

# Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.132.pre>

Pages vii–viii of

## **Case Suspension and Binary Complement Structure in French**

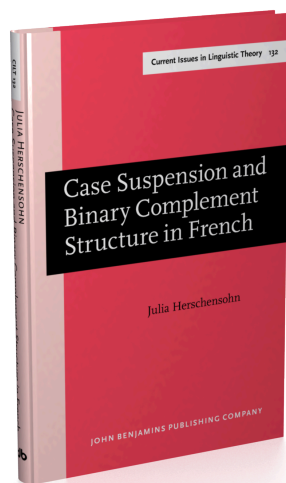
**Julia Herschensohn**

[*Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 132] 1996. xi, 200 pp.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

This electronic file may not be altered in any way. For any reuse of this material written permission should be obtained from the publishers or through the Copyright Clearance Center (for USA: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)).

For further information, please contact [rights@benjamins.nl](mailto:rights@benjamins.nl) or consult our website at [benjamins.com/rights](http://benjamins.com/rights)



## PREFACE

Adapting relevant aspects of the minimalist program, this book investigates constructions with nonthematic external arguments and one suspended Case. It argues that the dual nature of internal Case in French correlates with a parallel limit on argument projection: a verb can have one subject and no more than two objects. The assumption of a Larsonian shell—a triple tiered VP containing the external and internal arguments—provides the theoretical justification for this proposal. Larson's single complement hypothesis allows the VP complement to be predicated of the sentential subject and the indirect object to be predicated of the direct object for a maximum of two internal arguments. The testing ground for the binary hypothesis is a collection of perplexing data concerning nonthematic subject constructions; these constructions are linked to a lack of internal Case according to Burzio's generalization. The existence of a class of psychological experiencer verbs lacking an underlying thematic subject, yet capable of assigning accusative Case, apparently contradicts the generalization. The book investigates the apparent dilemma of these accusative psych verbs, showing that dative as well as accusative is a structural, not an inherent Case in French, and that the generalization must be extended to accommodate suspension of either Case. Two classes of verbs with nonthematic subjects and suspended dative Case, psych verbs and inalienable verbs, support this claim. These *undatives*, parallel to *unaccusatives*, actually provide support for Burzio's generalization in its strongest form. The theoretical underpinning of the generalization—the linking of Case suspension and lack of an external argument—is reaffirmed by the demonstration that the suspension of either structural Case can be linked to a nonthematic external argument. Furthermore, the proposal of multivalent inalienable verbs, an explanation that falls out from the undative analysis, provides significant evidence for the structural nature of dative Case, for the extended generalization, and for the central thesis of the book, the binary nature of internal Case and argument structure. The binary limit thus provides not only a theoretically significant contribution to our understanding of grammar, but also a motivated explanation for a number of empirical problems.

I wish to express my appreciation to the University of Washington for release time and a summer grant that contributed to the research for this book; I am grateful to the College of Arts & Sciences for the first, and to the Graduate School Research Fund for the second.

I would also like to thank the anonymous readers of the original manuscript who offered pertinent suggestions and asked important questions. Likewise I express my gratitude to the following colleagues for fruitful discussions and comments on earlier drafts: Deborah Arteaga, Marc Authier, Heles Contreras, Joe Emonds, Fritz Newmeyer, Carlos Otero, Johan Rooryck, Lisa Reed, Yves Roberge, Hilary Sachs, Judith Strozer and Karen Zagona. In addition to reading earlier drafts, Heles Contreras, Fritz Newmeyer and Karen Zagona made very helpful comments on a final draft; they and Ellen Kaisse provided substantial extralinguistic support as well in the final stages, for which I am deeply grateful. For more general linguistic, collegial and moral support, I thank Jeanie Fleming, Robert Fronk, Randall Gess, Jürgen Klausenburger, Lynn Klausenburger, Marian Sugano and Laurie Zaring.

The following speakers of French were kind enough to provide grammaticality judgments (often on more than one occasion): Leon Bensadon, Jean and Babette Bourguignon, Katia Criqui, Anne George, Gwenaëlle Geslin, Marie Labelle, Maria Leon, Louise Lepley, Jean-Jacques Malo, Réjean Canac Marquis, Patrick Moreno, Martine Pettenaro, Johan Rooryck, Christine Tellier and Bernard Tranel. I gratefully acknowledge the generous help that E.F. Konrad Koerner, the series editor, has furnished me in my production of the final version of the book; he responded to e-mail queries seemingly within minutes. I also thank Cecile Kummerer for all the support she has offered over several years in areas of computation, formatting and friendship.

Finally, I thank the members of my family for their patience, encouragement, help and humor, especially during the final stages of the book preparation. Olivia's inspirational concern, Aram's computer expertise and Zachary's parodies of syntactic titles have made the production much more enjoyable. I have appreciated the interest shown by Syl, Peggy and Nick who have bolstered my spirits from afar. Most of all I thank Michael for his boundless enthusiasm, constant encouragement and very concrete help in preparing this book. It is to him that I dedicate the book.