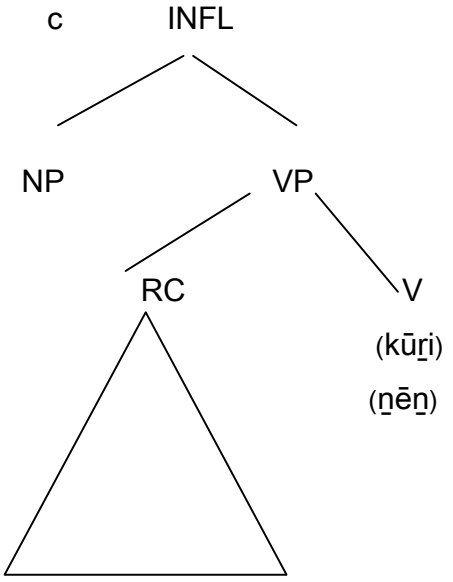
In the first construction, the verb is governing and assigning case to Object NP, Buyt , in the second sentence, The verb is governing two NP's (object NP and dative NP). The general opinion is that due to the NP movement the object NP case. But, now the question is how does the verb move the direct object and now the indirect object and assign case only to the direct object?

So we cannot explain dative case assignment through movement theory only one way to solve this problem is considering dative case marker 'kku' as case assigner and it will govern the NP 'Sita' and assign case to it. The verb as usual, governs the direct object malar 'flower' and assigns case to that NP.

Now consider the following embedded construction

(c) avaḷai oru ciṟanta talaivi eṉṟu kūṟiṉēṉ

“ he told that she is a good leader”



avaḷai oru ciṟanta talaivi eṉṟu

Even through the matrix verb “kūṟi” is not directly governing the embedded object, it gets case from the matrix verb. How the verb will assign case? Only one way is considering the matrix verb kūṟi will percolate down to embedded verb and assign case to the object NP.

4.1.1 Conclusion

The verb will govern and assigns case to direct object NP. NP movement is not a failure of an NP to get case in the place of its origin. In fact in Tamil, there is no need for the NP movement. In embedded construction, the object NP will get case from the matrix verb through percolation.

4.2 Assignment of dative case:

According of Chomsky, the dative case is assigned by inherent case. Consider the following illustrations:

1. John gave bill a book. In this construction (1) the NP ‘bill’ receives case from its governor ‘gave’. But the problem is the NP ‘ a book’, which is far away from its governor ‘gave’ also, gets case Chomsky tries to solve this problem by arguing that the above said construction (1) will have the NP Bill’ which receives structural case from the verb ‘gave’ and ‘a book’ receives inherent case which he says that is closely linked to the th Q-roles.

Later he receives his position and claims that case is assigned to the second NP structurally. However, in (1981) he assumes that the VP contains an internal VP.

Thus (1) will have the following structure.

2. John [vp [gave bill] a book]

In this sentence, the NP ‘bill’ receives structural case in a normal way and the NP ‘a book’ receives structural case from v bar. This small v bar analysis is in line with adjacency condition on case assignment and a single case assignment condition (that is one case assigner assigning one case). In this analysis, it is not necessary to assume that the direct object phrase bears inherent case. If this proposal stands, inherent case in English can be dispensed with. This is automatic consequence of the single case condition under the projection principle in that verb that sub categorize for

two NP object require a layered complement structure for each NP complement to have its own governor.

The major drawback of Chomsky's v bar analysis is that V bar is treated as a governor. This does not look very elegant when we consider the standard the assumption that only lexical categories (and of course AGR) are governors. In fact, if V bar can govern and assign case nothing should prevent v double bar or even v triple bar from doing the same in a language. So due to this problem some of the scholars argued and suggested other analysis for Dative case assignment

H & W (Nobert Horntein, Amy Weinberg) assumes that in double object construction, the indirect object is marked oblique case and the direct object marked object case. The main problem with their analysis is that they ignore the signal case condition. Kayne (1984) posits an abstract x zero category which can transmit case that it receives from a verb. But the case to the second NP is not assigned under adjacency condition. This is because in his analysis a PP intervene between a case assigner and the NP which gets case. Vimala Devi (1992) who has worked for Tamil language also suggested that the verb is assigning Dative case in Tamil. These are the various works done in the Dative case assignment. Now we can see how it operates in Tamil.

Consider the following Tamil sentence.

3. [[[raman [[sitavukku [oru puttakam koṭuttāṉ]]]

According to Chomsky's v bar analysis oru puttakam koṭuttāṉ is v bar this sentence and it is assigning Dative case to 'sita'. But if v bar is assigning the dative case to the NP 'sita', then there is a possibility for v double bar or v triple bar to assign dative case. So we should drop the v bar analysis for dative case assignment. Next of we assume the verb koṭuttu 'giving' assigning Dative case means, that is also not possible. Because the verb is not a case assigne in Tamil (the proper heads enough for assignment of cases) see Geetha (1985) and Shanmugom's manuscripts, (1995).

So, we cannot say the verb koṭuttu 'give' assign dative case to both the NP's dominated by NP's dominated by VP in the sentence. Next we do not go for covert PP analysis since there is evidence to show that there is no PP in a double object NP construction. Before going to see the other arguments, first we see the scrambling phenomenon in Tamil. The normal word order to Tamil language is the following pattern.

4. [NP] nom [NP] dative [NP] acc V

   Consider the following Dative – Accusative pattern of a Tamil construction

5. A) eṉakku avaṉai piṭikka villai

   'I do not like him'

B) avaṉai eṉakku piṭikkavillai

‘ I do not like him’

In there sentence, there is no restriction for the accusative NP to appear in the [NP, S] position and we assume that accusative case is assigned by the verb (say, under adjacency condition in the unmarked case). This means that 5b is the scrambled version of 5a. Further evidence for Dative accusative order comes from (Zeplech 1982) says that in German an SOV and case inflecting language. The Dative and Accusative objective appears in either order exactly as in Tamil.

Now we move onto the constructions where the Dative NP’s occur in the subject position. Consider the following sentence

6. rāmaṉukku vēlai kiṭaittatu

‘raman got the job’

Here in this sentence, the subject NP is empty. So the Dative case NP moves so the empty subject position and occupies that position. Because it is moving to empty subject position, the Dative case assignment process in Tamil gets strucking.

For example take the above sentence (6) who is the Dative case assigner for this sentence? However whether assigner should assign case to them uniformly.

Suppose that v assigns Dative case to sitavukku in (3) then what about in (6). It is very difficult to believe that it is v which assigns case to the NP in the subject position. This will obviously be a violation of the standard assumption that the verb has no role in the assignment of case to the subject position.

This means that there should be some other mechanism for the assignment of Dative case to the subject NP.

In short, there are three should be some other mechanism for the assignment of Dative case to the subject NP.

In short, there are there possibilities as regards how an NP gets Dative case. They are

1. inherent case marking
2. v bar governance/v governance
3. Empty preposition analysis

   We have briefly discussed the (2) and (3) now we shall go on to the remaining possibility and will show that this will account for the Tamil facts in a satisfactory manner.

Now let us consider some Dative construction in Tamil where Dative NP is dominated by a VP

7.a rāmaṉ cītāvukku oru pēṉā koṭuttāṉ

‘raaman gave a pen to sita’

b. appā rāmaṉukku oru puttakam vāṅki koṭuttār

‘father brought a book for raman yesterday’

c. ṭīccar rājāvukku oru aṭi koṭuttāṉ

‘ the teacher gave raja a thrashing’

It can be seen that in all the above examples the Dative NP is in some sense the recipient. So the assignment of Dative case to the NP is not only depends on lexical governing category but also depends on Q-roles of lexical governing category such as recipient and experience. This is the view advocated in Yadurai (1981) where he says that verb more likely the predicate assigns Dative case to the subject.

However we do not consider the view that predicate as such has any role in the assignment of Dative case. Since our attempt will be give a uniform treatment of NPs both in the subject and object position, so we will assume that Dative case is the outward manifestation of the certain theta-roles. In other words, essentially our claim will be that Dative case in the projection of particular theta-roles.

Traditionally the Dative NP has been associated with various meanings like ownership, knowledge, belief, perception/liking, disliking, need, obligation, ability etc. All these meanings can be brought under the broad title recipient and goal.

4.2.1 Conclusion

To recapitulate, there are three possibilities which are available to account for how an NP gets Dative case, viz., inherent case marking v bar, v governance and empty preposition analysis. We opted for the first analysis Dative case is assigned inherently.

5 GENITIVE CASE ASSIGNMENT

5.1 Introduction

Generally the elements in the verb such as AGR, TENSE, MODAL, etc., or the preposition such as at, on, etc., will play a major role in case assignment. But in genitive case assignment, there is no way for the verb elements or for the preposition to play a major role and assign genitive case. Because in genitive construction, the genitive NP is governed by a (Noun) phrase.

The skeletal structural of a genitive construction is as follows:

NP (CASE) + NP

Example: avan caṭṭai ‘his shirt’

(or) avaṉuṭaiya caṭṭai ‘his shirt’

Here uṭaiya ‘his’ is the genitive case marker, Tholkappiyar calls his case marker as ārām vēṟṟumai. The chief meaning of this case marker is termed as kiḻaimaip poruḷ ‘posessive meaning’ which according to nannul (s-300) is of the two kinds as tārkiḻamai ‘insparable of inalienable possession’ and pirtinkiḻamai ‘separable or alienable possession’.

The classification of possession as inalienable and alienable possession is based on the nature of the possessor and the possessed nouns. If objects show non-essential dependence on a possessor, then they are said to be alienable, whereas if the object relationship to the possessor is a permanent necessary one than it is said to be

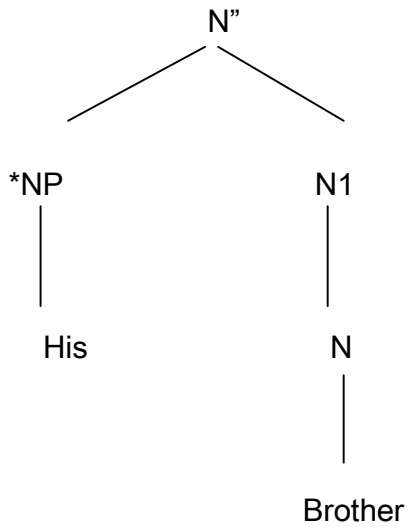
inalienable. For example, caṭṭai ‘shirt’ vīṭu ‘house’, etc. occurring in the geneitive phrases such as avaṉuṭaiya caṭṭai ‘his shirt’ and avaṉuṭaiya vīṭu ‘his house’ belong to the type of alienable possession. Because the possessed item is seen as having only a temporary or non-essential dependence on a possessor.

In alienable possession nouns express the concept than inherently relational and the relationship to the possessor is a permanent necessary one. For example, the nouns like pakkam ‘ side’ mukam ‘face’, etc. are inherently relational nouns. It is clear that the noun makal ‘daughter’ means oruvaṉuṭaiya makaḷ ‘ somebody’s daughter’ , mukam ‘face’ means oruvaṉuṭaiya mukam ‘ somebody’s face’. Here the possessed nouns are inseparable from the possessor noun and the possessed noun is a permanent necessary one. However Chomsky consider both alienable and inalienable possession as a single structural unit (poss) only.

5.2 Genitive Case Assignement

According to Chomsky (1981:170) NP is genitive (NP-X’) that is construction which has two noun phrases with an ‘N’ configuration. Let us consider the following illustration,

His brother



The above illustration shows that ‘his’ is getting case even though the governing NP* (namely the head of N’) is not a case assigner. Nevertheless, genitive case is assigned to this configuration.

So the configuration is important for English to explain the genitive case assignment but it is not so in Tamil language, because in Tamil a separate possessive element (‘atu’ (or) in (or) ‘Utaiya’) is found along with genitive NP. These elements are governing and assigning case to genitive NP, So, the structure of the genitive construction is as follows:

Noun phrase (poss) + Noun phrase

One of the two constituent NPs in this construction, the first one has taken the genitive suffix as the following example shows:

In the above illustration, the suffix ‘utaiya’ is the possessive element (x) which will assign genitive case to the NP ‘raman’. Apart from this there is no alternative for the genitive assignment.

Sometimes the possessive element uTaiya may not be present in the genitive construction. For example, let us take the following sentences:

avan puttakam ‘his book’

en manaivi ‘my wife’

Here in the above sentences, even though the genitive affix ‘utaiya’ is absent, the meaning of possession (possession of the Noun) in avan ‘he’ can be easily felt. So most of the linguistics working on GB theory posit an abstract POSS element with NP which is inflected for possessive case. This POSS element will assign genitive case to the genitive NP.

It is significant to note in the NP POSS and the article (specifiers) sometimes occur in the same position. However, articles are not phrases and hence it will not assign case to the genitive NP.

Example: avan puttakam ‘his book’

Anta puttakam ‘that book’

Now we will see the genitive case assignment in the embedded construction. Consider the following English construction:

I dislike NP (this playing football)

Here the NP ‘his’ is in genitive mode. But the Tamil version of the above sentence is ungrammatical and it is as follows:

eṉakku (avaṉuṭaiya puṭpāl) viḷaiyāṭuvatu piṭikkātu

‘ I dislike NP (his playing football)

This shows that the subject position of a gerund in English is different from the subject position of a infinite in Tamil. If the subject position of the embedded NP is nominative then the above construction is alright. It is as follows:

eṉakku (avaṉ puṭpāl) viḷaiyāṭuvatu piṭikkātu

here AGR in the matrix verb will be peculiar to the embedded verb and assign nominative case to the embedded subject.

5.3 Conclusion

POSS element which is attached in the genitive NP will govern and assign genitive case to the genitive NP.

6 CASE AND EMPTY CATEGORY 'Pro'

6.1 Introduction

There are four different sets of properties that may be associated with empty categories (Chomsky, 1982), and these sets determine whether an empty category is a trace, PRO, pro or a variable. All these empty categories are phonologically null. So it is very difficult to find out their locations. However, in the following places 'e' will occur. 1. A trace remains at an extraction site of move- 2. PRO is a pronominal which may be present in ungoverned position, 3. Pro is a pronominal which may be present in a governed position, and 4. Variables are case-marked traces. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to study the occurrence of pro in Tamil.

6.2 pro in Tamil

The empty category pro is present in Tamil language. Because this pro occurs in the subject position of a sentence, it has a great opportunity to get case. Batisetella (1985), however, claims that the empty category that appears in the governed subject position in Chinese is PRO. First let us see the difference between PRO and pro. Both PRO and pro occur only in the subject position.

6.3 PRO and pro

Chomsky (1981), following Rizzi (1979), notes that the following cluster of properties are usually found in a pro-drop language.

(i) Missing subject

(ii) Free invasion in subject sentence

(iii) Long wh-movement of subject

(iv) Empty resumptive pronoun in empedded clause

(v) Apparent violations of the (that –t) filter

He relates the phenomenon of pro-drop to take a rule which moves AGR into the VP and affixes it to V. This rule may apply in the syntax of PF level. Once it applies in the syntan, the subject position of a tensed S is left ungoverned and will be occupied by PRO, A non-pro drop language does not have this option.

In Chomsky's (1981) proposal, there is no empty category corresponding to overt pronominals. This leaves a gap in the paradigm of empty elements which are classified on the basis of the feature (+ anaphor) (+ pronominal). An empirical problem with this analysis has to do with sentences from Spanish language by Torrego (1981).

2 Con quien podra jvan ira nueva York

"with whom will john be able to go to New York"

Torrego says that PRO cannot appear in the place of jvan in this sentence. This is because the position will be obligatorily governed at S-structure by podra.

To overcome these problems, Chomsky (1982) revises his earlier position and introduces a fourth type of empty category, namely, pro which is (-anaphor, +pronominal). Chomsky says that in Spanish example (2) what occurs in the place jvan, a governed position, is not PRO but pro. This empty category fills the gap in the paradigm of the empty categories since it occurs in governed positions. It overcomes the empirical inadequacy highlighted by the Spanish data.

6.4 PRO in Tamil

The occurrence of PRO in Tamil is obligatory in some places, while it is optional in some other places according to the nature of the verb. Its occurrence is obligatory in the subject position of the infinitive constructions with control verbs like tīrmāṉi 'decidel', muyal 'try' vaṟpuṟuttu ' persuade'. Virumbu 'want' kaṭṭāyappaṭuttu 'force', etc. Let us consider the following sentences:

3 avaṉ vēlaikkuc cella tīrmāṉittāṉ

' he decided to go to job'

avaṉ vāḻkkaiyil muṉṉēṟa muyaṉṟāṉ

' he tried to progress in life'

The structure of each of the above is essentially as follows:

4 [s NP [[PRO V+PART] V AGR]

PRO is the only choice for the subject position in the embedded

Now, let us consider the following set of sentences where PRO occurs optionally in the subject position:

3 a. eṉakku (PRO/avaḷ) ciṉimāvukku pōṟatu piṭikkātu

" I don't like (her) going to movies"

eṅkaḷuṭaiya vīṭṭil (PRO/avaḷ) taṅkuvataṟku iṭammillai

"There is no place (for her) to stay in our house"

It has to be notices that in the subject position of the embedded sentence in each of the constructions above, either PRO or a lexical NP can occur.

Let us consider the following illustrations, where PRO cannot occur.

7 a. PRO nāḷaikku ceṉṉaikkup pōvāṉ

'he will go to Chennai tomorrow"

b. avaṉ PRO aṭittukkoṇṭāṉ

'he hit himself'

So far we have seen that in some places PRO occurs obligatorily and in some other places it is optional and in certain other places it cannot occur at all.

Basic property of PRO is that it is ungoverned, but if we see Tamil illustration, PRO is occurring in the governed position. In English PRO can occur in a position which is ungoverned but is case assigned as in a sentence like the following:

7 I like e PRO playing football

That the position in which PRO occurs is case assigned is evident from the following:

8 I dislike NP[his playing football]

The Tamil version of the above sentence is ungrammatical

9 eṉakku avaṉuṭaṉ puṭpāl viḷaiyāṭuvatu piṭikkātu

The point to be noted is that (9) is ungrammatical because the embedded subject is genitive. When the subject is in the nominative case the sentence is grammatical as illustrated by the following sentence:

10 eṉakku avaṉ puṭpāl viḷaiyāṭuvatu piṭikkātu

" I don't like him playing football"

This clearly shows that the subject position is one to which only nominatie case is assigned in such construction and we know that the subject position to which nominative case can be assigned is governed by AGR or the PART (ICIPLE) in the INFL. This shows that the subject position of a gerund in English is different from the subject position of the atu or a infinitive in Tamil with respect to the latter is in a governed position. Given these facts, the occurance of PRO as the subject of the gerund in English is unproblematic since it is in an ungoverned position, but the occurance of PRO in atu construction in Tamil is problematic because it is in governed position.

6.5 Pro in Tamil

Following Chomsky (1982), we define pro as an empty category in a governed positions which is not a trace and the context of a pro should be recovered in some sense. Let us consider the following illustration;

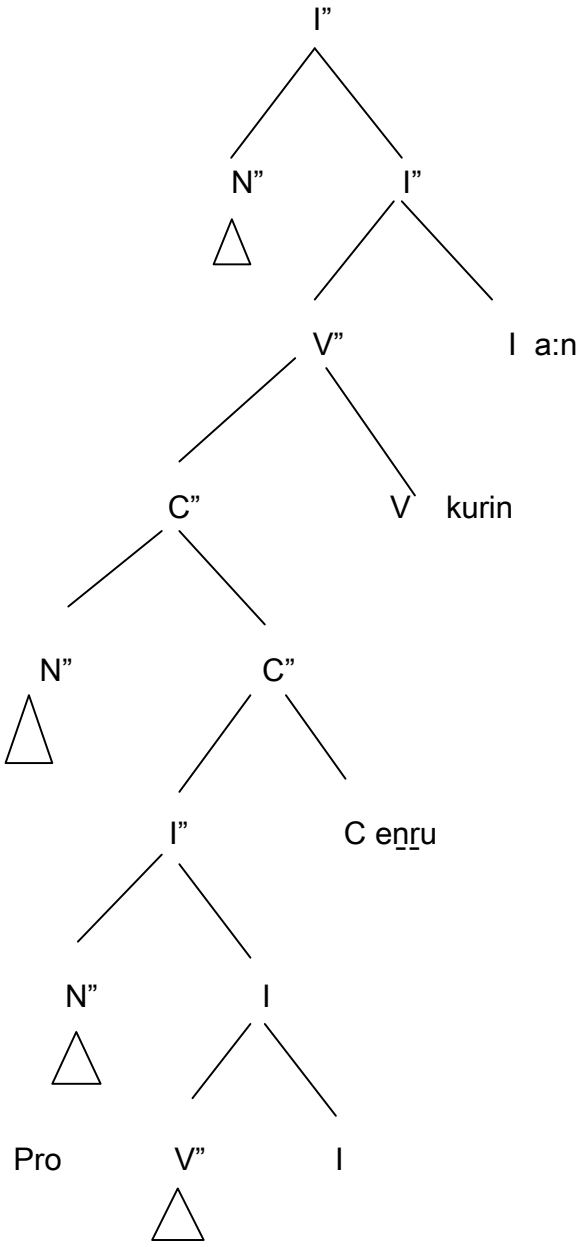
11 (paḷḷikku pōka vēṇṭām eṉṟu) mōkaṉ coṉṉāṉ

‘Mohan said (that he has to go to school)

In (11) the embedded subject is missing, The empty category in the subject position is understood as referring to the matrix subject. (11) has the structure (12)

12. mōkaṉ paḷḷikku pōka vēṇṭām eṉṟu mōkaṉ kūṟiṉāṉ

‘mohan said that (he has to go to school)



The bracketed portion in (11) that is, the lower IP in (12), as we see, is a tensed clause with an overt COMP eṉṟu. There is an empty category is not a trace (^t*) left by

movement. Both the matrix subject position and the embedded subject position are theta-positions. Therefore, the empty category is pro (empty pronominal)

Let us consider the following example:

13. (iṭli cāppiṭa vēṇṭum en̲ru) rāman̲ kūr̲iṉāṉ̲

"Raman said that (he) wanted to eat idli"

Here also we have an empty category in the embedded subject position which is identified with the subject of the matrix clause. We claim that the empty category in (13) is also a pro.

6.6 Content of Pro

Different scholars have identified the content of pro is different ways. Battistella (1985) says that the content of pro in a language can be identified by AGR is not overtly present. Then how can we recover the content of pro in those language? Chinese and Malayalam languages have this problem. Both are 'pro'- drop and languages and they both overt AGR. Huang (1982) who worked on Chinese language maintained that pro does exit is Chinese and gives the pro-drop principle as in (14).

(14) [A pro must be identified by its closest SUBJECT]. However, Battstella (1985) argues that Chinese does not have pro at all and what appears to be pro is in reality governed PRO. He further says that licensing pro un reality governed PRO. He further says that licensing pro in the way given in (14) has an undesirable result in that it misses the parallen between the reflexive ziji and pro. According to him, the distribution

of pro in Chinese is a proper subset of the distributin of ziji, since pro occurs only in positions where ziji occurs.

Mohanan (1982) who worked on Malayalam language also had the view of Battistella. However, later on Surendran (1987), in his students on Malayalam language, has argued that even though Malayalam does not have overt AGR, it can some way or other recover the content the of pro. Apart from this, he has argued that the distribution of pro in Malayalam is not necessary as a subject of reflexives. Let us Consider the following illustrations from Surendran (1987).

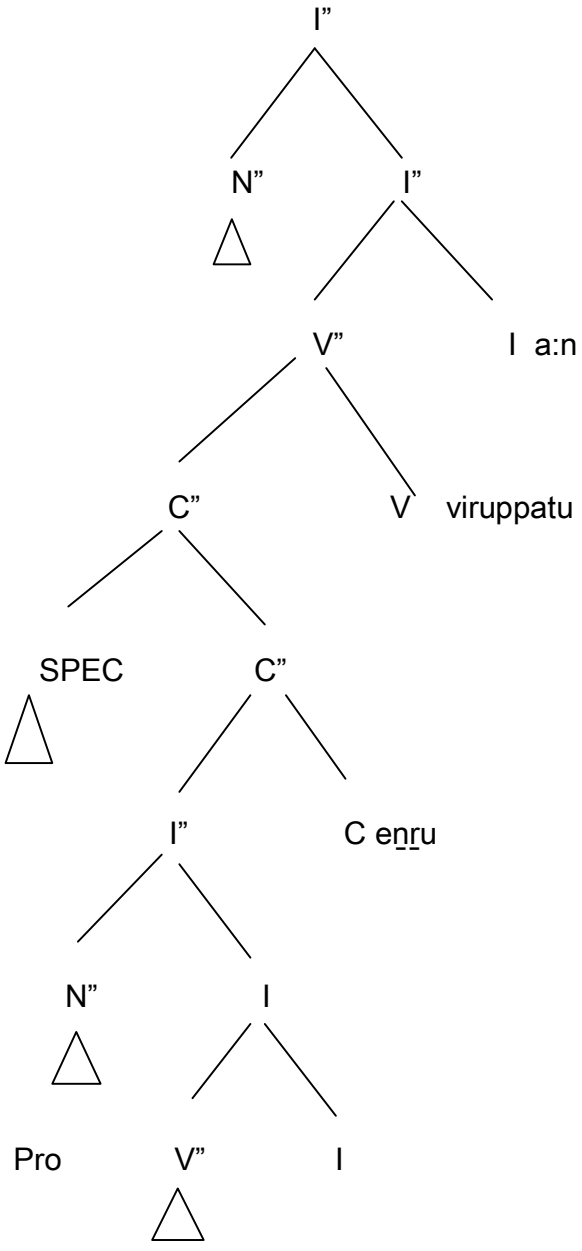
Pro / taṉ vīṭṭukku pōkaṉumēṉṉu cantiraṉ parañcu

‘ Chandran said that (he) self would go to school’

In this sentence, the empty pronominal pro alternates with the reflexive taṉ. So in Malayalam what appears as embedded subject is not PRO, it is pro only. But these types of problems do not arise in Tamil language, because in Tamil language we have a clear AGR system. The AGR element will easily identify the content of pro. Apart from this in Tamil language the embedded subject is directly related to the matrix subject. So, in Tamil language the matrix subject also recovers the content of pro in the embedded subject position. For example, let us consider the following sentence:

rāmaṉ (tāṉ) naṉṟāka irukka viruppapaṭṭāṉ

‘ Raman wanted him to be good’)



naṉṟāka irukka

in this sentence, the tense feature from the matrix INFL will percolate down to the embedded INFL through the embedded COMP and will assign nominative case on the lexical NP in the embedded subject position. Similarly, the empty category in the embedded subject position will be governed by the embedded INFL, which shows that it is an empty pronominal pro. This empty category can be co indexed with rāmaṉ “Raman” the subject of the matrix clause. So, in Tamil , we identify the content of pro in two days, (1) by its AGR system and (2) by its nearest subject.

6.7 Case Assignment for Empty Pronominal pro

In Tamil, when a verb subcategorizes for CP complement, the pro in the embedded subject position is governed and case marked. However, when a verb subcategorizes and an IP complement, the pro is governed but it is not case marked. As we have already mentioned in Chapter III (section 2.7) the TENSE/AGR element in matrix verb or PART element in embedded verb will govern the embedded subject position and assign case. So the EC pro will get nominative case from the TENSE/AGR element or PART element is embedded verb.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Consolidated Conclusion

An attempt has been made to study the properties of case assignment in Tamil under GB theory. Chomsky (1981:p170) in his GB theory proposes the following fundamental properties of case assignment for all world languages:

(i) NP is nominative if governed by AGR

(ii) NP is objective if governed by V with the subcategorisation feature: [NP-] (ie. Transitive).

(iii) NP is oblique if governed by P,

(iv) NP is genitive if (NP-X/) and

(v) NP is inherently case-marked as determined by properties of its (-N) governor.

An attempt has been made in this study of analyse the validity of the above case assignment properties for Tamil language. Most of the above said properties are found are found t suit very well for Tamil language. The findings and the proposals of this study have a significant positive consequence for GB theory, because a common criticism (atleast in the informal circle leveled against it is that its conclusions are mainly on language such as English and these conclusions face difficulty when applied to the complicated data (such as those drawn from Tamil and other languages). Our study has shown, however, that it is possible to provide a

relatively straight account of such complicated data in GB theoretical terms and without violating the fundamental principles of GB. The main findings of the study are given briefly below:

1. Each and every functional head is a case assigner in Tamil.
2. Nominative case is assigned by any one of the following functional heads (F) according to the sentences (1) TENSE, (2) AGR, (3) PARTICIPLE (4) COMP (5) NEG and (6) MODAL.
3. Objective case is assigned by the verb.
4. Dative case is assigned inherently (based on certain theta-roles)
5. Genitive case is assigned by POSS element present after the first noun.
6. Postpositions are different from case markers. Case markers will not assign case, because the case markers are particles only. IN adjuncts, the postpositions assign case to their argument.
7. Empty category pro is present in Tamil. The content of pro is easily identified by AGR features and AGR will assign nominative case to pro.

7.2 Future Prospects

The present study has elaborately dealt with the case parameters (i.e) case assignment parameters in Tamil. Other parameters care also present in Tamil language. They are (1) word order, (2) head direction, (3) Q-assignment, (4) pro, (5)

Avoid R-expression, (6) Bounding nodes, (7) anaphor, (8) relative clause, (9) passive movement, (10) Ergative, (11) Causative, (12) Topicalization, etc.

In future, attempts may be made, by scholars to work elaborately in these areas and construct a core grammar of Tamil. However, Chomsky (1996) in his talk on Chapter IV of the minimalist programme in EIEFL, India questioned the very necessity of case assignment in GB theory (1981) and case checking in minimalist program (1992) change drastically. However, for Chomsky (1988) the concept of parameters is applicable only to the lexicon and not to the computational system. So, this type of study will be useful to identify the lexical properties of particular languages.

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