

# Case in English, German and Danish

A comparative analysis

# What will we be looking at?

Case has a different function in languages such as German compared to English and Danish, and we are going to look at a few examples of this

- The Cases of English, German and Danish
- The Cases of Subjects: Oblique Subjects and Subject Predicates
- The Double Object Construction

# Which cases do we have?

English and Danish: Nominative and accusative, or to be more precise: oblique (non-nominative)

Where do we see it: on pronouns

German: Nominative, accusative, dative and genitive

Where do we see it: pronouns, nouns, articles, adjectives, numerals

# Subjects in oblique/non-nominative

Occur only in English and Danish, never in German

These cannot always happen: for example “mig er glad”  
or “me is happy”

But, it can happen when the subject-DP contains more  
than one element in one form or another

Da. a. Peter og jeg

b. Peter og mig

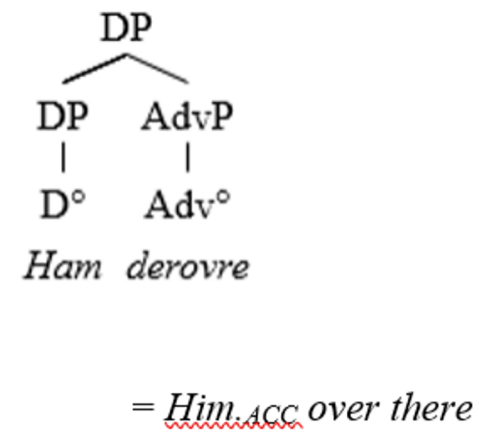
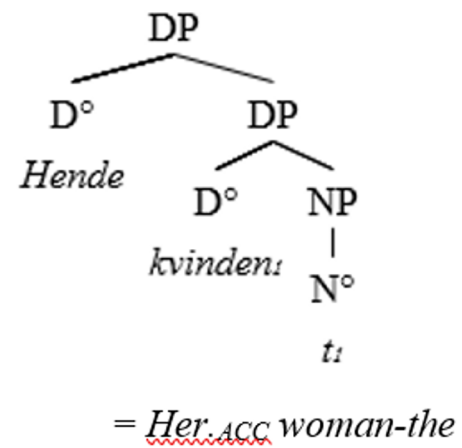
En. a. Peter and I

b. Peter and me

Ge. a. Peter und ich

b. \* Peter und mich/mir

# Danish only



# How?

If subjects receive case from  $I^0$  and  $I^0$  can only assign nominative, then how does this happen?

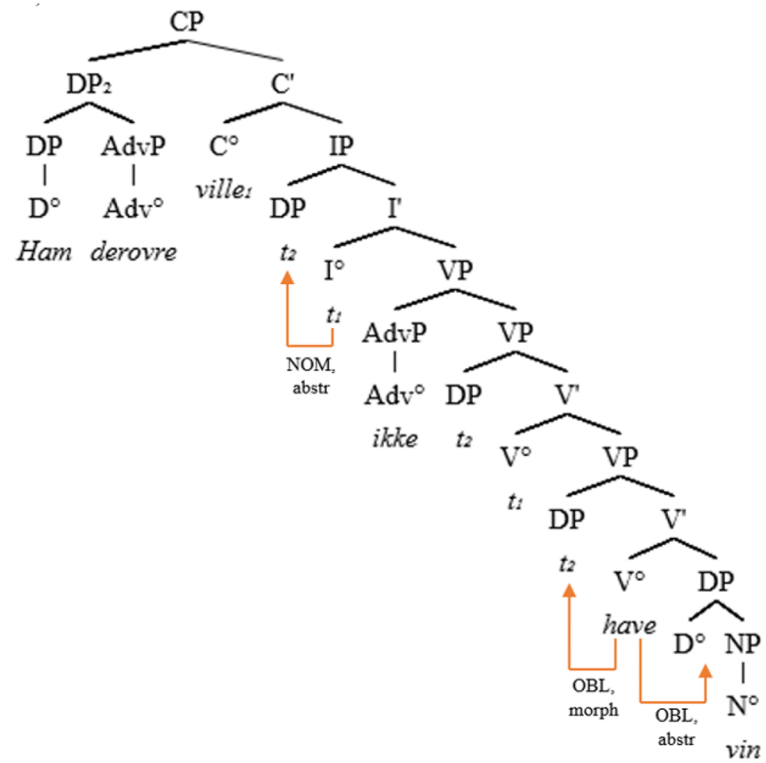
Default case:

- Only happens in languages with vestigial case (English and Danish)

Separation of abstract and morphological case:

- The case filter would then only apply to abstract case
- Here, it would then have to suppress nominative, and receive oblique somewhere else

# How?



# Subject predicates

Danish and English have oblique for subject predicates, in German the subject predicate is consistent with the subject

Again: default case

In languages like German, case matching is possible, but in vestigial case languages, the predicate will receive default case

En. a. It was he/me

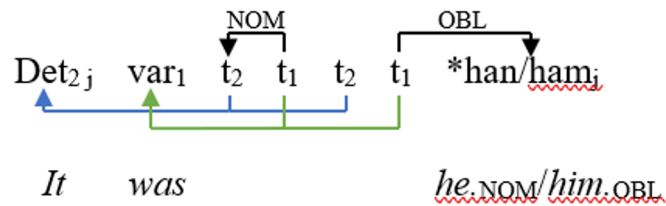
Da. b. Det var \*han/ham

Ge. c. Er/\*Ihn war es

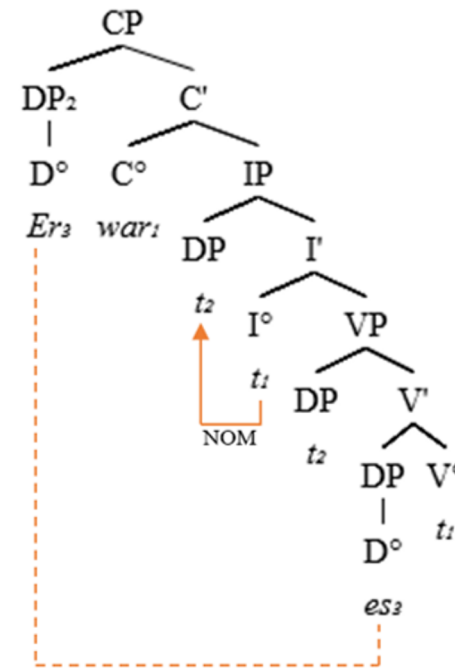


# Subject predicates - Delete?

Danish and English:  
oblique as object of the verb



German:  
case matching



# The double object construction

English and Danish: both objects receive oblique case, and word order and prepositions tell us the meaning

German: the indirect object receives dative, the direct object accusative, and while word order is mostly IO-DO as in English and Danish, it doesn't have to be

How do we explain that the verb somehow seems to assign two different cases to the objects?

- Structural and inherent case

# The double object construction

