

LIN 331

Subject Positions

Subject position is a point of variation

1) SVO vs. Expletive VS(O)

Icelandic

Expl. VSO a) there read some students the book

SVO b) Some students read the book

(2)

2) SV(O) vs. VS(O)

Spanish

SVO

a) Juan read the book

VSO

b) read Juan the book

Greek

SVO

a) Peter married Ilekttra

VSO

b) Married Peter Ilekttra

(3)

3) SV(O) vs. VS(O)
+ agreement - agreement

Arabic

VSO a) criticized Iisa Muhsaa

SVO b) the children came (3.m.pl)
+ agreement

4) SV(O) vs. VSO

+ topicalization
of S

Irish

VSO a) says he [COMP put he down it]

Welsh

SVO TOP b) Mair PART hit him

(5)

Big question

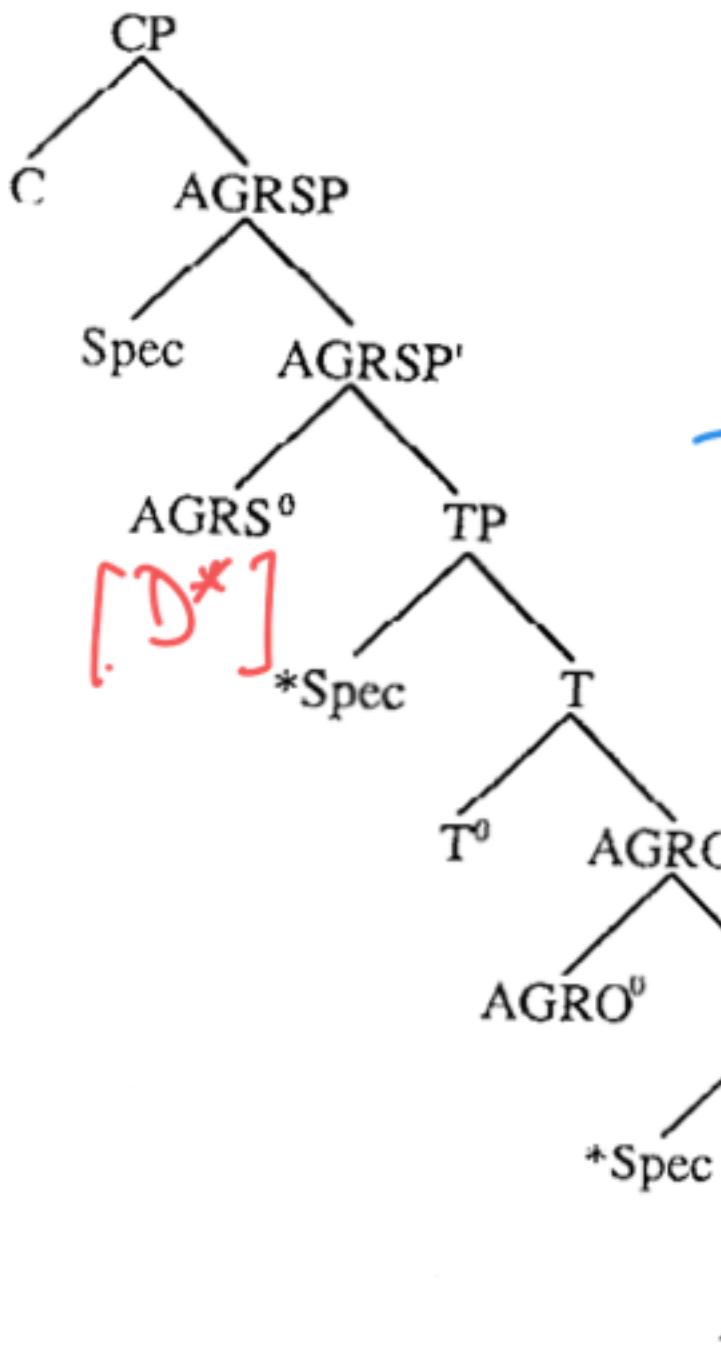
What does VS word order
tell us about the EPP?

E P P

Extended Projection Principle (EPP):

Every clause must have a
syntactic subject

(Syntactic subject
= Subject that has raised
out of IP into IP domain)



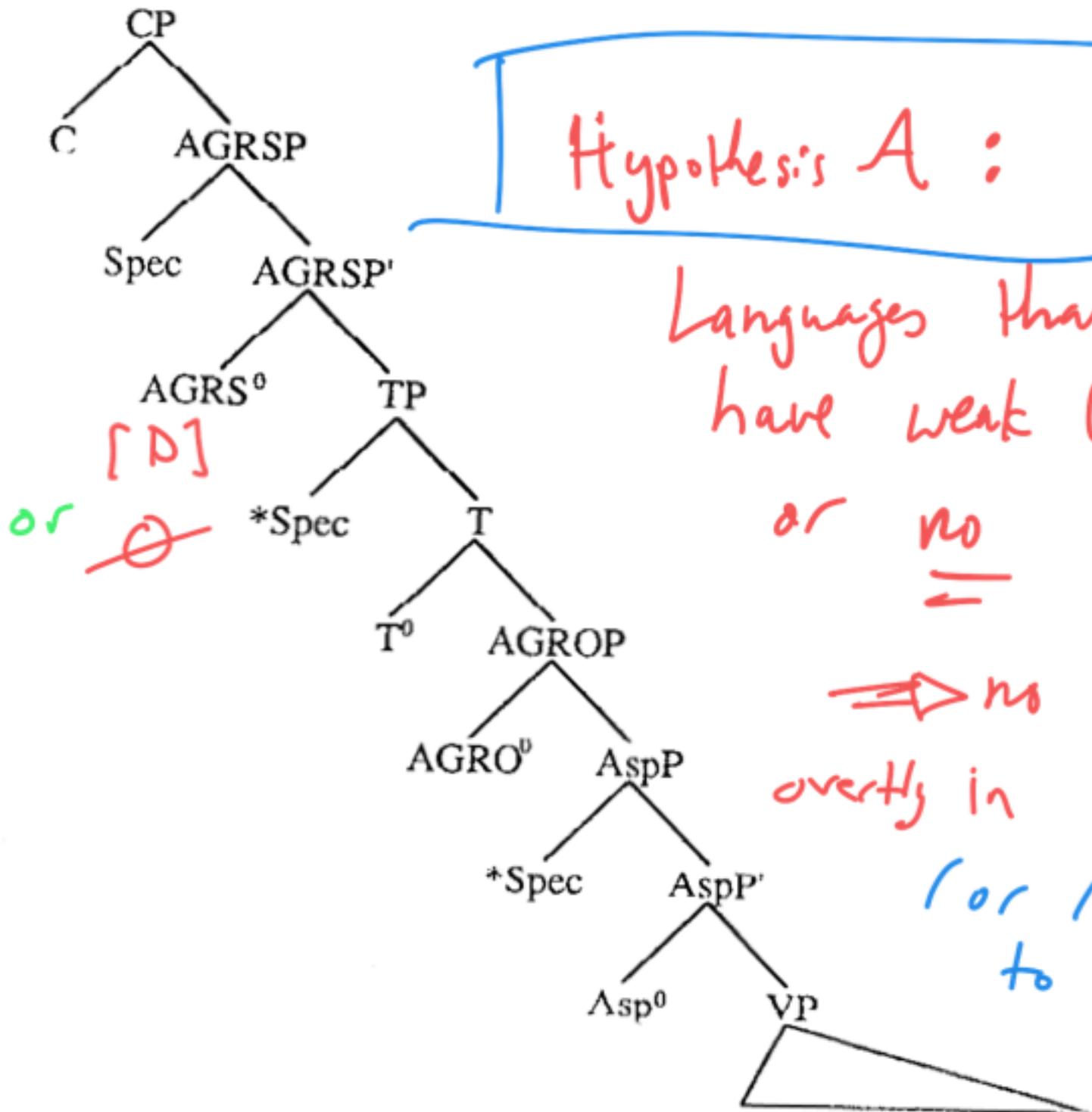
Locus of Ell
 for A & A
 is strong [D*]
 feature on
 Ags'

Big question

What does VS word order
tell us about the EPP?

Could it be that these languages either-

- A. Lack an EPP requirement
or
- B. Have a weak EPP feature?



Hypothesis A :

to be rejected

Languages that allow VS(0)
have weak [D] feature

or no [D] features

⇒ no XP merges

overtly in Spec, Agr SP
(or move overtly
to Spec, Agr SP)

Terminological Note

An aside on Merge and Move

Move reduces to

COPY plus (re) MERGE

in more recent minimalist analysis

In general, in these slides, where I say Merge I am not necessarily excluding Move.

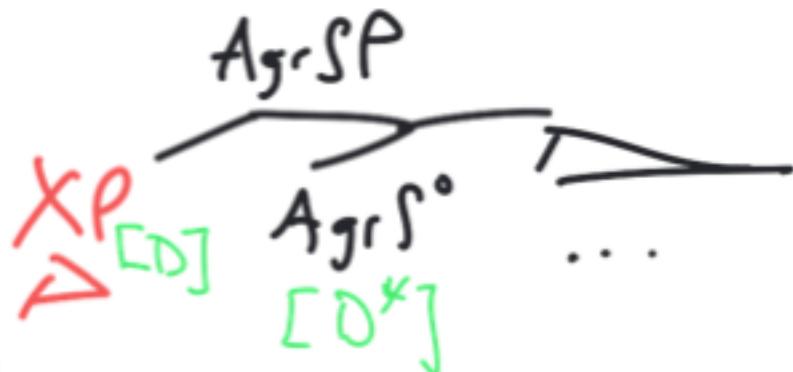
A & A:

Hypothesis A is on the right track insofar as no XP satisfies EPP. But wrong insofar as it says EPP requirement is missing or weak.

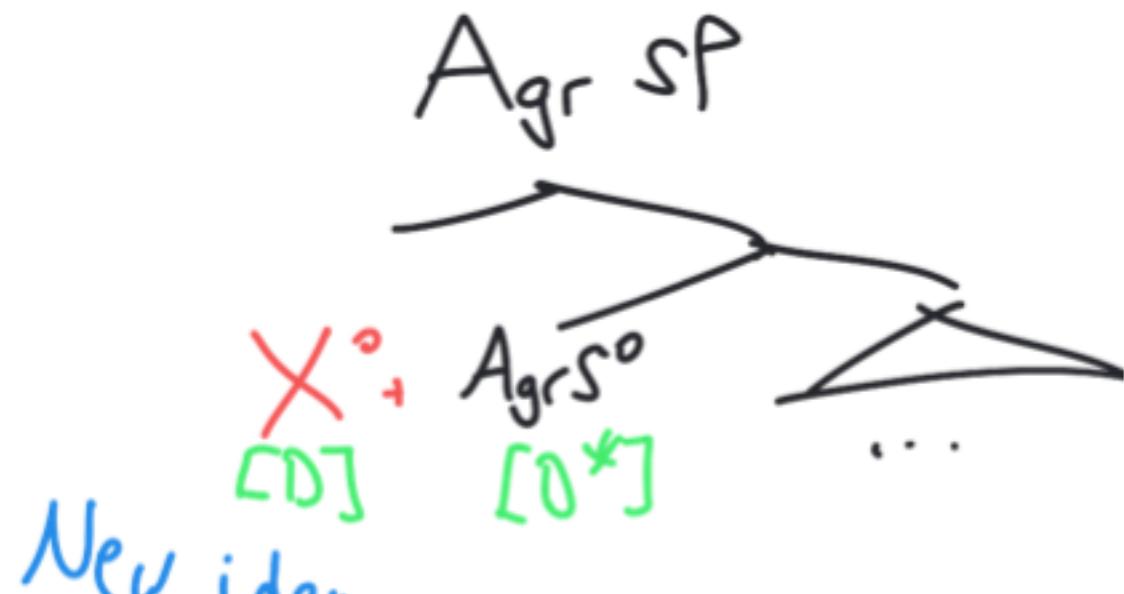
EPP in VS order is **strong**, it is just being satisfied in a different way

A & A: propose that there
are two ways for language to
satisfy EPP

① Merge XP



② Merge X°



This is the
traditional idea
of EPP

New idea

② Merge X°



Q: What is the X° that can satisfy Epp?

A&A: It is the inflected V of
Null Subject Languages (NSL_c)

Null Subject Languages

Languages that allow
independent (finite) clause to
lack an overt subject

E.g. Romance, Greek, Celtic, Arabic, Persian, Japanese
(and many others)

A&A:

Agreement morphology in NSLs has
the same formal features as pronouns in
other languages

- | | | | | | |
|--------|----------|-----------|----|--------|---------|
| (38)a. | I love | we love | b. | agapo | agapame |
| | you love | you love | | agapas | agapate |
| | he loves | they love | | agapa | agapane |

[\emptyset]

[\emptyset]

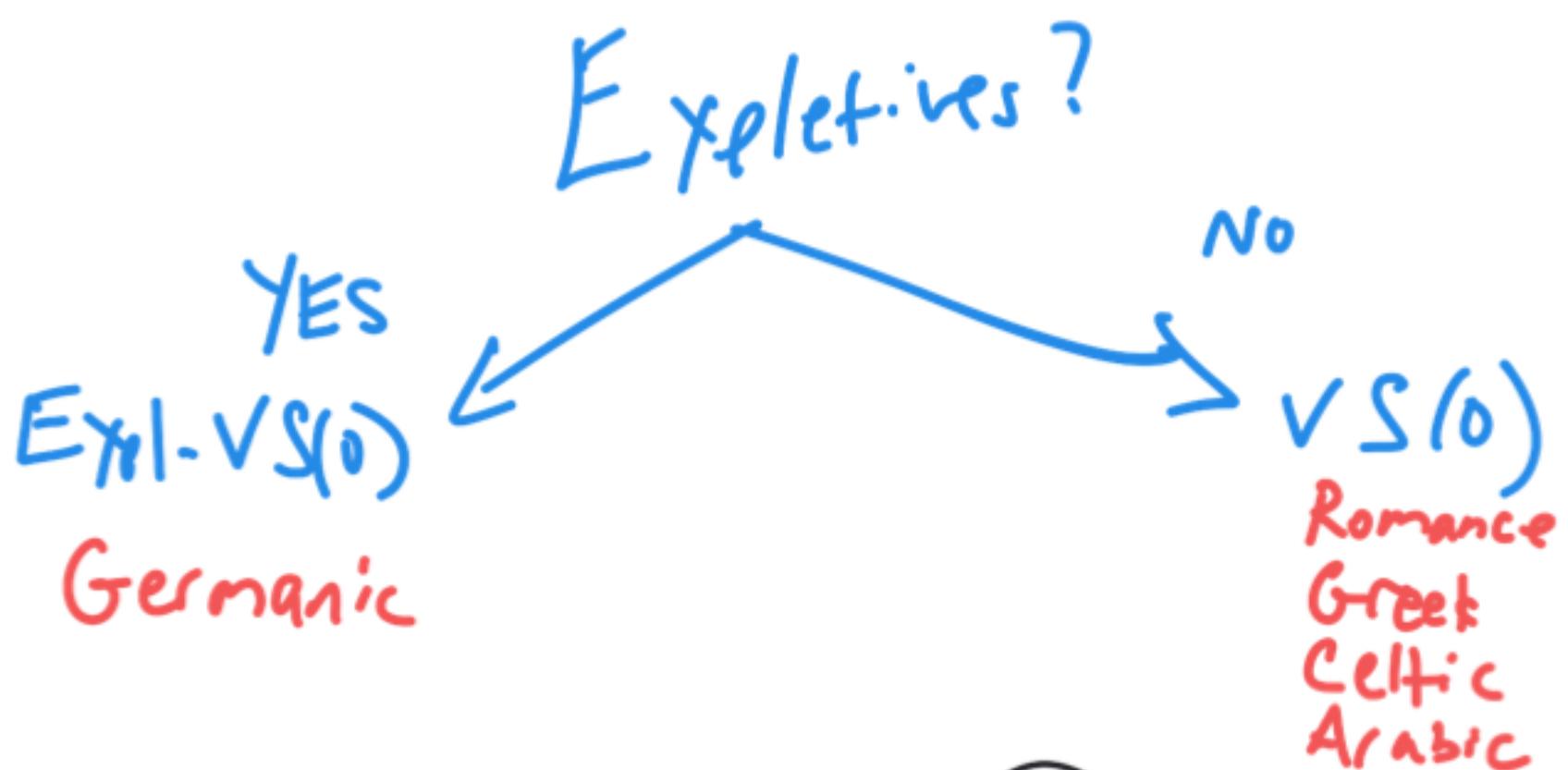
Goal for A&A 1998

- unified account of SVO/VSO alternations
*Romance, Greek, Germanic, Celtic,
Arabic*
- New theory of EPP

Patterns to be accounted for

but not all

- I. Some languages have (overt) **expletives** in VS(') order



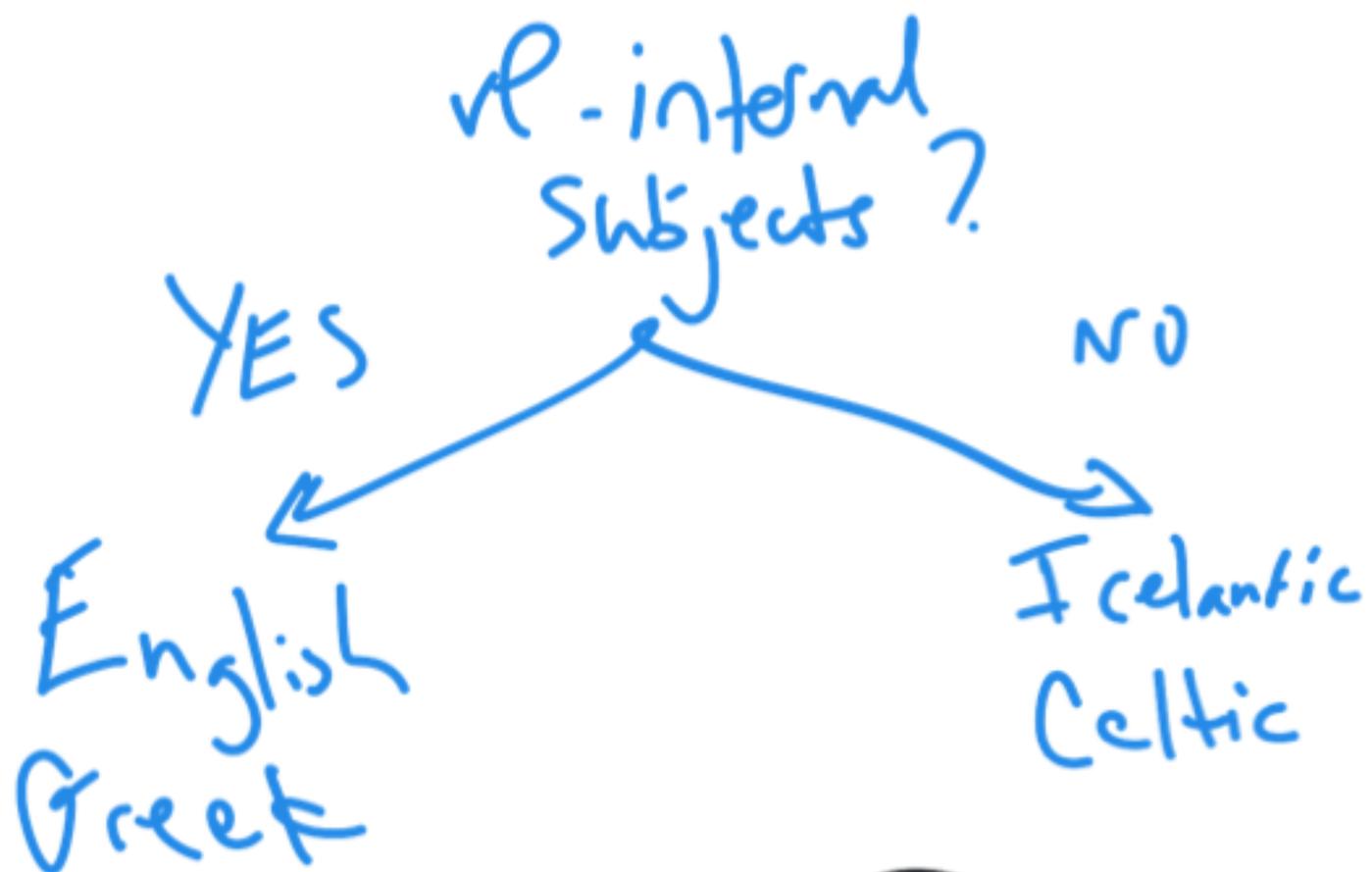
but not all

2. Some languages have a
definiteness restriction on subjects
In VS order

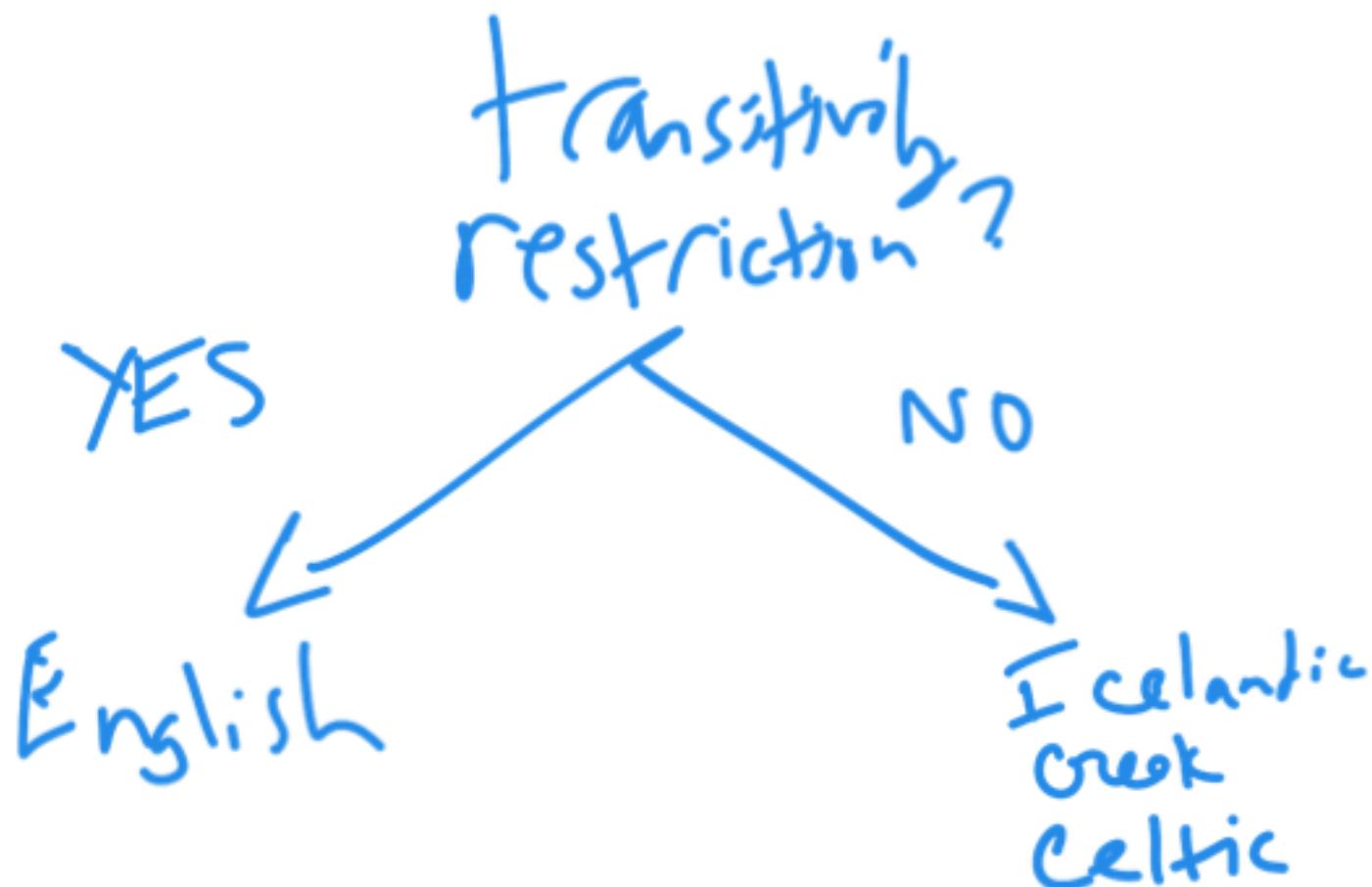


but not all

3. Some ✓ languages have
vP-internal Subjects in
V S(+) order



but not all
✓
4. Some languages exhibit a
transitivity restriction on VS
orders



Summary of Patterns

Table 1.⁸

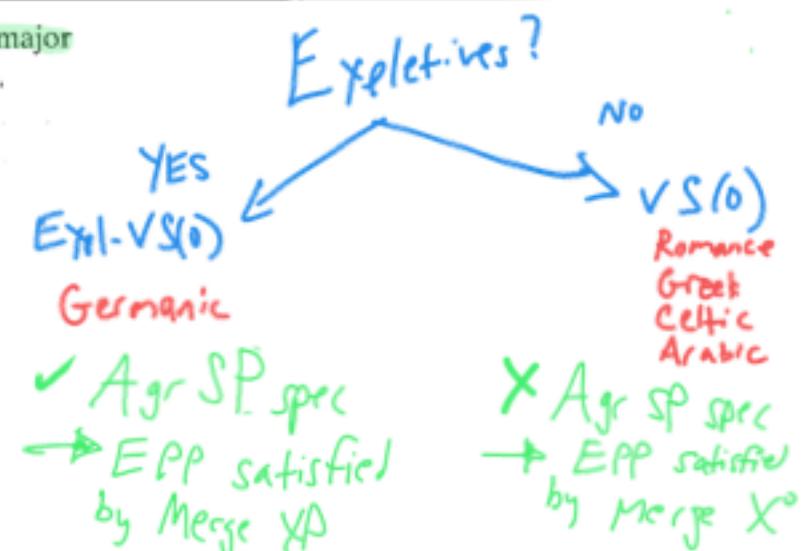
	Overt Expletive	DR effects	VP internal subjects	Intransitivity	poststrutice
Icelandic	+	+	-	-	
English	+	+	+	+	
Greek	-	-	+	-	
Celtic	-	-	-	-	

Table 1.⁸

	Overt Expletive	DR effects	VP internal subjects	Intransitivity	<i>restriction</i>
Icelandic	+	+	-	-	
English	+	+	+	+	
Greek	-	-	+	-	
Celtic	-	-	-	-	

In what follows, we argue that the above languages split into two major types, those that project a specifier of AGRSP and those that do not.

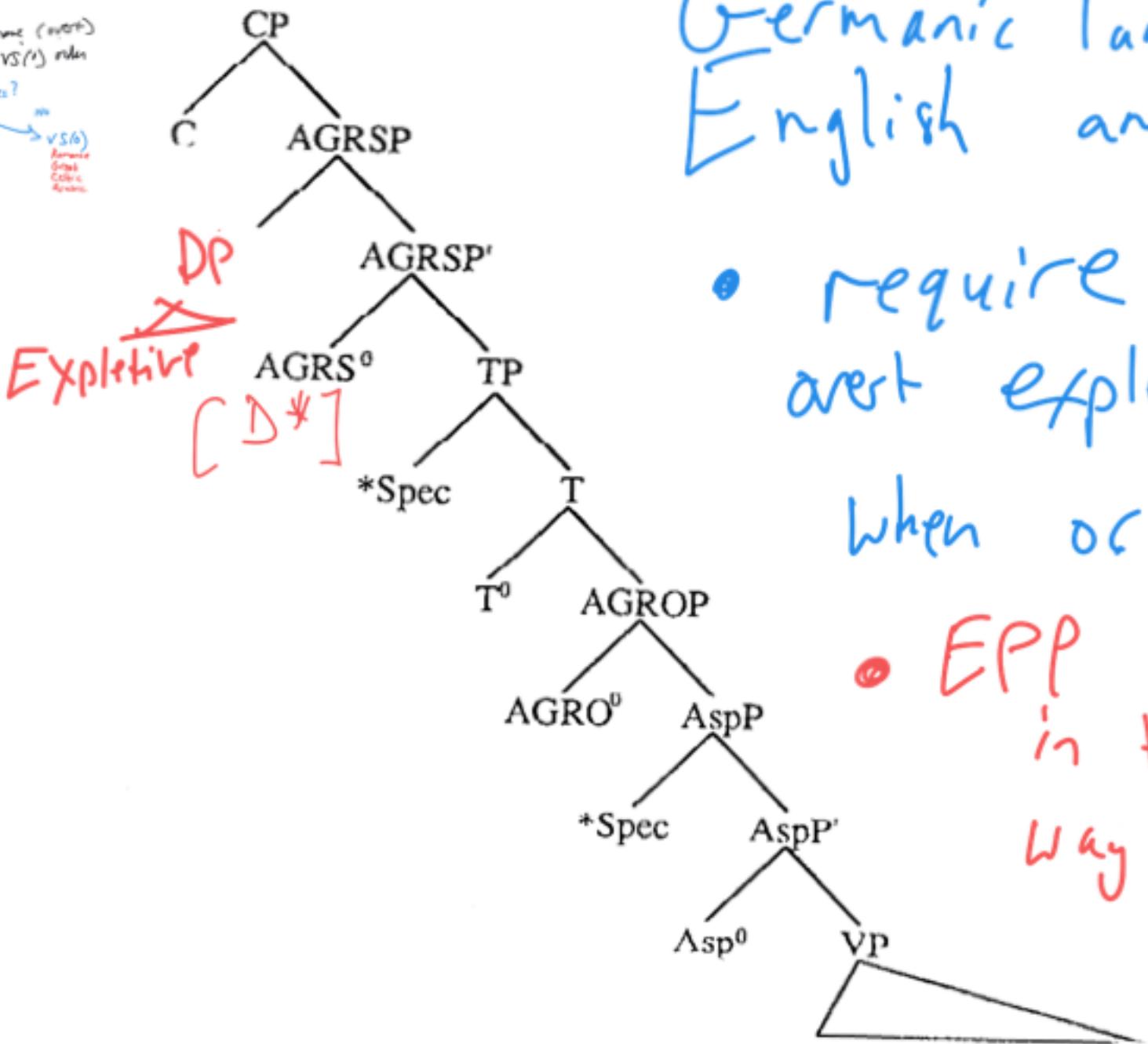
This split relates directly to the 1st column in Table 1



Expletives?



1. Some languages have (more) expletives in VS(¹) order
 Yes English Germanic
 Expletives? → VS(¹) Germanic Greek Celtic Arabic



Germanic languages like English and Icelandic

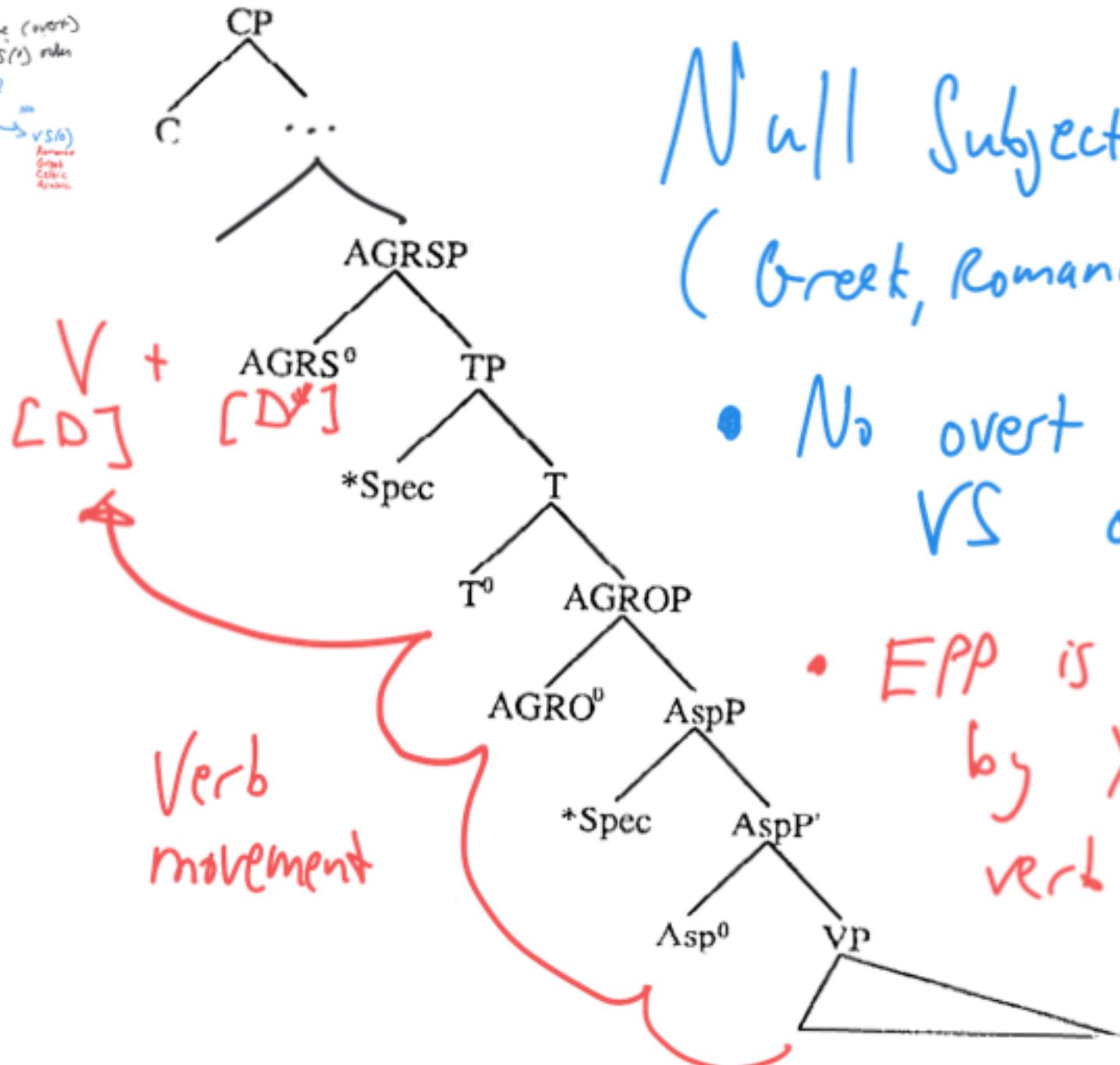
- require overt expletives

when order is VS

- EPP is satisfied in the familiar way: Merge XP

1. Some languages have (over) expletives in VS(¹) order

Yes [V2R]
German



Null Subject Languages (Greek, Romance, Celtic, Arabic)

- No overt expletive in VS order

- EPP is satisfied by X°, via verb movement + AgrS°

1. Some languages have (covert) expletives in VS(P) order
-
- ```
graph TD; A[Expletive?] -- YES --> B[EN, V2(O)]; A -- NO --> C[VS(O)
Romance
Greek
Celtic
Arabic]
```

famous observation about NSLs

is that null subjects

correlate with free

inversion, i.e. VS word order

(2 manifestations of same parameter)

1. Some languages have (covert) expletives in VS(O) order



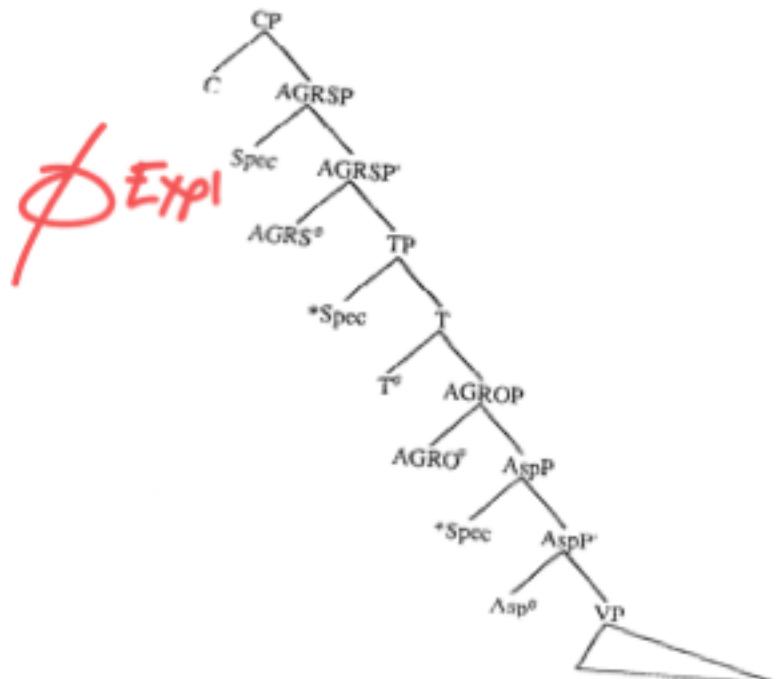
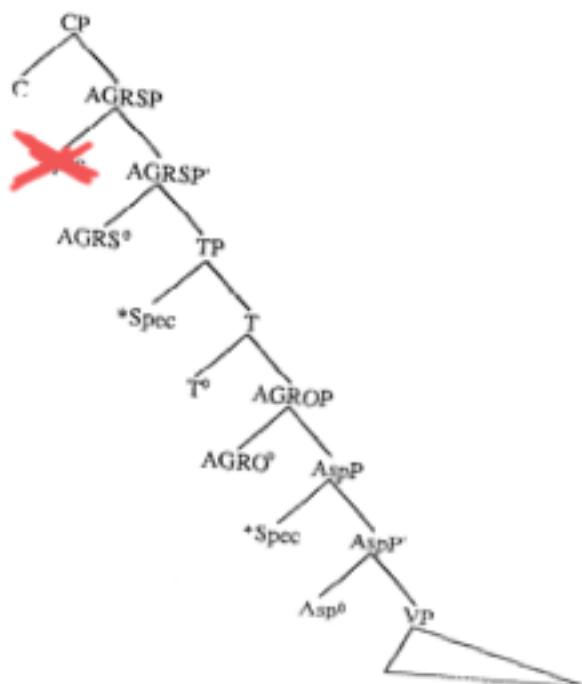
Why this correlation b/w VS(O)  
and null subject language?

Because only NSLs have  
inflected verbs with [DI]

# Null expletives?

instead of missing Spec, Agr or SP

Could it be that <sup>v</sup> Spec, AgrSP is always available but that it contains a **null expletive** in VS order?



A & A argue against null  
expletive analysis on grounds  
of Definiteness Restriction effect,

2. Some languages have a definiteness restriction on subjects

↳ VS order

Definiteness restriction

YES

Germanic

NO

Greek  
Celtic

Romance?  
Arabic?

# Definiteness

In some languages, a strong universal quantified DP

Greek, no DR

(8)a. irthe to kathe pedi.

*arrived the every child*

Each child arrived.

cannot be subject  
in VS  
order

English, yes DE

b. \*There arrived each child.

# More examples of DR

Notice the expletives in these VS examples

No DR

DR

- (31)a. There arrived a man/\*the man/\*every man. English  
b. Il est arrivé un homme/\*l'homme. French  
c. Er heeft icmand/ \*Jan een huis gebouwd. Dutch  
*there has someone Jan a house built*

It has been observed that DR effects in unaccusative constructions are systematically absent in NSLs (cf. Jaeggli 1982, Rizzi 1980, Burzio 1981, Chomsky 1981, Safir 1985, among others, and see (32) contra Belletti 1988). In (32), we see that in Greek the postverbal subject can be an indefinite, a proper name, or a strong universally quantified NP:

- (32) eftase ena pedi/ o Jorgos/kathe filos mu.  
*arrived a child/George/ every friend mine*  
A child/George/every friend of mine arrived.

intrans.

Moreover, in transitive constructions DR effects are systematically absent in Greek (cf. (33a)), while they are present in Icelandic (cf. (33b)):

- (33)a. diavase ena pedi/ kathe pedi to vivlio.  
*read a child/every child book*  
A/every child read the book.

trans.

- b. Það lasu einhverjur stúdentar bókina.  
*there read some students the book*  
Some students read the book.

Similar observations hold for Arabic and ...

2. Some languages have a  
definiteness restriction on subjects

↳ VS order

Definiteness restriction

YES  
Germanic

NO  
Greek  
Celtic  
Romance?  
Arabic?

What determines  
whether a language  
has DR effects?

Chomsky:

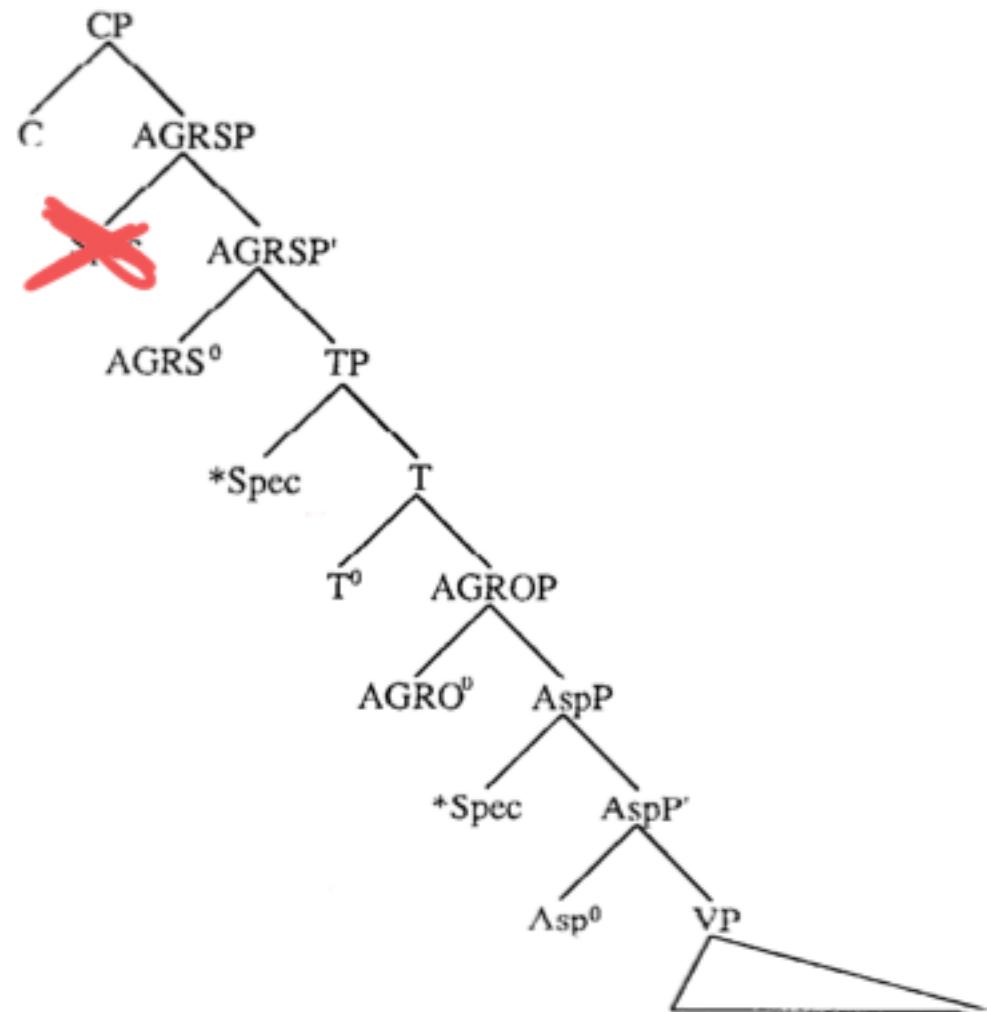
- expletives have [D] features
- like other Ds, they require an NP complement / associate
- It follows that the NP associate is non-specific

A&A:

- NSLs lack expletives ∴ subjects in VS are not [D] associates and no DR arises

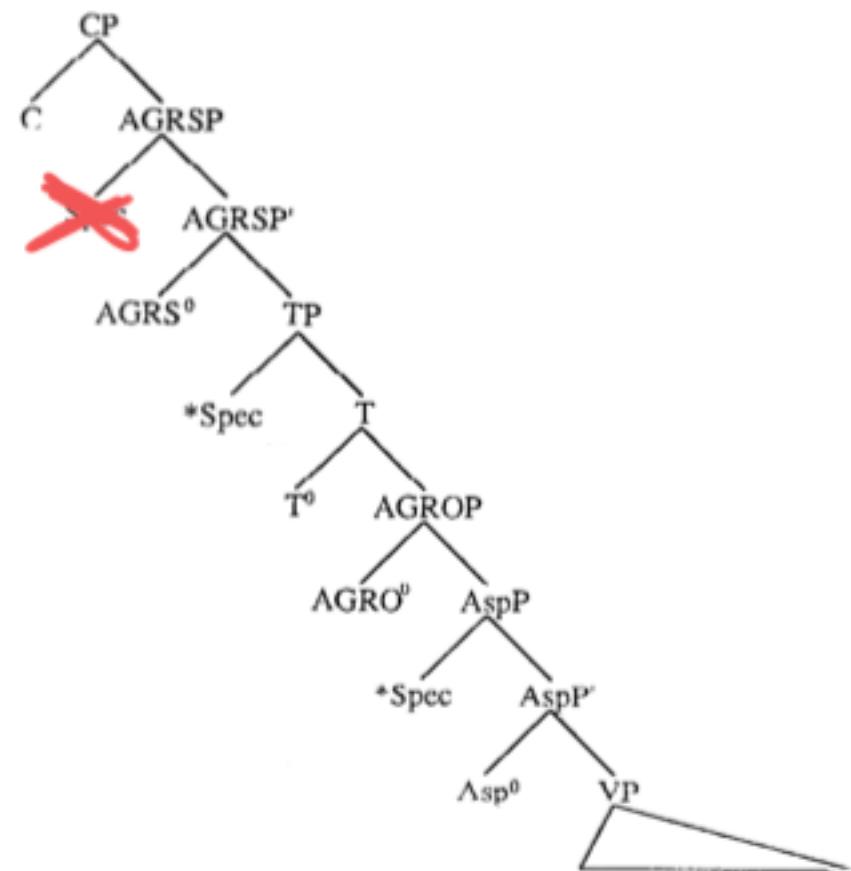
What about SVO order?

If there is  
no Spec, AgrSP  
in NSLs,  
how do we get  
SVO order?



What about SVO order?

If there is  
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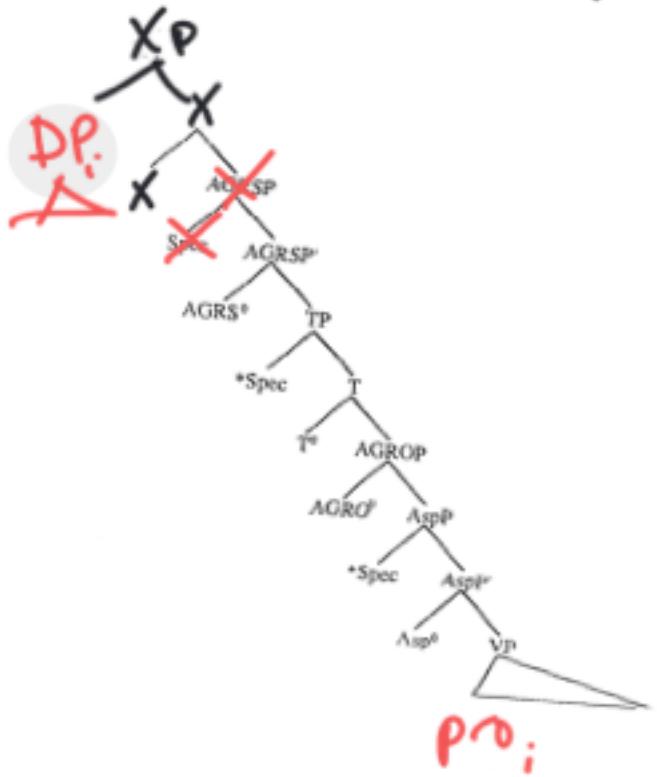


A&A: Subjects in SVO are left dislocated  
OR A-bar topics

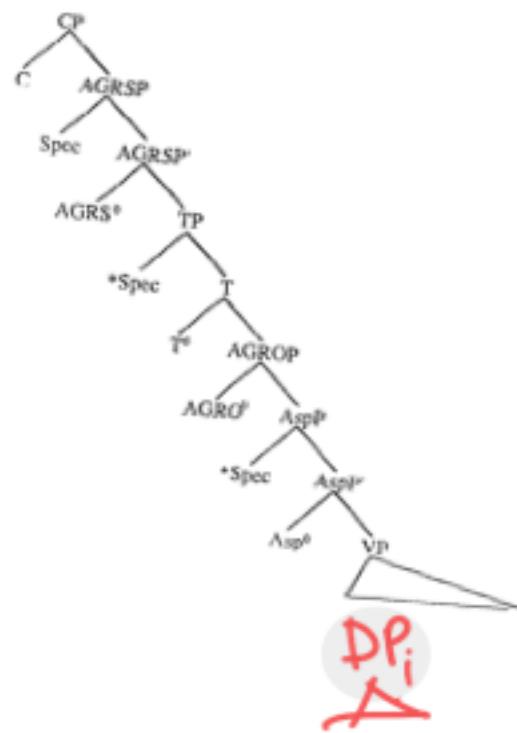
## Left dislocation

Left dislocation structures are base-generated high (adjoined at left edge of clause) and coindexed with a pronoun in the vP

Left dislocated subject



Subject in Spec, AgrSP



# Left dislocation

## Distributional evidence

- Adverbial material can intervene between S and V in N (15a)
- This contrasts with non-NSLR like French (15b)

### Greek

- (15)a. O Petros xtes meta apo poles prospathies  
*Peter yesterday after from many efforts*  
sinandise ti Maria.  
*met Mary*  
After many efforts, Peter met Mary yesterday.

### French

- b. \*Jean probablement/hier a rencontré Marie

NB: Both Greek + French have verb movement

A related observation is that subjects in Greek can precede complementizers/*if*-clauses (cf. 17a), while this is impossible in English (cf. 17b):

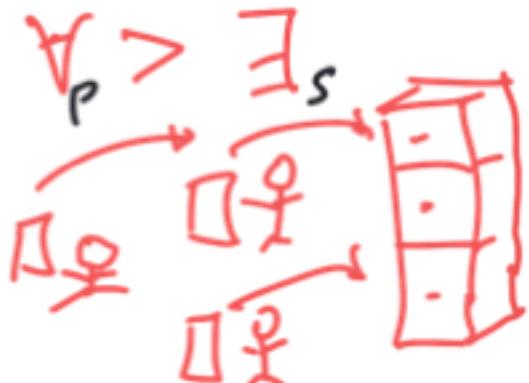
- (17)a. Epidi o Petros an erthi i Maria tha figi.  
*because Peter if comes Mary FUT leave*  
Because if Mary comes, Peter will leave.
- b. \*because Eric if Mary comes will leave

# Left dislocation

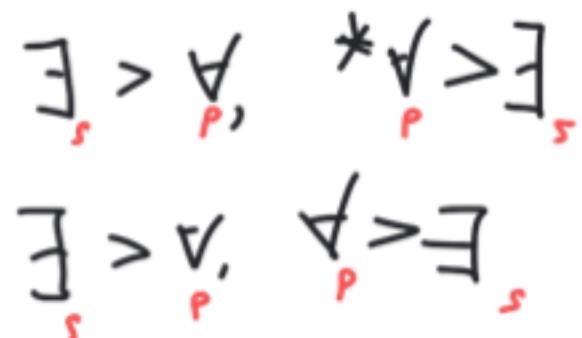
## Evidence from scope interpretations



Normally, the scope properties that a quantifier has on the basis of its pre-movement position are preserved when it is moved to an A-position (see van Riemsdijk and Williams 1981, Cinque 1982, Haik 1984, May 1985), though new properties may arise as a consequence of its surface position (cf. Chomsky 1980). The Greek preverbal subject position does not behave as an A-position with respect to this. The scopal properties of quantificational subjects in Greek are not preserved when these occur in a preverbal position. In (20a) the indefinite *some student* in a preverbal position has necessarily wide scope over the universally quantified NP in object position, while in the postverbal position (20b) the subject can have narrow or wide scope.<sup>14</sup>



- (20)a.  $\begin{matrix} \checkmark \\ \text{Kapios fititis} \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \checkmark \\ \text{stihiothetise} \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \circ \\ \text{kathe arthro.} \end{matrix}$   
*some student filed every article*
- b.  $\begin{matrix} \checkmark \\ \text{stihiothetise} \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \checkmark \\ \text{kapios fititis} \end{matrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \circ \\ \text{kathe arthro.} \end{matrix}$



The fact that the preverbal subject position is unambiguous (i.e., it only permits wide scope readings), while the postverbal position is characterized by scope ambiguity (of the type characterizing the preverbal position in English) is further confirmed by the observation that in cases in which wide scope leads to a nonsensical interpretation of the sentence, the narrow scope interpretation of the subject being the only meaningful one, the presence of a preverbal subject leads to an unacceptable (nonsensical) output, while postverbal subjects are fine:

- (22)a. #Enas orcos andras pandreftike kathc sinadelfo  
A handsome man married every colleague  
mu persi.  
*mine last year*

A handsome man married every colleague of mine last .

- b. Persi pandreftike enas oreos andras kathe  
last year married a handsome guy every  
sinadelfo mu.  
*colleague mine*

$\exists_m > \forall_c$ , \* $\forall_c > \exists_m$

$\exists_m > \forall_c$ ,  $\forall_c > \exists_m$

# Left dislocation

## Binding evidence

Montalbetti; Effects: an over<sup>1</sup> subject pronoun in NSLs cannot be understood as a bound variable

- (29) \*Tots els estudiants<sub>i</sub> es pensen que ells<sub>i</sub> aprovaran.  
all the students = think that they pass
- (30) tots els jugadors<sub>i</sub> cstan convencus que guanyaran ells<sub>i</sub>.  
all the players are persuaded that win they  
All the players are persuaded that they are the ones who win.

Solà (1992) and Barbosa (1994) account for these facts on the basis of the assumption that only postverbal subjects occupy an A-position, thus being able to be construed as bound variables.<sup>20,21</sup>

→ it follows that preverbal S is not in an A-position

# Summary so far

Table 1.<sup>8</sup>

|           | Overt Expletive | DR effects | VP internal subjects | Intransitivity | <i>postwhitel</i> |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Icelandic | +               | +          | -                    | -              |                   |
| English   | +               | +          | +                    | +              |                   |
| Greek     | -               | -          | +                    | -              |                   |
| Celtic    | -               | -          | -                    | -              |                   |

Two major types of languages

- Languages with overt Expletive  
in inverted word order :  $\text{Exptl } VS(\emptyset)$ 
  - $\text{Exptl}$  is in  $\text{Spec}, \text{Agr} SP$
  - This correlates with DR effects
- Languages with no expletive in inverted order :  $VS(\emptyset)$ 
  - no  $\text{Spec}, \text{Agr} SP$  projected
  - no DR effects
  - Null Subject Languages

## Let's circle back to Hypothesis A

Q: Why do A & A reject idea of weak or missing EPP?

A: Because weak/missing

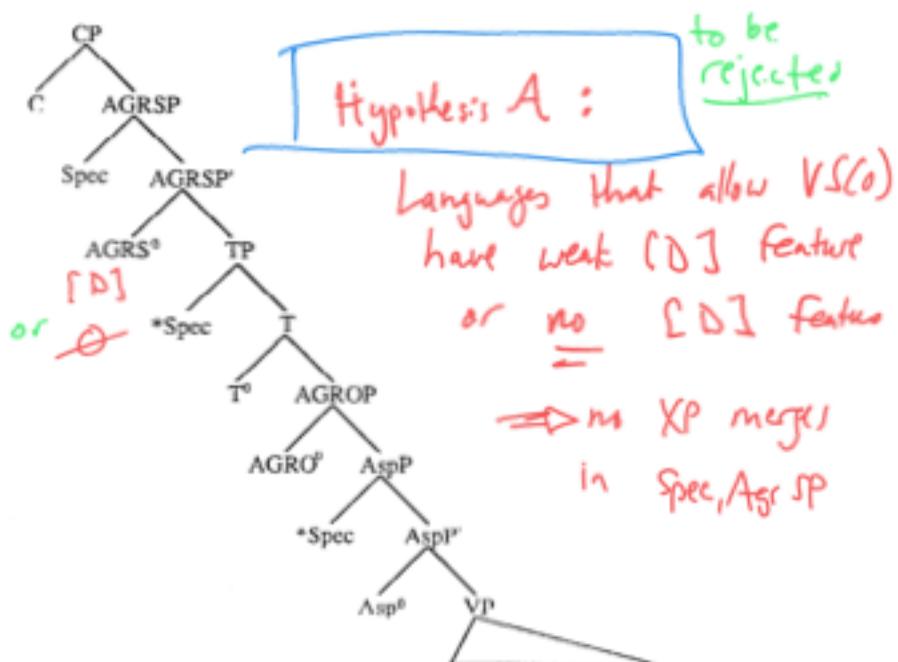
EPP can't capture  
the restriction of

VS to null subject

languages - Incorrectly predicts

weak/missing [D] should

be available for other types of languages



- We haven't yet accounted for all of the differences in subject position

Table 1.<sup>8</sup>

|           | Overt Expletive | DR effects | VP internal subjects | Intransitivity<br>postnitive |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Icelandic | +               | +          | -                    | -                            |
| English   | +               | +          | +                    | +                            |
| Greek     | -               | -          | +                    | -                            |
| Celtic    | -               | -          | -                    | -                            |

presence/absence  
 of Spec, AgrSP

We haven't yet accounted for all of the differences  
in subject position

Table 1.8

|           | Overt Expletive | DR effects | VP internal subjects | Intransitivity |
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| Icelandic | +               | +          | -                    | -              |
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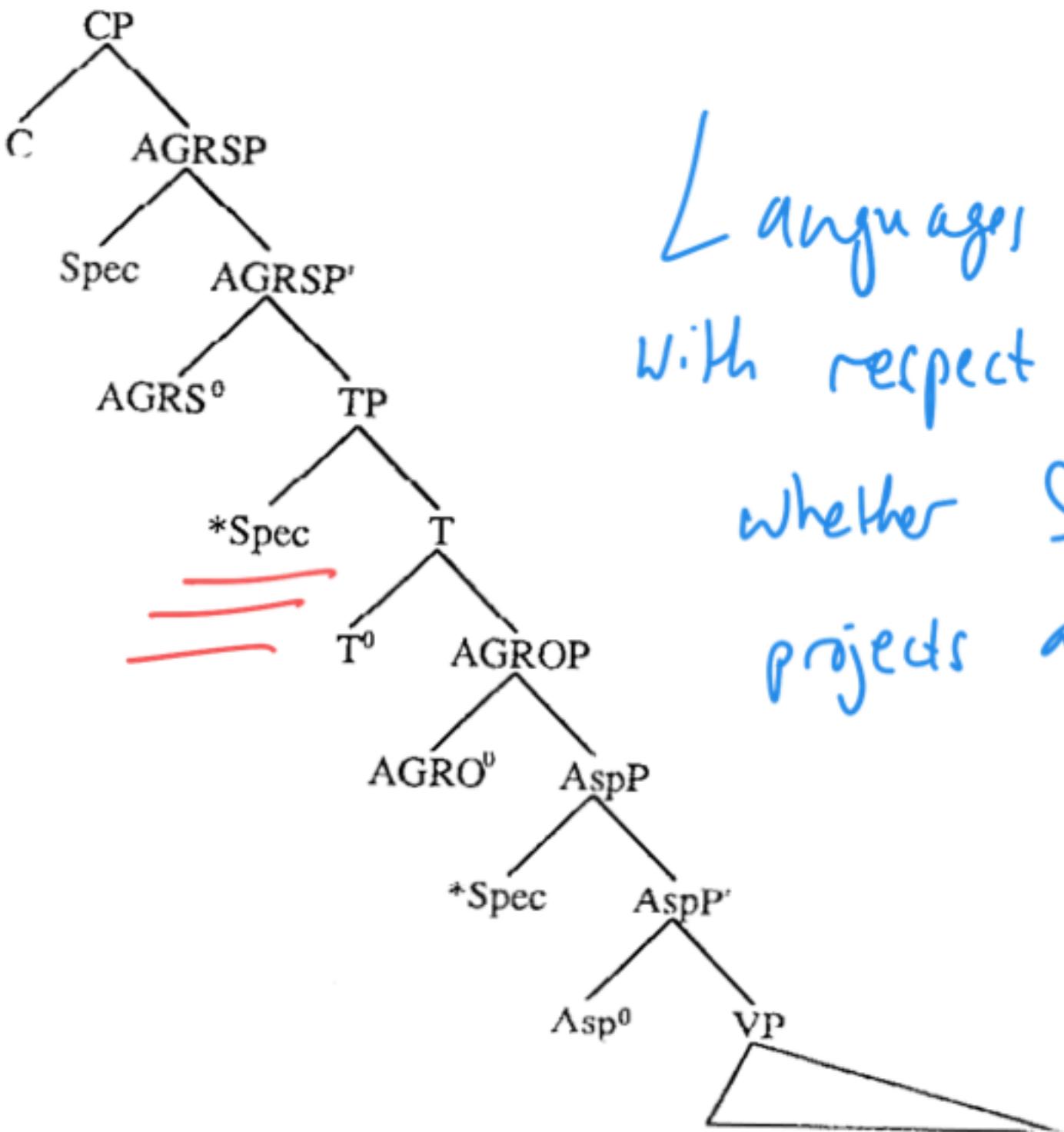
presence/absence  
if Spec, AgrSP



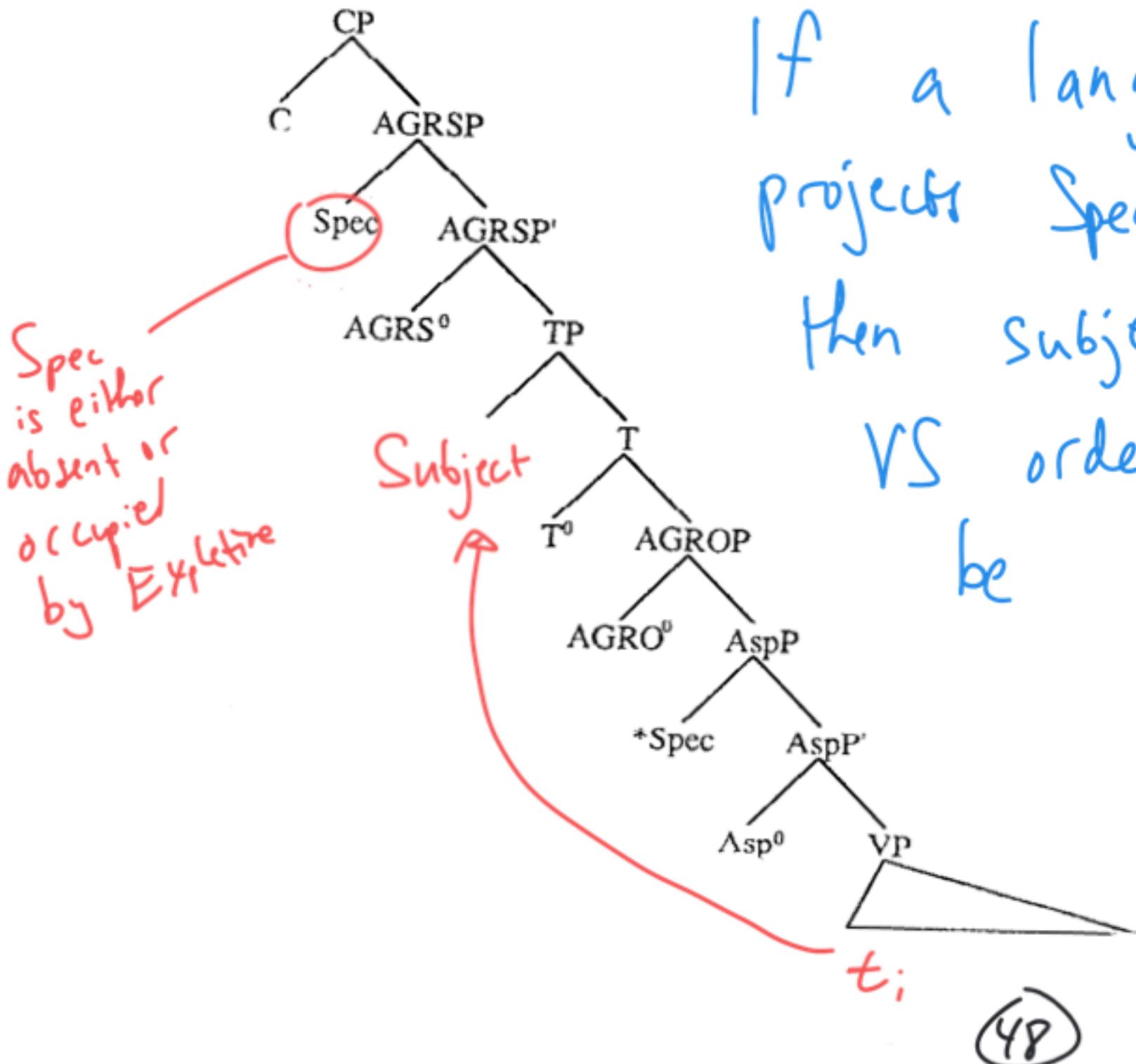
A & A propose that  
this relates to a second  
parameter: presence/absence

of Spec, TP

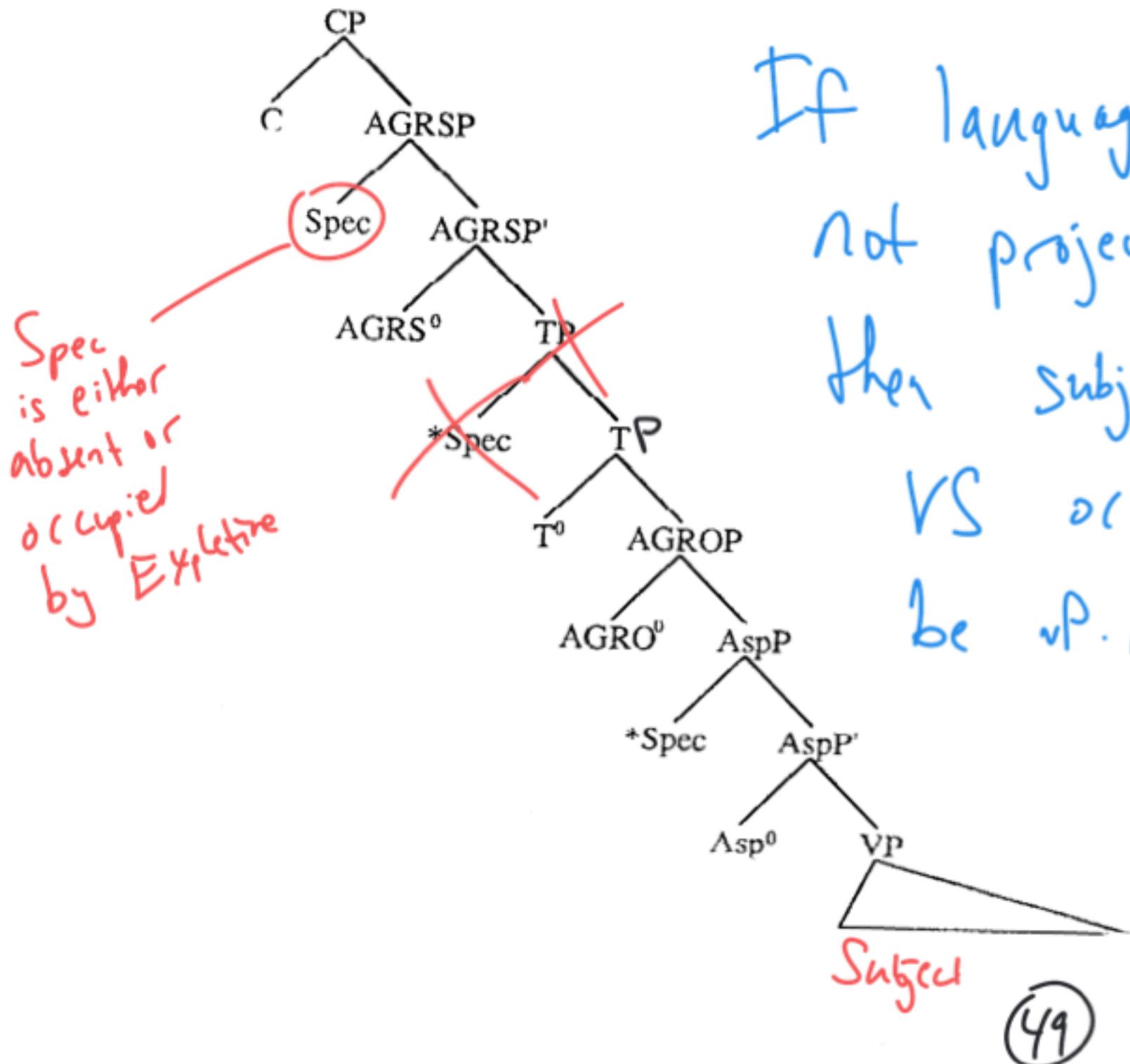
We won't  
talk about  
this one



Languages vary  
with respect to  
whether Spec, T,  
projects a specifier



If a language projects Spec, TP  
then Subject in VS order can be VP external



# VP Internal Subjects

- In Greek, Romance VSO, subjects are VP internal  
(like English)
  - Evidence: adverbial and participial word order factor

Greek order of constituents:

Aux > aspectual Adverb > participle > manner Adverb > Subject

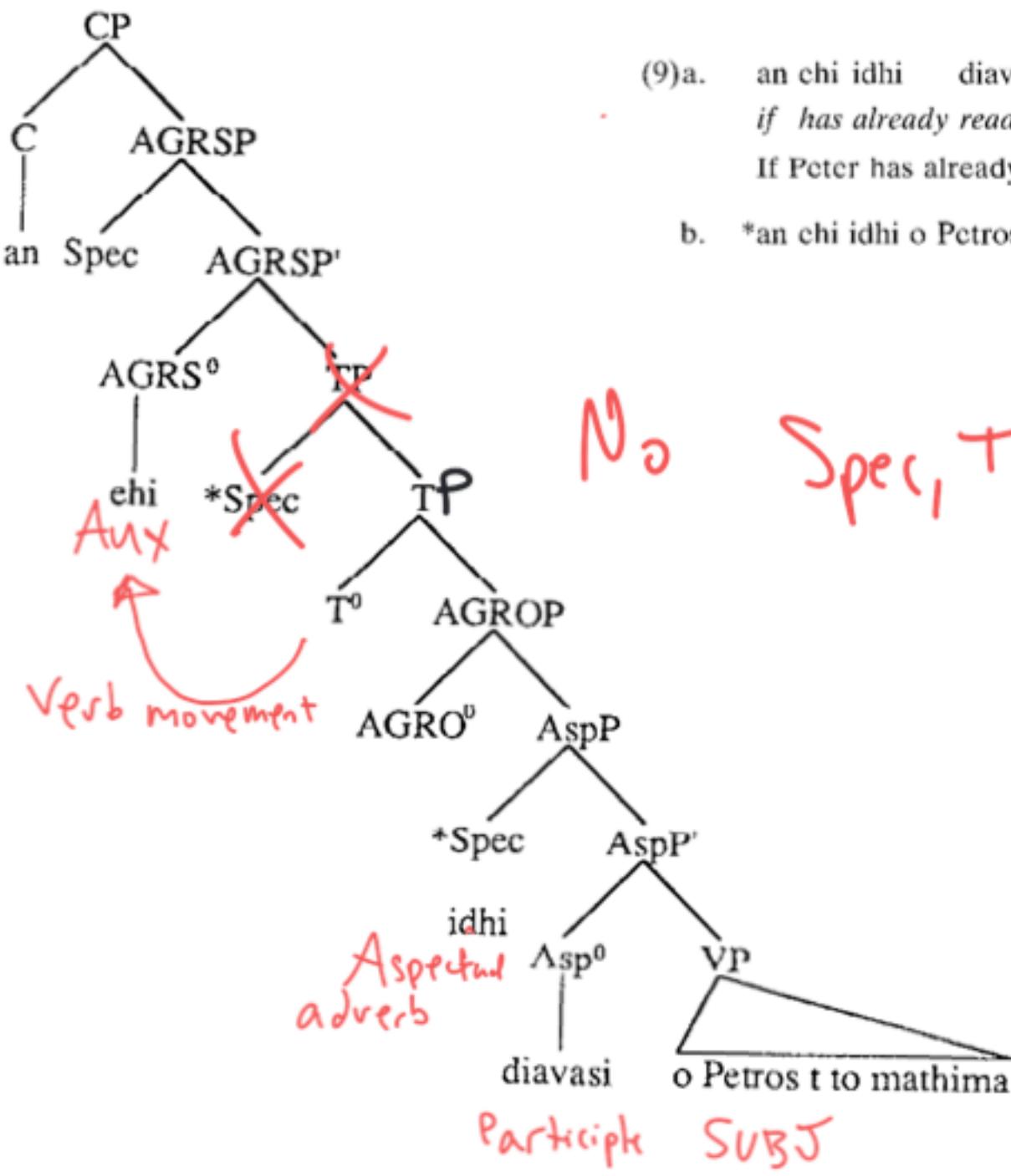
Greek

- (9)a. an chi idhi diavasi, [vp kala[vp o Petros t<sub>i</sub> to mathima]].  
if has already read well Peter the lesson  
If Peter has already read the lesson well.

- b. \*an chi idhi o Petros, diavasi, [vp kala[vp t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>i</sub> to mathima]].

| marks left edge of VP

(14)

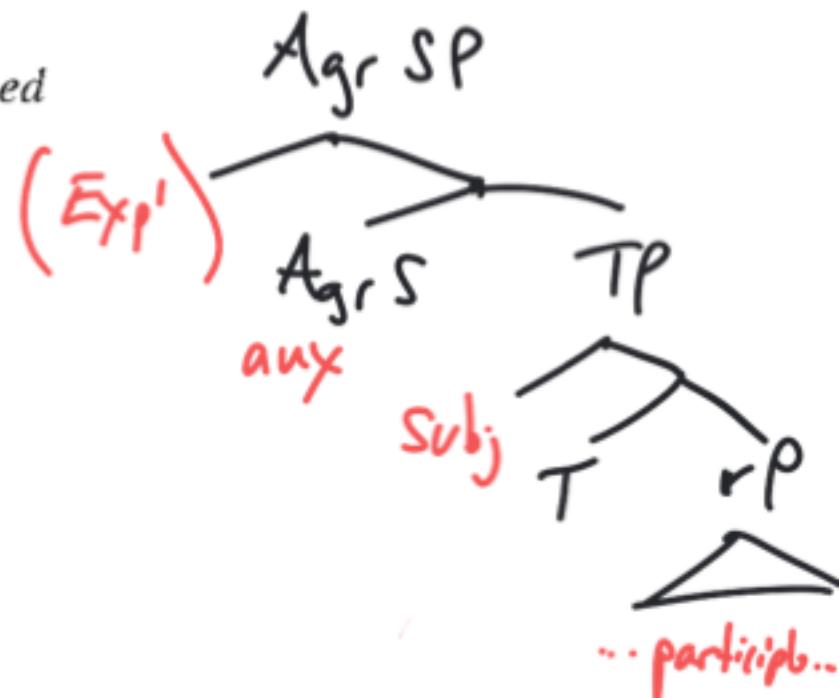


- (9)a. an chi idhi diavasi, [vp kala[vp o Petros t<sub>i</sub> to mathima]]]  
*if has already read well Peter the lesson*  
 If Peter has already read the lesson well.
- b. \*an chi idhi o Petros<sub>i</sub> diavasi, [vp kala[vp t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>i</sub> to mathima]].

The Greek pattern contrasts with Icelandic + Irish where the subject is VP external even in  $\text{Ex}(\cdot) \cdot \text{VS(O)}$  order

- (10)  $\text{það hefur sennilega einhver } [_{\text{VP}} \text{alveg } [_{\text{VP}} \text{lokið}$   
*there has probably someone completely finished*  
 $\text{verkefninu}].$   
*the assignment*

- (11) Tá mé  $[_{\text{tar éis an teach a^L thógaíl.}}$   
*be I after the house build*  
 I have just built the house.



Notice that the Spec, TP parameter  
is independent of the Spec, Agr SP  
Parameter

Table 1.<sup>8</sup>

|           | Overt Expletive | DR effects | VP internal subjects | Intransitivity |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|
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| Greek     | -               | -          | +                    | -              |
| Celtic    | -               | -          | -                    | -              |

## Conclusion

- EPP is universally strong
- What is parameterized is the mode of EPP checking
  - Merge YP vs Merge X'
- The need to check the strong [D\*] feature of AgrS° triggers V-raising in NSLs

(54)