



# Split intransitivity in English

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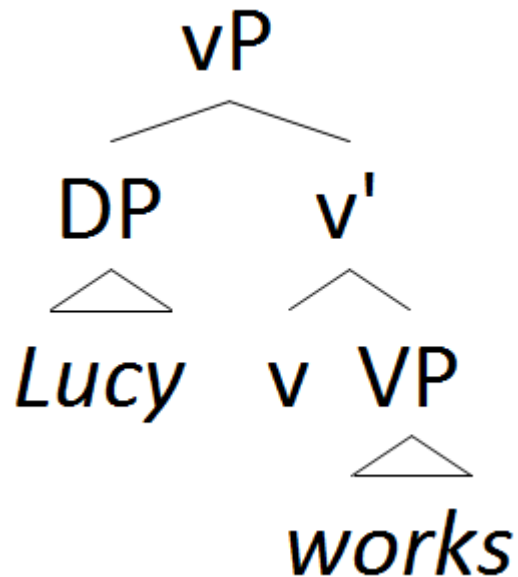
# 1. Introduction

# The Unaccusative Hypothesis

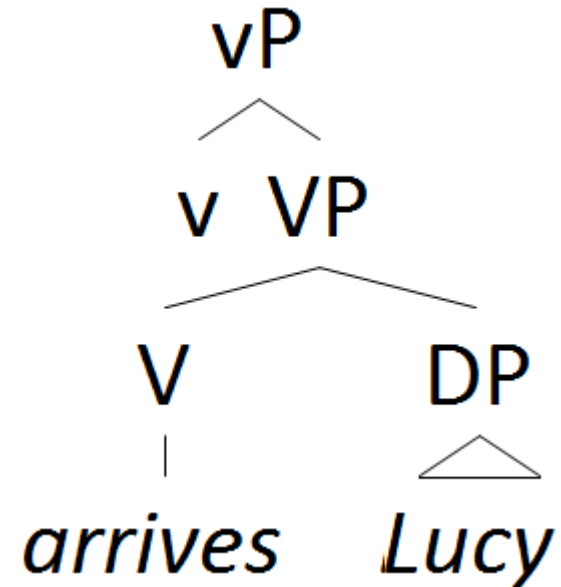
- Perlmutter (1978)
- Two classes of intransitives

# The Unaccusative Hypothesis

Unergatives



Unaccusatives

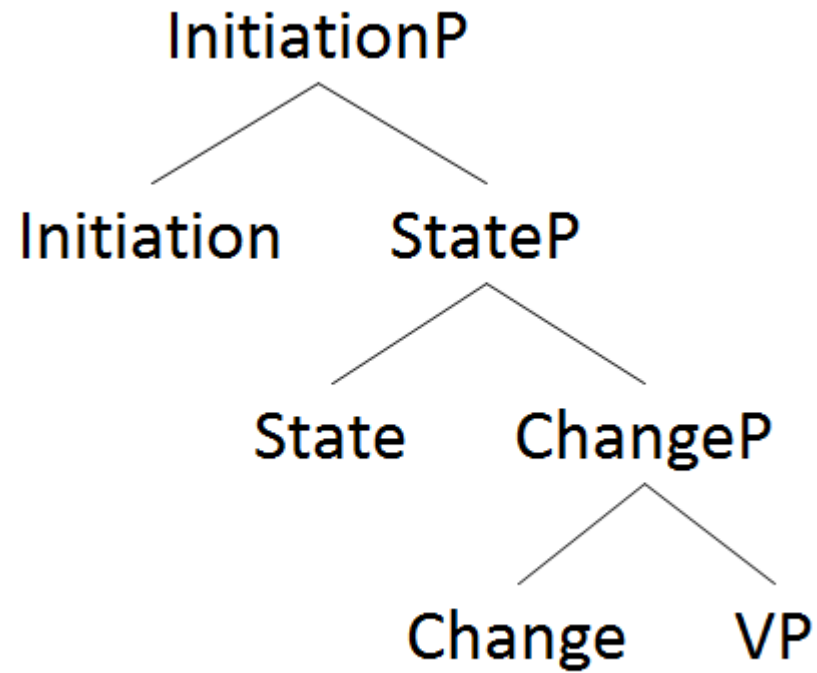


(after Burzio 1986)

# Proposal

- We should identify (at least) three classes of intransitives.

# Proposal



# Outline

- Introduction
- Statives
- Initiation
- Conclusion

## 2. Stative verbs



# Stative intransitives

- Existence of state: *be, belong, sit, seem ...*
- Continuation of pre-existing state: *last, survive, remain, persist ...*

(Sorace 2000)

# “Unergative” diagnostics

- *V away, V one’s way into*, cognate objects, prefix *out-*, suffix *-er*:
  - *Lucy was {swimming/\*arriving} away.*
  - *Lucy {swam/\*arrived} her way into the harbour.*
  - *Lucy swam a swim. / \*Lucy arrived an arrival.*
  - *Lucy {outswam/\*outarrived} Chris.*
  - *swimmer / \*arriver*

(For references see Baker 2016, submitted.)

# “Unaccusative” diagnostics

- Resultative construction:
  - *The butter melted soft.*
  - *\*Chris talked hoarse.*
- Causative alternation:
  - *Lucy melted the butter.*
  - *\*Lucy talked Chris.*
- Attributive past participles:
  - *the melted butter*
  - *\*the talked man*

(For references see Baker  
2016, submitted.)

# Statives – unergative or unaccusative?

- Generally fail unergative diagnostics:
  - *\*Lucy remained her way into the room.*
  - *\*Lucy was remaining away.*
  - *\*Lucy remained a remaining.*
  - *\*Lucy outremained Chris.*
  - *\*remainder*

# Statives – unergative or unaccusative?

- Also fail unaccusative diagnostics:
  - Resultatives: \**Lucy remained happy.*
  - Causatives: \**Chris remained Lucy.*
  - Attributive past participles: \**the remained man*

# Statives – unergative or unaccusative?

- Locative inversion / *there*-insertion – not valid unaccusative diagnostics:
  - *Into the station arrived a train.*
  - *There arrived a train.*
  - *In the forge worked a blacksmith.*
  - *There worked a blacksmith.*
- See also Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995: ch. 6)

# Statives – unergative or unaccusative?

- *for hours* (Schloorlemmer 2004)?
- Generally OK with unergatives, ruled out with some unaccusatives:
  - *Lucy was working for hours.*
  - *\*Lucy was arriving for hours.*
- But acceptable with other unaccusatives:
  - *The butter was melting for hours.*
- => not much use re statives.

# Statives – unergative or unaccusative?

- Statives cannot be reliably classed (by the linguist or the language learner) as *either* unergative or unaccusative.



# Classes of intransitives

- [+change]: *melt, burn, break, go, arrive ...*
- [+state]: *be, sit, stay, survive ...*
- [–change, –state] (“process”): *work, play, swim, run, cough ...*

# 3. Initiation

# Subclasses of change verbs

- Not all [+change] verbs allow resultatives/causatives:
  - *The butter melted soft.*
  - *Chris melted the butter.*
  - *\*Chris came tired.*
  - *\*Lucy came Chris.*
- Classes which do/don't allow these roughly the same for both constructions.

# Subclasses of change verbs

- Ramchand (2008): causatives only possible with *non-initiated* intransitives.
  - But what about statives like *The vase remained on the table?*
  - \**Lucy remained the vase.*
  - Are these verbs really initiated?

# Subclasses of change verbs

- Alternative characterisation:  
resultatives/causatives only possible with  
intransitives which are prototypically  
[–initiation, +change].

# Classes of intransitives

	[+change]	[-change]
[+initiation]	<i>go, come, arrive</i>	<i>work, play</i>
[-initiation]	<i>melt, break, sink</i>	<i>remain</i>

# 4. The Thematic Functional Hierarchy

# Three argument positions?

- Ditransitives:

– Lucy gave Chris a book.

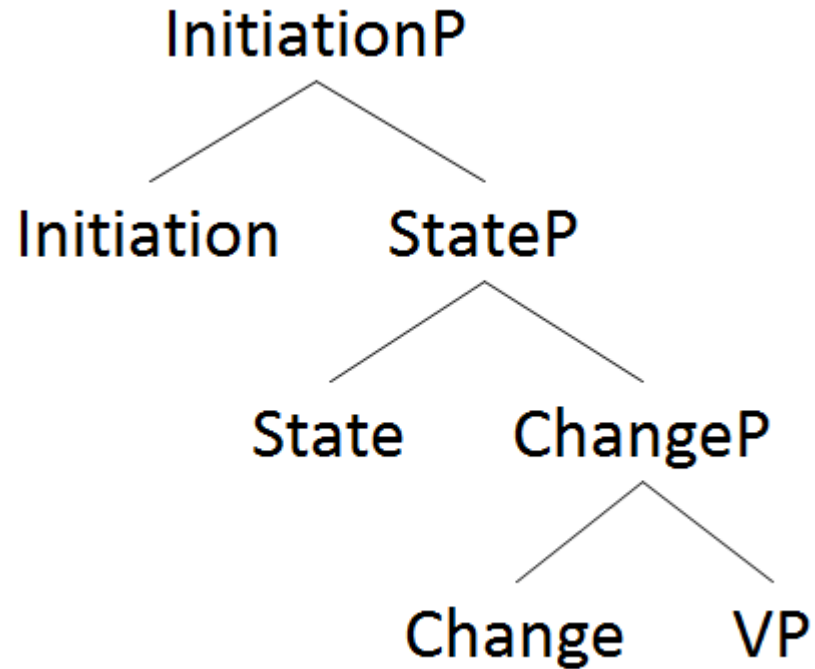
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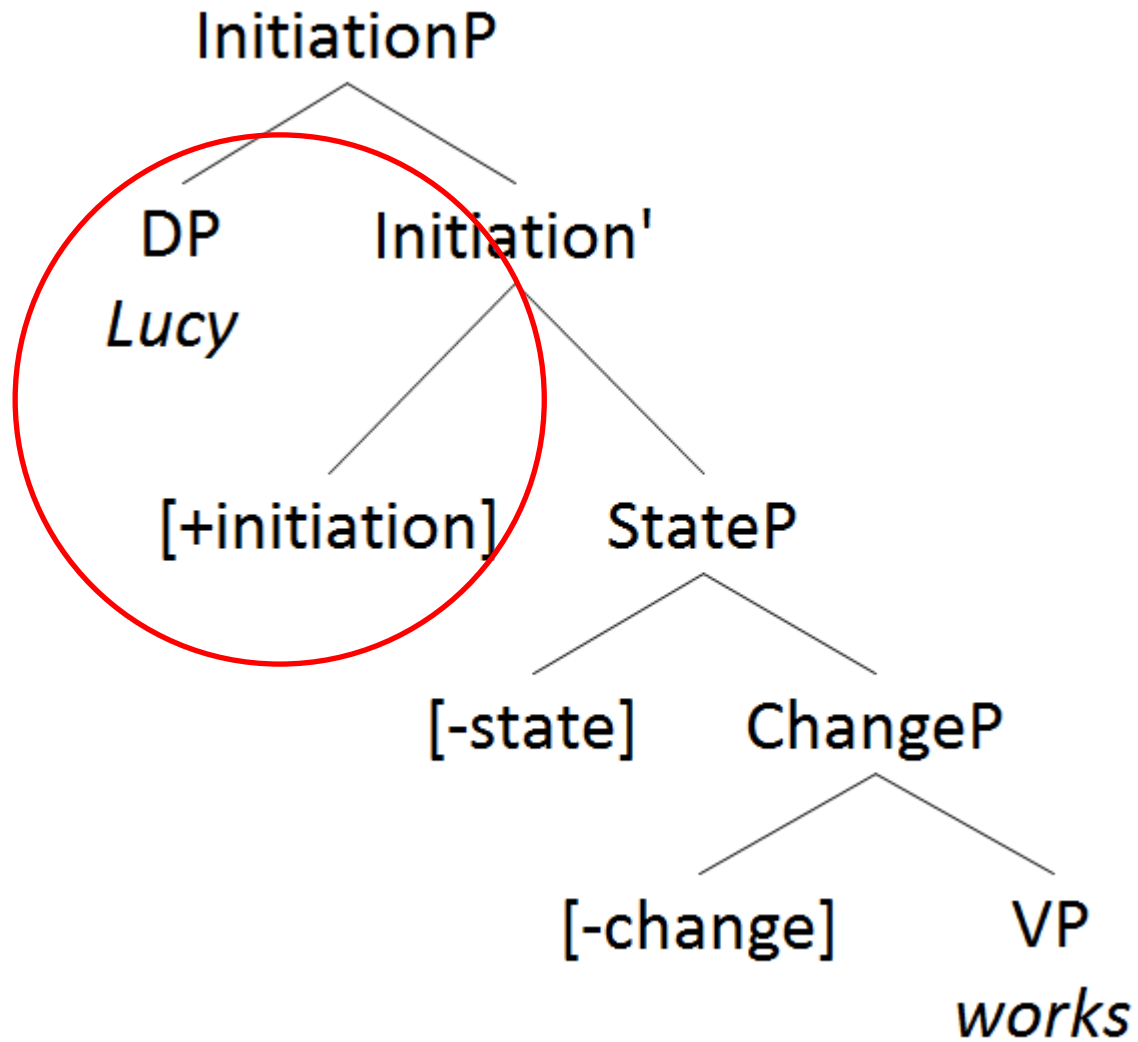
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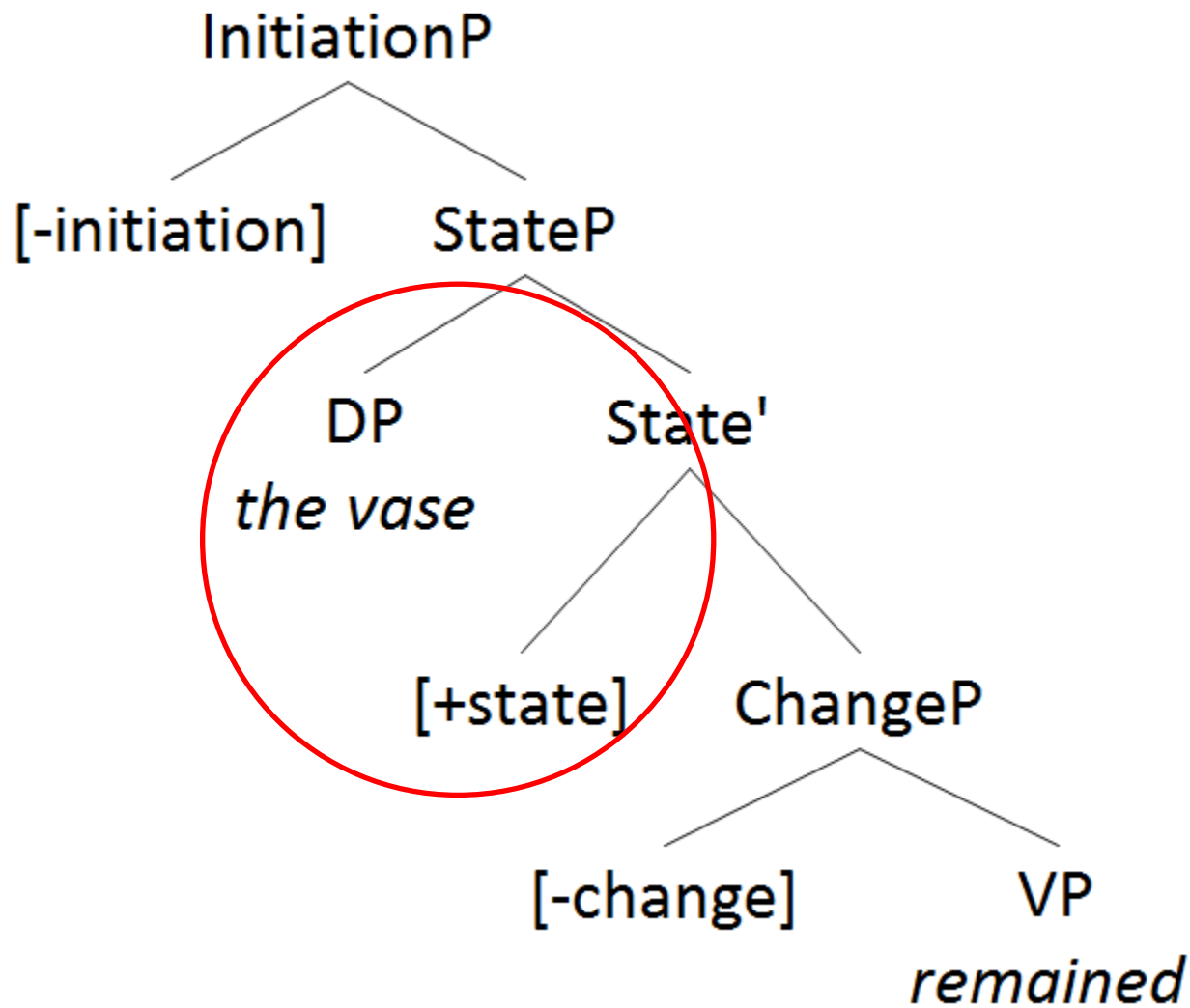
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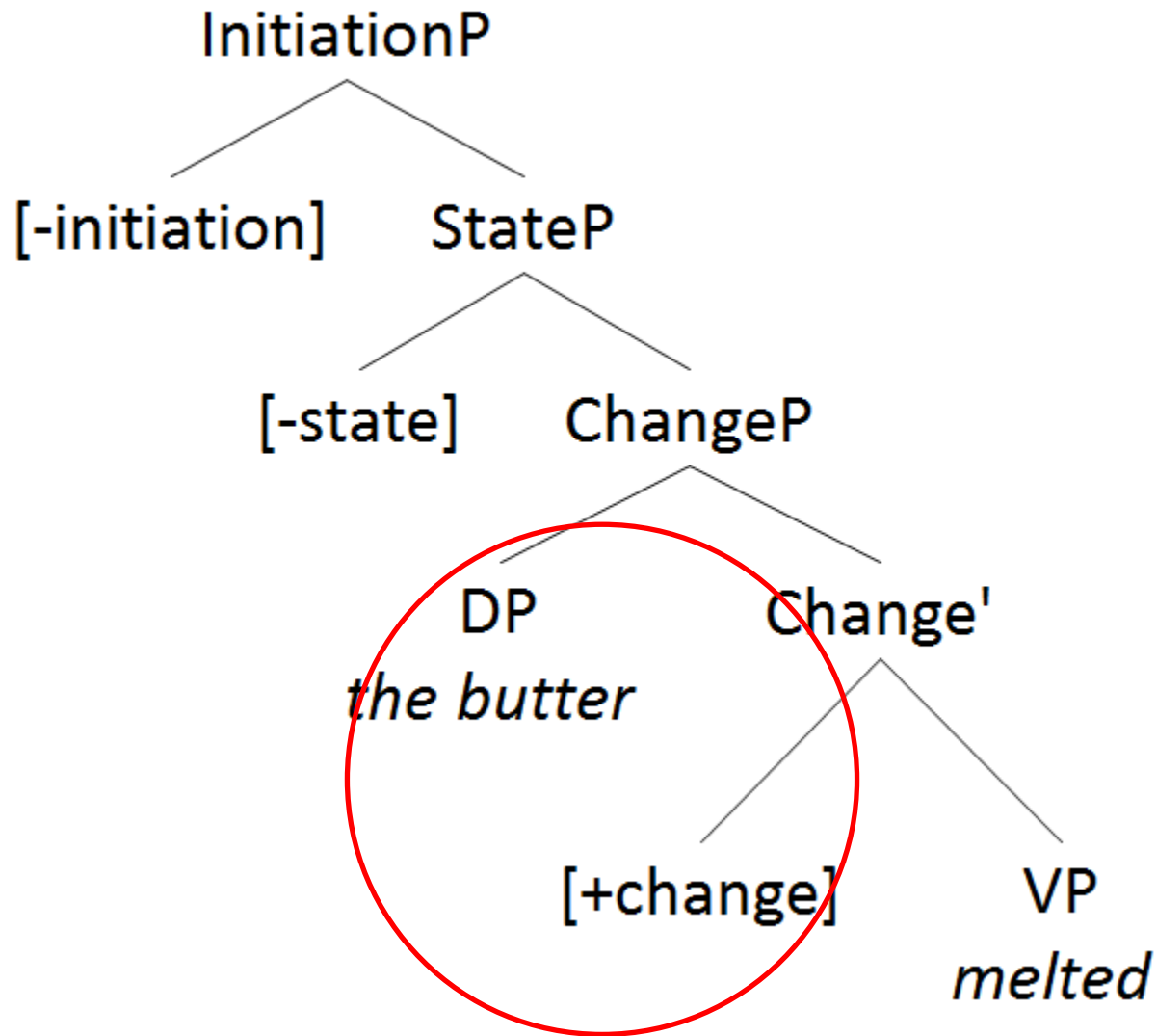


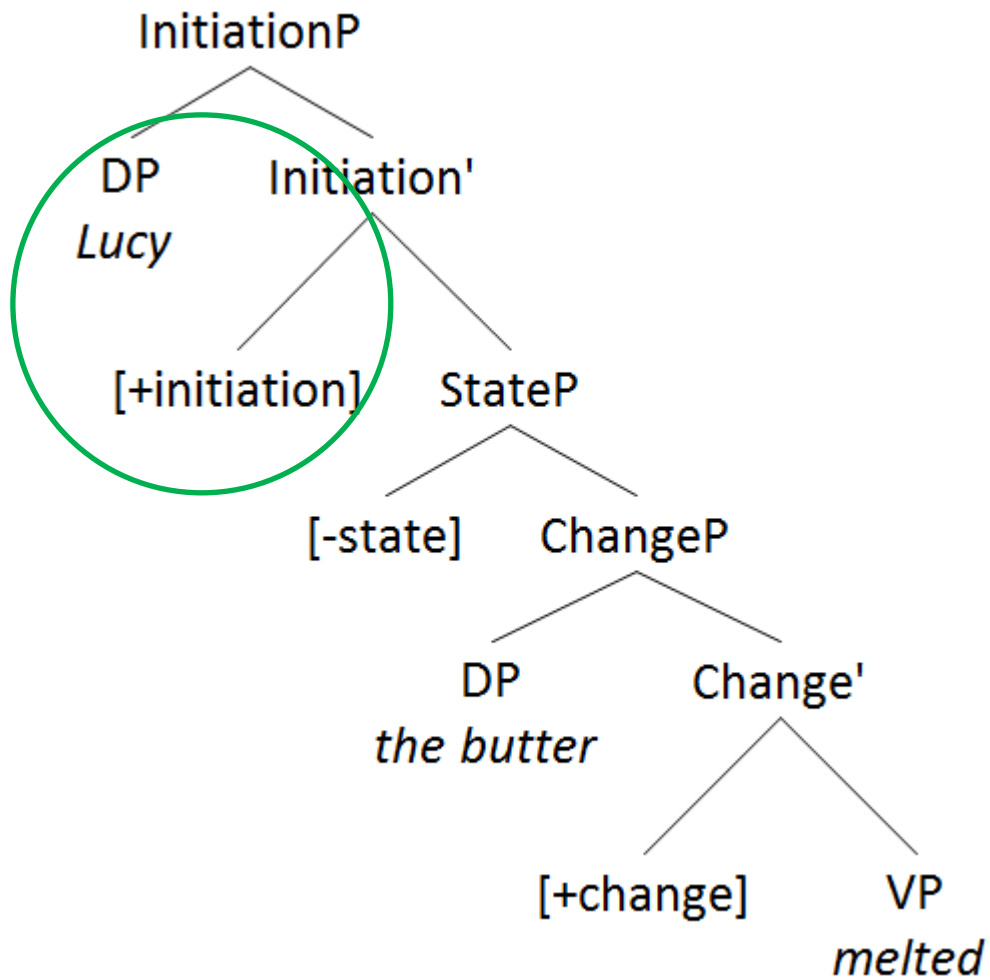
# The Thematic Functional Hierarchy



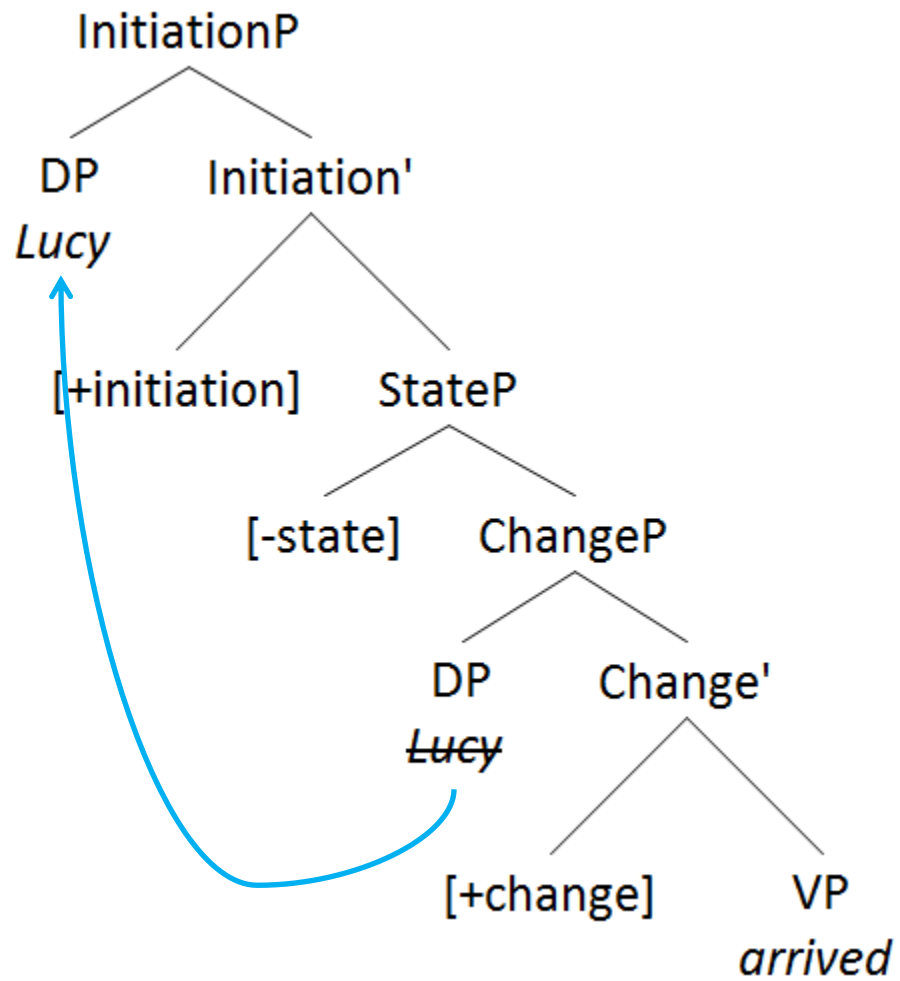








(after Ramchand 2008)



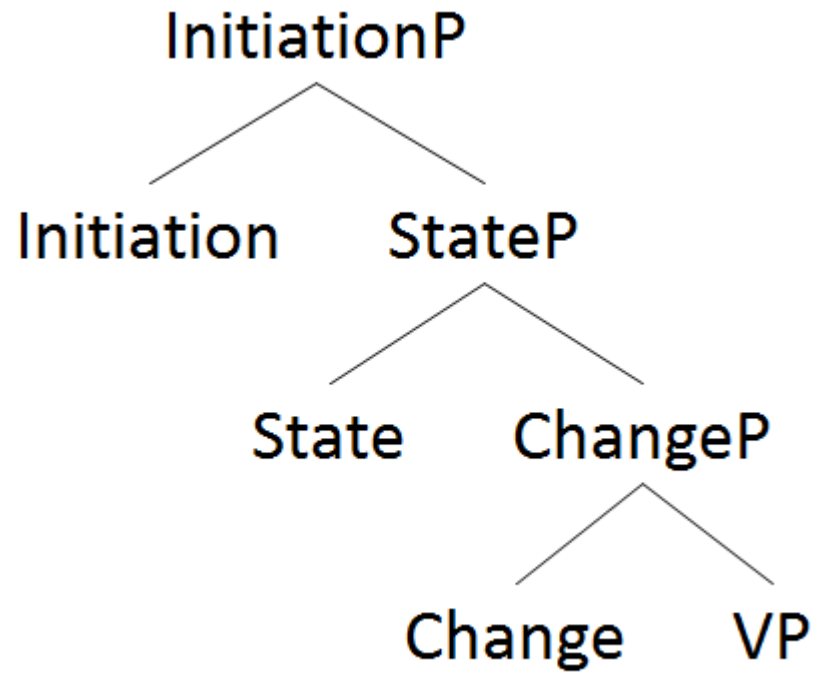
# 4. Conclusions

# Conclusions

- Classes of intransitives:  
[+change], [+state], [−change, −state];  
[±initiation]



# Conclusions



# Some advantages

- Identifying multiple classes means we don't run into problems with statives.
- Representing these classes in a functional hierarchy lets us maintain the link to argument structure.

Thank you