

On the Perfect tense-aspect in K'ichee' Mayan

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Goal: develop an LFG grammar for the perfect (P) tense-aspect

- show that the perfect tense-aspect is *not* a verb *nor* a participle
- P: a stative non-verbal predicate, always grammatically intransitive
- P: a participial adjective or a possessed noun, categorically
- demonstrate that the P inserts a state into discourse
- propose constituent structures & functional structures

Finite verbs: tenseless, prefixed aspect markers obligatory

- single **agglutinated** constituent (excluding periphrastic modals)
- aspect marker — ABSolutive AM — ERGative AM — root/stem

(1) x-ee-w-il-o *Transitive verb* (2) k-ix-biin-ik *Intransitive verb*
 COM-3PLABS-1SERG-see-TPF INC-2PLABS-walk-IPF
 'I saw them.' 'You all walk.'

Non-verbal predicates (NVP): structural configuration differs from verbs

- prefixed aspect markers never used: therefore, NVPs are *not* verbs
- zero-copula: no mediating (verbal) copulas, like Arabic, unlike English
- yet, NVPs are 'finite' & predicative because they host subjects
- ABS AM is free morph: ABSolutive AM + nominal (adjective/noun)
- third person singular ABSolutive AM is null (\emptyset)

(3) saq-(*a) lee laj jaa (4) sib'alaj ee (*sib'alaj) jeb'al
 white-ATT DET small house very.much 3PLABS very pretty
 'The small house is white.' 'They are very pretty.'

Mayanist literature: general consensus on the perfect tense-aspect

- Ps considered **verbs** &, infrequently, **participles**
- P's morphology is inflectional, same as the prefixed aspect markers
- P is an intransitive verb in (5); P is a transitive verb in (6)
- P intransitive suffix *-naq*; P transitive suffix *-oom* (K'ichee')

(5) ee war-naq (6) in ki-kuuna-an
 3PLABS sleep:IV-PERF 1SABS 3PLERG-cure:DTV-PERF
 'They have slept (Dayley 1985).' 'They have cured me (D 1985).'

Transitive stems: may also be past passive participial adjectives (L 1988)

- P: intransitive passive participial adjective (7); P: transitive verb (8)

(7) ix ajo'-oon (8) ix q-ajo'-oon
 2PLABS love:ADJ-PERF 2PLABS 1PLERG-love:DT'-PERF
 'You all are loved (Dayley 1985).' 'We have loved you all (D 1985).'

Ps: attributive participles & possessed nominals (Larsen 1988)

- Ps in (9): attributive adjectival participle; P in (10): possessed noun

(9) tzak-om saqmo'l (10) nu-mok-oom
 cook-PERF egg 1SPOSS-ask.services.of-PERF
 'cooked egg (Larsen 1988:235)' 'my servant (Larsen 1988:236)'

P stems: actor focus, mediopassive, causative, noun-incorporation

- actor focus: aree in ch'ay-ow-inaq 'He has hit me.'
- mediopassive: sok-otaj-naq 'have gotten wounded'
- inchoative -ir, causative -isa: b'aq-ir-isa-am 'have been made thin'
- noun-incorporated: u-b'an-om k'ax 'his having been pain-making'

Problems with Mayanist interpretations of the perfect

- absolutive AM: always NVP's SUBJ, except for the 'transitive' perfect
- oom*: morphologically marks intransitive Ps (7) & transitive Ps (8)
- identical exs. except for the AM prefixed to the P-marked predicate

Perfect arguments: subject & possessive

- subject *at* agrees with ABS (11); poss prefix *-w* references topic (12)
- passive by-phrase (e.g. 'by me') permitted in (11)

(11) at il-om at (12) rii in at w-il-oom
 2SABS see-PERF 2SPRO D 1SPRO 2SA 1SPOSS-see-PERF
 'You are the person-who-has-been-seen.' 'As for me, you are my person-who-has-been-seen.'

Parsing of P: Mondloch (1978) (1); this author (Duncan) (2)

- (1) *lee nu-jii'* = subject, *ruk'a'm* = verb, *lee chiim* = object
- (2) *lee nu-jii'* = ext poss., *ruk'a'm* = poss. noun, *lee chiim* = subject
- P's subject: lexical, often non-human; P's possessor: the protagonist

(13) lee nu-jii'_i \emptyset_j r_i-uk'a'-m lee chiim_j
 DET 1SPOSS-son.in.law 3SABS 3SPOSS-carry-PERF DET bag
 areetaq x-ooan chuwa w-o'ch
 when COM-arrive PREP:at 1SPOSS-house
 'As for my son-in-law_i, the bag_j is his_i thing-that-has-been-carried when he_i arrived at my house.'

Conclusions: perfects (non-periphrastic) are *not* verbs *nor* participles

- Ps: non-verbal predicates, therefore Ps are not verbs
- Ps: not verbs because (PRED-less) auxiliaries do not exist
- Ps: not participles because Ps are never verbs

Perfect Category: derived from verbs, outputs an adjective or a noun

- category unspecified for adjective or possessed noun

Perfect Versions: XN, Experiential, Result

- extended now (XN): 'love' atelic (8); 'carry' atelic (13)
- experiential: 'see' (12)
- result: telic
- resultatives & perfect of result: require telic predicates

Perfect adverb use: *not* like English Present Perfect

- Temporal adverbs acceptable: 'now, at last, yesterday, etc.'
- Temp advs: in same clause, or adjacent clause in bi-clausal sentence
- apparent 'definite' temporal deictic, which is element of simple past
- adverbs of motion acceptable: *no'jimal* 'slowly,' *aninaq* 'quickly'

Therefore: this construction is a perfect, *not* a resultative

Perfect Semantics – Temporal or Stative analysis?

- Temporal: Reichenbach, Neo-Reichenbachian, like Klein (1994)
- Problems: strictly syntactic, fails to adequately account for aspect
- Stative: PP holds between past event & current state (N&K 2004)
- P: inserts a 'state' into discourse, is 'background' material (K&R 1993)
- Conclusion: K'ichee'an suits stative analysis
- And pragmatics?

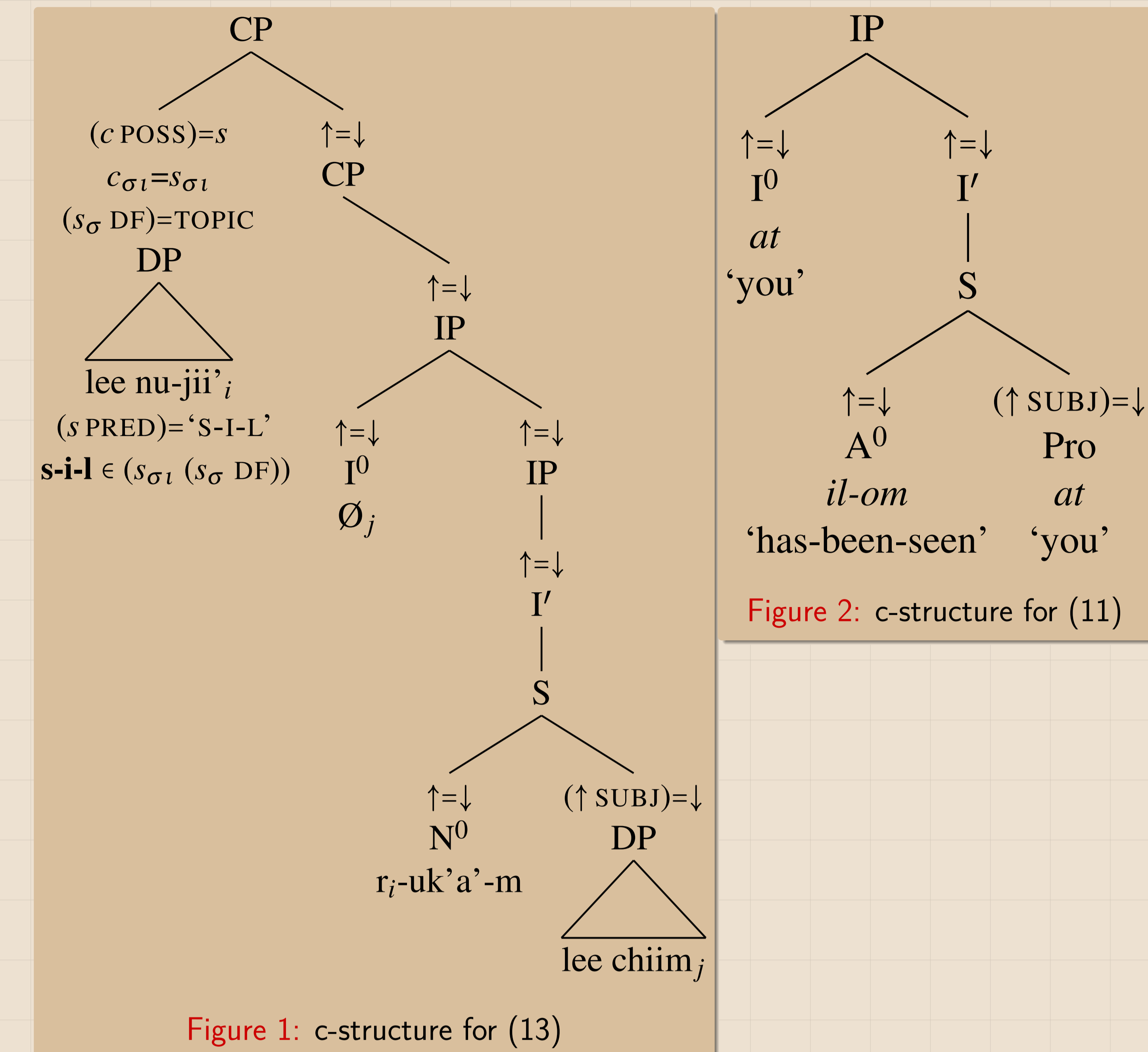


Figure 1: c-structure for (13)

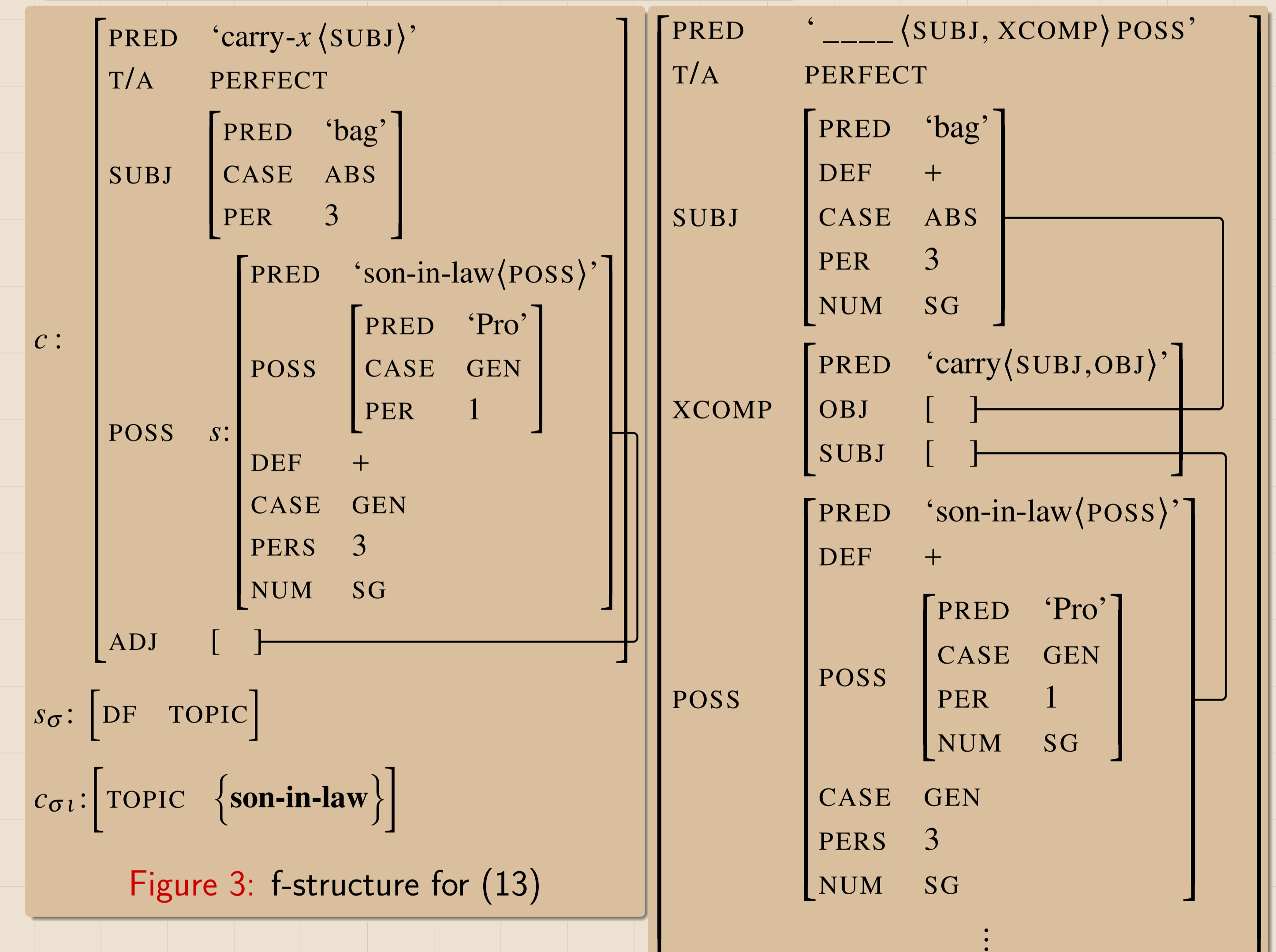


Figure 3: f-structure for (13)

Figure 4: f-structure for (13)

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