

Remarks On Case Transmission

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It has been observed that an expletive must be in a Case-marked position.

- (1) a. *it seems it to be likely that John left the party
- b. *there is likely there to be a unicorn in the garden
- (2) a. it is likely that John left the party
- b. there is a unicorn in the garden

In (1) the second expletives are not in Case-marked position, ruling out these sentences, whereas in (2) expletives are in Case-marked positions. According to Burzio(1986) and Chomsky(1981,1986), an expletive must be in a Case-marked position to transmit Case to the post-verbal argument that it is linked with and that has no Case. Thus, in (1), the second expletives do not have Case to transmit to the post-verbal arguments, the CP *that John left the party* and the NP *a unicorn* respectively. In contrast, in (2), they have Case to transmit to the post-verbal arguments.

However, there is substantial evidence against Case transmission from an expletive to a post-verbal argument, as pointed out in many places such as Pollock(1981), Safir(1985), Borer(1986), Belletti(1988), Lasnik(1992), Raposo & Uriagereka(1990), and Authier(1991). That is, it is not that an expletive must be Case-marked to transmit its Case to a post-verbal argument. Let us first take a look at the instance of the expletive *it* and its post-verbal argument. Safir(1985) and Authier(1991) show that if the expletive transmits Case to the post-verbal argument, the following examples should be grammatical, contrary to fact.¹⁾

- (3) a. *it seemed [Mary's leaving]
- b. *it was noticed [Mary's leaving]

1. Pollock(1981) argues against Case transmission, considering the French expletive *il*, which is reported in Borer(1986) to be similar to *it* rather than *there* in that it has its own agreement features.

- c. *we demand it of our employees [their being nice to the customers]
- d. *I dislike it [his being so cruel]

Safir takes a gerund as an NP and Authier takes it as a DP, following Abney(1987), since it needs Case. Thus, gerunds can appear after a verb like *insist* only with a preposition but they cannot show up after a verb like *remark*.

- (4) a. John insisted *(on) Mary's leaving
- b. *John remarked Mary's leaving

Now, in (3), the expletive is in a Case-marked position, whereas the post-verba NPs (or DPs) are not. Thus, if Case is transmitted from the expletive to the NPs, the latter would have Case, satisfying the Case filter and incorrectly ruling in the sentences. Furthermore, if Case is transmitted in this way, in (1), repeated here as in (5), the sentences should also be grammatical.

- (5) a. *it seems it to be likely that John left the party
- b. *there is likely there to be a unicorn in the garden

If the Case that the first expletives receive is transmitted to the post-verbal argument via the second expletives, the post-verbal argument would have Case. The ungrammaticality of the sentences indicates that Case is not transmitted in this way at all. Furthermore, it indicates that an expletive needs Case independently of Case-transmission, given that the second expletives are not Case-marked.

It has been pointed out in many places such as Safir(1985), Davis(1986) Epstein(1987), and Lasnik & Uriagereka(1988) that clausal argument CPs need not have Case. Consider the following example from Safir.

- (6) a. John insisted *(on) Mary's leaving
- b. John insisted that Mary leave

As we can see in (6a), the verb does not assign Case to its complement so that a preposition is required to do this job. Notice that the clausal argument CP is compatible with the verb without a preposition. This indicates that it need not be Case-marked. More examples that show this are given below.

- (7) a. I am proud *(of) John
 b. I am proud that John won the race
- (8) a. *it is likely (of) John to be late
 b. it is likely that John will be late
- (9) a. *it is believed (of) John to be a fool
 b. it is believed that John is a fool

In (7)–(9), we can see that the matrix predicates do not assign Case, if we look at the ungrammaticality of the (a) sentences (without the preposition in the instance of (7)). The CPs are compatible with these predicates. Given that CPs need not be Case-marked, Case transmission to them is not necessary, hence, it must not exist. Now, we may conclude that Case is not transmitted from the expletive *it* to the post-verbal argument.

Next, let us consider the instance of *there* paired with a post-verbal NP. As in the instance of the expletive *it*, it has been argued that no Case is transmitted from the expletive *there* to the post-verbal NP. Lasnik(1992) presents evidence that Case is not transmitted from the expletive *there* to the post-verbal NP. Consider the following examples.

- (10) a. *there is likely [someone to be here]
 b. we consider [there *(to be) a man here]
 c. I consider [there *(to be) a solution]

If Case is transmitted from the expletive *there* to its linked argument, all the examples in (10) should be grammatical regardless of whether the verb *be* is present or not. The expletives are in Case-marked positions, hence, they have Case to transmit to the indefinite NPs which have no Case. The ungrammaticality of the sentences (without *be* in (10b)–(10c)) clearly indicates that Case is not transmitted so that the indefinite NPs do not have Case, violating the Case filter. Thus, the indefinite post-verbal NPs need Case in *there* constructions, as we have just seen.

- (11) a. there is a solution
 b. there arrived a man

Belletti(1988) proposes that the (unaccusative) verbs such as (11) or passive verbs assign inherent partitive Case directly to the post-verbal NPs, which are

indefinites, rejecting the hypothesis of Case transmission.²⁾³⁾ Like many others, Belletti assumes, following Burzio(1986), that the post-verbal NP is base-generated in its S-structure position (and assigned a theta-role directly from the verb).

One of the reasons for Belletti's suggestion that partitive Case is inherent is that it is not assigned exceptionally, unlike structural accusative Case, in Italian.

- (12) a. *ho sempre considerato [Gianni intelligente]*
 I always have-considered intelligent
 b. **sono considerati [alcuni studenti intelligenti]*
 are considered some students intelligent

As we can see in (12a), accusative Case, which is structurally assigned, is exceptionally assigned to the subject of the complement of the verb. In contrast, as we can see in (12b), partitive Case, which is assigned by the passive verb (see footnote 2), is not assigned exceptionally.

Lasnik(1992) on the other hand argues that partitive Case can be assigned structurally in English since it is assigned to the subject of the complement of the verb *be*.

- (13) there is [a unicorn in the garden]

Opposing the bare NP analysis of Williams(1984), Belletti(1988), among others and following the small clause analysis of Stowell(1981), Safir(1984), Burzio (1986), among others, Lasnik claims that in (13) the phrase after *be* is a small

2. Passive verbs in Italian assign Case according to Belletti.

- (i) a. *e stato messo un/*il libro sul tavolo*
 has been put a/the book on the table
 b. **there has been put a book in the table*

but, they do not in English, as pointed out by Lasnik(1992).

3. Safir(1985) suggests that there is Case transmission in the instance of *there*, although there is not in the instance of *it*. Borer(1986) claims that in Hebrew, there is no Case transmission and that nominative Case is directly assigned to the post-verbal NP under the assumption that affix hopping takes place before S-structure so that Infl can govern the NP within VP. On the other hand, she claims that in languages like English, affix hopping does not take place before S-structure, as suggested in Chomsky(1981), so that Case must be transmitted from there to the post-verbal NP, as Safir suggests. Raposo & Uriagereka(1990) reject Case transmission and propose that in European Portuguese, partitive Case is assigned to indefinite NPs in the post-verbal position as in Belletti, but nominative Case is directly assigned to the definite NPs in the same post-verbal position as in Borer.

clause. Given that extraction is impossible from an NP, whereas it is possible from a small clause, the extraction pattern in *there* constructions goes with the latter, as shown in (14).

- (14) a. *in which lake did you discuss [NP many fish t]
 b. in which lake do you want [SC some fish t]
 c. in which lake are there [many fish t]

This fact suggests that the small clause analysis is on the right track. Now, given that unaccusatives are partitive Case assigners, consider the following examples.

- (15) a. there is a unicorn in the garden
 b. *there is John in the garden
 (16) a. a unicorn is in the garden
 b. John is in the garden

The VP-internal subject hypothesis, which we have assumed so far, suggests that *be* is a raising verb, as Burzio(1986) proposes. Then, the subjects in (16) must be base-generated post-verbally, as in (15).⁴

- (17) a. _____ is [a unicorn in the garden]
 b. _____ is [John in the garden]

As we see in (15b), partitive Case is not assigned to the definite NP in (17b) since it is only assigned to an indefinite NP according to Belletti. When it moves to IP Spec as in (16b), it gets nominative Case. Furthermore, if partitive Case is obligatorily assigned to the indefinite NP in (17b), the subject in (16b) would have two Cases: nominative and partitive. Thus, partitive Case must be assigned optionally, as suggested by Belletti. Assuming that Case is obligatorily assigned by the saturation principle (all positions in a grid must be discharged, Fukui & Speas 1986: 139, cf. Higginbotham 1985), I conclude that partitive Case assignment itself is not optional; rather, an unaccusative verb bears the Case optionally in its grid.

4. This suggestion rules out Davis'(1984) approach of rightward movement of the indefinite NP to *there* constructions.

When it bears partitive Case, we get the pattern in (15), whereas when it does not bear partitive Case, we get the pattern in (16).^{5,6)}

To sum up, we have seen so far that there is no Case transmission either from it to the post-verbal CP or from *there* to the post-verbal NP. Given that Case is not transmitted, the question is why an expletive must be in a Case-marked position, as we have seen earlier in (1)-(2), which are repeated here as (18)-(19) respectively.

- (18) a. *it seems it to be likely that John left the party
 b. *there is likely there to be a unicorn in the garden
- (19) a. it is likely that John left the party
 b. there is a unicorn in the garden

This question actually consists of two parts. One is why an expletive needs Case. The answer for this is rather simple, that is, it needs Case so as not to violate the Case filter since it is a lexical NP. The expletive *it* no doubt is an NP. Its argumental counterpart is a pronominal NP. I assume that the expletive *there* is also an NP of a sort, probably an adverbial NP, as Borer(1986) suggests.

5. Under the raising approach, the D-structure of (15) is the same as that of (16). Then, one might wonder how the following scope fact is accounted for.

- (i) a. there must be someone in the house
 b. someone must be *t* in the house

Sentence (ia) is not ambiguous; the quantifier only has narrow scope. In contrast, sentence (ib) is ambiguous; the quantifier has either narrow or wide scope. We might find an answer for this in Lasnik(1992), who suggests that if the quantifier in (i) has wide scope, it is referential, hence, it is like a name and it would be ruled out by the definiteness effects in these construction (indefinites are lexically ambiguous, as suggested by Fodor & Sag(1982); they are referential or quantificational; in the referential reading, an indefinite behaves like a proper name, which has only wide scope, whereas in the quantificational reading, it has either wide or narrow scope). Or the answer might be that S-structure as well as D-structure configuration determines scope, as suggested by Lasnik (class lectures, spring 1992) or S. Ahn(1990). See Heim(1987) and Higginbotham(1987) for more discussion of the scope (un)ambiguity such as shown in (i).

6. (At least) under the raising approach, it would be mysterious why (b) of (i)-(ii) is not possible, whereas (b) of (iii) is possible.

- (i) a. there is a solution
 b. *a solution is
- (ii) a. it seems that John is crazy
 b. *that John is crazy seems
- (iii) a. it is likely that John left the party
 b. that John left the party is likely

See Rothstein(1983) and Shlonsky(1987) for discussion of and/or a possible answer for this.

Its argumental counterpart can be used as an NP, as we can see in (20).

- (20) a. Mary went to America and you can go there too
 b. how long does it take to go from here to there

Now, the other part of the question is why an expletive must show up in a Case-assigned position, that is why a Case-assigned position that is not theta-marked requires an expletive to appear in it. An answer for this is that an expletive is required to be present in a Case-marked but non-theta-marked position to satisfy the saturation principle, which forces Case to be discharged.

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