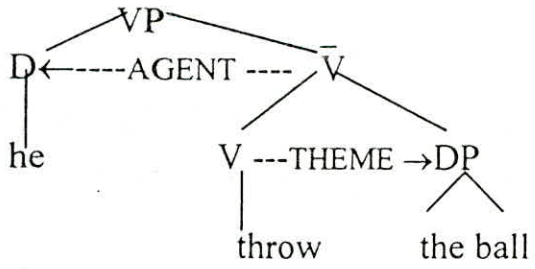
Having glossed briefly the notion of having semantic roles played by arguments in relation to their predicates, we find that "auxiliaries seem to play no part in determining the assignment of theta roles to subjects "(165) ; and this is because auxiliaries are regarded as **functional categories** and play no role in theta-marking. This is demonstrated by sentences (21).

21.

(i) He *will* throw a ball / a fit.
(ii) He *was* throwing a ball / a fit.
(iii) He *has been* throwing a ball / a fit.
(iv) He *might have been* throwing a ball / a fit.

Theta -roles are only assigned by **lexical categories** (i.e. contentives categories); i.e. arguments are assigned theta roles via the process of **merger with a lexical category.** Thus, the verb *throw* will be merged with the DP *the ball* (which is itself formed by the merging of *ball* with *the)* to form the V-bar *throw the ball.* As a result of this merger operation ,the DP *the ball* is assigned the theta -role of THEME argument of *throw.* The V-bar *throw the ball* is in turn merged with the pronominal determiner *he* ;and as a result of this merger operation *he* is assigned the role AGENT argument of *throw the ball.* This is demonstrated in (22).

22.