'Subject' in English is Abhihita

Akshar Bharati

Amba Kulkarni
Department of Sanskrit Studies
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad

apksh@uohyd.ernet.in

What is Abhihita?

Paa.nini's sUtra: 'an-abhihite'
That which is not expressed.

Question: Expressed by what?

Kaatyaayana: expressed by
Ti~n, k.rt, taddhita and samaasa

Subject Properties (Keenan: 1976)

- Every Sentence must have a subject, either overt or covert
- The unmarked position of overt subjects is pre-verbal.
- In an imperative there is no overt subject, but the subject is understood to be the addressee.
- The subject triggers agreement with the verb.
- The subject is associated with certain semantic roles.
- Subjects undergo raising.

Subject : Universal?

- None of the above properties is universal.

- Andrews(1985:104):
- At the outset we must note that there are no properties which in all languages are always exhibited by subjects and only exhibited by them.

Afresh Look at the English Syntax

Some facts about English

- Does not have a morpheme corresponding to an accusative marker, except in the form of remnant as in pronominal forms such as him, them, etc.
- ==> Two arguments will not have any marker on them.
- ==> How to distinguish between the two?
- Though one of them may be 'abhihita', in English the verb expresses only number, and not the gender or person. Hence the agreement codes very little information.

English … contd

- Information should be coded somewhere.
- How does English code this information?
- – in positions.

- In English
- $Rats\ kill\ cats$
- has different meaning than
- $Cats\ kill\ rats.$

Which Positions are Crucial?

- SVO order?
- *Fruits I like.*

- SV order?
- *Here comes the bus.*
- *Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.*

What is Invariant?

- The subject of the transitive verbs is always to the immediate left of the verb group.
- The main verb may also move around as in

  He wanted to come, and come he did.

  Something had to give, and give it did.
- What is invariant is:
- Subject-Auxiliary Proximity (Sannidhi)

Subject and Abhihita

- Subject: Abhihita
- Abhihita is in a FIXED position
- Abhihita is 'kartaa' if active voice
- 'karma?' if passive voice.

Missing yes/no question marker

- The information is coded through the 'subject-auxiliary inversion'.

- *He is intelligent.*
- *Is he intelligent?*

Anupurvl / Order

- Subject – Auxiliary ==> Declarative
- Auxiliary – Subject ==> Interrogative

- =========>
- Subject Position is Sacrosanct!

Implications:

- Subject Position can not be empty.
- ==> Dummy it

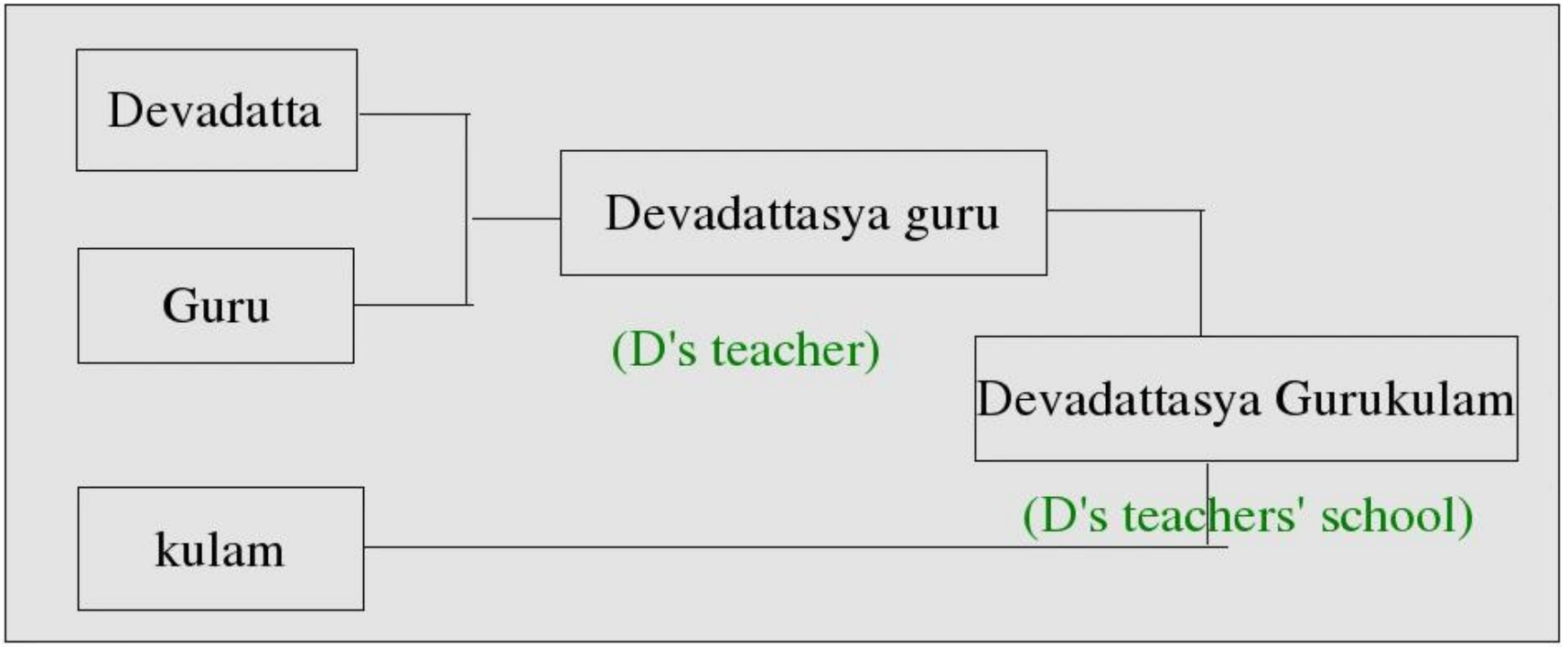
  It is raining.

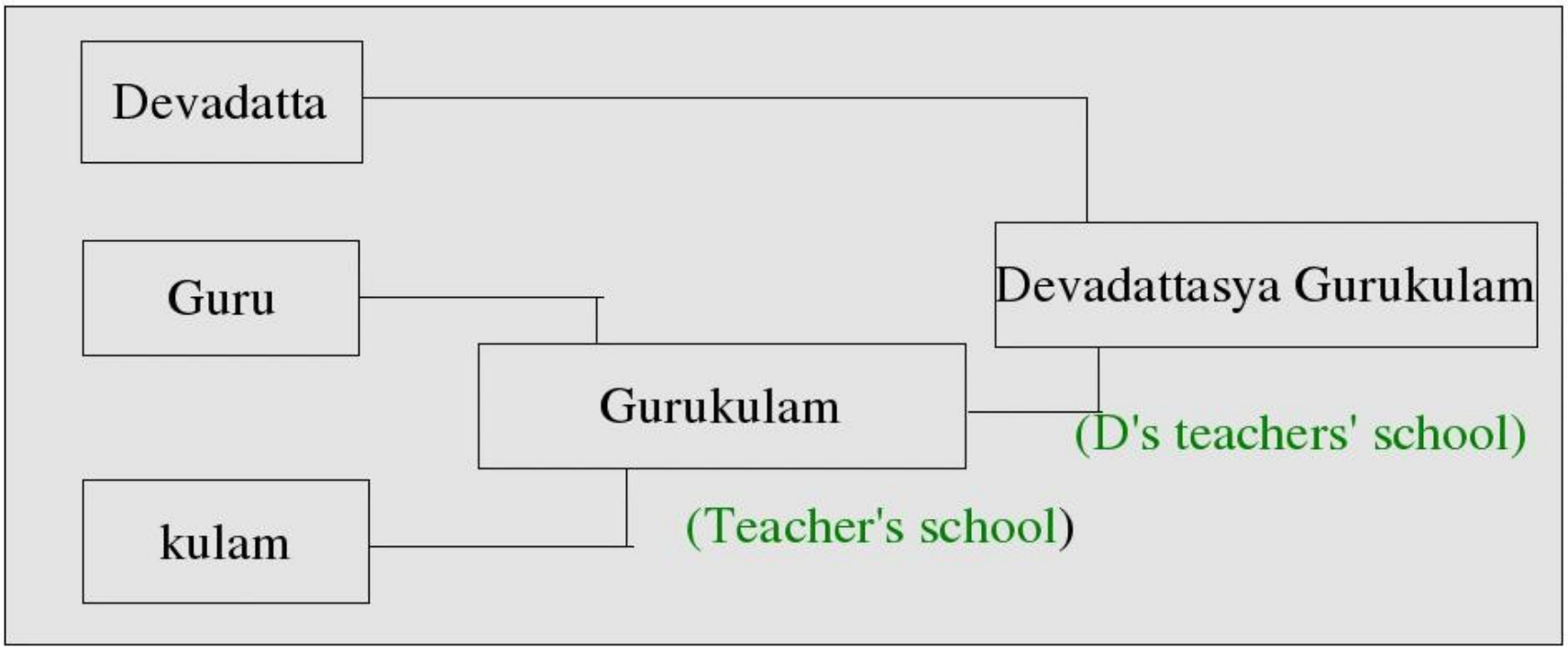
- To express Factuality / happeningness
- ==> Expletive There
- *There are flowers in the garden.*
- *There entered a hall an old man.*

Subject-Subject Raising

- *It seems that the boys have eaten fruits.*
- *The boys seem to have eaten fruits.*

- Seems to be 'asamartha padavidhi'
- The agreement is between 'boy' and 'seem'. 'boy' is not an argument of 'seem'.
- Apparent inconsistency at the structural level.


Devadatta
Guru
Devadattasya guru
(D's teacher)
Devadattasya Gurukulam
(D's teachers' school)
kulam


Devadatta
Guru
Devadattasya Gurukulam
Gurukulam
(D's teachers' school)
kulam
(Teacher's school)

Asamartha padavidhi? .. contd

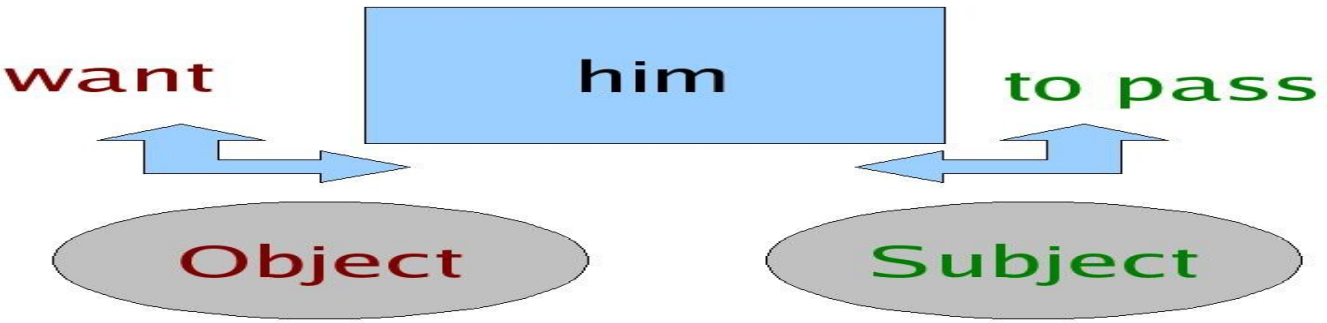
- The meaning is clear.
- – 'arthabodhakatva/ gamakatva'

- saakaa.nkshataa (the property of having expectancy) triggers the correct meaning.

ECM

I informed him about the incidence.

I want to go.
I want him to pass the examination.



Gapping

Mohan dropped the melon and burst.

Who/What burst?

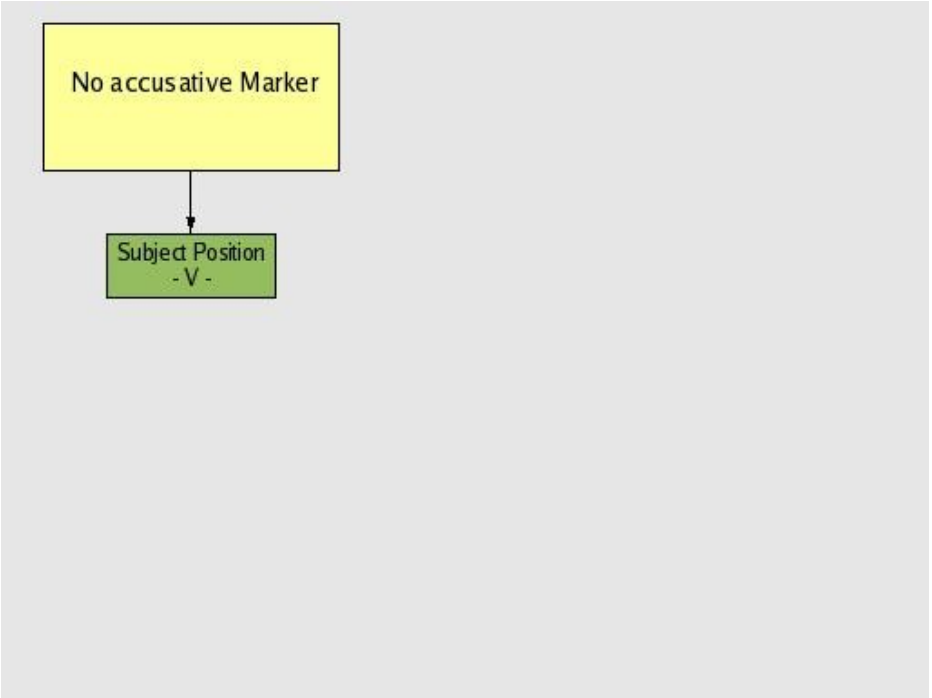
English Syntax: Mohan Burst

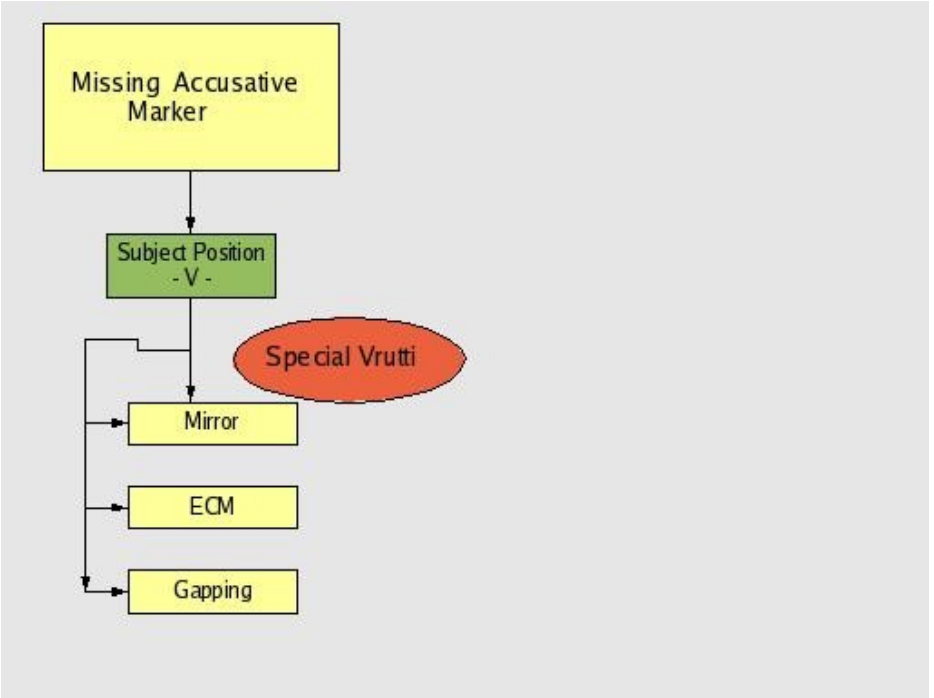
Tough Movement

It is hard to see John.
John is hard to see.

It is tough to play this sonata on this violin.
This violin is tough to play these sonatas on.

Missing Accusative marker


No accusative Marker
Subject Position
- V -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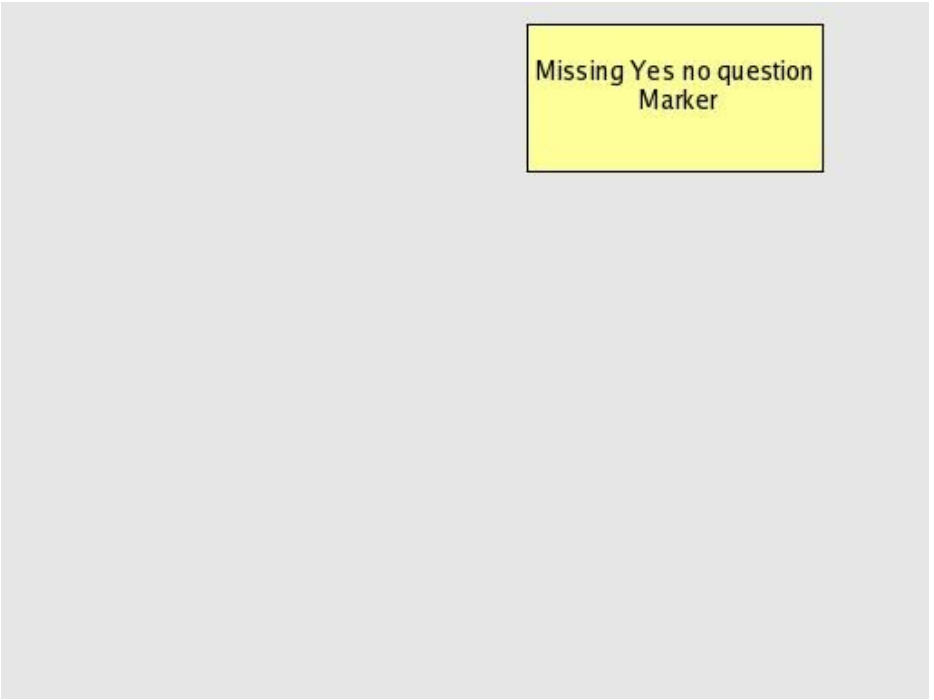
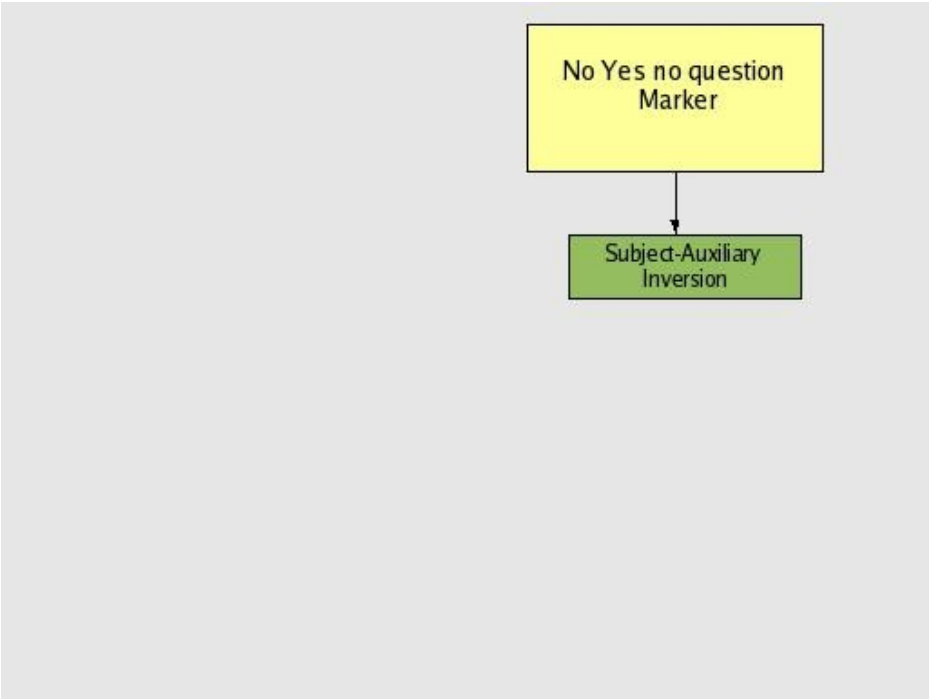
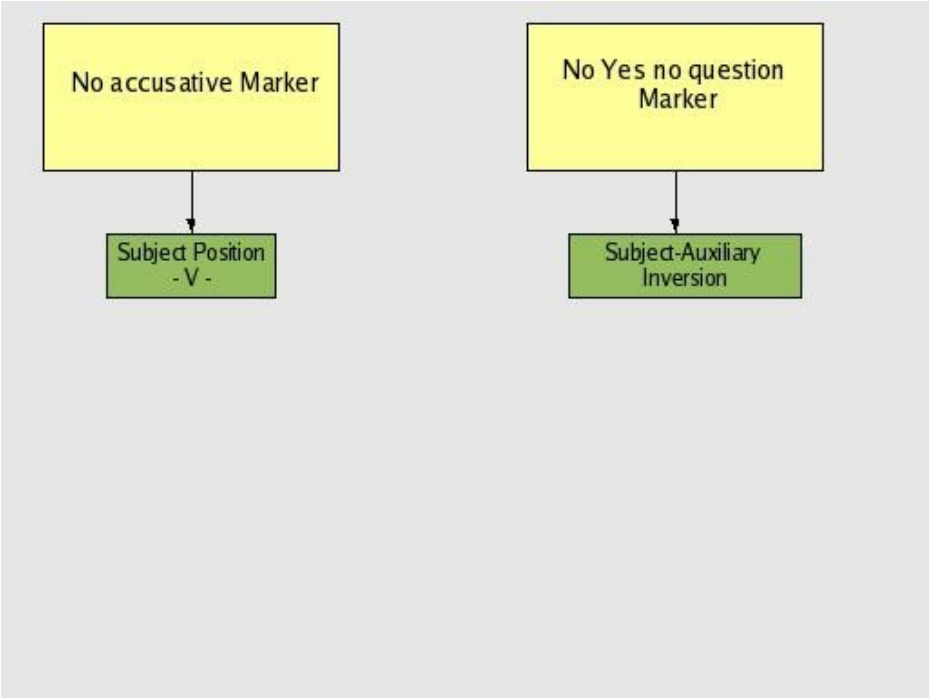
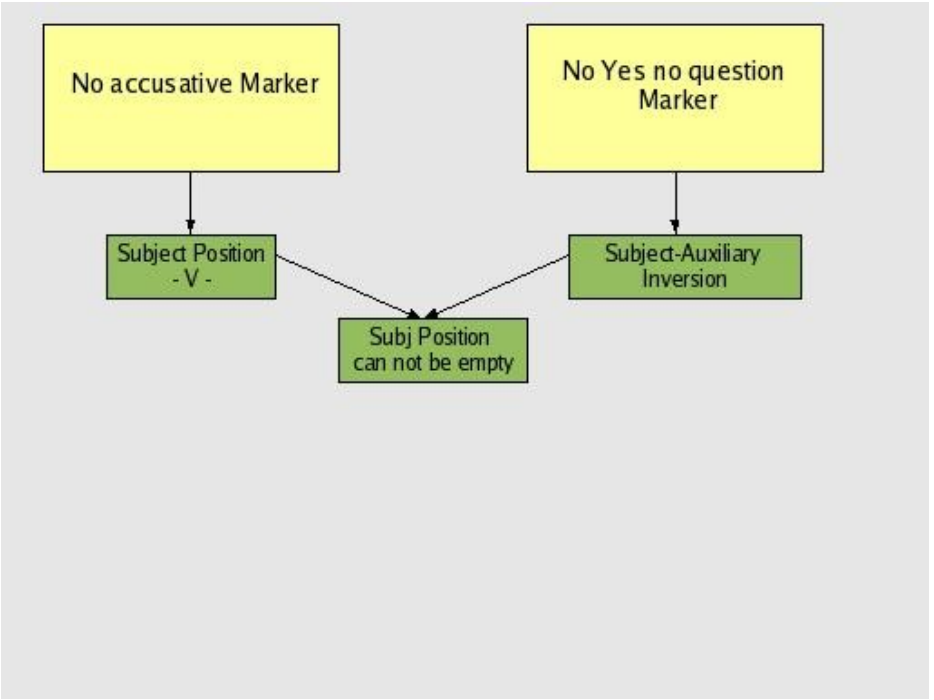
Subject Position - V -
Special Vrutti
Mirror
ECM
Gapping


Missing Yes no question Marker


No Yes no question Marker
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion


No accusative Marker
Subject Position
- V -
No Yes no question
Marker
Subject-Auxiliary
Inversion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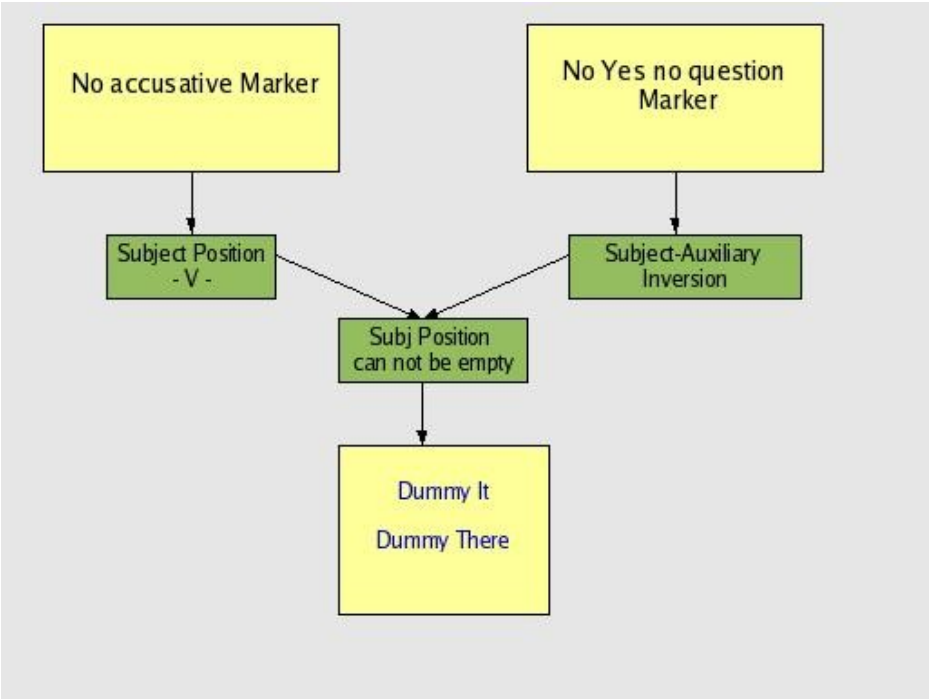
No Yes no question Marker
Subject Position - V -
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion
Subj Position can not be empty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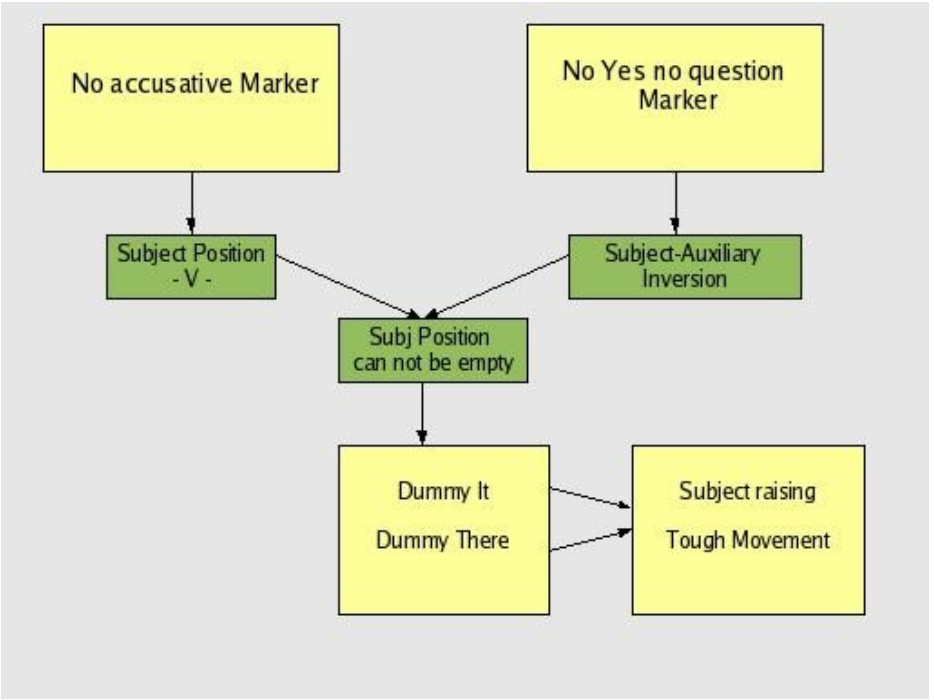
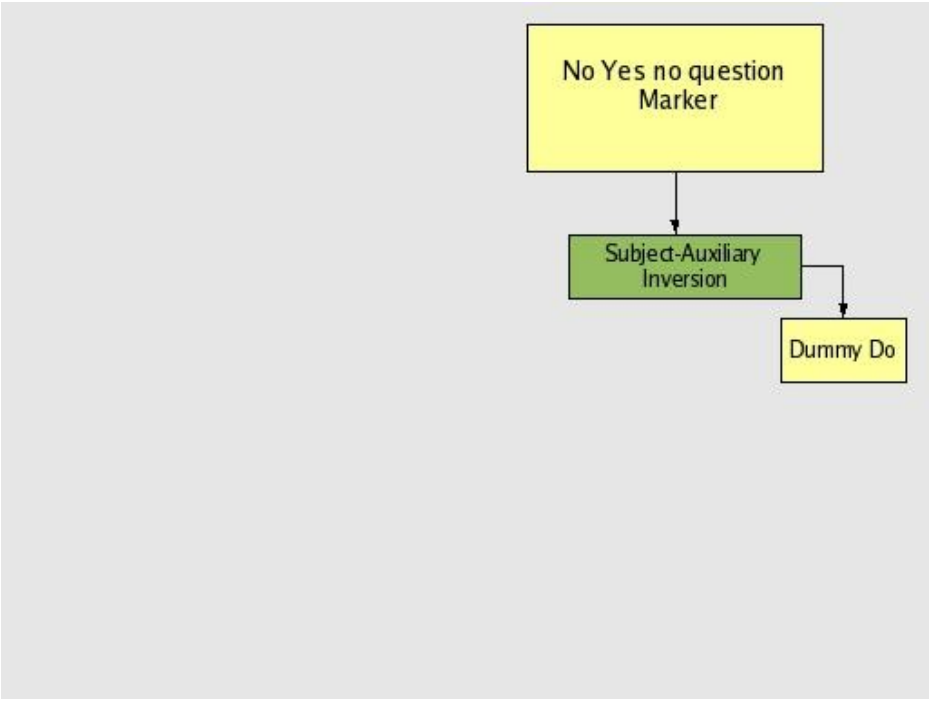
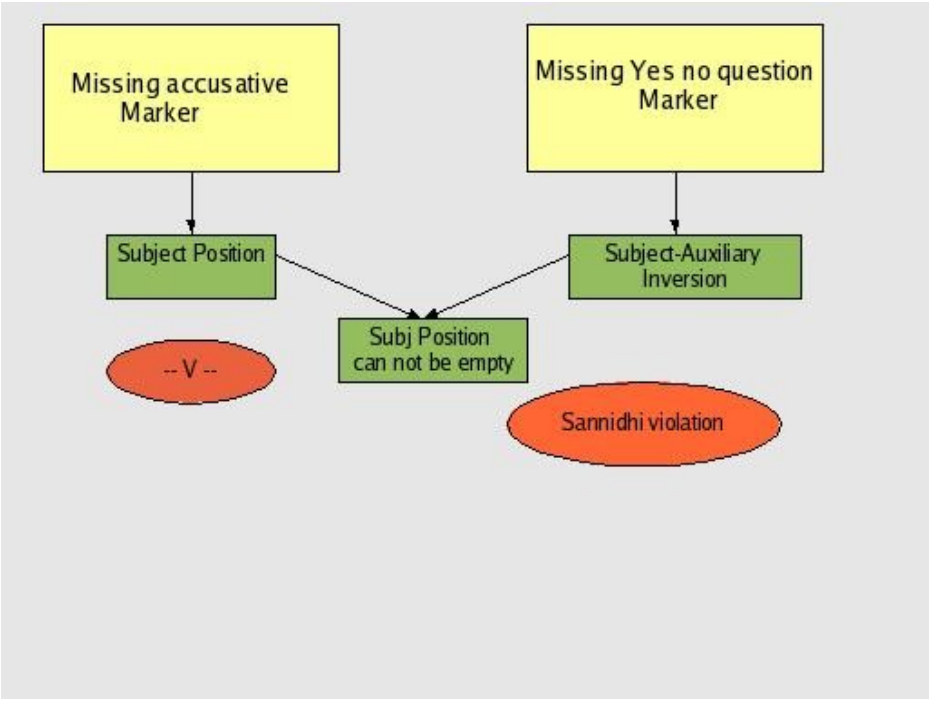
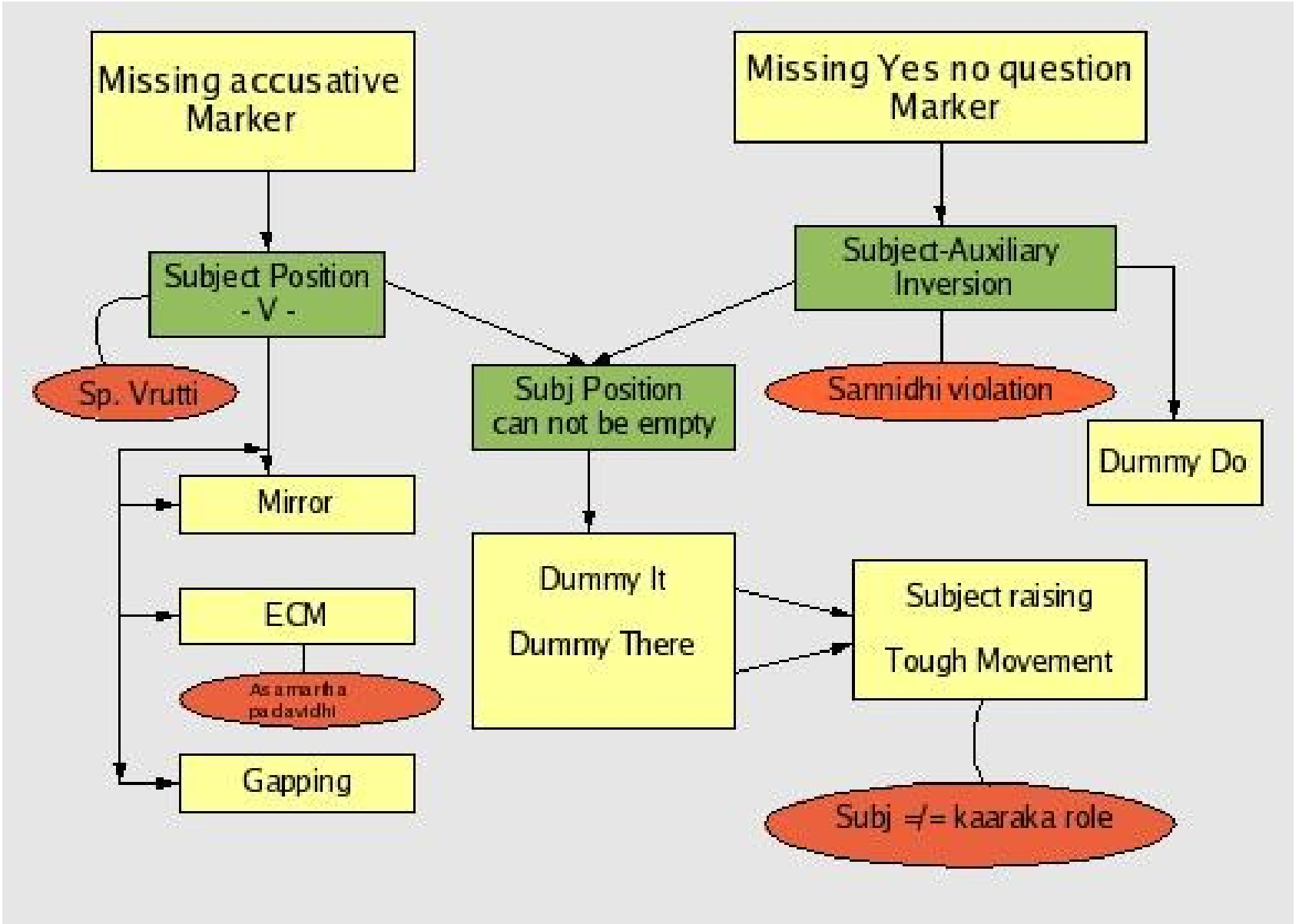
No Yes no question Marker
Subject Position - V -
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion
Subj Position can not be empty
Dummy It
Dummy There


No accusative Marker
No Yes no question Marker
Subject Position - V -
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion
Subj Position can not be empty
Dummy It
Dummy There
Subject raising
Tough Movement


No Yes no question Marker
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion
Dummy Do


Missing accusative Marker
Missing Yes no question Marker
Subject Position
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion
Subj Position can not be empty
-- V --
Sannidhi violation


Missing accusative Marker
Missing Yes no question Marker
Subject Position - V -
Subject-Auxiliary Inversion
Sp. Vrutti
Subj Position can not be empty
Sannidhi violation
Dummy Do
Mirror
ECM
Asamartha padavidhi
Gapping
Dummy It
Dummy There
Subject raising
Tough Movement
Subj =/= kaaraka role

Conclusion

Abhihita typically occupies the pre-verbal position.
It need not have any kaaraka role with the verb with which it agrees.

Patch to Panini's Grammar

In modern English,
a) Pre-verbal position is called 'Subject Position'.

b) In view of the absence of 'accusative marker', Abhihita occupies the Subject Position.

c) If the verb is to be focused, then Subject Position is occupied by 'Here' or 'There'.

Here comes the Bus!
There entered the hall an old man.

Patch to Panini's Grammar ...

d) In case the manner of the activity is to be focused, then the adverb expressing the manner is in Subject position.

Never was the sea so calm.
Uneasy lies the head which wears a crown.

Patch to Panini's Grammar ...

e) If the verb is implicit, then the Subject position is occupied by dummy 'it'.

It is raining.

Patch to Panini's Grammar ...

f) If the main verb is 'seem', then optionally the subject of the 'vaakya karma' occupies the subject position of the main verb.

It seems the boys have eaten the fruits.
The boys seem to have eaten the fruits.

Patch to Panini's Grammar ...

g) In case of icchaarthaka dhaatus (verbs expressing desire etc.), Subject sharing is optional.

I want to go.
I want him to go there.

Patch to Panini's Grammar ...

h) In case of icchaarthaka dhaatu, if the subject of the main verb differs from the subject of the secondary verb, then the subject of the secondary verb takes an accusative marker.

I want him to go there.