

## Chapter 9

# Case, agreement, and subjecthood

### 9.1 Introduction

- The goal for this handout is to spell out formally the notions of case, agreement, and grammatical relations (e.g., subject, object, indirect object).
  - So far we have rough notions for each of these, all to be refined in this handout.
- (9.1) **Subject** (working definition):  
A DP is a subject iff it is in Spec,TP.
- (9.2) **Morphosyntactic feature** (working definition):  
A feature is a morphosyntactic feature iff it is a category feature determining the morphological shape of a constituent (e.g., *K*, *#*, *G*,  $\pi$ , PTPC, ...).
- (9.3) **Case/Agreement** (working definition):  
Case and agreement are morphosyntactic features on T and/or DP.
- Goals for this handout
    - Refine all of these definitions:
    - Spell out an analysis of case German and Turkish passives.
    - Articulate the relationship between case, agreement, and ‘DP licensing’.
    - Investigate ‘subjecthood diagnostics’ (e.g., reflexive antecedents).
    - Examine arguments that even *agents* are promoted to subjecthood.

### 9.2 German passives and case

#### 9.2.1 The basics

The last assignment was an investigation into German passives. Some active-passive pairs:

- (9.4) a. *Wir wissen, dass jedes Jahr Regen die Haelfte der Ernte zerstoeert.*  
we know that every year rain the half the harvest destroy  
‘We know that every year rain destroys (the) half of the harvest’
- b. *Wir wissen, dass jedes Jahr die Haelfte der Ernte von Regen zerstoert wird.*  
we know that every year the half the harvest from rain  
destroy become  
‘We know that every year (the) half of the harvest is destroyed by rain’
- (9.5) a. *Die Rechnungen zeigen, dass die Firma den Gewinn vergroessert hat.*  
the calculations show that the firm the profit exaggerate have  
‘The calculations show that the firm has exaggerated the profits’

- b. *Die Rechnungen zeigen, dass der Gewinn von der Firma vergrößert worden ist.*  
 the calculations show that the profit by the firm exaggerate  
*worden ist.*  
 become is  
 'The calculations show that the profits have been exaggerated by the firm'
- (9.6) a. *Ich glaube, dass die Professoren das Buch gelesen haben müssen.*  
 I believe that the professors the book read have must  
 'I believe that the professors must have read the book.'
- b. *Ich glaube, dass das Buch von den Professoren gelesen worden sein muss.*  
 I believe that the book by the professors read become be must  
 'I believe that the book must have been read by the professors'

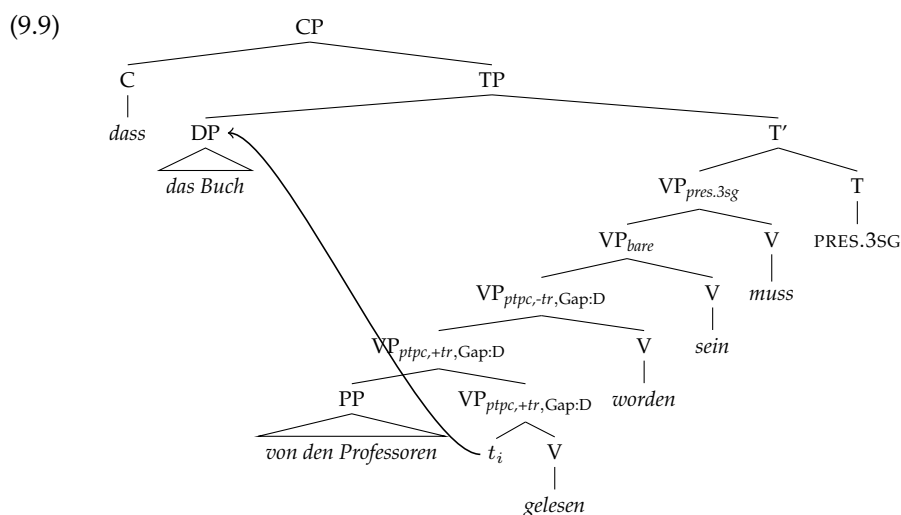
- Basic properties of German passives:
  - Like English, Spanish, Dutch, French, the passive is formed with an auxiliary plus a past participle.
  - The passive auxiliary is *werden* 'become'.
  - A non-agent DP occupies the subject position, binding a gap.
  - The perfect of *werden* is *sein* 'be' plus the past participle (*worden*).
- We can posit a lexical entry for *werden*<sub>P<sub>ass</sub></sub>, just like English *be*<sub>P<sub>ass</sub></sub>.

- (9.7)  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Phon: } \textit{werden} \\ \text{Cat: } V_{+intr} \\ \text{Select: } [V_{+tr}, \text{PTPC}, \text{Gap:D}] \end{array} \right]$

- We'll also need a *sein*<sub>P<sub>erf</sub></sub> 'be' for the perfect,
- We'll put *+(in)tr* features to ensure that *sein* selects for *werden* and not vice versa, and also so that *sein* can't be used for passives, and *werden* can't be used for perfect unaccusatives. Maybe there's something more elegant?

- (9.8)  $\left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Phon: } \textit{sein} \\ \text{Cat: } V \\ \text{Select: } [V_{+intr}, \text{PTPC}, \text{Gap:D}] \end{array} \right]$

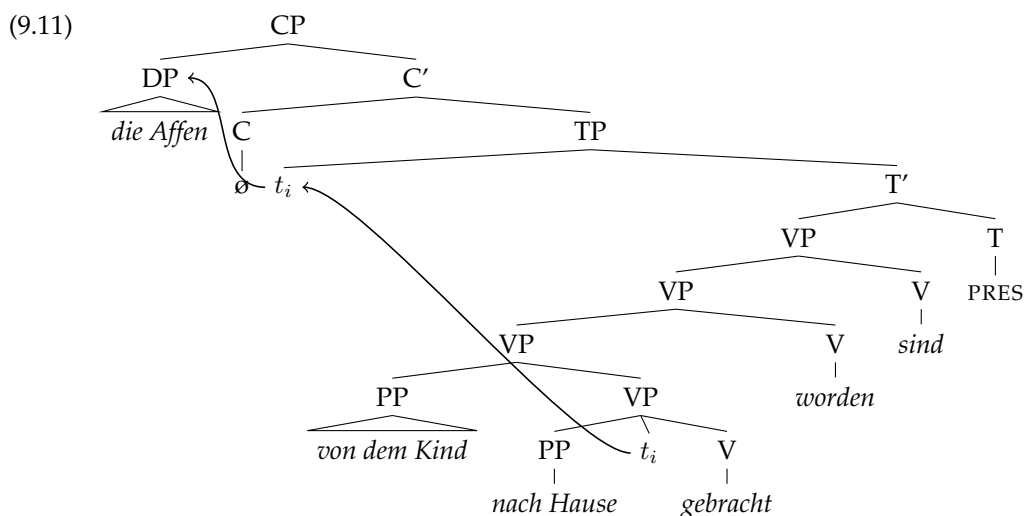
- The follow tree integrates our analysis of German V2 with *worden*-passives. We'll assume *von*-phrases ('by'-phrases) are VP<sub>PTPC</sub> adjuncts as in English/Spanish.



- There's no reason why this account cannot extend to main clause, given our developed analysis of V2, assuming V-to-T-to-C movement and topicalization to Spec,CP in declaratives.

- (9.10)
- Wurde der Affe von den Kindern nach Hause gebracht?*  
become the ape by the children to house brought  
'Was the monkey brought home by the children?'
  - Die Affen sind von dem Kind nach Hause gebracht worden.*  
the apes are by the child to house brought become  
'The monkeys have been brought home by the child.'
  - Die Affen muessen von dem Kind nach Hause gebracht worden sein.*  
the apes must by the child to house brought become be  
'The monkeys must have been brought home by the child.'

- This tree for (b) incorporates everything (V-to-T-to-C mvt not represented to de-clutter).



- This last example is a little unusual. We have a passive of a verb with a CP-complement:
  - The CP-complement is post-posed clause-finally.
  - As the CP doesn't raise to Spec,TP, a dummy pronoun *es* is there instead.
  - Note the English translation has the same properties.

- (9.12) *Es wird von allen Muettern befohlen, dass Affen nicht von Kindern nach Hause gebracht werden.*  
it becomes by all mothers commanded that monkey not by children to house brought become  
'It is commanded by all mothers that monkeys not be brought home by kids.'

## 9.2.2 Case in passives

- That's the verb-forms taken care of, what about the "choice of determiners"?
- We observe that *die Hälfte* and *das Buch* remain the same in Comp,VP and Spec,TP. But *Gewinn* is *der Gewinn* in Spec,TP and *den Gewinn* in Comp,VP.
- We can make the following table. Following German tradition, we divide the definite article by gender and refer to the subject and object cases as NOM and ACC.

(9.13)

	NOM	ACC
M	<i>der</i>	<i>den</i>
F	<i>die</i>	<i>die</i>
N	<i>das</i>	<i>das</i>

- The situation is just like Spanish DOM. The case (K) feature, of masculine DPs at least, changes depending on whether the DP is in subject or object position.
- Like in Spanish, we can say that T assigns NOM to its specifier.

$$(9.14) \begin{bmatrix} \text{Cat:} & T \\ \text{Spec:} & D_{[K:\text{NOM}]} \\ \text{Select:} & V \end{bmatrix}$$

- We will say that transitive verbs assign ACC to their complements.

$$(9.15) \begin{bmatrix} \text{Cat:} & V_{+tr} \\ \text{Select:} & D_{[K:\text{ACC}]} \end{bmatrix}$$

- A definite article with  $[G:M, K:\text{NOM}]$  is *der*, and with  $[G:M, K:\text{ACC}]$  it's *den*.
- The next set tells us some transitive verbs may assign a third case to Comp,VP: DAT.
  - *sehen* 'see' and *suchen* 'seek' assign ACC as in (9.15).
  - *helfen* 'help' and *folgen* 'follow' assign DAT instead.

$$(9.16) \begin{array}{cccc} & \text{NOM} & \text{ACC} & \text{DAT} \\ \text{M} & \textit{er} & \textit{ihm} & \textit{ihm} \end{array}$$

- (9.17) a. *Ich habe ihm geholfen/gefolgt.*  
 I have him.DAT help/follow.PastPart  
 'I have helped/followed him.'
- b. *Ich habe ihn gesucht/gesehen.*  
 I have him.ACC seek/see.PastPart  
 'I have sought/seen him.'

### 9.2.3 Expletives in passives

- Dative-case assigning verbs behave differently when passivized, i.e., the patient can remain low, with an expletive pronoun in the initial position.

- (9.18) a. *Es wurde ihm geholfen.*  
 It become.PRES him.DAT help.PastPart
- b. *Es kann ihm geholfen werden.*  
 It can.PRES him.DAT help.PastPart become.BARE

- Some options come to mind:
  - A *es* is directly selected in Spec,TP (or Spec,CP?) and *ihm* doesn't move.
  - B *es* binds a gap in VP (i.e., moves from VP), as Perlmutter proposes for Dutch.
  - C The dative *does* move, and *es* is how the higher copy is spelled out.
- Hyp A will lead us to revise the assumption that *werden* always selects for a gappy VP (contra our working theory of passives).
- The next dataset tell us that *es* doesn't appear if *ihm* does move.

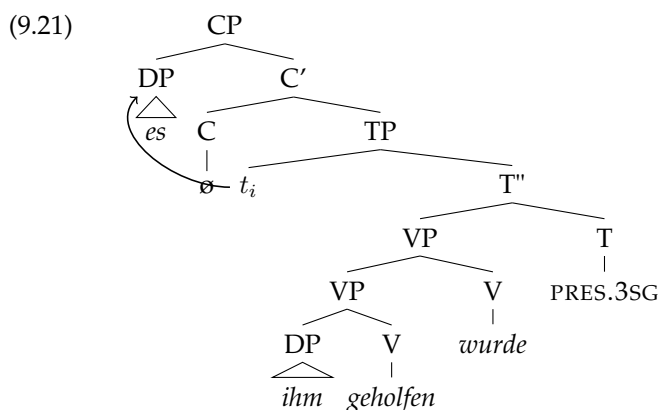
- (9.19) a. *Ihm wurde (\*es) geholfen.*  
 b. *Ihm kann geholfen werden.*  
 c. *Ihm kann (\*es) nicht geholfen werden.*

- So *es* and dative patients of passives are in complementary distribution in Spec,TP.

- This biases us against Hyp B, where *es* and the dative are both VP-internal. Under Hyp B, we'd need an extra story about why (a) is bad, i.e., why *es* can't appear VP-internally when the dative raises to the subject position.
- Next, the following impersonal passive, very similar to those in Dutch, tell us that *es* in passives doesn't always need a dative patient.

(9.20) *Es wurde auf den Strassen viel getrunken und getanzt.*  
 it was on the streets a.lot drunk and danced.

- This biases against Hyp C, which links *es* to the dative patient, not present in this case.
- Are we forced into positing Hyp A? Our lexical entry for T in (9.14) requires a nominative DP specifier, maybe *es* just satisfies that requirement if nothing else does.
- The following is a structure for *es wurde ihm geholfen*, suspending the assumption that *werden* has to select for a gappy VP.



- (9.20) would be formed similarly, just with no Comp,VP.
- This almost enough, but why is *ihm wurde es geholfen* in (9.19a) bad? Can't the dative just move to the topic position (Spec,CP), leaving *es* in the subject position (Spec,TP)?
- The following raises the same sort of question: when a PP-adjunct is in the topic position, *es* is blocked. Why?

(9.22) *Auf den Strassen wurde (\*es) viel getrunken und getanzt.*  
 on the streets was (\*it) a.lot drunk and danced

(9.23) **Working hypothesis:**  
*es* is only phonologically realized when it is in Spec,CP.

- This would immediately answer the next question: why is '*es*' bad in embedded clauses?

(9.24) a. *Wir hoffen, dass (\*es) ihm geholfen worden ist.*  
 we hope that (\*it) him.DAT help.PastPart. become.PastPart is.PRES  
 'We hope that he's been helped.'

b. *Ich weiss nicht wie im Forum am besten (\*es) geholfen werden kann*  
 I know not how in forum the best it helped be can  
 'I don't know how one can best be helped in the Forum'

c. *Ich glaube, dass (\*es) in diesem Raum gearbeitet wird.*  
 I believe that (\*it) in this.DAT room work.PastPart become.PRES  
 'I think that in this room one works.'

- Given our previous analysis of V2, *dass* doesn't have a specifier, so *es* could never be phonologically realized.

- In main clauses, where something occupies Spec,CP, or Spec,CP is not present (e.g., in polar interrogatives), *es* is blocked as predicted.

(9.25) *Ihm wurde (\*es) geholfen*  
 "He was helped."  
*Es wurde ihm geholfen*  
*Wurde (\*es) ihm geholfen?*

(9.26) *Es wurde viel getrunken.*  
 "A lot of drinking happened."  
*Dass (\*es) viel getrunken wurde, stoert mich.*  
*Wurde (\*es) viel getrunken?*

### 9.2.4 Passives and complement clauses

- As we know, certain verbs select for a CP instead of a DP.
- When these verbs are passivized in German, they do not need to move to the subject position (instead they can just be postposed).
- In this case, an expletive can appear in the subject position (directly to the right of *dass*, as predicted by our V2 analysis).
- Unlike passives of intransitive and dative-verbs, here the *es* can appear in embedded clauses.

(9.27) a. *Ich vermute, dass (es) dich stoert, dass in den Gleichungen II und IV die Variable d fehlt.*  
 'I suppose that it bothers you that in the equations II and IV the variable d is missing.'  
 b. *So ist der 1006 zu verstehen, dass (es) vermutet wird, dass der Besitzer einer beweglichen Sache auch gleichzeitig der Eigentuemer ist.*  
 "The (article) 1006 is to be understood [as saying] that it is assumed that the possessor of a moveable thing is also at the same time the owner."

- Obviously this contradicts our working hypothesis above, we'll need to separate the two classes of passives.

(9.28) **Hypothesis for passives of unergatives/dative-verbs:**  
*es* is only phonologically realized when it is in Spec,CP.

(9.29) **Hypothesis for passives of CP-selecting verbs:**  
*es* can be phonologically realized outside Spec,CP.

- The latter hypothesis explains the following. If a topic occupies Spec,CP, *es* optionally appears in the subject position.

(9.30) *Dass der Mond rund ist, (\*es) gefaellt mir.*  
*Es gefaellt mir dass der Mond rund ist.*  
*Mir gefaellt (es) dass der Mond rund ist.*  
 "That the moon is round pleases me."  
*Gefaellt (es) dir, dass der Mond rund ist?*  
 "Does it bother you that the Moon is round?"

- We see four types of passives in German, based on what the verb selects in Comp,VP:

	Type	Sel:	Passive behavior
	Regular transitives	D <sub>[acc]</sub>	Patient goes upstairs
(9.31)	Dative-assigning verbs	D <sub>[dat]</sub>	Patient stays downstairs, with <i>es</i> <sub>1</sub> upstairs
	Unergatives	∅	<i>es</i> <sub>1</sub> upstairs
	CP-selecting verbs	C	Patient can stay downstairs, with <i>es</i> <sub>2</sub> upstairs

- That's enough for the assignment, but there are some big questions here:
  - Do we have to abandon our working theory of passives (the auxiliary selects a gappy VP)? If the patient stays downstairs, there is no gap.
  - How do  $es_1$  and  $es_2$  “know” what kind of complement the VP selects?
- An idea to ponder: what if  $es_1$  and  $es_2$  are spell-outs of a higher copy of the patient?
  - Dative patients move to Spec,TP, but can be pronounced downstairs. The higher copy is pronounced *es*, but only if in Spec,CP.
  - CPs move to Spec,TP, but can be pronounced downstairs. The higher copy may be pronounced as *es*.
- But what about unergatives? Where is that *es* coming from? This is probably the biggest weakness of the “gappy VP” theory of passives.
- Remember that Perlmutter suggested that unergatives can select for *es* which moves to the subject position.

### 9.3 Turkish (im)personal passives

#### 9.3.1 Passives of transitives

- So far our discussion of passives has been very Indo-European, so let's look at Turkish.

- (9.32) a. *maymun bavul-u aC-tI*  
 monkey suitcase-ACC open-PAST.3SG  
 The monkey opened the suitcase.
- b. *bavul (maymun tarafIndan) aC-Il-dI*  
 suitcase monkey by open-PASS-PAST.3SG  
 The suitcase was opened by the monkey.
- (9.33) a. *kasap et-i kes-ti*  
 butcher meat-ACC cut-PAST.3SG  
 The butcher cut the meat.
- b. *et (kasap tarafIndan) kes-il-di*  
 meat butcher by cut-PASS-PAST.3SG  
 The meat was cut by the butcher.
- (9.34) a. *maymun ben-i IsIr-dI*  
 monkey me-ACC bite-PAST.3SG  
 The monkey bit me.
- b. *(maymun tarafIndan) IsIr-Il-dI-m*  
 monkey by bite-PASS-PAST-1SG  
 I was bit (by the monkey).
- (9.35) a. *yllan sen-i sok-acak*  
 snake you-ACC bite-FUT  
 The snake will bite you
- b. *yllan tarafIndan sok-ul-acak-sIn*  
 snake by bite-PASS-FUT-2SG  
 You will be bitten by the snake.

- Ideas about how to analyze Turkish passives?
  - What are the different selectional properties between V and V-*HI*?
  - What about the different meanings?

### 9.3.2 Passives of intransitives

- Like Dutch and German, Turkish allows passives of intransitives, but with some important differences.
- (9.36) a. *bu barda insan-lar pek Cok baGIr-Ir*  
 this bar-LOC person-PL too much yell-AOR  
 In this bar, people yell too much.
- b. *bu barda pek Cok (\*insanlar tarafIndan) baGIr-II-Ir*  
 this bar-LOC too much person-PL by yell-PASS-AOR  
 In this bar, there is too much yelling (\*by the people)
- (9.37) a. *insanlar pek Cok bu gOl-de boGul-ur*  
 person-PL too much this lake-LOC drown-AOR  
 People drown too much in this lake.
- b. *bu gOlde pek Cok (\*insanlar tarafIndan) boGul-un-ur*  
 this lake-LOC too much person-PL by drown-PASS-AOR  
 There is too much drowning in this lake.
- (9.38) a. *Universite-ye Clk-ar-Im*  
 university-DAT go.up-AOR-1SG  
 I go up to the university.
- b. *(\*benim tarafIndan) Universiteye Clk-II-r*  
 me by university-DAT go.up-PASS-AOR  
 This university is gone up to (\*by me).
- (9.39) a. *herkes yllan-lar-dan kork-ar*  
 everyone snake-PL-DAT fear-AOR  
 Everyone fears snakes
- b. *yllan-lar-dan (\*herkes tarafIndan) kork-ul-ur*  
 snake-PL-DAT everyone by fear-PASS-AOR  
 Snakes are frightening (\*to everyone).
- There are some similarities between German/Dutch impersonal passives and Turkish:
    - ‘by’-phrases?
    - agreement?
    - dative complements?
  - But one big difference is that unaccusatives can be passivized too.
  - This brings Perlmutter’s account of Dutch impersonal passives into doubt. For Perlmutter:
    - Unaccusative sole arguments are underlyingly objects
    - Impersonal passives involve a dummy pronoun which is underlyingly an object.
  - This complementarity was how Perlmutter explained why Dutch unaccusatives can’t be passivized. But Turkish would be a counterexample to this complementarity.
  - Next: be equal parts horrified and amazed by the following (from Kiparsky 2013, Legate and Akkus 2017):
- (9.40) a. *adam-ı döv-dü*  
 man-ACC beat-PAST  
 S/he beat the man.
- b. *adam döv-ül-dü*  
 man beat-PASS-PAST  
 The man was beaten.
- b. *Bu oda-da döv-ül-ün-ür*  
 this room-LOC beat-PASS-PASS-AOR  
 There is beating in this room.



### 9.3.3 Morphological passive

- Let's propose a new kind of analysis for Turkish, given that the passive seems to behave somewhat differently, and see if we can draw connections with the Indo-European periphrastic type.

$$(9.41) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Phon: } dö\ddot{v} \\ \text{Sem: } \mathbf{beat} : \langle \text{AG, PAT} \rangle \\ \text{Cat: } V \\ \text{Select: } (D_{\text{ACC}}) \end{array} \right]$$

- *Sem*: tell us that the meaning of *dö\ddot{v}* is a beating relation between an agent (beater) and patient (beat-ee).
- Now a passive. Now *dö\ddot{v}* is a one place property of being beaten, by some unspecified individual.<sup>1</sup>

$$(9.42) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Phon: } dö\ddot{v}\text{-}i\ddot{l} \\ \text{Sem: } \mathbf{beat} : \langle \text{PAT} \rangle \\ \text{Cat: } V \end{array} \right]$$

- A double passive will be an existential statement "beating happened".

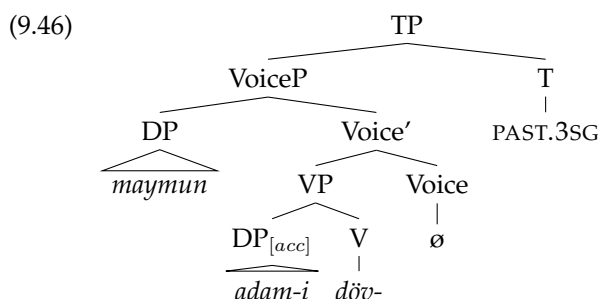
$$(9.43) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Phon: } dö\ddot{v}\text{-}i\ddot{l}\text{-}i\ddot{i}n \\ \text{Sem: } \mathbf{beat} \\ \text{Cat: } V \end{array} \right]$$

- The passive morpheme:
  - prevents a transitive verb root from selecting an accusative complement,
  - existentially closes the highest available theta role.

$$(9.44) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Cat: } V \\ \text{Phon: } \sigma \\ \text{Sem: } \tau : \langle \theta_1, \dots, \theta_n \rangle \\ \text{Select: } (D_{\text{ACC}}) \end{array} \right] \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Cat: } V \\ \text{Phon: } \sigma\text{-HI} \\ \text{Sem: } \tau : \langle \cancel{\theta_1}, \dots, \theta_n \rangle \\ \text{Select: } (\cancel{D_{\text{ACC}}}) \end{array} \right]$$

$$(9.45) \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Cat: } V \\ \text{Phon: } dö\ddot{v} \\ \text{Sem: } \mathbf{beat} : \langle \text{AG, PAT} \rangle \\ \text{Select: } D_{\text{ACC}} \end{array} \right] \Rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{Cat: } V \\ \text{Phon: } dö\ddot{v}\text{-}i\ddot{l} \\ \text{Sem: } \mathbf{beat} : \langle \cancel{\text{AG}}, \text{PAT} \rangle \\ \text{Select: } \cancel{D_{\text{ACC}}} \end{array} \right]$$

- This is a "morphology-feeds-syntax" point of view on the problem. Either *dö\ddot{v}* or *dö\ddot{v}\text{-}i\ddot{l}* are inserted under the V node.
- What about a "syntax-feeds-morphology" alternative? The following theory adapts the view of Voice in Kratzer 1996 and many others.
- Voice is its own syntactic head. In active sentences, Voice is a  $\emptyset$ -morpheme which has the agent in its specifier.



<sup>1</sup>We could substitute our *Sem*: values with  $\lambda$ -terms, e.g.,  $\lambda x.\lambda y.\mathbf{beat}(x)(y)$  and  $\lambda x.\exists y[\mathbf{beat}(x)(y)]$ .

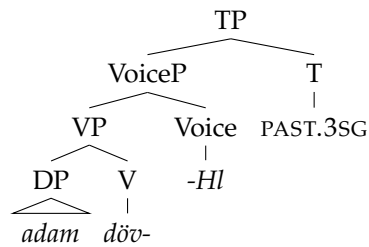
- This analysis requires a different understanding of accusative case. Kratzer proposes the following (non-CF) rule wrt accusative case.

(9.47) **Accusative case:**

Accusative case is assigned to the closest DP to active Voice (in terms of c-command).

- A passive sentence replaces the  $\emptyset$  Voice with a passive version *-HI*, which doesn't have a specifier (thus no agent), and doesn't assign accusative case via (9.47).

## (9.48)



- As *adam* doesn't get accusative, it must get some other case somehow. Some ideas:
  - It just gets a default value, i.e., nominative
  - We put *adam* in Spec,TP where it gets nominative via being selected by T, and binds a gap in Comp,VP.
- This analysis is an ultra-common way to treat voice cross-linguistically. But I'm unclear how it derives the double passive above. How does Voice "tell" V to not select its complement? (see Legate and Akkus 2017 for one approach)
- The morphological approach above has no problem with this.