

**Principles and Parameters in Natural Language**  
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**Lecture - 29**  
**Exceptional Case Marking**

So, let us look at case marking once again particularly for exceptional case marking. What we are going to discuss today is called exceptional case marking. But before we understand what is exceptional about the new type of case marking that we are going to talk about it is very important to be clear about the actual the real case markings that we have known so far.

So, briefly once again case is a property of sentence that is we talk about case when we are talking about sentences. The case is only realized on NPs and there are two types of them sometimes they are visible on the word with modifications in the word. So, we call them morphological case that is they appear in a morphological form and sometimes there is no change on the lexical or pronominal NP then we call them abstract cases ok.

We have seen that heads are largely case assigners that is whether we are talking about V P or I all of them are case markers. Rest of what we have seen which is how do these heads assign cases to their complements and to the NPs that are in their C-Commanding domain; the that phenomena is called structural case marking, that is we capture the notion of case transfer from head to the NP in terms of structural configuration with the help of x bar scheme. Therefore, it is called a structural case marking and then we have seen two terms we first started looking at structural relation in terms of dominance and precedents and we clarified what is the relationship of dominance and what do we mean when we say a particular element precedes the other one and how do we capture this dominance and precedence in the x bar scheme.

Soon after while looking at cases we saw two more which is it is not enough to say that heads assign cases, we wanted it more restrictive in the sense that we went ahead and said heads assign cases, because heads govern their complements heads govern NPs that they assign cases too and they govern the NPs in a particular way which is the notion of C-Command. So, v and p assigns accusative cases to their complements because v and p govern their complements and they C-Command their complements.

However when we started looking at nominative case marking, there was a problem and the problem is existing definition existing notion of C-Command was not giving us enough of space for the head I to be able to assign C-Command, to be able to assign nominative case under the known existing notion of C-Command to the specifier position of IP, which where we usually find subjects.


Then as a part of modification in the existing definition and for that matter existing apparatus in theory we made a modification. We saw a modification and that modification comes up in terms of m command, which is little bit in which is in it is nature more accommodative and it expands in such a way that we want the spec of IP that is the subject position, under the M-Command domain of the head I that is what we wanted to do.

At the same time we wanted to restrict it under the local domain of IP therefore, we added one more restriction so that we can say I m commands spec IP, but I does not M-Command anything beyond it is own scope that is anything within VP or further down, this is what we saw yesterday all right. Now with that we do not have all our problems taken care of. Even with the idea of case marking we see some problems; when we took care of accusative cases we were very happy and we saw structurally it is working very nice heads, government, C-Command very nice.

Then we saw a problem with nominative cases and we needed to expand existing apparatus and then we were still able to accommodate all of that. See what we are doing is we are trying to accommodate things in the theory as a matter of fact as a matter as a consequence of that we are weakening the theory, the more the patches weaker the theory. But that patch also did not solve all the problems we still run in problems. So, I am going to show you problems and then we are going to talk about how those problems are taken care of, and such problems and the way we take care of that is called an exceptional way of taking care of case assignment, therefore, they are called exceptional case marking.

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- John [*plays football in the playground.*]
  - John            Nominative
  - Football        Accusative
  - Playground    Accusative
- V *play* assigns accusative case to *Football*.
- *In* assigns accusative case to *the playground*.



So, we will look at that; one more point before we discuss exceptional case marking, we saw nominative case assignment and difficulty with that. Please keep in mind that the bringing in notion of M-Command to take care of nominative case marking was accepted within the existing parameters at that time, but people were not completely comfortable with this as you can as I can tell you, we do not have enough time to go into every single step to see what we mean or to understand what we mean when we say researchers were not comfortable with this patch, they wanted more comprehensive account of it.

And the reason why I am mentioning this thing is because I want you to connect what we have discussed little earlier with this as well that the patch in the theory and the problems of nominative case assignment was also one of the motivations for expanding IP sorry the expanding I in terms of a g r p tense phrase and aspect phrase and getting rid of IP completely which in a way created problem and if we get rid of IP then where does subject go to and then under that dismissal of IP how do we account how do we take care of cases that was a new paradigm in the theory, which we are not discussing right now.

After looking at exceptional case marking we will again briefly go around that problem to go to a different module which we have to look at which we which I start later. But am I making sense to you when I say that the problems of nominative case assignment was one of the motivating factor for expansion of I in terms of a g r p t p and all other which

did not solve the problem rather raised more problems and then people kept working on those things.

But as long as you see the expansion the motivation for separating several bundle several features under one bundle of I, we are with that that all right. Now let us come back look at this particular aspect and then we will talk about such things little later. So, we are done with this thing.

Student: Any reason for highlighting s in plays.

Any reason for highlighting.

Student: That plays s not (Refer Time: 10:37) no play is highlighted (Refer Time: 10:38) no I think s is not highlighted right.

S is not highlighted yes.

Student: Any reason.

Yes there is a clear reason for that. The clear reason for that is s is a morphological unit which is representing something else on the verb play, and it is representing something which is part of.


Student: (Refer Time: 11:03) in this context.

No not in this context in this context I though the reason why we will I left s is because I wanted to tell you that I has nothing to do with case assignment of accusatives. Only play the verb play as a head assigns a accusative case, anything else that comes up on I on surface structure has nothing to do with accusative case assignment yes that was the reason why I left that.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:37)

## Nominative Case

- If I as a head of IP assigns nominative case to the subject NP, does it govern and c-command the subject NP in Spec, IP?




We have looked at these things and we saw until this yesterday right that I assigns nominative case to the subject NP all right clear we have discussed all of this and here are the two things government.

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## C-Command and Government


- Government
  - A governs B iff
    - A is a governor (a head); and
    - A c-command B
- C-Command:
  - A C-Commands B iff:
    - A does not dominate B; and
    - The first branching node dominating A also dominates B.



And C-Command which are responsible for assignment of cases.

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- C-Command:
  - A C-Commands B iff:
    - A does not dominate B and every X that dominates A also dominates B;
    - X is the first branching node.
- M-Command:
  - A M-Commands B iff:
    - A does not dominate B and every X that dominates A also dominates B;
    - X is the maximal projection.



But this existing definition of C-Command was not enough to take care of nominative case assignment therefore we talked about M-Command. And then when we look at the difference between C-Command and M-Command afresh we need to modify the notion of government and this is how finally, the notion of government looks like.

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- Government
  - A governs B iff
    - A is a governor; and
    - A m-command B and no barrier intervenes between A and B.
    - Maximal projections are barriers to government.
    - Heads are governors.




And thus under this notion of government we can say both I and v govern the NPs that the case assign.

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### Exceptional Case Marking

- I want *John* to go.
- I want *him* to go.
  
- NPs *John* and *him* have accusative cases.
- *John* and *him* are in the Spec, IP of the complement clause.
- How do they [*John* and *him*] get the accusative case in the Spec, IP position?



Now, these are the two sentences which I wanted you to look at. Very simple sentences I think one I have discussed one of them or I have briefly mentioned it to you, but now is the time to look at them carefully. Simple sentences everybody is clear about these sentences. If these sentences are similar to the sentences we can also say I want to go right. So, when we say I want to go at the same time I just want to make one additional point, when we say I want to go what we actually say is I want I to go and the fact that both I are co indexed with one another therefore, the second one is dropped following the principle of economy, there is no need to retain the second one all right.

That is just one example you may ask why are we talking about first bringing in I into that sentence that is, I want I to go and then we are talking about deleting it the only reason why I am talking about that is because, I want you to see that is one of the examples which clearly shows us operating principle of economy. So, there would be there would be nothing wrong if we said I want I to go, but we do not want to say because the principle of economy operates very categorically.

Now, let us look at these things and there is one more reason why I mentioned I want I to go, I will discuss about that when I come to these sentences. So, in a traditional fashion slowly the way we have looked at every other sentence, let us look at this thing. Do you see that these sentences have two sentences in them if yes if not still no all right fine what is the verb in this sentence.

Student: Want (Refer Time: 15:14).

Want clear do you see another verb here?

Student: Go.

Go and which is to go right please bring in your mind what we discussed about finiteness and non finiteness what did we say about finiteness.

Student: Tense.

Finiteness equals to tense which is we say a sentence is a finite sentence when a sentence has tense right and also agreement and things like that. A sentence is non finite when we do not have tense in the sentence all right please keep that also in mind. So, want is the verb in this sentence main verb in this sentence, by main verb we mean when we are talking about the sentence we are talking about want and with want the sentence is finite right I want. So, which tense is here I want you to go I want him to go what sent what tense is there?

Student: Present.

Present tense right very nice want is a transitive verb or intransitive verb.

Student: Transitive (Refer Time: 16:27).

Transitive verb, right. So, it is going to have an object, what is the object of this verb?

Student: John wants to (Refer Time: 16:37).

John.

Student: To go.

Or something else.

Student: (Refer Time: 16:50).

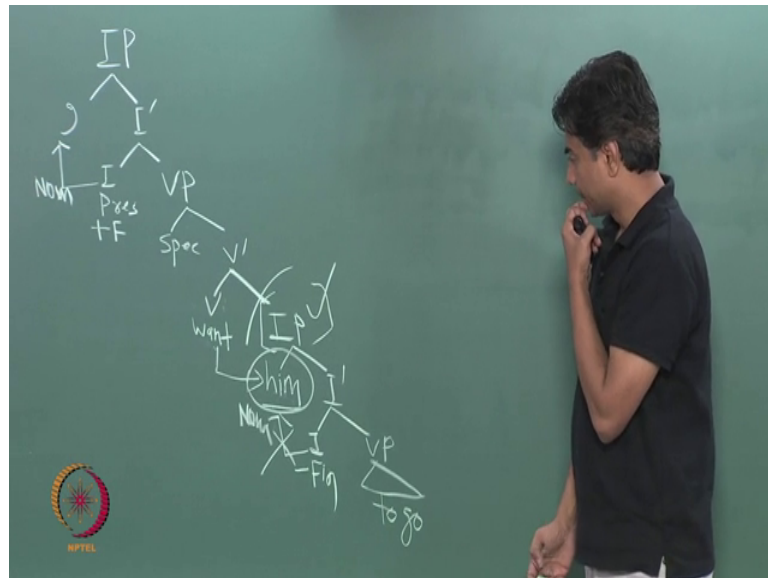
The complement or the object of the verb want is.

Student: Kohn (Refer Time: 16:51).



John to go that is the question is what do I want? I do not want john I want john to go or him to go right. Now look at that part him to go while I am waiting and I will draw this thing here if you get time, please draw the structure for this thing as well. So, so far you see IP right and VP right ok.

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Let me draw this thing for you here is here is our good old IP. So, here is our I NP right here is a I which is present tense which means plus finite that is the presence of the present tense makes the sentence finite sentence alright.

So, then we have a VP and since we have been retaining their specifier position so far. So, let me retain it once again and see we have a v which is want clear right. Now the question is what is the complement of this verb want? John to go or him to go is the whole thing as the complement. Now if I say john to go right is a sentence what is missing from that sentence, is that a real good looking sentence no that is not a real good looking sentence that is there are features of there are ingredients of a sentence in this where it seems like it has a subject john and it has a predicate to go ok.

But there is there are things missing in it which is there is no tense, because the moment we had tense we will not be able to use infinitive verbs; to go will not be used all right. So, this is an example of non finite type of a sentence which is not possible independently. As an independent sentence which is outside the domain of this main bigger sentence independently this type of sentence is not possible we never say I to go

right you to eat, we do not say these types of sentences right. So, your friend is laughing about this, but that type of sentences looks perfectly all right here we see that.

So, there must be a reason why that type of sentence is allowed under the larger domain of a bigger sentence and it is not independently. Answer is very simple there is no mystery here, the reason why this is not independently is big that is an infinite sentence and being infinite also that sentence does not have is missing agreement is missing all sorts of connecting features between subject and predicate. Therefore, that is not a good sentence.

But nonetheless that is a sentence. So, here we are going to say it is an IP it is not a full looking good looking IP, but this is an IP all right, but. So, the again the problem is let us draw this thing and then you will see further problem. So, here is your him or john, I am putting him for a specific reason that I want you to see that this NP in the subject position of the lower clause is not getting a nominative case it is getting an accusative case you see this thing so hold on.

So, now we have I here is our I, and here is our VP and for the simplicity, I am going to put it as to go; where there is no complement of this verb to go it is an intransitive verb and we can put them together actually it is in the v head position of v go, but to go, but this is there is no complement we are just putting them together. Interesting thing is this happens to be non finite sentence right.

Now, we are saying I assigns nominative case to the subject right see this thing we have just discussed this thing, here we have another IP where we do not have nominative case. Can we say I want he to go; I want he to go no. Now please notice the ungrammaticality of the sentence I want he to go is located in he, which means he has a nominative case. And therefore, it is not allowed him has a accusative case and a still it is allowed. What I am trying to hit at is if this I can assign nominative case to this, what is the problem of this I assigning nominative case to this NP does everybody see the problem, see the see the problem.

So, this one is assigning nominative case this one is not assigning nominative case that is the conclusion; how do we explain this problem and how do how do we resolve this problem this is what is called explanatory capacity of this framework, that we can say I want him to go is a good sentence and I want he to go is not a good sentence, but beyond

just giving a judgment or description we need to explain why so. The earlier methods earlier models earlier theoretical approaches did not have the capacity to explain it. This theory case theory with the help of x bar scheme not only explains the problem clearly, but it also provides solutions of course, with patches, but solution to the problems that it comes up.

It does not try to brush the problems aside, it does not put the problems under the rug it let us you see the problem clearly. And therefore, if you can see the problem clearly, you can try to solve them in a clearer fashion here is what happens. Once we are clear that this I does not assign nominative case to this NP then we know what is about I that assigns nominative case it is not just the I which assigns nominative case what assigns nominative case actually is the finiteness it is tense and other features which is bundled under it is what is responsible for nominative case.

This I lower I being non finite having no tense is the limiting factor for this I not assigning nominative case to the subject NP of the lower clause, is this much clear we explained the problem also. Now, we know finiteness and tense and agreement which were very important in a sentence has more things to do. It is important not just because of agreement and now you can see clearly why it becomes features like tense and agreement becomes head of a sentence. See it has one more function that is assigning nominative case all right we do not have a nominative case here, that is one we explained this far but we do not we have not resolved the problem you see the what is the problem now?

The problem is it may not have a nominative case, but it does have a case and what case do you see here accusative case. Then the problem is if it did not get case from it is canonical assigner, canonical head which is responsible for giving it case where did it get case from? Particularly accusative case see the problem where did that get where did this NP get case from see this thing, we can say or one can say look this is not a big surprise probably it is giving case from v right. Because this v as a head must discharge it is case, it is a v it has it is complement and it is a head it has capacity to assign accusative case. So, where is it assigning it is accusative case.

If it is an object, remember we have said the complement of this v is whatever comes here right NP or not just the n, but NP the whole NP. So, to resolve that argument there

where does this verb this head discharge it is case. One can say it assigns it is case to IP great that is also that looks, but we have just defined that and if we say this assigns accusative case because it assigns accusative case to the IP right therefore, it assigns accusative case to the spec of IP also, ok.

This is the solution that has been proposed, but do you see a problem with the solution what is the problem not?

Student: Not for the (Refer Time: 28:47) it is not m commanding.

Not m commanding clear right non m commanding and what is why is it not m commanding.

Student: That is (Refer Time: 28:56) barrier.

There is a barrier in it. It is m commanding to the extent that first maximal projection dominating v also dominates this NP. To this extent it is first maximal projection dominating v is VP right and VP also dominates this one, to this extent it is, but what is not is maximal projections are barrier. See that there is another maximal projection here which is IP. Following this definition of government v should not be able to assign it is nominative case it is we should not be able to assign accusative case to this NP see this thing very nice.

But we see something beyond this happening, which is v actually does not care for this kind of a barrier and violating the barrier it is still assigns accusative case to this that is the only way we can explain this problem. So, we say if we still say we are not making any changes to this notion of government, but if we still say that this type of sentence ends of violating this definition and still v happens to assign accusative case to the NP. The reason why we need to say that is because we need to explain accusative case on this it is also true that this has a accusative case.

What is true is this is a barrier, but it is also true that this has a accusative case. So, we would we or the theoreticians ended up saying that this n this v assigns accusative case to the NP in the subject position, this regarding barrier. Do you see another weakness of this theory? That it defines something, but soon after it violates that that theoretical module in order to explain the sentence we are not violating it because we are offenders right

when we allow this kind of violation because we need explanation for this kind of a sentence and we clearly see that in the subject position that is spec IP, lower IP we see the accusative case and an NP with the nominative case is not even allowed there, which we can explain that because this is non finite IP I a nominative NP is not allowed.

But when we see an accusative NP we do not know what to do. So, we again go ahead with the cost that we allow this kind of violation, which is a weakness a patch in the theory. Do you see the problem, do we see the solution do we understand the problem we see the solution to the problem and we also see with that we see weakness of the theory.

Student: (Refer Time: 32:47) what is accusative case (Refer Time: 32:48).

Sorry.

Student: What is accusative case for John?

The accusative what we are trying to say with that with these two sentences john also has accusative case, the fact that it is a lexical NP the case accusative case on john is abstract we do not see that and if we explain this problem with just with john, it will not be very convincing. So, we take another sentence where we clearly see an NP with an accusative case therefore, I took another sentence. So, no one has any difficulty will the other sentence, but. So, after discussing the second sentence, if I tell you john also has a accusative case on it is convincing.

But if I start with the first sentence it will be further abstract and probably not so convincing. So, john has an NP will also have accusative case because we do not want to get into another difficulty, where we say him has a accusative case, but john has nominative case and how could same position have two different cases. Therefore, structural case marking gets into difficulty, all the notion of C-Command and M-Command and government they keep running into difficulties therefore, this kind of allowing case thing to happen is called exceptional case marking, this is the reason why we call it exceptional case marking.

So, some people suggested couple of more modification couple of more things which is they said look, because they knew this is an this is a barrier they said look. There is one way to say that non finite IPs pay placed by attention to that, non finite IPs are probably

not barriers right, but again it sounds right it solves the problem for the time being, but you can see that it is still a manipulation if we are saying maximal projections are barrier whether it is non finite or finite what difference does it make? After all it is a maximal projection and it should be barrier.

But again you know it is like life, we need compromises in life. So, they ended up saying probably non finite IPs are not barriers, we need more evidence to see such a thing whether they are really barriers or not barriers see the problem all right. So, John and him have accusative cases being in IP, spec IP of the complement clause how do they get accusative cases? Did we solve this question we understand? So, instead of the main point is instead of saying, instead of revising the notion of government once again or in a way we end up revising the notion of government, we are saying maximal projections are barriers, but not non finite IPs; everything else will be still barrier, but not non finite IPs makes it weaker nonetheless yet sounds like a convincing solution for the time being.

This is yet another reason why people were getting impatient day by day and felt compelled to look at the whole theoretical apparatus a fresh, that probably we are running into difficulty with nominative cases, we are running into difficulty with these kinds of sentences where we have I want him to go type of sentences, are we really looking at the whole idea of case assignment in an proper way? Maybe there is a problem in the way we are looking at it is there an alternative way of looking at it.

The alternative way was proposed and that is called what is the what have we been calling this whole framework so far.

Student: (Refer Time: 37:52).

Sorry.

Student: Exceptional case (Refer Time: 37:54).

That is exceptional case marking it is part of principles and parameters approach of language because of these problems, when they revise the whole theoretical apparatus they call it minimalist program. So, minimalist program is yet another revised version of theoretical apparatus to look at language. So, we will not go too far into minimalist program because our domain is to look into principles and parameters, and we are

looking at principles we are looking at parameters we are also looking at their limitations we are looking at the problems that they have they run into and we are looking at the solutions that existing paradigm existing framework provides. Even though weaker, but that is the solution see this thing.

Just to underline and not leave what I said as a mystery, when we see separation of the bundle of features into a g r p, t p and aspect phrase right they are going to have more implications in the theoretical apparatus and those implications and the separation all of them are part of minimalist program. So, anyway I have given you a flavor of that minimalistic approach of looking at it, what they mean by minimalistic approaches let us go deeper into features and then probably we will have an new way of talking about cases. Because case is such an important aspect of sentence, we cannot leave it unexplained right now principles and parameters approach explains case assignment, but with lot of patches.

Student: (Refer Time: 40:14) was founded English only or some other (Refer Time: 40:15).

No there are many languages where you we have this problem, English definitely run into this problem. True very very nice question just for English again will be a weaker argument, but also keep in mind even if it is available in one language, the problem remains in the theory. Keep in mind that for a theoretical understanding of language we do not really need a quantitative ways of numbering in terms of more than 50 percent of languages have this problem that is not really important.

But to answer your question in short I do not have the examples from top of my head right now, but this problem was in other languages too. I mean I for the simplicity of theory and for the simply for retaining our attention with the abstraction of these discussions, I am not bringing in examples from Hindi and other languages.

Student: (Refer Time: 41:25) but English is also a one can write (Refer Time: 41:26) away the cases (Refer Time: 41:27).

No.

Student: (Refer Time: 41:32).

Absolutely not see this model developed in 80s, we are not talking about old English period, we are not talking about Shakespearean English, this model of description the explaining language came up in 80s, and the minimalist program that I am telling you about was developed in 95. So, it is a very recent phenomenon, it is not about old English or Shakespearean English or English had a different form or things like that. At the same time what I have not told you keeping keep keeping a abstraction in mind is things like ergative cases remember we have seen agreements like Raju [FL] right [FL] was an ergative is a case.


Student: (Refer Time: 42:27).

Ergative [FL] as the marker was an ergative case marker. So, how does case assignment take place in Hindi and when what is the reason we looked at agreement in that sentence right, we said for the purpose of agreement [FL] agrees with the verb and not Raju right. So, that is another reason another motivating factor to separate features of agreement and tense. So, we are not going into too much of details, I wanted you to look at thematic relations, cases particularly nominative and accusative with clarity and exist and within existing paradigm. Then, I further wanted you to see the problems with the existing paradigm.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:44)

**ECM**

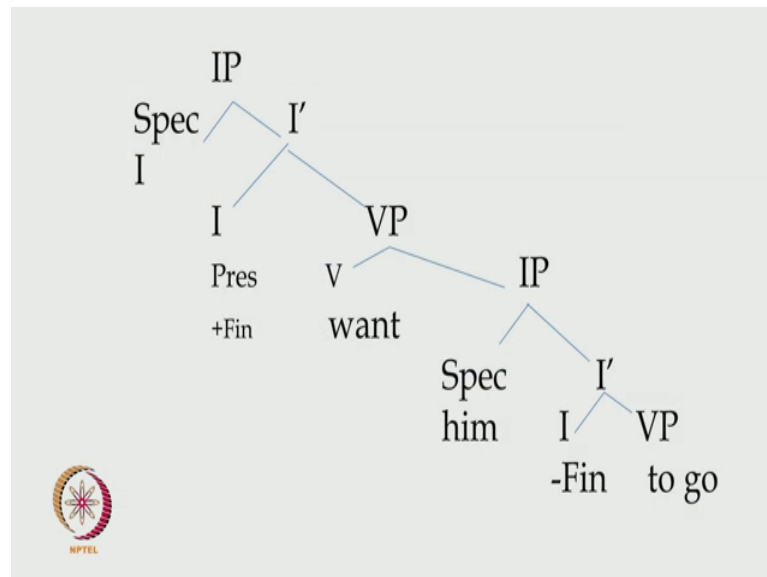
- I want **him** to go.
  - Sub: I Nom
    - » (Infl assigns nominative case to I)
  - Verb Want [+transitive]
  - Object [him to go]
    - » An IP





I hope with a microscopic view we have seen the problems right. So, we already looked at this thing him to go is an IP, it is a it is not a full fledged IP, it is a non finite IP and this is what saved the theory for the time being.

(Refer Slide Time: 43:57)



This is how it looks like and this is what I have been trying to show you on the board. We needed a diagram on the board, but this is how it looks like.

(Refer Slide Time: 44:12)

- Morphological Case
  - Abstract Case
  
  - Structural Case Marking
  - Exceptional Case Marking
- The NPTEL logo is in the bottom left corner.

At the end of it I want you to know that these are the terms, but clarity you should keep in mind what we mean by morphological case and what we mean by abstract case ok.


So, look at this sentence john in sentence number 1, I want john to go is an john is an example of abstract case that is accusative case appears on john in an abstract way. I want him to go him is an example of morphological case, it appears accusative case appears on him in a morphological way, in the sense that we are not saying I want he to go. He is a nominative form him is a morphologically modified accusative form and therefore, we can see with see the difference with clarity. So, that is about morphological and abstract case.

And then we wanted to you I wanted you to understand the difference between structural case marking and exceptional case marking. Exceptional case marking is also part of accept part of a structural case marking, because we are looking at an exceptional way of marking case to a particular NP also within a structural notions.

(Refer Slide Time: 45:52)

## Cases

	Nominative	Accusative	Genitive
• Lexical NPs:	John	John	John's
• Pronominal NPs:	I	me	my
	You	You	Your
	He	Him	His
	She	her	her
	It	it	its
	We	us	our
	You	you	your
	They	them	their



So, keeping the differences in similarity in mind try and understand exceptional case marking and a structural case marking that. This clear to you, if that is clear then before I ask you any anything else we will look at we will stop and then we will talk.