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Pronominal case assignment in English[1]

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Following a long tradition of research on English case, this paper first outlines the phenomenon of canonical and non-canonical case assignment to pronouns functioning as heads or dependents, and then discusses some previous treatments in order to illustrate the data, as well as to demonstrate that a unified account capable of capturing all the generalisations has up until now remained elusive. A purely phrase-structural explanation will be sketched out and rejected, to be superseded by a model relying on the formalism of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG), which I argue successfully accounts for all the relevant syntactic patterns. The paper ends with a comparison between the present proposal and some earlier ideas in the literature. Finally, I briefly defend the claim that English pronouns still exhibit case distinctions.

1. Introduction

In Modern English, morphological case is traditionally said to survive in personal pronouns, and, to a lesser extent, in some interrogative/relative pronouns. We still distinguish between NOMINATIVE *I* and *who* on the one hand, and ACCUSATIVE *me* and somewhat obsolescent *whom* on the other. In general, the nominative is used for subjects and the accusative for objects, as shown in examples (1) and (2).[2]

[1] This paper evolved after I attended the Historical Linguistics module at the 2009 LSA Linguistic Institute at Berkeley taught by Andrew Garrett and Paul Kiparsky. The trip was made possible by the generous financial support of Mary Dalrymple, Oxford's Faculty of Linguistics and Jesus College. The article has benefited enormously from stimulating discussions at the University of Oxford, the Second South of England LFG meeting in SOAS and the LFG 2011 conference in Hong Kong. Special thanks are due to Doug Arnold, Ash Asudeh, Emmon Bach, James Blevins, Maris Camilleri, Yehuda Falk, Jonathan Lipps, Joan Maling, Irina Nikolaeva, Rachel Nordlinger, Louisa Sadler, Melanie Seiss, Peter Sells and Andrew Spencer. I am particularly grateful to Alexandra Bagasheva, Mary Dalrymple, Catherine Mary MacRobert and Louise Mycock, as well as two anonymous *Journal of Linguistics* referees, for reading monstrously long drafts of this and giving invaluable feedback.

[2] For case in Old English, see Quirk & Wrenn (1955: 60–61), Mitchell (1985), Allen (1995: Chapter 2) and Mitchell & Robinson (2007: 105); for an overview of the history of English case, see Denison (1993), Allen (1995: Chapter 5), Czepluch (1996: 42–43, 186) and Howe (1996: Chapter 6).

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(1) **I** called him.

(2) **He** called me.

Nominative and accusative may no longer seem appropriate labels for describing the case marking on Present-Day English pronouns, because there are no separate dative forms for what would conventionally be called indirect objects. It might therefore be more accurate to talk about 'subjective' and 'objective' forms of pronouns, the former covering the nominative and the latter comprising the accusative and dative. This, however, could be misleading. The 'subjective/nominative' case can now mark the subject of a finite verb and (marginally) a subject complement, whereas the 'objective/accusative' is frequently used not only for objects but also for subject complements, as in (3). What is more, morphologically 'objective/accusative' forms can even function as subjects, which is shown in (4).[3]

(3) I'm sure they're as good as we are but, **they**'re **them** and **we**'re **us**. And that's that. (BNC)

(4) **Me** and my brother are gonna be off at the same time. (BNC)

Judging by such examples, 'subjective' and 'objective' are no more precise labels than nominative and accusative. Admittedly, 'nominative' and 'accusative' are not perfect either, but we adopt this terminology, following Payne & Huddleston (2002: 456), because it is the most widely accepted terminology for talking about case.[4] The terms 'nominative' and 'accusative' can be more easily reserved for reference to the morphological marking, without making any claims concerning the syntactic behaviour of those morphological forms. That is why we will continue to use them for the rest of the exposition.

This paper will focus on the regularities that govern pronominal case assignment in Modern English, with special emphasis on contexts where things seem to 'go wrong'. In the next section, we identify three varieties of Modern English with regard to canonical and non-canonical case assignment. We then argue that non-canonical case is allowed as long as the relevant pronoun is not a head – this claim is substantiated in Section 3. Section 4 offers discussion of some previous treatments, pointing out what their particular contribution is and the respects in which they are found to be lacking, while Section 5 outlines a new proposal that is more comprehensive and succinct. It relies on constituent structure, functional categories such as subject and object, as well as lexical specifications constraining individual

[3] Some examples in this paper come from the British National Corpus (BNC; http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc) and some from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA; http://corpus.byu.edu/coca).

[4] For instance, *him* and 'objective' *her* are continuations of the Old English dative case forms and, etymologically speaking, they should not be designated as accusative.

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pronominal forms. The final sections place our model in the context of earlier ones and justify the stance that Present-Day English retains case on its pronouns. The approach taken throughout this article is that of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG), including the basic assumptions about (noun) phrase structure, coordination, apposition, and the use of terms such as HEAD and DETERMINER. It is believed that the flexibility of this framework, as well as the tripartite distinction it makes between constituent structure, functional structure and lexical constraints, means that it is well placed to offer a satisfactory solution encompassing a wide range of complex data, which has so far remained unattainable for many proposals.

2. CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL CASE ASSIGNMENT IN THREE VARIETIES OF STANDARD ENGLISH

If the nominative is used to mark subjects and the accusative to mark objects (including prepositional objects), we are dealing with CANONICAL CASE assignment. This is what happens in a variety of Standard English exemplified in the (a) sentences in (5)–(11) below. We will be referring to this sub-system as the PRESCRIPTIVELY 'CORRECT' VARIETY. Another variety allows accusative forms to be NON-CANONICALLY assigned to subjects, as shown in (5b) and (6b). This will be labelled COLLOQUIAL STANDARD ENGLISH. The third variety also allows non-canonical case assignment – this time nominative forms can appear in object functions, as in (9b) – a usage typical of the HYPER-CORRECT VARIETY of Standard English.[5]

(5) (a) **He and I** tried to make conversation. (COCA)
(b) **Him and me** tried. **We** used a fingernail file once. (COCA)

(6) (a) **We two** speak together. (COCA)
(b) If **us two** don't play, then it's strictly political. (COCA)

(7) (a) **We all** left at the same time. (BNC)
(b) ***Us all** left at the same time.

(8) (a) It was **I** who opened the door. (COCA)
(b) It was **me** that had to tell her. (COCA)

(9) (a) The affinity **between him and me**… (BNC)
(b) all the protection **to both he and I** (BNC)

[5] For a brief note on recent developments in non-canonical case usage, see Swan (2006: 332); for non-canonical case assignment in Middle and Early Modern English, see Denison (1993: 32), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1994), Howe (1996: 166), Wales (1996: 88), Johannessen (1998: 15), Angermeyer & Singler (2003). Since so-called HYPER-CORRECT usage has a long history of attestation, with manifestations at least as far back as Shakespeare's time, the label is not meant to go with any judgemental or diachronic claims that it is recent, artificial or unstable. Neither are such connotations attached to the terms COLLOQUIAL or NON-CANONICAL more generally.

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(10) (a) **I** probably won't go. (BNC)
(b) ***Me** probably won't want to go. (Grano 2006: 6)

(11) (a) **She** poisoned **him** against **me**. (COCA)
(b) ***Her** poisoned **him** against **me**.
(c) ***She** poisoned **him** against **I**.
(d) ***She** poisoned **he** against **me**.

The ungrammatical examples in (7b), (10b) and (11b, c, d) suggest that non-canonical case assignment is far from random. Below, it will be argued that non-canonical case may only appear on pronouns which are not the head of the relevant construction that receives case. This is what many scholars believe about conjoined phrases, which are often described as headless or exocentric. In the next section, it will be demonstrated that the same distinction accounts for the grammaticality judgements in (6) and (7).

Admittedly, there is a certain amount of circularity because we appeal to pronoun usage to distinguish the three linguistic sub-systems, which in turn will be relied on in order to understand pronoun usage. One way of determining register that is independent of the behaviour of pronouns might be to look at the source of our corpus examples. As expected, pronouns tended to be used colloquially in very informal texts, replete with other colloquial vocabulary and abbreviations, even slang words and swearing. By contrast, hyper-correct examples were often associated with formal, solemn occasions, such as a hearing at the High Court of Justice – this context definitely presupposes being on one's best linguistic (and non-linguistic, for that matter) behaviour, to the extent of possibly overdoing it.

Unfortunately, however, things were not always as simple as that, and we sometimes encountered hyper-correct usage in informal contexts, and colloquial usage in relatively formal ones. This calls the distinctions into doubt, but the following grammaticality judgements from Kershaw (1992) (quoted in Johannessen 1998: 137) confirm that we are indeed dealing with three different sub-systems of English: the first one colloquial, shown in (12) below, the second normatively 'correct', in (13), and the third hyper-correct, in (14). On the basis of his intuitions, we can conclude that Kershaw is a speaker, or at least a writer, of 'institutionally sanctioned' English, which he finds unobjectionable, as in (13), setting it apart from the other two varieties presented in (12) and (14). Crucially, (15) demonstrates that the two 'deviant' varieties, neither of which Kershaw accepts without reservation, are incompatible in the same clause. For more discussion of the different registers of English with their different grammars, see Householder (1987) and Klima (1964).

(12) %Me and him went out.

(13) He and I went out.

(14) %They know he and I.

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(15) *Me and him know she and I.
(all examples from Kershaw 1992; quoted in Johannessen 1998: 137)

It could raise concern that, in the present account, non-canonical case will be regarded as optional in the colloquial and hyper-correct varieties, thus allowing *Him and me went out*, *Him and I went out*, and even *He and I went out*, in the grammar of colloquial English.[6] Essentially, everything that can be generated in the prescriptively correct variety can also be generated either by the colloquial or the hyper-correct grammars. This redundancy arguably brings to the fore the somewhat artificial nature of the 'proper' rules for the deployment of pronouns – the result of formal education, often based on pre-conceived notions and foreign models, as opposed to authentic usage, introduced later in life via schooling as a secondary appendage to already existing (sub-)grammars. Be that as it may, the present author sees no reason why different (sub-)systems with partially overlapping outputs should not be able to coexist.

Moreover, there are attestations of nominative subjects in what is otherwise a relaxed, everyday conversation with contractions such as *gonna* and '*d*, as in the extended quotation in (16).

(16) **I and she**'d never said a word! Oh I said, well she had to say something gave the three back, get her flowers and er chocolates or something and the same for his mum. Oh no, nothing like that she said. She said er well they came to us in the interval and Con was just like, I thought she'll call me when Sally has gone, Sally had their address, she'd just you know, she was **gonna** be in there and Con said … (BNC)

This suggests that the concerns expressed above are exaggerated and misplaced, and some speakers feel comfortable with nominative subjects in an informal atmosphere (for whatever reason, schooling or otherwise). Switching from one register to another within the same discourse is conceivable, but probably not within the same clause (note the contracted '*d*). The boundaries between patterns based on register would of necessity have to be fuzzy at least in part. Such 'sub-Englishes' are anything but watertight and should be seen more as helpful approximations or anchoring points with grey areas between them than as clear-cut domains. If worries persist nevertheless, it would be expedient to stipulate that colloquial English must involve at least one accusative subject, though this stipulation is largely orthogonal to our discussion, as it only concerns matters of stylistic differentiation and pigeonholing, rather than the overall output of our grammar(s).

[6] I would like to thank an anonymous *JL* referee for bringing this up. The same referee suspects that, at least for some speakers, there is a register difference between *John and I went out* (neutral) and *It is I* (formal), suggesting that *John and I*/**me went out* may belong to a variety that also includes *It is me*/**I*. My trichotomy does indeed leave no room for such a variety.

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Having introduced the concepts of canonical and non-canonical case in the three registers, we are now ready to return to the claim that non-canonical case assignment can only occur if the pronoun in question is not the head of the relevant construction. This issue will be addressed in Section 3, after which we examine how some earlier theories cope with the complex data and finally outline our own.

3. Pronouns as heads or dependents

Mention was made above of a crucial distinction between *We*/**Us all left* and *We*/*Us two left* – namely, that the pronoun is the head in the former example and a dependent in the latter (cf. (6) and (7) above). We believe that the difference between these patterns holds the key to a better understanding of pronominal case assignment in English. In this section, the different case-assignment options in these two phrases will be attributed to their different syntactic structures. Pronouns have to get canonical case when they head the relevant phrase but are free to get non-canonical/default case when they are dependents, and it is essential for any theory of English case to be able to capture these facts.

3.1 *Empirical evidence*

A substitution test lends support to such an analysis. In the sentence ***We***/***Us*** *two left*, if we replace *we*/*us* with central determiners like *those*/*the*, we get grammatical results like ***Those***/***The***/***Which*** *two left* (see Baker 1995: 153; Wales 1996: 12). Such a substitution is impossible in ***We*** *all left* – ****The***/****Which*** *all left*. The sentence *Those all left* is grammatical because the demonstrative pronoun *those* can also stand on its own. Similarly, if we replace a pronoun functioning as head with a full NP, we get a grammatical sentence (*The men all left*), but trying to replace a pronoun functioning as determiner with a full NP results in ungrammaticality (**The men two left*) (Mary Dalrymple, p.c.). We can also say *Those*/*Us three all left*, where either a central determiner or a pronoun functioning as determiner co-occurs with *all*, so *all* is compatible with determiners, including determiner pronouns, as long as there is a head (the numeral *three*, in our case). Determiner pronouns, on the other hand, are incompatible with other determiners, unless there is an intonation break, which makes such phrases instances of apposition: **we the linguists*, **you the students* (Hudson 1987: 122; see Postal 1969 and the next section). These differences in syntactic behaviour point to an interpretation whereby the pronoun is a determiner in *us two* and the head in *we all*. Kim & Sells (2008: 156) note that *all* in *The boys will all be there* is a floating quantifier, which can follow the auxiliary verb, so *all* may not be part of the phrase at all.

In terms of semantics, *we all* is equivalent to *all of us*, whereas *us two* is not equivalent to *two of us*. In *us two*, *us* must refer to two people, while in *two of*

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us, *us* must refer to at least three people.[7] Another fact to note is that *us girls*, *you girls* and *we girls* are all perfectly well-formed, whereas **they girls* clearly is not. *Them girls* is only possible in varieties of non-standard English in which *them* has the same determiner function as *those*. **I girl* and **she*/**her girl* are obviously out too. These examples make it apparent that only some of the personal pronouns can act both as pronouns and as determiners – third-person pronouns may be precluded from determiner functions due to blocking by the definite article (see Abney 1987; Quinn 2005: 288).

Payne & Huddleston (2002: 374) also consider first- and second-person pronouns in examples like (17) and (18) to be determiners, because they mark a noun as definite and their distribution is exactly parallel to that of other definite determiners, as demonstrated in (19).

(17) all we supporters of a federal Europe

(18) all you students

(19) all those supporters of a federal Europe and all the students
(all examples from Payne & Huddleston 2002: 374)

Such determiner pronouns permit the universal quantifier *all* as predeterminer. Payne & Huddleston point out that this property distinguishes determiner pronouns from personal pronouns, which permit *all* only when post-modified, as shown in (20a, b) (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 353, 382). The positioning of *all* already tells us that a pronoun followed by a relative clause is no independent head.

(20) (a) All we/you who support a federal Europe will win the argument.
(b) *All we/you will win the argument.
(both examples from Payne & Huddleston 2002: 374)

Since the pronouns in (21) and (22) are not sole heads which stand alone in the matrix clause, they are free to get non-canonical case:

(21) Everything comes to **he** who waits.[8]
(Corby trouser-press advertisement, London Underground, 7 November 1994, from Wales 1996: 96; quoted in Quinn 2005: 304)

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[7] This does not hold for ***the*** *two of us*, of course.

[8] An alternative explanation offered in Quinn (2005) is that those pronouns can have their case assigned by the relative clause verb. If Quinn's analysis is applied across the board, however, it will rule out *who* when the relativisation target in the relative clause is not a subject (Mary Dalrymple, p.c.), which is an undesirable consequence; see (i) below. As pointed out by an anonymous *JL* referee, examples like the one in (ii) would also be excluded.

(i) … if he saw me or anybody **who** he knew … (BNC)
(ii) She couldn't stop thinking about **he** (**who**(**m**)) she loved. (invented)

Another alternative, to which we return below, is that prepositions have lost their ability to assign case in some varieties of English.

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(22) **Them** she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin.[9]
(George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*, from Visser 1963: 248; quoted in Quinn 2005: 307)

The paraphrasability with 'those [people] who [can] wait/that [one] who waits/those [people] [who(m)] she lived with' can hardly be denied. The skeleton is thus made up of a determiner (demonstrative or pronominal), plus a head (overtly present or omitted), followed by a relative clause modifying the head. As no nominal can be reinstated in (21), and no third-person pronouns normally act as determiners, *he* might be more profitably interpreted as a FUSED DET-HEAD, combining in it 'the/that person/individual/one [+who waits]', or *he who* might be a PERIPHRASTIC FREE RELATIVE – a single unit composed of two parts which spells out *whoever*. We cannot get **Everything comes to who waits* – the pronoun *he*, or its functional equivalent, the morpheme *-ever*, are indispensable in licensing what is basically a free relative clause in *Everything comes to whoever waits/to he who waits*; if so, the pronoun does not even belong to the matrix clause as a separate constituent; rather, it forms a syntactic unit with *who* (see Hristov 2012: Chapter 6; on the FUSED RELATIVE CONSTRUCTION, see Huddleston, Pullum & Peterson 2002: 1068ff.). If, on the other hand, *he* is a non-free standing, fused Det-Head post-modified by a relative clause, then the structure reminds one of a pronoun followed by an appositive phrase or a pronoun that co-occurs with an adjectival modifier (see examples (23) and (31) below). We now turn to these contexts.

3.2 *Apposition*

The evidence adduced in the previous section is unequivocally in favour of treating pronouns in phrases like *we two* or *we linguists* as determiners. If, however, compelling reasons turn up that such pronouns should not be considered determiners, an alternative analysis whereby those constructions are instances of apposition will always be available (although see Postal 1969, who argues against it). Apposition is similar to coordination in that there are two elements, neither of which is the head, so we will essentially make the same predictions (on apposition and coordination, see Sadler & Nordlinger 2006). We would have to resort to the apposition explanation for examples like (23) anyway. The pronoun *we* in (23) cannot be plausibly construed as a determiner because there is one already (a rather different analysis is proposed by Quinn 2005: 301). Although there are archaic analogues with two determiners from Early Modern English like (24), such idiom would not be judged grammatical in Present-Day English.

[9] The non-canonical pronoun here may be due to the speaker's (or, more accurately, the character's) sub-standard dialect. Our account is restricted to Standard Modern English.

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(23) Finally, I must speak of the frustrations of **we, the journalists**.
(*The Observer*, 12 August 1984; quoted in Kjellmer 1986: 448)

(24) No, **this my** hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine.
(William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*)

3.3 *Fossilised nominalisations*

In Section 3.1 we saw that pronouns can be either heads or dependents in the relevant phrase. If they are heads, they must be assigned canonical case. If they are dependents, they may be assigned non-canonical default case. Yet another possibility, illustrated in (25), involves pronouns which have been nominalised and function as nouns, therefore exhibiting no morphological case inflections.[10]

(25) a whole new **me**[11]

An additional complication arises from phrases like *poor him*. In this subsection we explore possible reasons why they end up with non-canonical case and identify at least three: first, such phrases often appear as independent constituents (in separate clauses); secondly, the pronoun can be analysed as a frozen nominalisation that does not inflect for case; thirdly, there are indications that such pronouns act as determiners.

The non-canonical default case on pronouns used with adjectives, as in *poor him*, may not be due to the hierarchical internal organisation of the phrase itself, but to the fact that they frequently occur as part of independent non-sentential constituents without a case-assigning verb (see Quinn 2005: 288). And yet, there are examples where they are integrated in finite clauses, as in (26).

(26) Poor **him** never got a word in edgeways. (Quinn 2005: 75)

As pointed out by Catherine Mary MacRobert (p.c.), such constructions as *poor him* or *lucky me* might be idiomatic set expressions which are not built

[10] The only potential exception of nominal case might be the genitive marker *'s*. As it attaches to the right edge of the NP, and not directly to the head noun, it is better analysed as an enclitic than as an inflection (see Halpern 1995).

[11] The following is probably also a nominalised pronoun that does not exhibit case variation:

(i) Well, I don't see **me** anywhere [in the picture]. Where is **me**, 'cause that's not **me**.
(http://www.npr.org/2011/02/22/133847765/silver-star-recipient-areluctant-hero; accessed 10 July 2011; thanks to Mary Dalrymple for bringing this example to my attention)

Similar examples from Early Modern English, to which a nominalisation account might not apply, are cited in Kjellmer (1986: 448) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1994: 219). They will be ignored here because they belong neither to Standard nor to Later Modern English. Present-day non-standard varieties are likewise ignored (see Wales 1996: 85).

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on the basis of syntactic rules at all, because they cannot combine freely with any adjective (e.g. **ridiculous us*/**hungry me*). Schütze (2001: 213–214), Zwicky (2004) and Grano (2006: 4) consider only the accusative to be grammatical in sentences like (27) and (28) below. There exists a certain parallelism between *poor me* and *lucky me* from examples (27) and (28), on the one hand, and *the real me* in example (29), on the other. Case variation is precluded in all three of them, with the accusative being the only option (provided that we trust Schütze's, Zwicky's and Grano's intuitions about grammaticality).

(27) Lucky **me**/***I** gets to clean the toilets. (Schütze 2001: 213–214)

(28) Poor ***I**/**me** will have to start all over again. (Grano 2006: 4)

(29) The real **me**/***I** is finally emerging. (Schütze 2001: 214)

(30) Lucky **me**/the real **me** is/*am … (Schütze 2001: 214)

Taking these insights on board, we propose to treat the pronouns in phrases like *poor*/*lucky him* as fossilised nominalisations, as suggested by the parallels between *lucky me* and the unambiguously nominalised *the real me*. This is indeed supported by the agreement facts in (27) above, where no first-person agreement would be tolerated by *me*. The grammaticality judgements in (30) also point in this direction – the third-person agreement on the verb means that the subject is a (third-person) noun, not a first-person pronoun. However, it remains a mystery why the pronoun is barred from co-occurring with a determiner in (27) and (28) (**the lucky me*). More damagingly, nominative forms are also attested in such contexts, as shown in (31).

(31) This is hard for poor **we**. (Householder 1987: 164)

This is evidence of real case assignment, as opposed to a frozen nominalisation. One way out is to say that both the nominative and the accusative forms have given rise to two synonymous nominalised lexemes (maybe in different idiolects), which do not allow overt determiners. Another route is to emphasise the incompatibility of such pronouns with determiners, which might be due to the conceivable determiner status of the pronoun.[12] However, such pronouns would have to be the only post-adjectival determiners (as an anonymous *JL* referee also alerts). Yet another potential analysis might be apposition, which was considered in the previous section

[12] The incompatibility with determiners cannot be due to the unique reference of pronouns – compare **that poor him* vs. attested *that poor Rob* (COCA). In addition, (i) shows that adjectival heads allow determiners other than the definite article:

(i) But it's real jobs they want, **these young**: to be needed, useful, a cog in the machine (http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/libby_purves/article7107887.ece; accessed 25 April 2010)

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(Quirk et al. 1985: 423–424, Sections 17.65, 17.88 promote similar ideas regarding phrases like *we British*), but the same word-order issues arise from placing the pronoun last. We leave this for future research.

3.4 *The formal treatment of pronouns as heads or dependents*

The syntactic differences between a pronoun which is the head of a structure and a pronoun which is a dependent will prove pivotal in our analysis. The formal treatment of pronouns in general, and pronouns functioning as determiners in particular, remains controversial, with scholars disagreeing over the very basics of what they believe to be the correct phrase-structure representation (Postal 1969; Jackendoff 1977: 106; Quirk et al. 1985: Section 6.1; Abney 1987: 169ff.; Hudson 1987: 122ff.; Cardinaletti 1994: 202–205; Longobardi 1994; Wales 1996: 11; Panagiotidis 2002; Payne & Huddleston 2002: 374; Quinn 2005).

The whole phrase-structure problem can be circumvented by using LFG functional structure, especially since what is the head in the constituent structure does not necessarily have to be the head at functional structure (see Bresnan 2001: 102; Dalrymple 2001; and the brief outline of LFG in Section 5 below). We propose the LFG f-structure treatment presented in Figure 1. If pronouns behave like determiners, they will supply the value of the specifier (SPEC) at f-structure, which will enable them to get default case, as they are not the f-structure head. If pronouns function as heads, they will contribute the PRED value in the relevant f-structure and will only be able to get canonical case (see Section 5 below).

Us two *left*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'leave<SUBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{SPEC} & [\text{us}] \\ \text{PRED} & \text{'two'} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

We all *left*

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'leave<SUBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'we'} \\ \text{ADJUNCT} & \{[\text{all}]\} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 1
Functional-structure analysis of pronouns as heads or dependents.

The aim of this section has been to demonstrate that an adequate analysis of case assignment in Present-Day English will have to be able to reflect the disparities between pronouns functioning as heads and pronouns functioning as dependents – heads always have to be assigned canonical case, whereas dependents are allowed to get non-canonical default case. This is valid for the material we have been examining here, as well as for coordination, which will be discussed in more detail below. After this excursus, we turn to reviewing a small sample of the vast literature on pronominal case in English. It will emerge that while coordinated constructions have featured

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prominently in previous work, often no attempts have been made to extend the analysis to what we have labelled determiner pronouns.

4. Previous accounts

This section contains thumbnail sketches of some earlier attempts at tackling case in English, with special reference to case assignment to conjoined phrases. We first present the treatments offered in the two standard reference grammars of Modern English – Huddleston & Pullum et al. (2002) and Quirk et al. (1985) – followed by a discussion of the work of two more theoretically-minded authors – Johannessen (1996, 1998) and Quinn (2005). As we go along, we also point out some of the problems previous proposals face. Finally, we argue against the purely tree-based explanations that have dominated the specialist literature. In the next section, we will outline our alternative proposal and then set it against a backdrop of similar ideas.

4.1 *Payne & Huddleston (2002)*

Payne & Huddleston (2002: 462) list three strategies for assigning case to coordinate constructions. The first one involves having the same case-assignment rules for both conjoined and non-conjoined pronouns (equivalent to what we have labelled the prescriptively 'correct' variety). The second one involves treating the coordinating conjunction as a preposition and is exemplified by sentences where only the second conjunct gets accusative case, like (32). The third strategy is to have accusative case for both conjuncts. Payne & Huddleston's second and third strategies are subsumed under what we have called the colloquial variety of Standard English.

(32) **She and us** are going to be good friends.
(Payne & Huddleston 2002: 462)

In relation to the hyper-correct insertion of nominative forms into object slots, Payne & Huddleston (2002: 463) distinguish two patterns. The first one features a 'deviant' conjunct in second position, as in (33) below. The second pattern has the 'deviant' conjunct in first position, as in (34), or both conjuncts are 'deviant', as in (35). The authors point out that the first pattern is much more common than the second.

(33) The present was supposed to represent Helen and **I** …

(34) They've awarded **he** and his brother certificates of merit.

(35) There's a tendency for **he and I** to clash.
(all examples from Payne & Huddleston 2002: 463)

A difficulty arises from attributing the assignment of non-canonical accusative case in the colloquial variety to the reanalysis of the conjunction as a

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preposition. Such an explanation cannot be invoked when both conjuncts get non-canonical accusative case, or, more importantly, when it is the first conjunct that gets non-canonical accusative case, but not the second. We have attested examples from the Internet:

(36) **Me and he** are having a heated discussion about this.
(http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/forums/showthread.php?t=287273&page=162b; accessed 13 April 2010)

(37) She can't take the fact that **me and he** are happy together, she's jealous, actually she wants him back.
(http://www.country-couples.co.uk/datingtips/does-your-man-flirt-with-other-women/; accessed 13 April 2010)

Nor can this explanation be extended to the constructions with determiner pronouns discussed in the previous section. Although Payne & Huddleston (2002: 374) correctly identify pronouns used in this way as determiners, they do not offer a comprehensive solution that applies to both instantiations of what seems to be the same phenomenon.

4.2 *Quirk et al.* (*1985*)

In order to explain the mechanisms of case assignment, Quirk et al. (1985) divide the finite clause into 'subject territory' (the pre-verbal subject position) and 'object territory' (which includes all noun-phrase positions apart from that immediately preceding the verb).[13] In informal English, the accusative is the unmarked default case form which is used 'in the absence of positive reasons for using the nominative form' (Quirk et al. 1985: 338). This is how the authors account for accusative subject complements such as that in (38). This also explains the preference for *me* in 'absolute' functions, as in (39) (see Erdmann 1979: 68).

(38) That'll be **them**.

(39) 'Who's there?' '**Me**.'
(both examples from Quirk et al. 1985: 338; bold face mine)

According to Quirk et al. (1985: 338), the same idea of 'object territory' is responsible for the tendency to find accusative conjoined pronouns functioning as the subject of the finite clause. The pronoun is no longer said to be in subject territory here, because coordination means that it is:

> separated to some extent from the following verb, either by position or by failure of concord, as in the non-standard *Him and Mary/Mary and him are going abroad for a holiday*. (Quirk et al. 1985: 338)

[13] Consult Klima (1964: 15–16) for similar ideas.

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It is mysterious, however, that *him* should be accusative, despite immediately preceding the verb in its 'subject territory'. Having recourse to 'failure of concord', on the other hand, is circular: an accusative subject is said to constitute an exception merely by virtue of being accusative. An anonymous *JL* referee protests that failure of concord/agreement is not meant to be the same as being accusative; instead, it only means that the verb fails to agree with the individual pronoun. Even if we accept this point, which arguably justifies removing the pronoun from subject territory, it remains unclear why a pronoun in the same slot might be nominative.

Hyper-correct nominative objects are attributed to the prescriptive bias in favour of nominative forms. Nevertheless, conjoined nominative pronouns which have encroached on 'object territory' pose a problem for Quirk et al.'s explanation, as it predicts that anything in the object territory will be in the accusative (compare *between you and I*, *as for John and I*, etc.).

In order to salvage these otherwise neat insights, we might stipulate that, in the hyper-correct register, the defaults have been flipped around (this is what we will do in our analysis below). Although the problem of hyper-correction can be eliminated by positing another default, Quirk et al.'s (1985) model would have a hard time explaining why it is possible to get the default case in ***Us** two left*, but not in ***We** all left*. Since neither of the two pronouns immediately precedes the verb, they are not in 'subject territory', and default case should be available to both of them. Although the authors offer convincing analyses of the headedness of such constructions (Quirk et al. 1985: 339, 353, 423–424, Sections 7.25, 17.65, 17.88), the case marking options in them cannot be covered by the concepts of subject and object territory. What is more, nominative subject complements remain unaccounted for.

With regard to the interrogative/relative pronoun *who*/*whom*, Quirk et al. (1985: 367) note that the accusative form is the marked one, unlike the unmarked accusative form of personal pronouns.[14] The advantage of their approach is that it naturally anticipates this discrepancy. Since 'subject territory' in colloquial English is defined as the position preceding the verb, and since the fronted *wh*-pronoun in interrogative and relative clauses can

[14] At first sight, this may seem rather strange. In fact, it is not so surprising, since case on personal pronouns is expressed by suppletion; as a result, nominative and accusative forms are of more or less equal length. Formally, neither is more marked than the other, but functionally, accusative personal pronouns are definitely the unmarked member of the opposition (e.g. they would be expected in single-word responses, as in '*Who's there?*' '*Me*/?*I*'). By contrast, the case on the accusative relative pronoun is realised by the ending *-m*. The nominative is thus clearly shorter and has a zero ending, which makes it formally unmarked. In addition, the nominative is doubtlessly the unmarked member of the opposition from a functional point of view, as it can act as an object. Treating *who*/*whom* differently from *he*/*him*, however, is assailable on grounds of applying double standards (and in fact scholars like Quinn 2005: Chapter 6.2 treat both pairs alike). At the same time, it has to be emphasised that *who* and *whom* share a vowel (long /u:/), whereas *he* and *him* do not; this implies that *who* and *whom* have the same stem, while *he* and *him* are suppletive forms from different stems.

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only appear in subject territory, regardless of whether it functions as subject or not, there is a tendency in informal English to avoid accusative *whom* and to replace it by *who* (Quirk et al. 1985: 367; see Section 5.8 below, where we set out our ideas). We now turn to an analysis cast in the Minimalist framework and its hierarchy-based account of the same facts, or at least a subset of them.

4.3 *Johannessen (1996, 1998)*

Restricting herself to conjoined pronouns, Johannessen (1998) also recognises the fact that the deviant conjunct gets default case. For her, this has to do with the structure of the Conjunction Phrase. On the basis of the observation that mixing canonical and non-canonical forms normally proceeds in that order (see (40) and (41) below, and Section 4.1 above), as well as on the basis of other assumptions which are not rehearsed here, Johannessen concludes that conjoined nouns form a Conjunction Phrase (ConjP) headed by the conjunction and constructed according to the generalised X-bar schema given in Figure 2 (i.e. there is a head, in addition to a complement, which is sister to the head and daughter to the X-bar node, as well as a specifier, which is daughter to the XP and sister to X-bar).

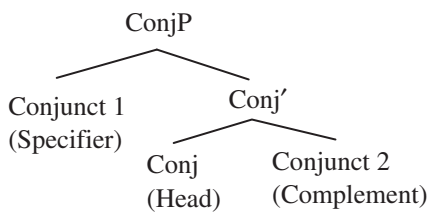


Figure 2
Johannessen's (1998; 1996: 669) ConjP.

The conjunction, which is the head, gets the case properties dispensed by the verb.[15] Since conjunctions display no case, case is realised on one of the conjuncts. Crucially, agreement in this framework is always a relation between a head and its specifier.[16] Thus, the pronoun or noun which sits in the specifier position receives the expected canonical case, whereas the other pronoun (or noun) can host default case, as the model does not stipulate that any agreement relations will obtain between a head and its

[15] More precisely, the claim is that the conjunct in specifier position gives its features to the whole ConjP through Spec-head agreement, especially its syntactic category features, while the specifier in turn receives the features of the whole ConjP, especially case (Johannessen 1998: 110, 271; I would like to thank an anonymous *JL* referee for elucidating this point).

[16] This is open to criticism because it conflates the concepts of AGREEMENT and GOVERNMENT.

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complement. It follows that if only one of the two conjuncts is aligned with the expected canonical marking, it must be the one that appears in the specifier position.

Johannessen (1998: 3, 54–55) believes that the relative order of heads and complements is fixed in any given language. With particular reference to English, she claims that the order of verb (head) and object (complement) corresponds to having a conjunction (head) and a deviant conjunct which follows it (complement). This is indeed true in sentences like (40) and (41).

(40) Can someone help **my wife and I** find housing in Texas?

(41) **She and him** will drive to the movies.

(both examples from Johannessen 1998: 15–16)

This account predicts that the first conjunct (the specifier) will not be allowed to admit non-canonical morphology if the second conjunct (the complement) bears the expected canonical case. And yet, this is exactly what we find in examples (36) and (37) above, as well as in (42) and (43):

(42) No, quite the opposite. **Him and I** have remained close.

(43) Well, it does, in a way, because **him and I** took different paths fighting our case.

(both examples from COCA)

The fundamental motivation behind Johannessen's approach is primarily theory-internal, and her arguments can be turned upside down, again for theory-internal reasons. Zoerner (1995), for instance, props up the ConjP scaffolding too, but with exactly the opposite predictions – he expects that the conjunct in complement position will be given the canonical case, because for him the conjunction (head) acts like a case-assigning predicate which somehow channels the case for the relevant position; in addition, heads dispatch features to their complements, but not to their specifiers. A similar idea was entertained and rejected while discussing Payne & Huddleston's (2002) proposed solution in Section 4.1 above.

4.4 *Quinn (2005)*

Building on Johannessen's work, Quinn (2005) appeals to violable weighted constraints in order to model pronoun case assignment in conjoined and non-conjoined phrases alike, including determiner pronouns. One such constraint is RELATIVE POSITIONAL CODING 1, which states that, in a conjoined phrase, the first conjunct must be GRACILE and the second ROBUST. The set of gracile pronoun forms comprises: *me*, *he*, *she*, *we*, *they*; the set of robust forms comprises: *I*, *him*, *her*, *us*, *them*. As this does not account for coordinations like *me and they*, Quinn (2005) introduces an additional constraint, stipulating that sometimes the second conjunct has to be

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'more robust' than the first, with *they* declared more robust than the other gracile pronouns. Yet another constraint allows INVARIANT STRONG FORMS like *him and me*. The invariant strong forms are listed as: *me*, *him*, *her*, *us*, *them*.

However, none of these dictates seems to be in a position to straightforwardly capture attested and reported combinations like *me and he* in (36) and (37), or *her and we* functioning as subjects; if these were eventually captured, that would be achieved in a rather forceful manner, since such patterns are certainly less expected in this model. Examples like (42) and (43) above also slip through the net, unless some extra caveats are brought in (e.g. Quinn 2005: 192ff.). As pointed out by an anonymous *JL* referee, the above constraints do interact with others, such as POSITIONAL CASE (see below) and ARGUMENT CASE, both of which predict the occurrence of nominative forms in conjoined subjects. Nevertheless, it is the present author's belief that such a proliferation of optional rules somehow misses a deeper generalisation.

This brief survey of some relevant literature has revealed the need for an analysis that does a better job of demystifying the phenomenon under investigation. We will try to provide such an analysis in the next section, but we first set out to justify our decision not to make exclusive use of constituent structure.

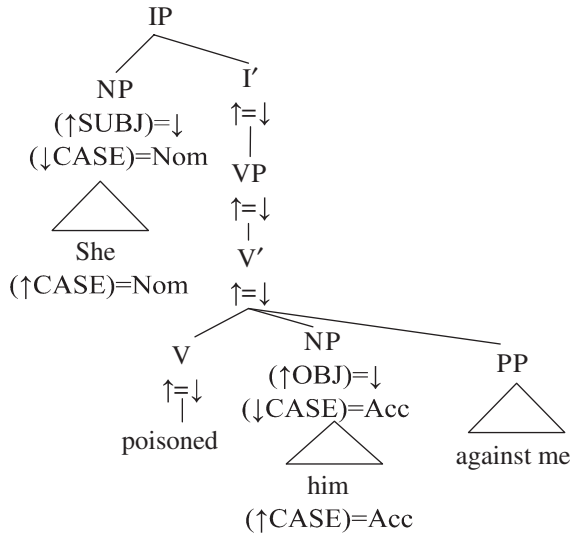
4.5 *Against an approach exclusively based on constituent structure*

Since English is a configurational language, it might seem that we can rely on constituent-structure trees to formulate the generalisations. Such arboreal generalisations are laid out in the two bullet points below (to be visualised as in Figure 3 below), but, as we shall see, they soon turn out to be rather problematic.

- If the maximal projection of a pronoun is IMMEDIATELY DOMINATED by IP, then the pronoun gets nominative case (as in ***We*** *all left* or simply ***We*** *left*). If the (main/lexical) verb (incl. a copula), or a preposition, IMMEDIATELY C-COMMANDS[17] the maximal projection of a pronoun, the pronoun then gets accusative case. This accounts for straightforward instances like *She gave it to* ***him*** and *It's* ***me***.
- If, however, the pronoun is not the head of the maximal projection immediately dominated by IP, then the pronoun need not get nominative case and is free to receive default accusative case (in the colloquial

[17] We stick to the wording IMMEDIATE C-COMMAND, instead of the more widely used term GOVERNMENT, so that we can avoid mixing up this kind of C-STRUCTURE GOVERNMENT with LFG's F-STRUCTURE GOVERNMENT which is employed below.

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$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`poison}\langle \text{SUBJ}, \text{OBJ}, \text{OBL}\rangle\text{'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`she'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Nom} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`him'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Acc} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBL} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`against}\langle \text{OBJ}\rangle\text{'} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`me'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Acc} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

(b)

Figure 3
Partial c-structure (a) and partial f-structure (b)
for ***She*** *poisoned* ***him*** *against* ***me*** (COCA).

variety). This accounts for ***Us*** *two left* and ***Me and him*** *left* (assuming that coordination is exocentric). In the hyper-correct variety, if the verb or a preposition does not immediately c-command the maximal projection of a pronoun, the pronoun can then get default (nominative) case. In order for a pronoun to obligatorily get accusative case, its maximal projection has to be immediately c-commanded by the verb/preposition. This accounts for patterns like *He drove my brother and* ***I***.

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These insights appear in early work by Klima (1964), Emonds (1976), and Hudson (1995: 378), among others, but they need to be refined. In a theory like LFG, such relations as subject and object, as well as case assignment, are usually processed at functional structure, which is what we propose to do below. The motivation for rejecting a purely phrase-structural explanation is not whimsically theory-internal, however. It would be a challenge, possibly tackled by transformations or other suitable machinery, to extend our rigid phrase-structure account to languages with thriving morphological declensions and free word order, like Czech and Old Norse, which are hardly immune to non-canonicity (Siegel 1987: 69–70 highlights other, more formal, problems for configurational approaches to case assignment). Nor would such a tree-based model be able to naturally predict the behaviour of subject complements in English, since they inhabit the same surface c-structure position as objects, though attempts have been made within Minimalism to devise different underlying phrase-structural representations for the two types of constituent (as I am reminded by an anonymous *JL* referee; see Bowers 1993). The big debate on whether transformations are in general viable and motivated, or whether syntactic functions should be manipulated via phrase-structure trees, is ongoing. Unfortunately, we have no space for a more detailed discussion of what we believe to be a healthy scepticism on the part of non-transformationalists.

We will therefore primarily rely on LFG F-STRUCTURE GOVERNMENT and primitive grammatical functions such as subject, object and subject complement, but at the same time we will also make use of constituent-structure trees. We end up claiming that case in English is assigned to pronouns which are governed by a finite verbal PRED at f-structure, bear certain grammatical functions, and appear in certain constituent-structure positions. In addition, the approach we will defend below is more flexible in delimiting what contexts individual pronominal forms are allowed to appear in, due to constraints that we attach to lexical entries.

5. A NEW PROPOSAL

We now proceed to reformulate our generalisations in the setting of LFG. After outlining the proposed f-structure solution, we will go on to explore how it can be implemented in different contexts where non-canonical case may gain a foothold, including conjoined and determiner pronouns, subject complements, as well as instances of topicalisation and left-dislocation. Special attention is paid to the inability of non-finite verbs, and perhaps prepositions in some varieties of English, to assign case. Focusing on conjoined environments, we address issues like the distributivity of case (see Section 5.9 below), and clusters with more than two conjuncts. In the later sections, we compare our model to existing ones that share similar intuitions, and bring this part of the paper to a close by listing the limitations of our

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account, as well as potential extra-syntactic constraints that remain to be worked out in future research. Finally, claims that English has no case at all will be assessed and discarded in Section 8.

5.1 *Lexical-Functional Grammar* (*LFG*)[18]

Unlike tree-based transformational approaches to syntax, LFG makes available two types of syntactic representation. CONSTITUENT STRUCTURE (C-STRUCTURE) is similar to the surface phrase-structure trees of transformational grammar and provides information about linear order and constituency. FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE (F-STRUCTURE) is separate from constituent structure and is entrusted with expressing tense, agreement, or grammatical relations such as subject and object in the form of attribute–value matrices enclosed in square brackets. An attribute like CASE, for example, might have the values Nom(inative) or Acc(usative). The value of a given attribute may be supplied by an embedded f-structure; for instance, the value of SUBJ in Figure (3b) shows the f-structure of the pronoun *she*. F-structure is licensed by functional annotations on the nodes of the c-structure tree which specify the attributes and values of the f-structure. Such annotations can tell us that a given c-structure node, labelled '↓', is the subject of the node above it, labelled '↑', as expressed in the equation '(↑SUBJ) = ↓' that appears on the tree diagram (see Figure 3 above). These annotations spell out the links between c- and f-structure. The interface between the two modules will prove crucial for the present analysis, because we will enlist the help of such c-structure annotations to assign case which will then be processed at f-structure.

In our analysis, we will be appealing to F-STRUCTURE GOVERNMENT, which is discussed in the next section. Functional concepts such as SUBJ and OBJ will also play a part, because the assignment of case will be tied to the grammatical role of the pronoun. A difference between LFG and transformational syntax is that grammatical functions are considered to be primitives in the former. Similarly to other formalisms (e.g. Government and Binding and Minimalism), LFG draws a distinction between STRUCTURAL (or FUNCTIONAL) and LEXICAL (or IDIOSYNCRATIC) case (Allen 1995: 125). Structural case is aligned with grammatical relations such as SUBJ and OBJ. Lexical case, on the other hand, originates in the lexical entries of individual verbs and it, so to speak, overrides its structural counterpart. Below we demonstrate that Modern English has only got structural case left (in the sense of Butt 2006: 145–146). Subject pronouns will therefore be fitted with nominative morphology and object pronouns with accusative morphology.

Finally, in a constraint-based theory like LFG, much emphasis is placed on the lexicon. We reflect this by regulating pronoun usage via distributional

[18] Comprehensive introductions to LFG include Bresnan (2001), Dalrymple (2001) and Falk (2001).

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constraints associated with the lexical entries of individual pronominal forms. Having thus taken a glimpse at some of the relevant architecture of LFG, we are now equipped to present our proposal.

5.2 *F-structure account: The basic principles*

We can explain our data with the following overarching generalisations in the setting of LFG f-structure (to be supplemented below in order to take into account positional restrictions on case assignment):

- SUBJ pronouns must receive nominative case if they are governed by the finite verb of the relevant clause.
- Similarly, an OBJ pronoun that is governed by a finite verb or a preposition will have to be assigned canonical accusative case.
- Ungoverned pronouns can get default accusative case in the colloquial variety or default nominative case in the hyper-correct variety.

A governed pronoun will appear as a governed grammatical function of the governing PRED, not as a member of such a function or as a non-governed function. Looked at from the point of view of the case assigner, this means that the case assigner can only 'have power' over the head of the phrase to which it sends case, but its requirements cannot reach any further embedded potential receivers of case.[19]

In the f-structure in Figure 3 above, all the pronouns are governed by a case-assigning predicate (either the finite verb or the preposition). The PRED *poison* governs the functions of SUBJ, OBJ and OBL. The respective values of those attributes are the f-structures for the pronouns *she* and *him*, as well as the f-structure of the PP *against me*. In the PP, the PRED of the preposition governs its OBJ, whose value is supplied by the f-structure of the pronoun *me*. Since they are all governed, those pronouns must get the canonical case expected for their grammatical functions. This might be achieved by the traditional constraints given in (44).[20]

(44) *Constraints imposed by a case-assigning predicate*
PRED 'poison < SUBJ, OBJ, OBL >'
(↑SUBJ CASE) = Nom, (↑OBJ CASE) = Acc

The first line in (44) tells us that the predicate *poison* takes a subject, an object and an oblique argument (a prepositional object). From the second line, we learn that the case of the subject has to be nominative and the case of

[19] This raises the issue whether case in English distributes to all the conjuncts in a conjoined phrase or whether the conjoined phrase acts as a barrier to case assignment – more discussion will follow below.

[20] For the time being, we will be ignoring constraints associated with prepositions and their case-assigning properties; there will be more discussion in subsequent sections.

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the object has to be accusative. This is the traditional LFG treatment of arguments and the cases assigned to them by the predicate (Butt 2006: 145ff.). We will only depart from these standardly held assumptions in one respect. Instead of having case assigned by the predicate, as shown in the second line of (44), we will have case associated with certain positions in the c-structure tree, with the nominative descending to SUBJ constituents in the specifier of IP, and the accusative descending to OBJ sisters of V or P, as shown in the c-structure in Figure 3 above. The second line of (44) thus becomes redundant. Case will not be completely independent of predicates, however, because we continue to rely on function government by PREDs at f-structure, i.e. we still rely on the first line in (44), whereby the PRED takes a SUBJ, an OBJ and an OBL, although it may not give case to them. In addition, case remains ultimately linked to the properties of predicates because we assume that non-finite verbs block case assignment (Section 5.4 and Figure 10 below illustrate how this is achieved formally).

For a pronoun to receive nominative case in any variety of Standard English, it will have to be a SUBJ pronoun governed by a finite verb at f-structure, in addition to appearing in a specific c-structure position. For a pronoun to receive the accusative in any variety of Standard English, it will have to be an OBJ pronoun governed by a finite verb or a preposition at f-structure, in addition to appearing in a specific c-structure position. The empirical motivation for positional case assignment is presented in Section 5.7 below, but before we flesh out our proposal in full, we zoom in on some of the environments where default case may be tolerated because the relevant pronoun is not governed by a finite verbal PRED or a preposition at f-structure.

5.3 *Conjoined pronouns and determiner pronouns*

In Figure 4, the subject pronouns are further embedded as conjuncts within the coordinate structure. Lexical-Functional Grammar indicates this by enclosing them in curly brackets which signify that the conjuncts form a set. These brackets reflect the phrase structure in English – neither pronoun is the head of the phrase, and therefore is not governed by the finite verbal

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`paint<SUBJ,OBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`him'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Acc} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`me'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Acc} \end{bmatrix} \right\} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`porch'} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 4
Partial f-structure for *How **him and me** painted the porch* (COCA).

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$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`leave<SUBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{SPEC} & [\text{us}] \\ \text{PRED} & \text{`two'} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 5
Partial f-structure for ***Us two*** *left*.

PRED. Here, the verbal PRED governs the coordinate structure as a whole, but not the individual conjuncts.[21] That is why they are allowed to default to the accusative.

Another context where non-canonicity is possible is given in Figure 5. This time the first-person plural pronoun functions as a determiner in the subject phrase (see Section 3 above). Consequently, it appears as a sub-constituent (here, SPEC) of the SUBJ f-structure and is therefore free to get default accusative case in the colloquial variety.

Analogous processes can be observed in the hyper-correct variety if the finite verb or a preposition does not govern a pronoun nested in the OBJ f-structure. In other words, if the pronoun appears in an f-structure which is a sub-constituent of the OBJ, the pronoun can get default nominative case in the hyper-correct variety. This explains sentences like (45).

(45) But to **we** nostalgic post-Imperial powers it was what the Scandinavian sexologists call an anticlimax.
(*The Guardian*, 27 March 1980; from Kjellmer 1986: 448; also quoted in Quinn 2005: 125; bold face mine)

5.4 *Default case assignment in the absence of a finite predicate*

Another context in which default case can step in is the absolute use of pronouns, where they stand on their own, as in (46).

(46) 'Who's there?' '**Me**'.

The reason for the default accusative in (46) is the absence of a (finite) verb to be governed by. This is also the explanation for elliptical constructions, like (47), which lack a finite predicate in the main clause (Quinn 2005: 178–180 advocates an alternative hypothesis).

(47) **Me** that's led such a quiet life!
(Wain, *Hurry on Down*; quoted in Erdmann 1979: 69; bold face mine)

As we can establish from (48) and (49), either accusative or nominative forms are acceptable in elliptical constructions.

[21] The conjuncts are nevertheless licensed by appearing in a governed coordinate structure.

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(48) (a) He was morose, **she**/**her** full of life.
(b) What, **he**/**him** a republican?
(both examples from Payne & Huddleston 2002: 460; bold face mine)

(49) **She** a beauty! I should as soon call her mother a wit.
(Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; quoted in Quinn 2005: 32; bold face mine)

This suggests that what we have here is indeed default case, which is different in the different varieties. The non-canonical, hyper-correct form in (50) can likewise be attributed to the non-existence of a verbal PRED in the parenthetical *if*-clause.

(50) Who, if not **he**, could he have hired?
(Emonds 1986: 115; quoted in Johannessen 1998: 125; bold face mine)

The same explanation can be extended to non-finite clauses, which we illustrate in (51)–(53).

(51) We were in Greville's office, **I** sitting in his swivel chair behind the vast expanse of desk, Annette sorting …
(Payne & Huddleston 2002: 460; bold face mine)

(52) He could think of a few himself, I expect, **him** being so much in the business already. (Payne & Huddleston 2002: 460; bold face mine)

(53) That's what you wanted, **me** going out to work every morning and bringing money in on Friday night.
(Sillitoe, *A Tree on Fire*; quoted in Erdmann 1979: 71; bold face mine)

Although the predicate is there, it consists of a non-finite verb which cannot furnish its subject with case.[22] In essence, case ultimately seems to depend on the predicate. Non-finite predicates disable the positional case annotations in the c-structure, whereas finite ones activate those annotations (see Section 5.2 above and Figure 10 below).

It should be noted that the accusative in (53) co-varies with the genitive (*my*), and not with the nominative, so the whole clause can be construed as a nominalised construction.[23] Accusative pronouns in such examples might indeed be thought of as modifiers of the nominalised gerundive form, rather than as independent subjects of the clause. However, such a scenario cannot cover (51) and (52), where a genitive pronoun is not an option. We therefore prefer to attribute the availability of default case in all such contexts to the

[22] As suggested by an anonymous *JL* referee, it does not really matter if an OBJ pronoun is governed by a finite predicate or not. Presumably, in *Him attack me?*, *me* would still be a canonical accusative, rather than default case assignment (see Figure 6).

[23] Quinn (2005: Chapter 8) has devised an analysis which is supplemented by a different formalism but shares the underlying intuition.

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inability of non-finite verbs to ensure case for their subjects. So-called MAD MAGAZINE SENTENCES are a subtype of non-finite clause (Figure 6) (see Akmajian 1984: 3–4; Siegel 1987: 62; Haegeman 1994: 159). Since the pronoun in Figure 6 is not immediately governed by a finite verb, it can also default to the accusative.

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'attack<SUBJ,OBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'him'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Acc} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'Bill'} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 6
F-structure for the Mad Magazine Sentence *Him attack Bill?*

Independent evidence from raising and control confirms that non-finite predicates cannot license case (see (54), (55) and Schwartz 1985: 161–162).

(54) *Bill tried Tina/she to go. (Schwartz 1985: 161–162)

(55) He seemed to go/I believed him to go. (invented)

In (55), case comes from the main-clause verbs *seemed* and *believed*, respectively.[24] In (54), the non-finite verb cannot even afford any form of subject, since both *Tina* and *she* are equally bad. Neither can they serve as the object of *tried*, since that role is already occupied by the clausal complement.

5.5 *Prepositions and complementisers as case assigners*

In Section 5.4 above, we saw that English non-finite predicates block case assignment. We now turn to the case-licensing properties of prepositions. Examples (56) and (57) are apparent exceptions to our generalisation from Section 5.2 above that objects which are not displaced and are immediately governed by a preposition should be accusative.

(56) John told no one other than **I**.

(57) For **they** to be understood correctly.
(both examples from Emonds 1986: 115; quoted in Johannessen 1998: 125; bold face mine)

[24] As pointed out by Zwicky (2004), the subjects of present subjunctive clauses are required to be in the nominative, as in *I demand that she/*her be chair*. Although such clauses have the base form of the verb, they are still finite (Quirk et al. 1985: 149–151). Consequently, the condition on case assignment has to do with finiteness, and not with morphology or mood.

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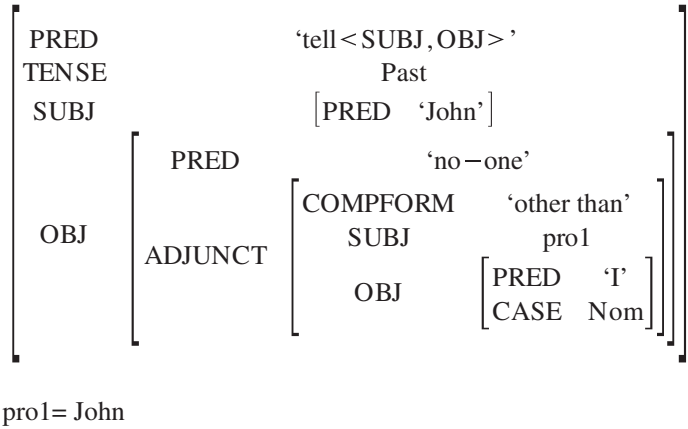


Figure 7
Re-analysis of a preposition as a complementiser.

Because it can function as a complementiser (as in *He is taller than I am*), *than* in example (56) must have been (mis)interpreted as a complementiser instead of a preposition. Complementiser *than* is not a case-licensing preposition: in LFG, complementisers contribute the value of COMPFORM, without assigning case. Therefore, since there is no finite verb in the (elliptical) clause introduced by the complementiser, the pronoun can get default case (see Figure 7). Similarly, *for* in (57) can be either analysed as a preposition or as a complementiser. If it is a complementiser, then the case of the pronoun seems to be left to the verb to take care of.[25] Since the verb is non-finite, it will let the pronoun appear in whatever the default is. The same will hold for (58), which can be regarded as a telegraphic version of *a girl like I am*. *But* can also be a conjunction or a preposition. Although it would be a bit of a leap to say that it is anything other than a preposition in (59), the point is that it can be a conjunction elsewhere.[26]

(58) a girl like **I**

(59) She will not sing for anybody else but **he**.
(both examples from Householder 1987: 167, 174)

There might be arguments against treating *than* as a complementiser in (56) above, since it can be stranded, as in *I am the one he is taller than*; this is a property that prepositions have but complementisers do not (Schütze 2001: 212). Then, the logical conclusion would be that prepositions

[25] From a historical perspective, and also because of the accusative marking it usually requires, I would be more inclined to always analyse *for* as a preposition, even when it introduces non-finite clauses, except when things go wrong, as in (57).

[26] An anonymous *JL* referee finds sentences like **John came after I/before she* unacceptable, so reanalysis might take place only in certain idiolects and with some words, but not others.

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in some varieties of English have lost their ability to allocate case (i.e. they block positional case assignment), similarly to non-finite verbs. In fact, we have come across a substantial number of examples like *Come with I* in the BNC, where *with* has legitimate credentials to be a preposition and nothing else. However, it remains for future work to determine if such sentences belong to Standard English in the first place, and if they should be included in the model, as English native speakers find them pretty bad (Steven Kaye, Mary Dalrymple, p.c.). For the time being, we will assume that the default case in (56)–(59) above can only be due to reanalysis.

5.6 *Subject complements*

The treatment of subject complements, which are neither subjects nor objects, is very interesting. Capturing their case-marking idiosyncrasies in terms of function, and not in terms of constituent structure, gives us a solution which would not be available if we were to rely on constituent structure alone. Strings like *It is I* are problematic for the tree-based account from Section 4.5 above, because they go against the generalisation that, if a verb immediately c-commands a pronoun, the pronoun must get accusative case. A proposal that appeals to function naturally makes the desired predictions.

As mentioned in Section 5.2 above, the nominative is obligatory for non-displaced SUBJ pronouns which are governed by a finite verb. Similarly, non-displaced pronouns heading OBJ f-structures and governed by a finite verb or a preposition have to get accusative case. A (sole) pronoun functioning as subject complement will be governed by the verb, but the f-structure for the subject complement will be associated neither with SUBJ nor with OBJ, but with PREDLINK (see Figure 8 and Butt et al. 1999). A pronoun housed in the f-structure of a PREDLINK, even when governed by a finite verbal PRED, can receive either nominative or accusative morphology because a PREDLINK is neither a SUBJ nor an OBJ, and no case requirements have been specified for it.[27]

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`be}\langle\text{SUBJ, PREDLINK}\rangle\text{'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`it'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Nom} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{PREDLINK} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`me'} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{Acc} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

Figure 8
F-structure for *It's me*.

[27] Additional lexical constraints might need to be put in place, in order to account for the fact that copulative *be* allows its complement to appear either in the nominative or in the

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$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{be} < \text{PREDLINK}, \text{COMP} >, \text{SUBJ} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{FORM} & \text{it} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{PREDLINK} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'she'} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{COMP} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{TOPIC} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{pro1} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{PRED} & \text{'discuss'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \text{'John'} \\ \text{OBJ} & \text{pro1} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

pro1= she

Figure 9
Partial f-structure for *It was she that John discussed in detail.*

The explanation of the non-canonical example in (60) below follows from the fact that the nominative feminine pronoun appears in the PREDLINK f-structure of the matrix clause; it therefore succumbs to the default nominative case in the hyper-correct variety, even though it is semantically also interpreted as an object within the embedded clause (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: Section 6.5; Wales 1996: 96). Crucially, our analysis assumes that there is no syntactic equality between the PREDLINK of the main clause and the missing argument in the subordinate clause, as shown in Figure 9.

(60) It was **she** that John discussed in detail.
(Emonds 1986: 115; quoted in Johannessen 1998: 125; bold face mine)

5.7 *Displacement and positional case assignment*

Postposed pronominal subjects can be potentially challenging for our model. Grano (2006: 5) notes that when pronominal subjects are inverted, they must be accusative, as in (61) and (62).

(61) People are used to these stories of Alaska that are romantic and beautiful, and flowing wilderness, and here comes **me** with, y'know, an assault rifle and a jug of R&R. (Zwicky 2004)

---

accusative, whereas a copula like *become* is only happy with the accusative case, as in (i) (Erdmann 1979: 74–75).

(i) I wanted to become **her**.
(Lessing, *The Golden Notebook*; quoted in Erdmann 1979: 74)

More work is needed in order to ascertain if other copulas exclusively license accusative subject complements.

Secondly, nominative case is impossible across all standard varieties of English in certain kinds of predicative complements, such as in the context of picking oneself out in a photo: *This one here is* ****I/me*** *at the age of 12* (Payne & Huddleston 2002: 459; anonymous *JL* referee). This calls for a somewhat more nuanced approach to subject complements, again left for future work.

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(62) Before her, in the arms of death, lay **him** on whom her hopes of happiness seemed to have formed so firm a basis.
(Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prose Works*; from Visser 1963: 248; quoted in Quinn 2005: 306)

This, however, is not always the case, because some speakers can insert nominative pronouns in such contexts (Catherine Mary MacRobert, p.c.). In other words, we seem to be dealing with another environment that fosters default case.

As Zwicky (2004) puts it, either *me* in (61) is not a subject, or the inverted construction is an exception to the rule that English subjects have nominative case.[28] The former scenario has more plausibility to it. Bresnan (1994) also argues that the locative phrase is the real subject in examples like (61) and (62). The third-person subject–verb agreement in (61) is a tell-tale sign. More evidence that such pronouns are not subjects is given by Bresnan (1994). Likewise, something has 'gone wrong' with the case of the FRONTED object in (63) and the TOPICALISED subject in (64).

(63) **She**, who had been the bane of his life, he treated with the respect a good son might offer a kind mother.
(Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*; from Jespersern & Haislund 1949: 225; quoted in Quinn 2005: 305)

(64) **Me**, on the other hand, am not so patient.
(http://groups.google.com/group/alt.consumers.free-stuff/browse_frm/thread/22e5e49f6036de49/4930da530c426f97; quoted in Grano 2006: 6; bold face mine)

(65) ***Me** probably won't want to go. (Grano 2006: 6)

The reason for the assignment of non-canonical case in both (63) and (64) is that a constituent has been topicalised (by fronting) and does not appear in the phrase-structure position where it is expected to appear. The parenthetical PP *on the other hand* indicates that the subject in (64) is not in its usual subject position. Other constituents can be lodged between the subject and the verb, but if they are not parenthetical, as in (65), the subject remains in situ and non-canonical case is ruled out. This seems to be so because *probably* is much more integrated in the clause, and does not isolate the preceding pronoun as a displaced topic in the same way that a parenthetical expression like *on the other hand* does. In addition, Schütze (2001: 210) treats the non-canonical pronoun in LEFT-DISLOCATED constructions like (66) below

[28] Of course, this construction should be distinguished from subject–auxiliary inversion in interrogative clauses, after certain adverbs, or in sentences like *Kim would object, as would I/*me* (Zwicky 2004), where case assignment is not affected (Zwicky 2004).

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as a non-argument which ends up with default case because there is no obvious case assigner for it.

(66) **Me**, **I** like beans (Schütze 2001: 210)

Unlike the topicalised examples with a gap in (63) and (64), both the relevant grammatical function and the dislocated topic position are filled in (66).[29] *I* is the subject and *me* is a floating topic; they are co-referential but do not share the same case.[30] We are going to propose a unified treatment for both TOPICALISATION and LEFT-DISLOCATION, ignoring some crucial differences between them which are irrelevant for the purposes of the present paper (see Greenberg 1984: 283 and the references cited there, as well as Ross 1967; Rodman 1974; Prince 1997: 133; Gregory & Michaelis 2001).

The evidence presented in this section supports the claim that case in English is assigned positionally, with nominative descending to subjects appearing in the specifier of IP, and accusative descending to objects appearing as sisters of V or P (as per Section 5.2 above, as well as Quinn's 2005 idea about POSITIONAL CASE). Anything that does not surface in its canonical phrase-structure position will thus be free to get default case. This can be achieved through the interaction of LFG c-structure and f-structure, as envisaged in Section 5.1 above. Assigning case positionally does not amount to going back to a purely phrase-structural explanation, because we

[29] Another option in left-dislocation is to have an emphatically used reflexive pronoun, as in the following example:

(i) **Myself**, uh, uh, I just recently, or about to, get a divorce
(Gregory & Michaelis 2001: 1686)

[30] A similar context is given in (i), though it does not involve topicalisation but only co-referentiality of pronouns with mismatched case in the same clause; more discussion can be found in Wales (1996: 106–107).

(i) Let **us** go then, **you and I** …
(T. S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*; quoted in Wales 1996: 107)

Such usage is best explained either as an apposition that behaves like coordination (i.e. comprising a set of constituents), or in terms of the parenthetical (right-dislocated) status of the conjoined pronouns (at least in (i)). The sentence in (ii) below exemplifies either an apposition behaving like coordination and exhibiting 'closest-conjunct agreement' or a displaced subject with a verb defaulting to the third person singular as a result of the empty subject slot; (iii) favours the latter explanation.

(ii) **I**, your head, **is** not being represented …
(*The IT Crowd*, TV show, thanks to Mary Dalrymple, who found this example)

(iii) If **I**, with all the protection and all the defences and all the security that a chancellor of the exchequer or a prime minister has, **is** so vulnerable to unscrupulous tactics, unlawful tactics … what about the ordinary citizen?
(news story: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-14119225; accessed 12 July 2011, thanks to Mary Dalrymple, who spotted it)

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continue to rely on functional categories, with some extra help from the interface between c- and f-structure. This seems to be necessary for English.

Above we mentioned that f-structure is licensed by annotations attached to c-structure nodes, which are themselves the product of the valency requirements of the predicate. The specifier of IP will bear the annotation (↑SUBJ)=↓, which states that it acts as the subject of IP. Likewise, the NP complement of the V or P will be marked as (↑OBJ)=↓, indicating that what is below this node acts as the object of the nodes higher up. Those will also be the places where case specifications are inserted, so there will be an association in English between occupying a particular slot and being required to have a certain case (see Figure 10). If a constituent appears elsewhere, it will resolve its grammatical function in an indeterminate way. Fronted elements can be subjects or objects, or have a number of other grammatical functions. Crucially, such displaced constituents will not be required to have a particular case.[31] What is more, the annotation (↑TENSE)=>(↓CASE)=Nom establishes a link between the positional assignment of case and the presence of a finite predicate, in line with the findings from Section 5.4 above.

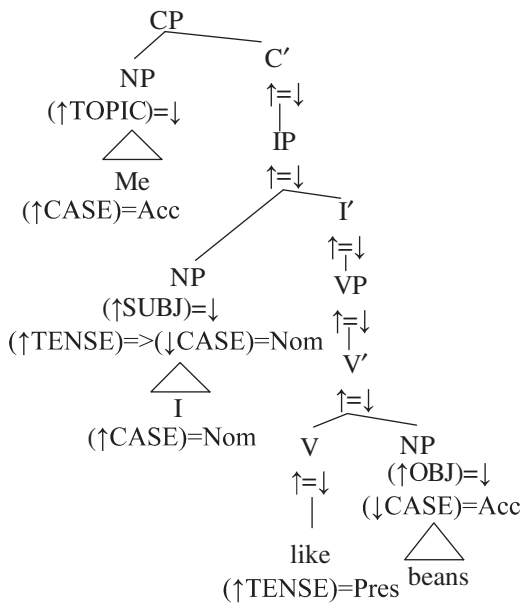


Figure 10
Positional case assignment in a finite clause.

[31] I am grateful to Mary Dalrymple for drawing my attention to this possibility.

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5.8 *Displacement and* wh*-pronouns*

The reasoning from the previous section can be straightforwardly applied to *wh*-words that function as relativisers and interrogative pronouns. Since they are usually displaced, we expect that *wh*-pronouns will in principle be able to get default case, except in pied piping. In this way, the form is always *who* in the colloquial variety, whereas *whom* can be encountered in all grammatical functions in the hyper-correct variety, as in (67).

(67) certain members of the press **whom** I suppose are friends and friendly to him (COCA)
(compare: *I suppose* ***them to be*** *friends* vs. *I suppose* ***they are*** *friends*)

When a *wh*-object of a preposition is moved to the front of the clause and the preposition is stranded, the pronoun can be either nominative or accusative, as in (68) (see Quirk & Greenbaum 1973: 379).[32] However, if the preposition is fronted with the pronoun, the only possible case is normally the canonical accusative, as shown in (69) (cf. Quirk & Greenbaum 1973: 379).

(68) the person **who**/**whom** they were interested in

(69) the person in ***who**/**whom** they were interested (both invented)

In this sense, the present account has an advantage over that of Quirk et al. (1985) outlined in Section 4.2 above, because the latter fails to explain why the default case is disallowed with pied piping, in (69), or why it is possible to get *whom* instead of *who* in the hyper-correct variety, when one would not expect *whom* to break into the subject's territory. And yet, we did find some instances of *who* used with a pied-piped preposition in the BNC, one of which is displayed in (70).

(70) She was a founder member of the Bradford Gilbert and Sullivan Society, **with who** she had a long association. (BNC)

This means that *whom* has been lost altogether from the grammars of at least some speakers, and our account only concerns people whose grammars do not let them use *who* with pied-piped prepositions. Similarly, the default form *who* normally takes over in so-called echo-questions (e.g. *You saw* who *?*/*You went with* who *?*), as I was reminded by an anonymous *JL* referee. This, however, smacks of nominalisation, as interrogative *wh*-words are not usually expected to remain in situ and fail to trigger subject–auxiliary inversion (unless they are subjects themselves).

[32] This is why objects of prepositions will have to receive their case positionally, too. Otherwise, it would be hard to explain why displaced objects of prepositions can get default case.

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It is essential to ensure that our mechanism does not over-generate. Unacceptable sentences like (71) must be outlawed.

(71) ***Whom** saw Mary? (Lasnik & Sobin 2000: 358)

Positional case assignment accomplishes that naturally, because *wh*-subjects appear in situ, unless separated from the rest of the clause by other material such as an extra clause or a parenthetical expression. The fact that we do not witness subject–auxiliary inversion with subject *wh*-pronouns suggests that they are indeed not displaced; this sets them apart from fronted *wh*-pronouns or fronted adverbs like *never*, both of which trigger subject–auxiliary inversion (see Huddleston & Pullum 2005: 162–165). Yet again, there are surprising counter-examples like (72) and (73).

(72) no matter who spoke, or **whom** was addressed

(73) Ben Johnson, **whom** should have known, thought Shakespeare's writing too fluent, too facile …

(both examples from Lasnik & Sobin 2000: 363)

The speakers that produced them must have conflated the construction with a displaced *wh*-word and the one where the *wh*-word remains in situ.

5.9 *Distributivity of case, lexical constraints on individual pronominal forms*

Since the different varieties of English described above have different settings, the default can either be the (colloquial) accusative or the (hypercorrect) nominative. Conjoined phrases are one context in which pronouns can get default case because neither of the conjuncts is the head or main PRED of the SUBJ or OBJ f-structure. In conjoined constructions, case may at first sight appear to be an OPTIONALLY DISTRIBUTIVE feature.[33] The mother node gets the expected canonical case, which is sometimes passed down to both conjuncts and sometimes to neither; it is also possible for only one conjunct to receive the expected canonical case, with the other one left with the default. At first glance, the distributivity of case seems to offer a principled way of drawing boundaries between the different registers of English. Case is always a distributive feature in the standard, prescriptively correct, variety, and therefore must always spread to all conjuncts. It may be a non-distributive feature that never gets passed down in the colloquial system which has *Me and him left*, or in the hyper-correct variety with *between he*

[33] DISTRIBUTIVITY has to do with how a feature is passed down to the members of a set (including a set of conjuncts). If a feature is NON-DISTRIBUTIVE, it will characterise the set as a whole but will not be passed down to the individual members. If a feature is OBLIGATORILY DISTRIBUTIVE, it will have to hold of each member of the set. If a feature is OPTIONALLY DISTRIBUTIVE, it may or may not be passed down to one or more members. These categories are elaborated more fully in King & Dalrymple (2004) and Dalrymple & Hristov (2010).

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and I; in addition, case may be a feature involved in 'single-conjunct government' in the varieties with mixed nominative and accusative conjuncts (see Payne & Huddleston 2002: 462–463).

The trouble with this picture is that there is no way of telling when case will distribute and when it will not. A far more promising idea is to model assignment by saying that case in English is always non-distributive (following Schwartz 1985, Parker, Riley & Meyer 1988, Schütze 2001, Sadock 2005). This means that case requirements will only reach the c-structure mother node or the main f-structure PRED of the relevant phrase, but will never be handed over to any further embedded constituents such as conjuncts or determiners. We will rely on this assumption and will then put additional constraints on the lexical entries of pronouns. A nominative (74) and an accusative (75) pronoun will have the following lexical entries in the colloquial register (see Butt 2006).

(74) *Partial lexical entry for a nominative pronoun in the colloquial register*
he: (↑CASE) = Nom
(SUBJ ε* (SPEC) ↑)

(75) *Partial lexical entry for an accusative pronoun in the colloquial register*
him: (↑CASE) = Acc

The representation in (74) includes a constraint associated with the lexical entry of the word form *he*. It states that *he* is nominative in case and is only allowed to function as subject, or as part of a subject (ε) (which is what we encounter in conjoined phrases, for example), or as the specifier of the subject. The entry in (75) designates *him* as the default which can step in where accusative case is assigned, as well as anywhere else where there are no case requirements, since it is not restricted to a particular function. Similarly to the term UNMARKED in the way it is understood in morphology, default case here means absence of additional specifications (for more on default case in English, see Schwartz 1985: 165; Wales 1996: 101; Johannessen 1998: 121–122; Schütze 2001).

Schütze (2001: 221ff.) talks about two algorithms of implementing default case. One way is to have word forms which are the 'least featurally specified items of their respective paradigms', and the other is a specific 'feature-filling mechanism that applies before vocabulary insertion'. This mechanism would issue instructions of the type: 'if you find a DP/NP with no case, assign it such and such case'. Our model obviously falls into the first category: there are default items, and default case is 'a descriptive way of referring to that set of forms but has no independent status in the grammar' (Schütze 2001: 221). The empirical advantage of this for English is that it is sometimes nominative pronouns (e.g. *who*), and sometimes accusative pronouns (e.g. *him*), that act as the default in the colloquial variety (see Schütze 2001, especially page 222).

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In a coordinate construction in the colloquial variety, the subject in Spec IP and its corresponding f-structure will be required to be nominative, but this requirement will not spread to the individual conjuncts. Consequently, some of them might end up being morphologically accusative, while still counting as conjuncts within the SUBJ (the mother NP node will still be annotated with the equation (↑SUBJ)=↓). On this analysis, the case requirements coming from the c- and f-structure will travel to the conjoined phrase but will not affect individual conjuncts. Independently, due to lexical-entry constraints on the pronouns, nominative forms are barred outside of subjects.

However, if the pronoun is not embedded in a conjoined phrase (or another super-structure), the case requirements will reach it. A non-conjoined, non-dislocated accusative pronoun will therefore not be able to function as the subject of a finite verb, because there will then be a clash between the case assigned for the relevant function (at f-structure) and position (at c-structure), on the one hand, and the case information supplied by the pronoun on the other (see Figure 10 above).[34]

In the colloquial variety, the nominative cannot penetrate an OBJ f-structure, because its lexical-entry specifications bind it to SUBJ. If we remove this restriction, the nominative will be allowed anywhere where no case requirements are imposed. This is the situation in the hyper-correct variety.[35] The constraints for the hyper-correct variety will thus be a mirror image of the colloquial ones above, with the nominative unrestricted and the accusative confined to OBJ functions – (76) and (77).[36]

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[34] An anonymous *JL* referee objects to this solution, because they deem it redundant. According to them, the f-structure case requirement for the SUBJ to be nominative, coupled with the nominative case information supplied by the lexical entry, would be enough to derive *He left*. In such a clause, there would be no need for the lexical entry to indicate separately that the nominative form is restricted to subject functions in colloquial English. Although this might indeed be redundant here (but does language not take a particular liking to redundancy, especially when we think of phenomena such as agreement or expressing time information through tense, side by side with adverbials like *yesterday*), restricting the nominative to SUBJ functions is crucial in preventing it from appearing in conjoined colloquial objects for example, where the case requirements of the c- and f-structure are powerless (because they are non-distributive).

[35] As pointed out by Jonathan Lipps (p.c.), some speakers might only use the first-person singular nominative pronoun in their idiolectal hyper-correct English due to over-extending prescriptive patterns. Our model allows us to leave only the lexical entry of *I* unrestricted, as each pronoun can be specified separately. However, there are attested examples of hyper-correction that do not involve first-person pronouns, such as (34) and (35) above. Unfortunately, we have no way of ruling out combinations like **between I and you* and **He gave it to I and Mary*, which Rini (2003: 154) considers ungrammatical. This ordering constraint is beyond the scope of our model – such limitations will be acknowledged below.

[36] As regards interrogative/relative pronouns, some colloquial varieties of English will only possess *who* (even in cases of pied-piping), with *whom* being obsolete. Other varieties will impose no restrictions on *who*, whereas *whom* will be confined to canonical, non-displaced OBJ configurations and thus only available in pied-piping (e.g. *To* ***whom*** *did you write?* but ***Who*** *did you write to?*). It seems that the hyper-correct variety which endorses *whom* in place of prescriptively 'correct' *who* has no restrictions associated with either pronoun.

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(76) *Partial lexical entry for a nominative pronoun in the hyper-correct register*
he: (↑CASE) = Nom

(77) *Partial lexical entry for an accusative pronoun in the hyper-correct register*
him: (↑CASE) = Acc
(OBJ ε* (SPEC) ↑)

What we will need to do for the prescriptively correct variety is restrict the nominative to SUBJ (and PREDLINK) functions, and the accusative to OBJ functions. In other words, the entry for *he* would look like (74), possibly extending the restriction to PREDLINK (for some speakers; see footnote 7 above, as well as Section 5.6), whereas the entry for *him* would be as in (77), thus ensuring that subjects are always nominative and objects always accusative. Our rules do not require that the same speaker should consistently operate with only one sub-system on different occasions or even in different utterances, but consistency is expected within the same clause (consult Wales 1996: 108 for code-switching between the different registers).[37] Unlike Klima (1964), who derives the rules of one variety from the rules of the others, we build parallel (sub-)systems, each of which has its own grammatical constraints associated with certain pronominal forms.

As mentioned in Section 2 above, our posited register boundaries may turn out to be an idealisation, because it is often rather problematic to determine register independently of pronoun use. However, it would not be a good idea to conflate all three sub-systems by placing no lexical-entry restrictions on either nominative or accusative pronouns. This would have the undesirable consequence of allowing accusative subjects to appear in the same clause as nominative objects.[38] As we saw in example (15) above, repeated as (78) below, such co-occurrence results in ungrammaticality, thereby lending support to our register divisions. A summary of how the case forms of

[37] An attested example of mixing two systems across (elliptical) clauses is given in (i).

(i) Last time <name> went silent she explained how both she and her husband had ended up in the hospital (**she** for lots of tests – **him** for throat surgery)
(Mary Dalrymple, p.c.)

It is not clear, however, if this is substantially different from the mixing of case forms we have seen in conjoined NPs.

[38] This is what might actually happen in some dialects of English. Wales writes that

> the traditional 'sites' of the [nominative] and [accusative] cases, the preverbal and the postverbal, are, as far as co-ordinated NPs are concerned, both open to the option of either case (as in south-west England dialect). (Wales 1996: 107)

We see it as an advantage of our model that it is flexible enough to be able to accommodate different usage patterns. However, for the time being, we simply try to account for the patterns found in Standard English.

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pronouns work in the three different registers we have identified is provided in Table 1.

(78) ***Me and him** know **she and I**

Variety	Functions of Nom forms	Functions of Acc forms
Prescriptively correct	{SUBJ|PREDLINK}	OBJ
Colloquial	SUBJ	any
Hyper-correct	any	OBJ

Table 1
Summary of the functions of pronominal case forms in the different registers of Standard Present-Day English.

We expect that any of the conjuncts in a phrase with more than two will be free to choose either canonical or default case. There have been speculations in the literature that all non-final conjuncts must bear identical case, even when the case of the final conjunct is different (Zoerner 1995: 352). If this were really so, our model would suffer a heavy blow. However, we can produce empirical evidence to justify our predictions:

(79) The next day **he, her and I** were in my flat and she asks 'you coming with us too …
(http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=1630595; accessed 2 June 2011)

(80) Joe insists that he and Gail need to go away – just **he, her and the boat**.
(http://coronationstreetupdates.blogspot.com/2010_01_01_archive.html; accessed 2 June 2011)

6. Syntactic and extra-syntactic constraints

Our proposal does not address ordering tendencies. In fact, a search in the BNC shows that conjoined subjects can be both nominative, as in (81); both accusative, (82)–(83); nominative and accusative, (84); and accusative and nominative, (85). All combinations are possible, albeit with different frequencies. In addition, individual pronouns might have their own preferences as to the company they keep.

(81) **I and she**'d never said a word.

(82) **Me and him** don't talk very much.

(83) **Him and me** have never kept things from each other;

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(84) … and take Maggie away from him and **she and me** and Francie could go back to Ireland and live quietly together and play music …[39]

(85) But **him and I** have this fight, right? (all examples from BNC)

Attempts have been made to constrain the distribution of conjoined pronouns in terms of person and case (e.g. Parker et al. 1988, Quinn 2005, Grano 2006). According to Grano (2006), if all conjuncts are in the nominative, second person pronouns should come before third person pronouns, which in turn should come before first person pronouns, but (81) does not abide by these rules. If we have a string of accusative forms, then second person tends to precede first, which in turn would tend to precede third, but problems arise with (82) and (83). Moreover, these constraints do not operate in cases of mismatch, when one conjunct is nominative and the other accusative. The data from the BNC do offer some support for previous generalisations that, if there is a case mismatch where first-person pronouns are involved, the accusative tends to be the first conjunct and the nominative the second one, whereas the situation is reversed with non-first-person pronouns (Quinn 2005, Grano 2006). More importantly, however, our research also turned up counter-examples to these observations. Such generalisations are therefore only tendencies, rather than hard and fast rules. Even Grano (2006: 41) himself reports exceptions to his 'X and I' constraint, such as (86). The ranking of person is no less problematic, as both *you and me* and *me and you* are fairly common (Grano 2006: 55). It would be biased to overlook non-conformist 'aberrations' like (87) and (88).

(86) **I and others** have been having this problem. (Grano 2006: 41)

(87) **she and me** and Francie could go back to Ireland and live quietly together. (BNC)

(88) ears and mouth and nose, head and shoulders, knees and toes, **me and he**. (BNC)

I will therefore refrain from attempting to predict the ordering preferences of various pronouns or what combinations are more likely than others. What I have tried to do here is set out the syntactic constraints on when non-canonical case assignment is possible, leaving the ordering tendencies outside of the realm of syntax (see Parker et al. 1988: 221). In addition to tendencies of 'closest- and furthest-conjunct government', there are phonological, sociolinguistic and pragmatic effects, as well as prescriptive influences, and differences in the behaviour of individual pronominal forms, some of which have already featured in the discussion. They are not in the scope of the

[39] An anonymous *JL* referee warns that we should not forget the third conjunct. There is a possibility that this is actually meant to be read as: [*she and* [*me and Francie*]].

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present work either. Discussion of such arguably 'extra-syntactic' matters or meaning nuances can be found in Quattlebaum (1994), Wales (1996: 104), Boyland (2001), Angermeyer & Singler (2003), Quinn (2005), and Zwicky (2005a, b).

7. The present approach and similar ideas in the literature

Analyses of case patterns in English abound in the specialist literature. I have already touched upon many of them and contrasted them with mine. Here I mention some like-minded authors, highlighting what the present model shares with theirs and also the respects in which it differs.

Quinn (2005: 79) notes that some formal approaches to coordination assume that conjoined phrases are transparent to outside case influences (Pollard & Sag 1994; Zoerner 1995; Johannessen 1996, 1998), while others treat conjoined phrases as fundamentally opaque and predict that the argument structure status and/or syntactic position of the coordination as a whole will have no bearing on the case of its members (Emonds 1986; Schütze 1997: 59; also Peterson 2004: 675ff., who talks about the non-distributivity of case). On this count, the present model of pronominal case assignment falls squarely into the second camp, but pronouns will still have to 'know' the function of the constituent in which they appear.

The opinions presented here are sympathetic to the ones espoused by Schwartz (1985), Parker et al. (1988), and Sadock (2005), for whom the optionality of case in conjoined phrases is caused by the dominating NP which serves as a barrier to case assignment. However, all of the cited scholars only use phrase structure to express the generalisations, whereas our approach relies primarily on grammatical functions and lexical constraints (see Section 4.5 above). Similarly to the present author, Schwartz (1985) believes that we get variation because of the percolation of case to individual conjuncts, but her account suffers from the problems that beset Johannessen's (1998) (see Section 4.3 above).

Schütze (2001: 217) proposes a very similar analysis to the one developed here, and also employs default case in his account. This is perhaps the work to which the present paper bears the greatest resemblance. What we call case distributivity, Schütze calls case spreading (or concord), which in addition includes case agreement within the NP in languages like Latin. It is an advantage of Schütze's approach over others discussed here that it covers default/non-canonical case in both conjoined and non-conjoined NPs. He comes up with a typology akin to the classification into distributive and non-distributive features, and also maintains that canonical case is only assigned to pronouns occupying head positions (he acknowledges the same distinction

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between *we/us two* and *we all*). According to Schütze (2001: 226), the following options exist:

(i) do not spread the case of the head (English, Spanish, dialectal Norwegian);
(ii) spread it to all constituents within DP (Latin, German);
(iii) spread it only to the specifier of DP (Norwegian dialects).

Schütze envisages a situation in which either all or none of the conjuncts get canonical case, or a situation in which only the specifier gets it. What his trichotomy lacks, however, is the option of sanctioning either non-canonical/default or canonical morphology on any conjunct. Assuming that case can only spread to the specifier is discredited by the same inadequacies as those exposed in relation to Johannessen's (1998) work, which will not be repeated here (see Section 4.3 above). Schütze refuses to handle instances of conjoined nominative and accusative forms, dismissing them as unnatural (following Emonds 1986 and Sobin 1997). This is another point on which my analysis departs from Emonds' (1986), Sobin's (1997) and Schütze's (2001) – they do not 'take the possibility of an unambiguously NOM pronoun as a member of a conjunction to be a bona fide option for any grammar of English' (Schütze 2001: 214). According to these researchers, all conjoined phrases are exclusively comprised of accusative pronouns, irrespective of their grammatical role; nominative forms are deemed to be an artificial addition which does not need explaining. Nor does Schütze believe that *who* and *whom* should be recognised as case forms (Schütze 2001: 218). More recently, Parrott (2007: Chapter 6) has recast analogous notions in the framework of Distributed Morphology: in general incredulous of the syntactic status of case in English (see below), again relying on ConjPs and only looking at a subset of the data presented here.

8. Do English pronouns have case after all?

Before we bring this discussion to a close, we need to consider the possibility that we have been on a wild goose chase all along. It has been suggested that English altogether lacks morphological case because other languages with inflections mark all subtypes of subject as nominative. Advocates of this view maintain that the remnants of case on English pronouns are not the sort of case that depends on grammatical relations and should therefore be generated with special, idiosyncratic rules, not by activating the mechanisms of case assignment. Hudson (1995) goes as far as to suggest that English is a completely caseless language, like Chinese. This raises the question of the status of our rules formulated in the preceding sections: do they regulate case assignment or do they pertain to the distribution of arbitrary forms?

Hockett (1947: 342–343), for instance, contends that *me* and *I* are in complementary distribution, at least in some dialects of English, '*I* initially,

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except in isolation, *me* directly after a verb or a preposition and in isolation', inviting the conclusion that so-called subjective and objective forms actually belong to the same morpheme (see Emonds 1986; Hudson 1995; Howe 1996: 99–100; Blevins 2006: 508, 514–516). Harris (1981: 18–19) likewise claims that English is headed for a situation in which the distinction between *I* and *me* will become a distinction between a 'clitic' form bound to the finite verb and a 'non-clitic' form appropriate elsewhere, as in French (see Quinn (2005: 383, Chapter 3), who splits pronouns into strong and weak).[40] If English reaches this state of affairs, it will sound credible to argue that the earlier remnants of a crumbling case system are no longer the exponents of different case properties at all, but just clitic or non-clitic variants of a lexeme (or even two separate lexemes). Although they might be moving in that direction, English pronouns have not yet started functioning like their French 'counterparts'. If *I* was a clitic, we would be surprised to spot it in conjoined phrases at all.

While I am sympathetic to the reasoning behind such scepticism, I am no less convinced that *he* and *him* should be treated as exponents of case. As Schütze admonishes,

> failing to do so would leave it as a total coincidence (at least synchronically) that the 'nominative' environments in English are a subset of the nominative environments in bona fide case languages, rather than just any arbitrary set of surface positions that could be written into an idiosyncratic rule. (Schütze 2001: 216–217)

Moreover, we would hardly expect to discover an analogous division of labour between nominative and accusative in other languages with impoverished case systems which have also been argued to retain no 'proper case', such as Bulgarian or Irish, but in fact we do (Schütze 2001: 217–218; see McCloskey 1986 for more on case and conjunction in Modern Irish, and Hristov 2012: 266–267 on Modern Bulgarian). Finally, languages with healthy declensions like Latin, Old Norse and Czech are no strangers to non-canonicity, recorded in circumstances similar to the ones relevant for English, Norwegian or other systems with moribund inflections (consult Gil 1982 for Classical Hebrew and the Nilotic language Nandi; Lasersohn 1995: 33–34 for Latin; Johannessen 1996: 674; 1998: 18 for Norwegian; Camacho 2003: 34 and Rini 2003 for Spanish). I doubt that anyone would use non-canonical case assignment as an excuse for saying that Czech or Latin have

[40] Blake (2001: 179) enumerates the following French first-person singular forms: *je* 'subj. clitic' *me* 'obj. and ind. obj. clitic', *moi* 'oblique (free form)'. The free, stressable pronoun can be used in isolation (*moi*), with prepositions (*avec moi* 'with me'), predicatively (*L'état c'est moi* 'The state, it is me') or when stress is required (*Moi, je le vois* '**I** see it'). (Blake 2001: 179).

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no case. All of these considerations are in favour of confirming that our rules apply to case forms.

9. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that, despite the considerable progress made in the study of English pronominal case assignment, a fully satisfactory, comprehensive account has not been articulated so far. Our LFG-based account aims to fill the gap, assuming the following underlying principles:

- Canonical nominative case MUST be assigned if the relevant pronoun is the head (main PRED) of a SUBJ f-structure governed by a finite verb and occupies the Spec of IP at c-structure.
- Canonical accusative case MUST be assigned if the relevant pronoun is the main PRED of an OBJ f-structure governed by a finite verb or a preposition. In addition, the pronoun will have to be sister of V or P and daughter of V′ or P′ at c-structure, where case is actually dispensed.
- In all other situations, non-canonical/default case MAY sneak in. Different defaults operate in different sub-systems of Standard English.

The only case that English has got left is structural and it is housed in specific phrase-structure positions. Although the present paper's reliance on positional case assignment is very much in the spirit of previous work, we enrich our model with the functional-structure dimension and the lexical constraints regulating the distribution of individual pronominal forms. This gives our proposal greater explanatory power and empirical adequacy.

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