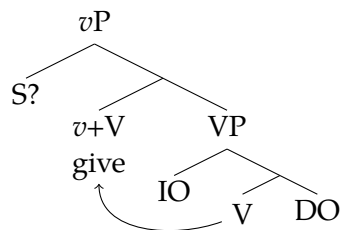# Subjects

Last week: 9 NP asymmetries and ditransitives

(1) **Uniformity of Thematic Alignment Hypothesis (UTAH Adger, 2003, p. 138, from Baker 1988):**

Identical *thematic relationships* between predicates and their arguments are represented syntactically by identical structural relationships when items are Merged.

Last week we saw a new head, *v*, with verbs like *give* pronounced in the position of *v*.

We call this *head movement*.

1 5 properties of subjects

1. Controls subject agreement   (in English and many other lgs)

2. In nominative case   (in English and many other lgs)

    (2)   **They are** sleeping.

    (3)   **I am** sleeping.

    (4)   * You **am** accusing **me**.

...but not always:

    (5)   I saw [**him** open the door].

3. Every clause has one   (in English and many other lgs)

We call this the *Extra-Peripheral Position* requirement (EPP).

    (6)   a.   **It** will rain.

           b.   * The weather will rain.

We call nouns like *it* in (6a) which do not receive theta-roles *expletives*.

4. Reflexives only allow subject antecedents   (in Mandarin and many other lgs)

(7) Zhangsan$_i$ yijing   tongzhi Lisi$_j$ ziji$_{i/*j}$-de fenshu le.
    Zhangsan already inform Lisi self-GEN   grade LE
    'Zhangsan$_i$ already told Lisi$_j$ his$_{i/*j}$ grade.'   (Huang et al., 2009, p. 337)

5. Often are more agentive; doing the action. But not always: see (6) but also passives (**??**) and experiencer subjects (**??**):

(8) **John** was hit (by a car).
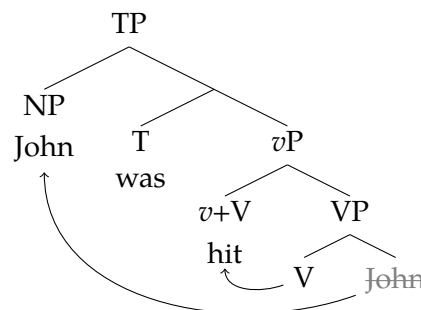
(9) **John** will feel old.

What exactly is the EPP? It's not a requirement that a verb have an agent.

Idea: Subjects are an obligatory specifier of a projection headed by auxiliaries (*do*, *will*, *can*, *have*, *be*, etc.). Call this T for tense. (Sometimes T is not pronounced; more in a few weeks.)

(10) **Hierarchy of projections (updated):**
     Every clause has T > v > V.

But we also want to preserve UTAH: for example, some subjects are themes (**??**), not agents, and we want them to be Merged as complements to V.

Unlike head movement, here we are moving a phrase (NP): call this *phrasal movement*.

(11) **Move$_{\mathbf{phrase}}$(α, β)**   (read: 'β moves to specifier of αP' or 'α attracts β')
     If α is a projection with a feature F, β a maximal projection with a matching feature F, and α contains β, and F is *strong* (marked F*) on α or β or both, then

     a. check the strong features F* on α and/or β: $\cancel{F^\star}$;

     b. mark β in α as deleted: $\cancel{\beta}$ (call this a *trace*); and

     c. return $\overset{\gamma}{\overset{\frown}{\beta\ \alpha}}$ where the label $\gamma = \alpha$.
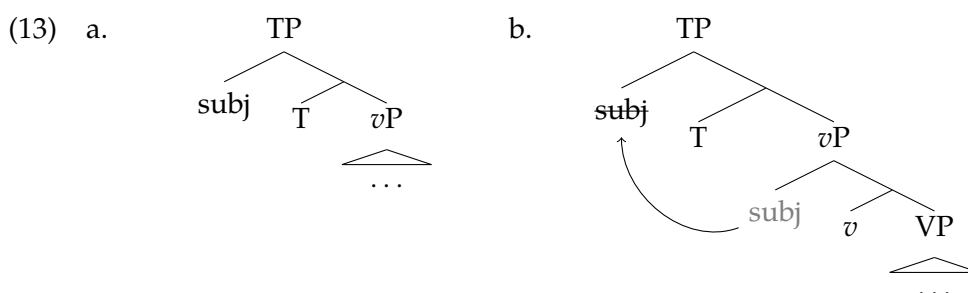
(12) **Extra-Peripheral Position (EPP):**
     T has a strong uninterpretable N feature: [uN*].

2   The VP-internal subject hypothesis and 5 arguments

Two approaches to (agentive) subjects:

(13)   a. TP
        subj   T   *v*P
        . . .

      b. TP
      ~~subj~~   T   *v*P
      subj   *v*   VP
      . . .

The idea that all subjects start within *v*P and move to Spec,TP (specifier of TP) is called the *VP-internal subject hypothesis*.[1]

See McCloskey (1997) for history and more details on the following arguments.

1. <u>Coordinating actives and passives:</u>

First, a minor detour...

(14)   *What* did you devour ___ last night?

(15)   *John* was arrested ___ last night?

(16)   a.   * *What* did John eat [[an apple] and [___]]?

    b.   * *The newspaper*, [[John read ___] and [Mary read a book]].

What's the generalization here? (Notice that conjunction always takes two conjuncts of the same size: NP & NP, TP & TP, etc.)

(17)   **The *Coordinate Structure Constraint* (CSC)** (Ross, 1967)
In a coordinate structure [= conjunction], no conjunct may be moved, nor may any element contained in a conjunct be moved out of that conjunct.

(18)   **Apparent counterexamples to the CSC:**

    a.   *Who* does [[John like ___] and [Mary hate ___]]?

    b.   *What furniture* did you say we [[need to buy ___] but [can't afford ___]]?

    c.   *Had* [the general ___ paid attention] and [the troops ___ been in place]...

The examples in (18) illustrate a systematic counterexample to the CSC: *Across The Board (ATB) movement* of a single constituent from both conjuncts at the same time does not violate the CSC.

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[1]Warning: "VP" here refers to the idea of a lower verbal projection; strictly speaking, the subject in (b) originated in *v*P but not VP.

Now consider:

(19)   ✓ John will close the deal and be promoted.

(20)   ✓ At least one person will confess and be arrested.

Exercise: Where are the brackets here for the two conjuncts?

Consider the hypotheses in (13). Both hypotheses allow for conjunction of two active *v*Ps and conjunction of two passive *v*Ps. But only hypothesis (13b) predicts that we can coordinate an active *v*P and a passive *v*P.

2. <u>Quantifier float (stranding):</u>

A quantifier can be "stranded" in lower positions.

(21)   a.   *All* the dragons have died out.

       b.   The dragons have *all* died out.

Hypothesis: the stranded *all* in (b) reflects an earlier position for the NP *all the dragons* from which *the dragons* moved.

3. <u>Expletive constructions:</u>

Sometimes expletives can satisfy EPP, leaving the subject lower:

(22)   **Transitive expletives in Germanic (Dutch; Koster and Zwart, 2000):**

       Er   danste iemand.
       there danced someone

       'Someone danced.'

Constructions similar generally not possible in English, but similar constructions are possible with certain intransitives; we will discuss this next week.

(23)   a. A controversy arose on the subject.

       b. *There* arose a controversy on the subject.

(24)   a. Three people were arrested ＿＿ at the airport.

       b. *There* were three people arrested ＿＿ at the airport.

4. <u>VSO languages:</u>

Irish is a VSO language. Based on just the first sentence, we could imagine a number of ways that we could analyze it.

(25) Phóg   Máire an lucharachán
      kissed Mary the leprechaun
      'Mary kissed the leprechaun.'

When there is an overt auxiliary (T), though, the verb is pronounced after the subject.

(26) Tá Máire ag-pógail an lucharachán
      is Mary PROG-kiss the leprechaun
      'Mary is kissing the leprechaun.'

(27) **Constituency tests on VP:**

  a. Tá Máire [ag-pógail an lucharachán] agus [ag-goidú a   ór].
     is Mary [PROG-kiss the leprechaun]   and [PROG-steal his gold]
     'Mary is kissing the leprechaun and stealing his gold.'

  b. Is   [ag-pógáil an lucharachán] atá   Máire ___ .
     It-is [PROG-kiss the leprechaun]   that.be Mary
     'It's kissing the leprechaun that Mary is.'

So the VP is a constituent. We can show that the subject is part of *v*P using *v*P ellipsis, which cross-linguistically targets a sub-TP constituent:

(28) John didn't come home this year, but he will ___ next year.

(29) **Irish VP ellipsis includes the subject:**

   Ní   tháing muid 'na bhaile anuraidh, ach tiocfaidh ___ i mbliana.
   NEG came   we   home   last year but come.FUT   this year

   'We didn't come home last year but [we will come home] this year.'

So *v*P includes the subject, with the verb moving up to T. Irish does not have the EPP requirement, so the subject does not move to Spec,TP.

5. <u>Imperatives in Ulster English (Northern Ireland)</u>

Ulster English:

(30) a. Go *you* away.

      b. Open *you* that door.

      c. Eat *you* your dinner.

Ulster English also has "Object Shift," where pronominal objects move to the left of adverbs.

(31) a. Throw us *you* that rope!

      b. Throw *you* us that rope!

(32) a. Bring them *you* over here to me!

      b. Bring *you* them over here to me!

When the subject is lower, it must follow adverbs:

(33) a.   Tell them always *you* the truth!

      b. * Tell them *you* always the truth!

Thus, if the subject is to the right of the Object-Shifted object, there is only one position it can be in, and it is also to the right of adverbs (the edge of *v*P). The subject can optionally move up.

West Ulster English:

In "west Ulster," imperatives come with an invariant imperative marker, *gon*. Assume *gon* takes a TP. The verb is then in T at the highest.

(34) Gon make *us* a cup of tea.

(35) a. Gon open *you* that door!

      b. Gon open us *you* that door!

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