

A note on Case-assignment to CP
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Some predicates allow for a passive form with promoted CP objects (henceforth CP-passives), whereas other predicates do not:

- (1) It was thought/believed that he was a spy.
- (2) *It was complained/prayed that he was a spy.
- (3) *That it was raining was complained.

Crucially, this does not appear to correlate with general Case assignment possibilities. Although *complain* fails to assign accusative Case to DP complements, the same is true of other verbs such as *hope* which nonetheless permit a CP-passive (cf. Alrenga (2005) amongst others):

- (4) I'm hoping/wishing *(for) rain.
- (5) It was hoped/wished/insisted that it would rain.

Nor does the split appear to depend on factivity, as many factive verbs allow a CP-passive:

- (6) It was revealed/divulged/recognised that he was a spy.

Moltmann (2009) provides a crucial diagnostic which appears to distinguish the class of verbs represented by *complain* from the class represented by *hope*. While the (factive/non-factive) *hope*-class can (marginally) combine with a non-referential 'special' pronoun *something*, the *complain*-class cannot:

- (7) (?)Mary hoped/wished/reasoned/revealed/divulged something.
- (8) *Mary complained/prayed something.

The interesting thing here is the extremely restricted distribution of Case assignment with *hope*-type verbs. As Moltmann shows, the special pronouns are only possible where they have propositional content. Where the complement has non-propositional content, a preposition is required in active sentences. Where passives are permitted in such cases, they take the form of pseudo-passives:

- (9) John hoped *(for) something (replacing a DP)
- (10) A solution was hoped/wished/reasoned for.

Assuming that the passive is derived via Case-absorption, it follows that *hope* must assign Case to special pronouns. As CPs can also form passives with exactly those predicates which license these special pronouns, the implication is that some predicates assign a special kind of case to clausal complements. Crucially, though, the data strongly suggest that not all CPs have Case. Verb such as *complain* fail to license Case on either DP or CP complements. This suggests that a more nuanced version of Stowell's (1981) Case Resistance Principle, or whatever replaces it is required. It is not the case that DPs require Case whereas CPs do not. Some, in fact, most CPs do require a kind of Case, though not the kind assigned to full DPs with non-propositional content.

References

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- Stowell, T. 1981. Origins of phrase structure, Thesis (Ph.D.) - Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1981., Massachusetts Institute of Technology,.