Embedded clauses

Notes:

- First language reports for EL5880R/6880 are due next week
- Survey on IVLE
- No office hours this week; email for appointment or questions

1 A few notes on *do*-support

<u>Review:</u> What is in T in (1)?

(1)   a. I will fly to Hong Kong.

   b. I have already packed my bags.

   c. People drive on the left in Hong Kong.

What happens to (1) in the following contexts:

(2)   Environments that can trigger *do*-support:

   a. Sentential negation with *not*

   b. Questions

   c. Negative inversion:

   Not a single book did he read.

   d. Emphatic *do*

   e. *v*P ellipsis

   f. *V*P movement (e.g. in cleft, pseudocleft, topicalization tests of *v*/VP-looking constituents)

These constructions can all break the local connection between T and *v*, forcing features to be pronounced on T using a free morpheme.

2 CP

In questions and neg inversion, T (an auxiliary or *do*) moves in front of the subject. We call this position C for *complementizer*. We will see more *T-to-C movement* next week.
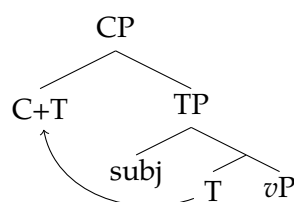
Embedded questions do not involve T-to-C movement. Instead, they use a special complementizer such as *whether* or *if*. This contrasts with declarative clauses which use the *that* or null complementizer.

(3)   I wonder [CP *whether/if* people drive on the left in Hong Kong].

(4)   I know [CP (*that*) people drive on the left in Hong Kong].

Notice that these CPs are *finite*: they allow for all tense/aspect distinctions available in English.

Know can take a NP or CP complement. We can use a noun like *fact* to turn the CP into NP with approximately the same meaning.

(5)   I know [NP the fact [CP that people drive on the left in Hong Kong]].

NPs and CPs behave differently with respect to case: NPs need case while CPs do not. Consider the passive of *know*:

(6)   a.   [CP That people drive on the left in HK] is known (by many people).

      b.   [NP The fact [CP that people drive on the left in HK]] is known (by many people).

(7)   a.   It is known (by many people) [CP that people drive on the left in HK].

      b.   * It is known (by many people) [NP the fact [CP that people drive on the left in HK]].

3   Nonfinite clauses with subjects[1]

3.1   *for*-infinitive complements

We also embed clauses that are *nonfinite*, which do not show tense distinctions and do not allow modals in T. The nonfinite T, *to*, also does not assign nominative case:

(8)   a.   I was excited [that Ted came to Singapore].

      b.   * I was excited [Ted to come to Singapore].

(9)   I was excited [for Ted/him to come to Singapore].

We know (problem set 1) that this *for* does not form a constituent with the following subject.
Idea: *for* is a nonfinite C that takes a nonfinite TP; *for* assigns accusative case to the embedded subject.

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[1]This and the next section follow notes by David Pesetsky, Jason Merchant.

3.2 Bare nonfinite TP complements

There are also verbs that take a TP without *for*:

(10) I consider (*for) [$_{TP}$ Sarah/her to be an expert].

(11) I proved (*for) [$_{TP}$ John/him to be guity].

The embedded subject can also be a reflexive bound by a higher subject. This is not possible for embedded finite clauses:[2]

(12) Trump$_i$ believes himself$_i$ to be an expert.

(13) * Trump$_i$ believes [$_{CP}$ that himself$_i$ is an expert].

These verbs are traditionally called *Exceptional Case Marking (ECM)* verbs. The idea is that the verb (*consider*, *prove*) assigns accusative case to the embedded subject, and this was exceptional. As evidence that the higher verb assigns accusative, we can passivize the higher verb:

(14) Sarah/she is considered [$_{TP}$ ___ to be an expert].

(15) John/he was proven [$_{TP}$ ___ to be guilty].

Other ECM verbs: *believe*, *judge*, *want*, *expect*, *predict*...

3.3 What verbs allow

Which verbs take which kinds of complements is actually pretty idiosyncratic:[3]

(16) *regret*: *that*-CP:ok, *for*-CP:*, ECM:*, NP:ok

    a. I regret [$_{CP}$ that [$_{TP}$ he is no longer here]].

    b. * I regret [$_{CP}$ for [$_{TP}$ him to no longer be here]].

    c. * I regret [$_{TP}$ him to no longer be here].

    d. I regret this outcome.

(17) *hope*: *that*-CP:ok, *for*-CP:ok, ECM:*, NP:*

    a. I hope [$_{CP}$ that [$_{TP}$ it doesn't snow this week]].

    b. I hope [$_{CP}$ for [$_{TP}$ him to get well soon]].

    c. * I hope [$_{TP}$ him to get well soon].

    d. I hope *(for) a favorable outcome.

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[2]Since the embedded subject seems in many ways to be an *object* of the higher verb, these verbs have also been called *raising to object*: the idea is that the embedded subject has now become an object of the higher verb. We'll see more non-controversial uses of the term "raising" below.

There is a similar-looking construction called *object control* that I will not discuss; *persuade* is an object control verb.

[3]From a handout by Rajesh Bhatt.

(18) *believe*: *that*-CP:ok, *for*-CP:*, ECM:ok, NP:ok

    a.   I believe [CP that [TP she is innocent]].

    b.   * I believe [CP for [TP her to be innocent]].

    c.   I believe [TP her to be innocent].

    d.   I believe her account.

(19) *want*, *prefer*: *that*-CP:ok, *for*-CP:ok, ECM:ok, NP:ok

    a.   I want [CP that [TP he leave]].

    b.   I want [CP for [TP him to leave]].

    c.   I want [TP him to leave].

    d.   I want his immediate departure.

4   Nonfinite clauses without subjects

At first glance, the sentences with *seem* and *try* below look like they have a similar structure:

(20)   a.   John seems [to be happy].   *raising*

        b.   John tries [to be happy].   *control*

But notice that the subject's interpretation is very different. In (20b), *John* is trying to do something, so that he will be in class. He is an agent of *try*. In contrast, in (20a), John isn't "seeming" in any way.

- *Raising* verbs like *seem* do not assign a theta role to their subject. *Seem* logically takes one argument, the idea or possibility that *John is happy*.

- *Control* verbs like *try* assign a theta role to their subject. *John* and *to be happy* are separate arguments of the verb *try*.

There are important differences between the two types of verbs.

Three diagnostics for raising vs control:

1. Availability of expletives and weather *it*:

    (21)   a.   There is a book on the table.

            b.   There seems to be a book on the table.

            c.   * There tried to be a book on the table.

    (22)   a.   It is raining.

      b.   It seems to be raining.

      c.   * It tried to be raining.

2. Equivalence of actives and passives:

  (23)   a.   John has written this letter.

          b.   John seems to have written this letter. =
               This letter seems to have been written by John.

          c.   John tried to write this letter. $\neq$
               This letter tried to be written by John.

3. Idiom chunks:

  (24)   Some useful English sentential idioms:

        a. The cat is out of the bag. = A secret is now known.

        b. (The) chickens are coming home to roost. = Inevitable bad consequences are now happening.

        c. The shit hit the fan. / All hell broke loose. = Something terrible happened.

        d. The passive of *take advantage of*: Advantage was taken of John.

  (25)   a.   The cat seems to be out of the bag.   idiom meaning ok

          b.   The cat tried to be out of the bag.   idiom meaning *

Exercise!

4.1   The analysis of raising

  (26)   It seems [that John/he is an expert].

  (27)   * It seems [John/him to be an expert].

  (28)   John/he seems [___ to be an expert].

What is happening here? The subject receives nominative case from T and moves to Spec,TP to satisfy EPP.

A subject can raise across multiple raising verbs:

  (29)   John seems [t to be likely [t to win the race]].

4.2 The analysis of control

Control verbs introduce both a higher argument and a nonfinite TP with a subject missing, but this lower (unpronounced) subject is interpreted as the higher subject:

(30)   John promised [to leave].

$\Rightarrow$ John$_i$ promised [that he$_i$ would leave] (not someone else)

<u>Idea:</u> The subject of the embedded clause is an unpronounced pronoun, PRO (big pro), which must be coreferential with the higher subject. This allows *John* to receive two theta roles:

(31)   John$_i$ promised [PRO$_i$ to leave].

The presence of the lower PRO is detected by reflexives:

(32)   John$_i$ wants [Mary$_j$ to help *himself$_i$/herself$_j$].

(33)   John$_i$ wants [PRO$_i$ to help himself$_i$].

Sometimes the interpreted lower PRO can be a group which includes the higher subject, but also includes others. This is not possible with raising.

(34)   John$_i$ wants [PRO$_{i+j}$ to meet at 5pm].