

# Selected Topics in Slavic linguistics

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Slavic languages are sufficiently similar and sufficiently different to provide an attractive research laboratory. (Corbett 1998)



# Language-family-oriented research

- Rationale
  - novel perspective on **grammar sharing**
  - linguistically sound and theoretically motivated **modularity**
  - incorporating important **insights** from Slavic linguistics
- Typological similarities and systematic differences
  - observed at various **intermediate levels of linguistic abstraction**
  - detectable as **parameters of systematic variation**



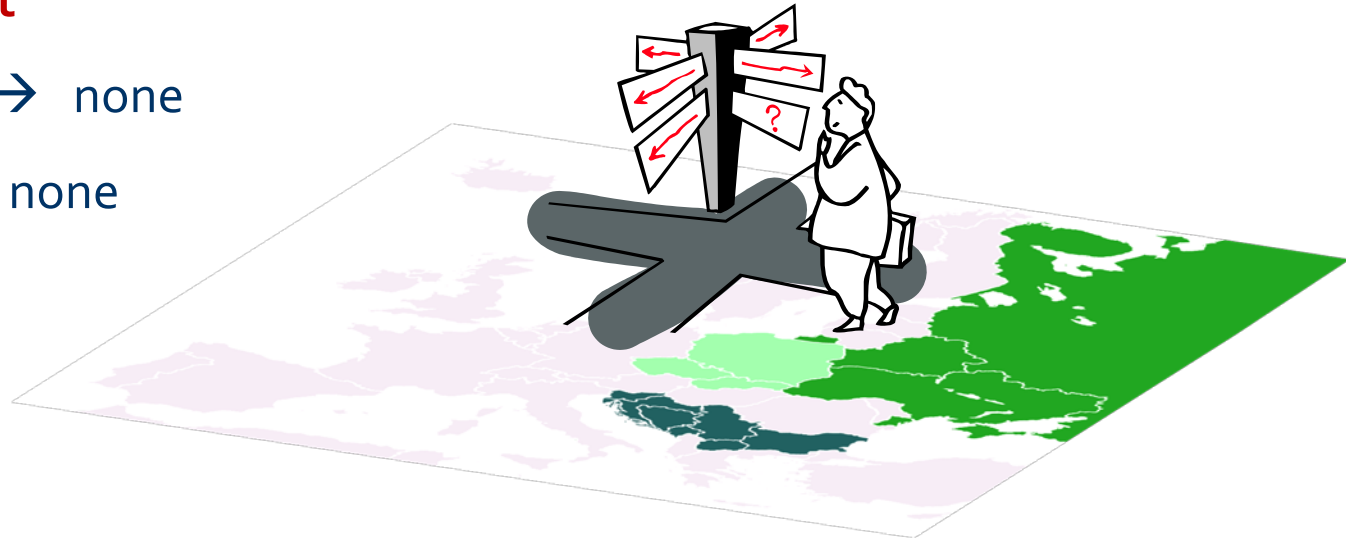
# Observable tendencies

## ➤ East ➤ West ➤ South

- elaborate case system → case syncretism → case remnants
- copula-less predication → morphosyntactic verb complex
- infinitival complements → finite complements

## ➤ South ➤ West ➤ East

- aux & pron clitics → none
- definite article → none





# The extent of grammatical relatedness?

## Bulgarian ➤ **South Slavic**

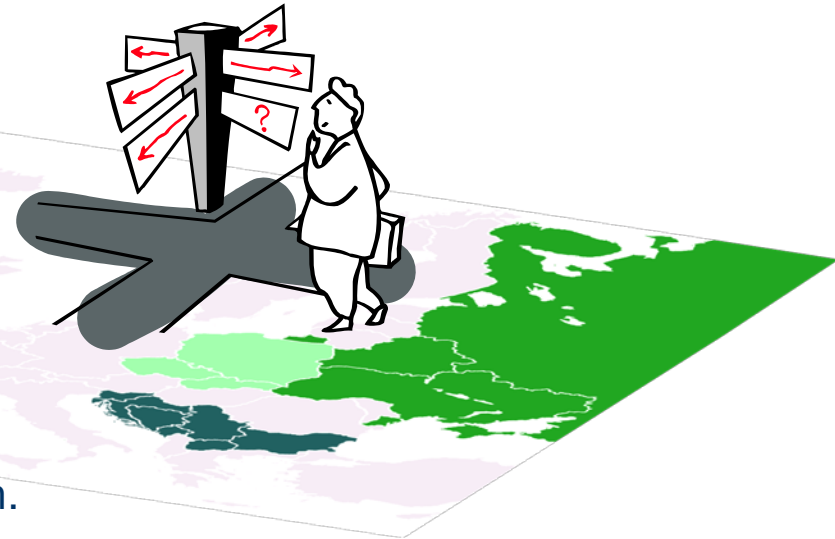
lacks morphological cases and infinitive,  
but shows an impressively complex verbal system,  
a definite article, a full-fledged clitic paradigm,  
and a phenomenon of clitic doubling.

## Czech, Polish ➤ **West Slavic**

clausal-domain auxiliary and pronominal clitics,  
along with morphological cases and infinitive.

## Russian ➤ **East Slavic**

has morphological cases and infinitive,  
but lacks any auxiliary or pronominal clitics,  
and extensively employs non-verbal predication.

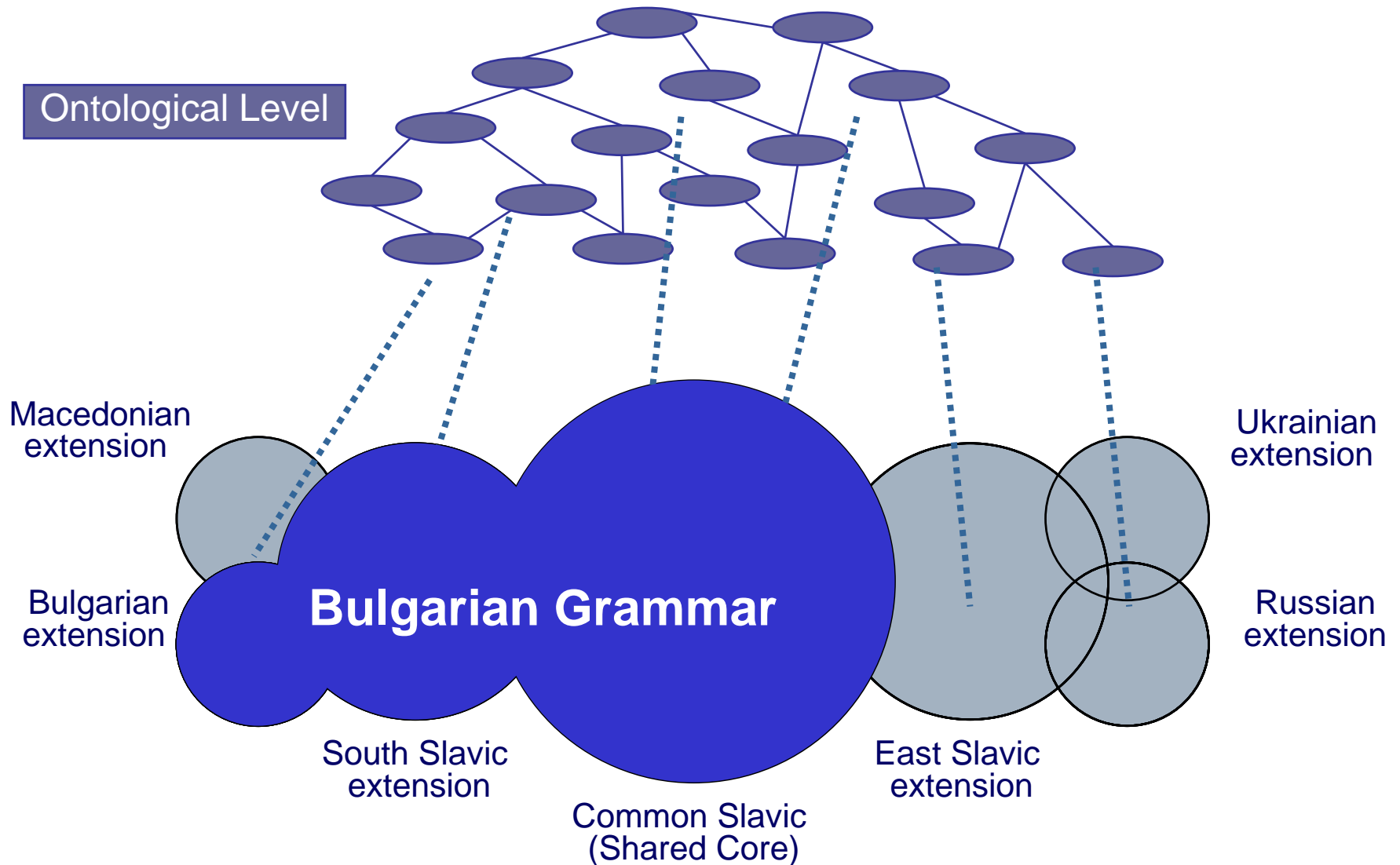


# Phenomena-driven modelling strategy



- Grammar as knowledge repository
  - encoded in rich ontologies
  - multidimensional hierarchical organisation
  - various degrees of abstraction
  - language-specific and construction-specific parameterisation
- Typological insights
  - across languages and constructions
  - across frameworks

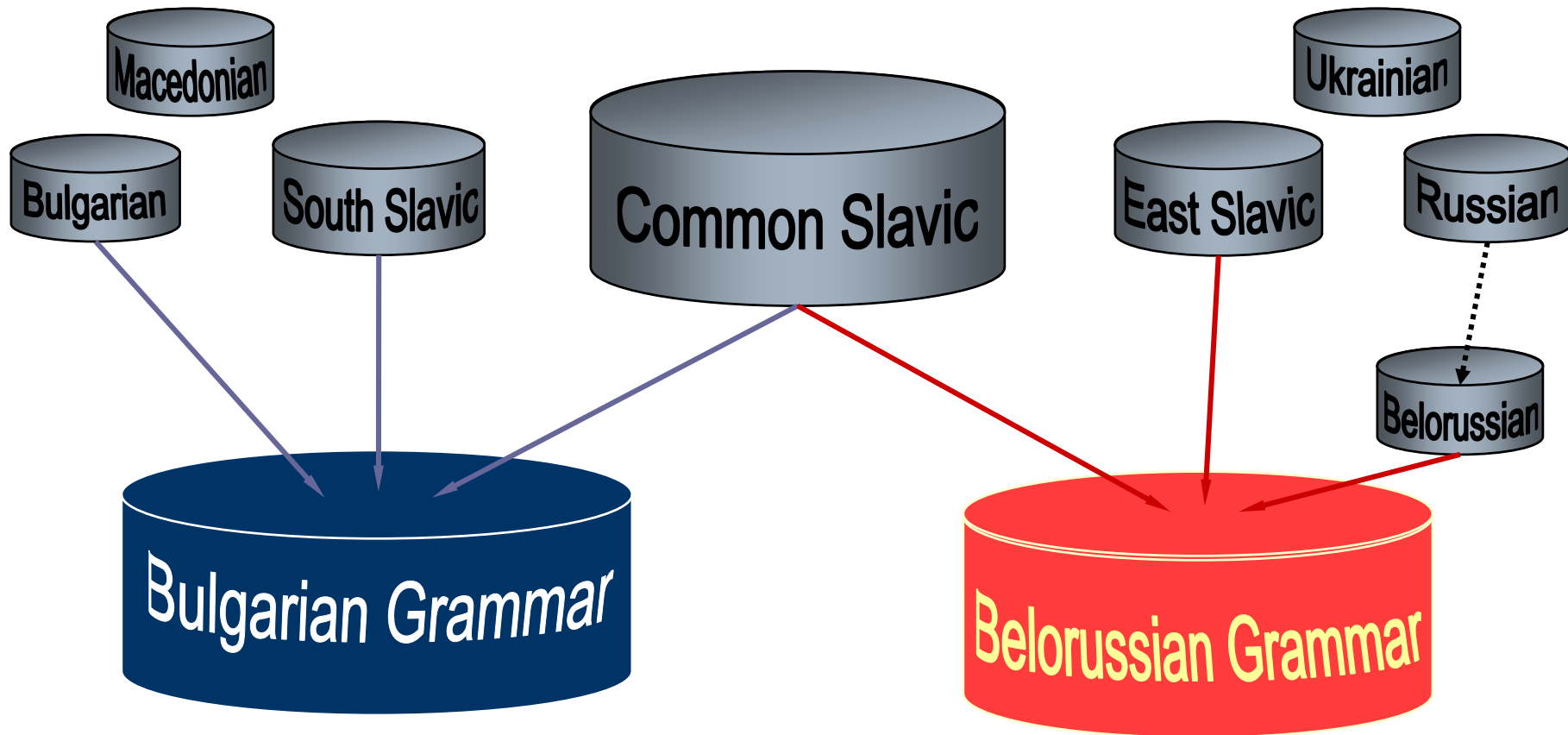
# Phenomena-driven modelling strategy



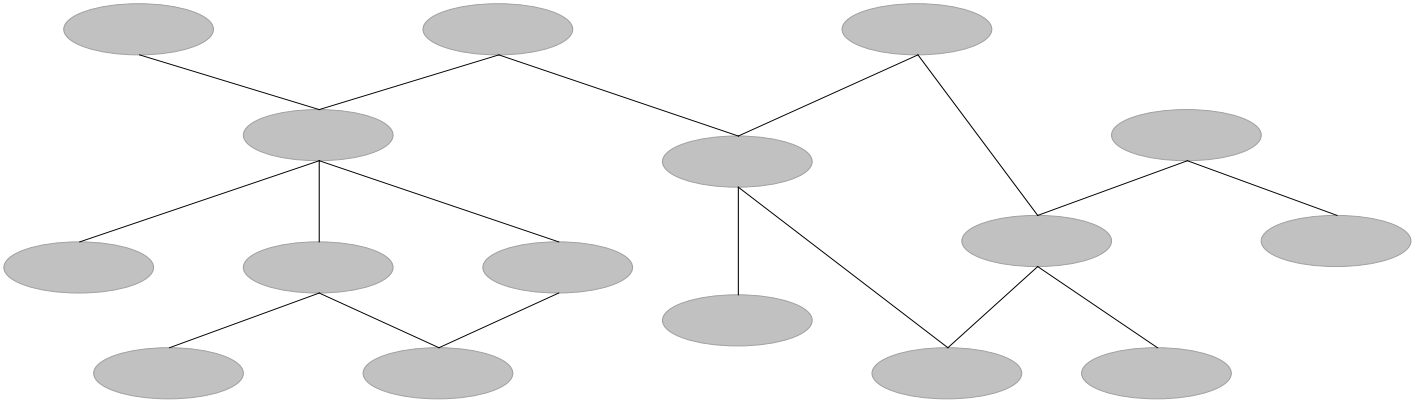
# Phenomena-driven shared grammar in action



Depending on formalisation, shared grammar components can be combined by logical conjunction or unification.



# Resource architecture



Ontologies



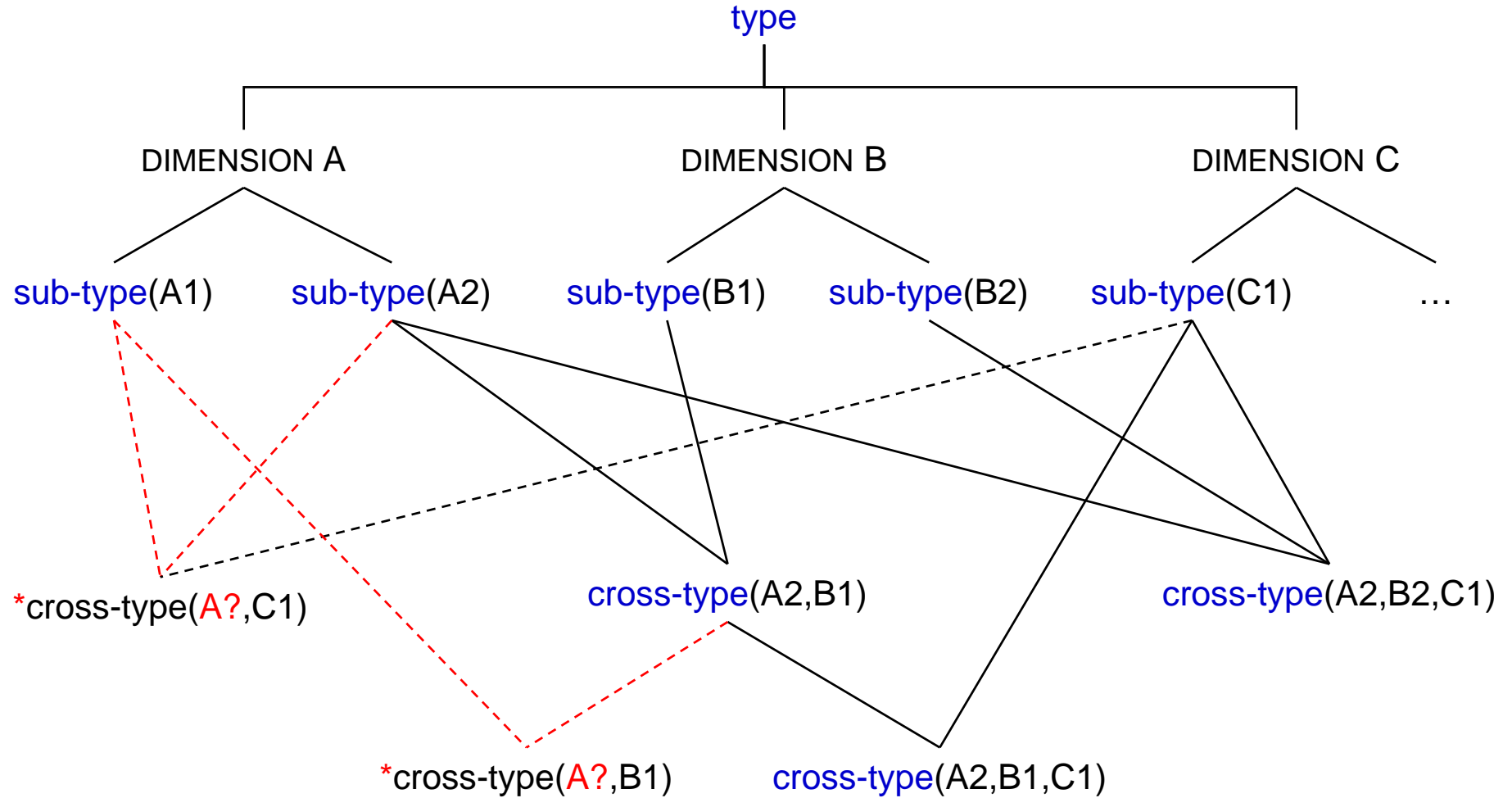
Modules



Grammars



# Adopted representation of type hierarchies





# Phenomena in focus

## 1. Case in Slavic

- Common Slavic inventory of functional cases
- Functional and marking dimensions of case classification
- Shared Slavic case hierarchy

## 2. Clitics in Slavic

- Common Slavic inventory of special predicative clitics
- Module of inflecting (aux & pron) clitics

## 3. Agreement in Slavic

- Systematic relations of co-variation
- An ontology of co-variation phenomena

# Canonicity of morphosyntactic features (Corbett 2009)



- Principle I: Features and their values are clearly distinguished by formal means.
  - The clearer the formal means by which a feature or value is distinguished, the more canonical that feature or value.
  - Clear formal means allow a straightforward and regular mapping from form to function.
  - In the canonical situation we have clear evidence both for the feature and for each of its values.
- Principle II: The use of canonical morphosyntactic features and their values is determined by simple syntactic rules.
  - Syntax–morphology interface (!)
  - In the canonical situation,
    - the rules of syntax determine the required case value, and
    - the morphology realizes this value without further complications.

# Canonicity of morphosyntactic features: Russian



- Given such a set of requirements, the traditional case values are confirmed, though some are more canonical than others.
  - *Accusative* is in many instances not clearly distinguished by formal means.
  - There are case values with various non-canonical characteristics, i.e. *second locative, second genitive, vocative, adnumerative*.
- Instead of a homogeneous system, we have a set of values of differing status,
  - some being close to canonical, and
  - some showing non-canonical and sometimes even quite exotic behaviour.
- In terms of obligatoriness too, we find a mixed picture.
  - While case as a feature is obligatory in Russian, not all of the values are.
  - E.g., for several nouns which have a *second genitive* its use is facultative.



# Slavic case system

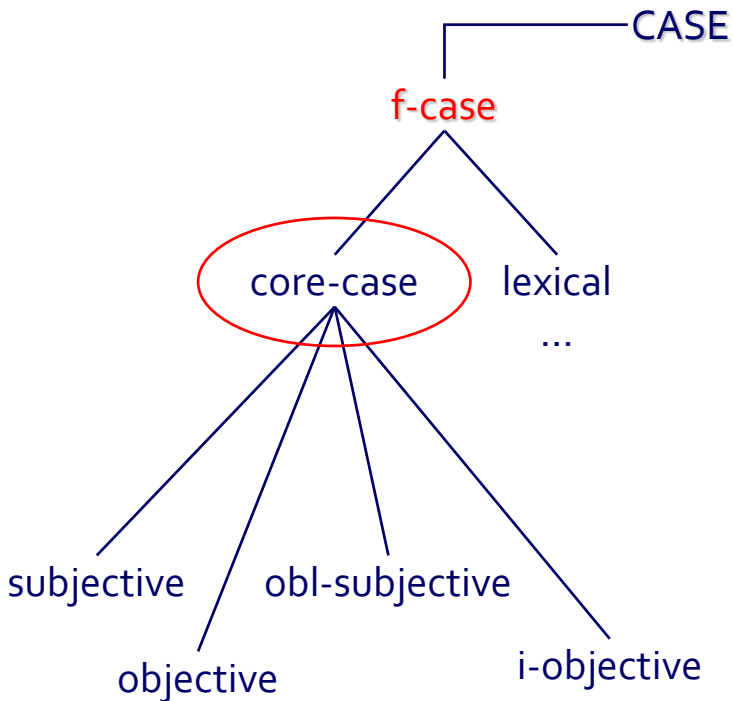
- The notion of “case” is used differently at different descriptive levels
  - case marking
  - syntactic function
  - semantic role
  
- How is case acquired by case-marked categories?
  - in concord (concordial case)
  - under government (relational case)
  
- Terminological complexity
  - With case-related concepts, it is crucial to pursue explicitness, and avoid presentational ambiguity and simplification.

# Common Slavic inventory of functional cases



- Notion of **functional case** as morphosyntactic abstraction over
  - regular case variation and
  - language-specific constraints with regard to case marking
- Parametric constraints on the instantiation of functional case
  - language-specific
  - idiosyncratic
  - context-sensitive
- Functional dimension of case classification (**f-case**)

# Functional dimension of case classification



- “subjective”
  - canonical **nominative** NP
  - **dative** NP: with Polish and Russian infinitives (modal construction)
  - **genitive** NP: Russian (in context of negation)
- “oblique-subjective”
  - **instrumental** NP: Russian / Czech / Slovak
  - **PP**: Bulgarian (**от**) / Polish (**przez**) / Slovene (**od**)
- “objective”
  - canonical **accusative** NP
  - **genitive** NP: Polish / Russian
  - **instrumental** NP: Polish / Russian
- “indirect-objective”
  - canonical **dative** NP
  - **PP**: Bulgarian (**на**)



# Generalising the concept of case marking

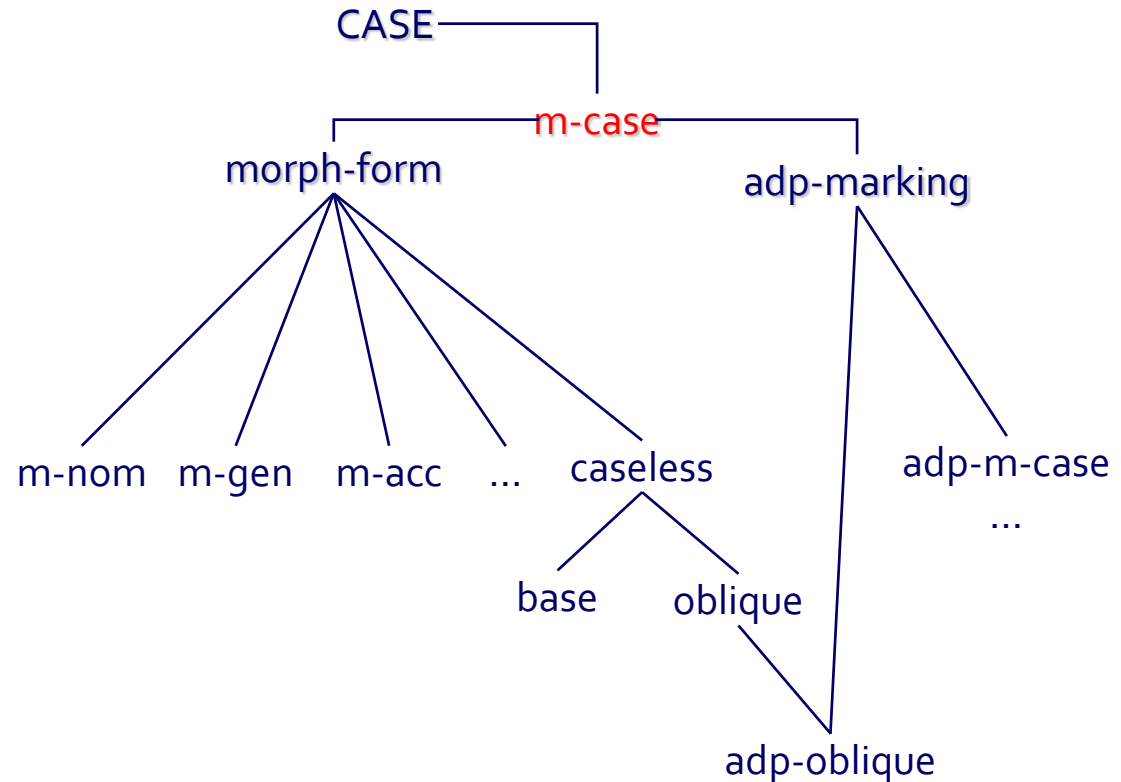
## ● Spectrum of case marking possibilities

- synthetic means
- analytical means
- suppletion of forms

## ● The idea of case marking

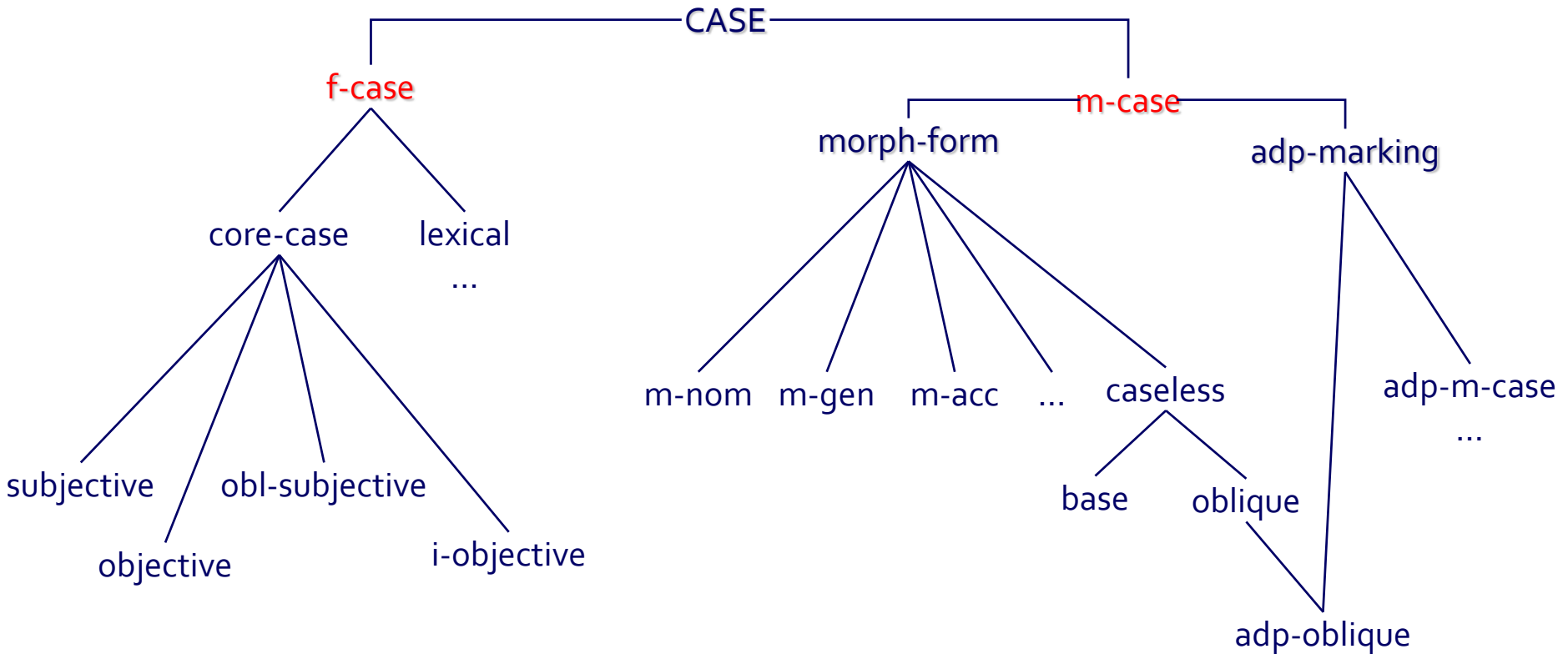
- traditionally: inflectional marking
- extension: to cover adpositions, too

## ● Marking dimension of case classification (**m-case**)

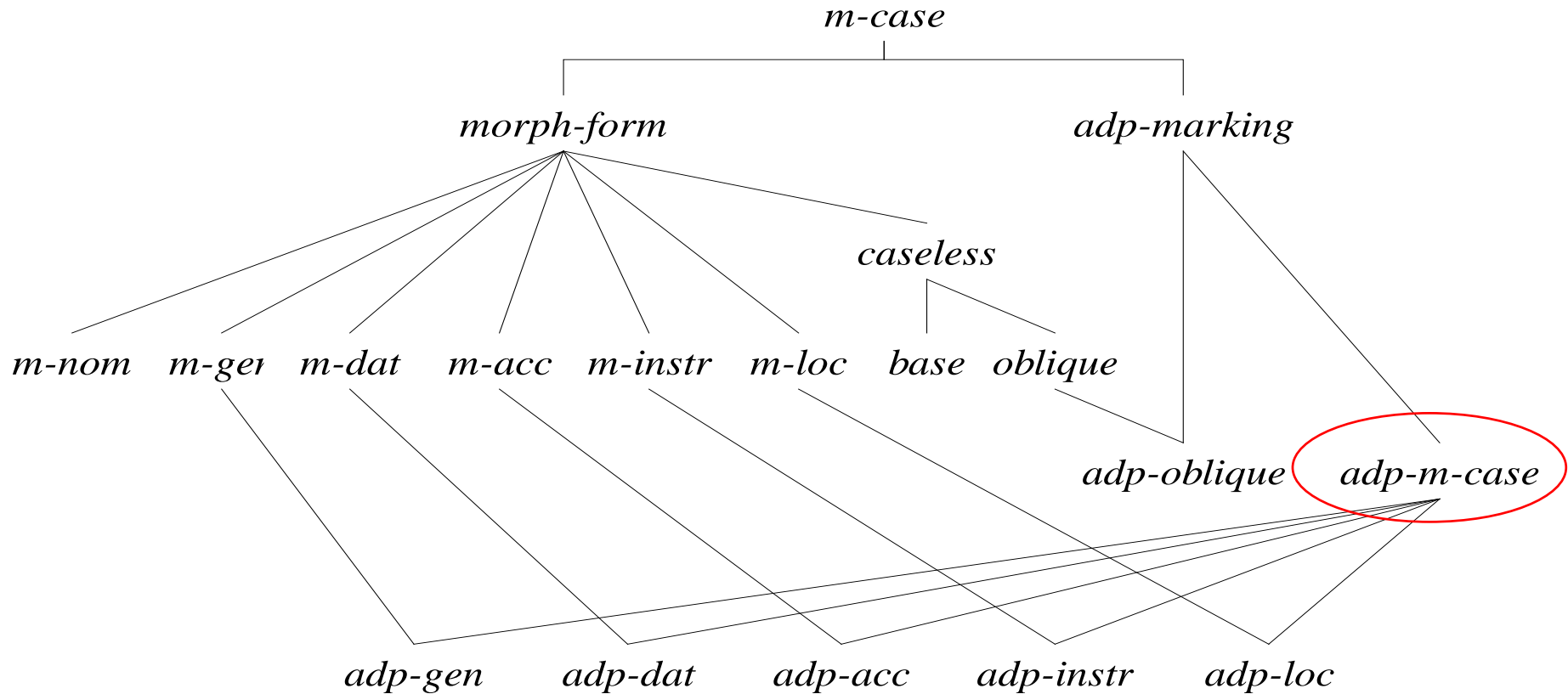




# Functional and marking dimensions



# Marking dimension of Slavic case hierarchy

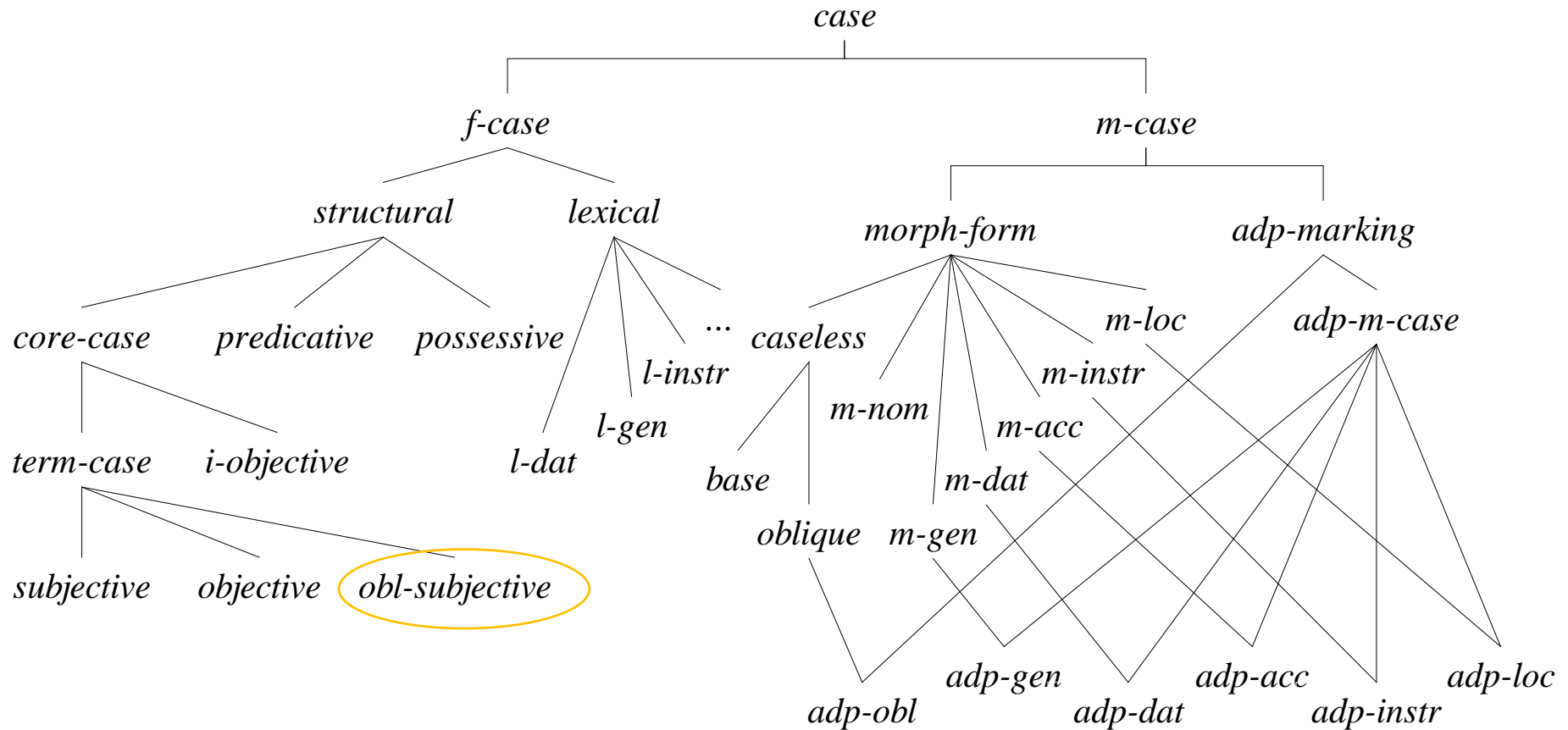


# Shared Slavic case hierarchy



functional dimension

marking dimension





# Parametric constraints on f-case instantiation

- Language-specific: the particular encoding of functional case, e.g., the instrumental / prepositional marking of the agentive phrase in passive.
- Idiosyncratic: lexically determined subclasses of structural arguments, e.g. accusative, genitive and instrumental direct objects in Polish.
- Context-sensitive: case alternations triggered by syntactic or semantic context, e.g., genitive of negation.

