More subjects

Last week: 5 properties of subjects and 5 arguments for the VP-internal subject hypothesis.

Key concepts to review: Hierarchy of projections, UTAH, EPP

1 Quiz 1 next week

Time: 60 minutes, at the beginning of class

Format: A number of short answer questions and one problem similar to PS2/in-class exercises

Content: The quiz will cover all material including today. (Note: Quiz 2 will cover the entire semester, not just the second half.)

Make sure you know:

- Chomsky’s questions (3)
- constituency tests (10)
- NP asymmetries (9)
- Common properties of subjects (5)
- The VP-Internal Subject Hypothesis, 4 arguments
- The Unaccusative Hypothesis, 7 arguments (today)
- Key ideas: categories, heads, features, UTAH, Hierarchy of Projections, EPP
- How to use Merge, Adjoin, Move

2 Review

Canonical transitive:

Passive:

Erlewine
3 Intransitive verbs

Transitive verbs generally have an agent (specifier of \( vP \)) which becomes the subject (specifier of TP) and a theme object (complement of V). Intransitive verbs only have one argument.

(1) The Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter, 1978):

There are two kinds of intransitive verbs:

- **unergative**: agentive subject, subject is originally the specifier of \( vP \).
  
  “willed or volitional acts; certain involuntary bodily processes”

- **unaccusative**: non-agentive subject, subject is originally the complement of V.
  
  “predicates whose [arg] is a patient; predicates of existing and happening;” etc.

The idea: Subjects of some intransitive verbs behave like subjects of transitive verbs, while subjects of other intransitive verbs behave like objects of transitive verbs.

7 arguments for the Unaccusative Hypothesis.

1. Causative alternation (Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995):

   English has pairs of intransitive and transitive verbs which are the same word, where the subject of the intransitive corresponds to the object of the transitive.

   (2) a. The window broke/opened.
   
   b. She broke/opened the window.

   (3) a. The ship sank.
   
   b. They sank the ship.

   (4) a. The ice melted.
   
   b. We melted the ice.

   These intransitives are all **unaccusative** verbs.

   There are also intransitive verbs which do not have matching causative transitive verbs. These are **unergative** intransitives:

   (5) a. The crowd laughed/giggled.
   
   b. * The comedian/joke laughed/giggled the crowd.

   (6) a. The children played/spoke.
   
   b. * The teacher played/spoke the children.

\[ \text{This collection of arguments in part from Jason Merchant’s notes.} \]
2. Adjectival participles:

English adjectival past participles can only describe objects of transitive verbs and subjects of unaccusative verbs (Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1986):

(7) Objects of transitives: unemployed man, uneaten food

(8) Subjects of transitives: *uneaten children (intended: children who have not eaten)

(9) Subjects of unergatives: *unworked man, *unrun jogger

(10) Subjects of unaccusatives: unfallen leaves, unsunken ship

Un- is used here to ensure that the forms have become adjectives.

Similarly for Japanese -kake participles (Kishimoto, 1996). Aspectual suffix -kake ≈ ‘just started, not complete’:

(11) Objects of transitives:
   a. nomi-kake-no biiru
      drink-kake-gen beer
      ‘the half-drunk beer’
   b. yomi-kake-no zasshi
      read-kake-gen magazine
      ‘the half-read magazine’

(12) Subjects of transitives:
   a. * yomi-kake-no Masao
      read-kake-gen Masao
      Intended: ‘Masao, who has only partially read’

(13) Subjects of unergatives:
   a. * hataraki-kake-no roodoosha
      work-kake-gen worker
      ‘the worker, who has only partially worked’
   b. * hashiri-kake-no ranna
      run-kake-gen runner
      ‘the runner, who has only partially run’

(14) Subjects of unaccusatives:
   a. kare-kake-no hana
      wither-kake-gen flower
      ‘a flower that is almost completely withered’
   b. obore-kake-no suiei-senshu
      drown-kake-gen swimming-athlete
      ‘a swimmer who has almost drowned / is drowning’
3. **Postverbal subjects:**

In some SVO languages, the EPP requirement can be optional, in which case (some) subjects of passives and unaccusatives can be postverbal.

First, Hebrew indefinite subjects (Shlonsky, 1987); data from Reinhart and Siloni (2005):

(15) Ne’ecru shlosa xayalim ba-hafgana.
    were.arrested three soldiers in-the.demonstration

(16) * Radku shlosha yeladim ba-mesiba.
    danced three boys in-the.party

(17) Hit’alfu shlosha xayalim ba-hafgana.
    fainted three soldiers in-the.demonstration

We observe the same in Mandarin. Data below is from Li and Thompson (1981); Travis (1984, p. 99) observes that the verbs in (18) are unaccusatives.

(18) **Unaccusatives:**

    enter-come-perf / exit-come-perf / come-perf one-cl guest
    ‘A guest entered/came out/came.’

b. Tao-le san-zhi yang.
    escape-perf three-cl sheep
    ‘Three sheep arrived.’

c. Dao-le yi-pi huo.
    arrive-perf one-cl merchandise
    ‘A shipment of merchandise arrived.’

(19) **Unergatives:**

    jump-perf one-cl cricket

b. * Pa-le yi-ge laohu.
    climb-perf one-cl tiger

c. * Fei-le yi-ge niao.
    fly-perf one-cl bird
4. Resultatives (Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995):

Direct object restriction: A “resultative phrase” may describe the result state of a VP-
internal NP, but not of the agent or of PP complements.

(20) He shot them dead. (They end up dead, not him.)
(21) The floor was swept clean.
(22) They laughed *(themselves) helpless.
(23) The river froze solid. / The bottle broke open.

5. Italian ne-cliticization (Burzio, 1986): (also, French en)

Ne is a clitic meaning ‘of them,’ which attaches to the verb.

(24) Subject of transitive:
   * Ne esamineranno il caso molti.
   Ne will.examine the case many
   Int.: ‘Many of them will examine the case.’
(25) Object of transitive:
   Giovanni ne inviterà due.
   Giovanni Ne will.invite two
   ‘Giovanni will invite two of them.’
(26) Unergative:
   * Ne telefonano molti.
   Ne call many
   Int.: ‘Many of them call.’
(27) Unaccusative:
   Ne arrivano molti.
   Ne arrive many
   ‘Many of them arrive.’


(28) Gakusei-ga hon-o [ hon-ya-de yon-satu kat-ta.
   ‘The students bought four books at the book store.’
(29) ?* Gakusei-ga hon-o [ hon-ya-de yo-nin kat-ta.
   students-nom book-acc book-store-at 4-cl(person) buy-PAST
   ‘Four students bought books at the book store.’
(30) Gakusei-ga (san-nin) [ ofisu-ni (san-nin) ki-ta.
   student-nom (three-cl) office-loc (three-cl) come-PAST
   ‘Three students came to the office.’
(31) Gakusei-ga (san-nin) [ geragera-to (*san-nin) wara-tta.
   student-nom (three-cl) loudly (three-cl) laugh-PAST
   ‘Three students laughed loudly.’
7. Impersonal passives:

Some languages allow passivization of intransitive verbs, with an expletive subject.

First, Dutch ([Perlmutter, 1978]):

(32) Unergative verb ‘dance’:
   a. De jonge lui dansten hier veel.
      the young people danced here a lot
   b. Er wordt hier door de jonge lui veel gedanst.
      there is here by the young people much danced
      (lit.) ‘There is danced here a lot by the young people.’
      i.e., ‘There is a lot of dancing here by the young people.’

(33) Unaccusative verb ‘die’:
   a. In dit ziekenhuis sterven de patienten dikwijls.
      In this hospital die the patients often
   b. *Er wordt in dit ziekenhuis door de patienten dikwijls gestorven.
      there is in this hospital by the patients often died

Next, Yaqui (Uto-Aztecan, spoken in Arizona and northern Sonora; [Jelinek, 1998]):

Yaqui has different suffixes for transitive (-t)a and intransitive verbs (-t)e:

(34) Transitive Unergative
    chep-ta ‘step on x’    chep-te ‘jump’
    ‘om-ta ‘anger x’      ‘om-te ‘be angry’
    noi-ta ‘take/bring x’ noi-te ‘go/come’

(35) Transitive Unaccusative
    vee-ta ‘burn x’ vee-te ‘burn’
    kot-ta ‘break x’ kot-te ‘break’
    sip-a ‘cool x’ sip-e ‘become cool’

And yet, some intransitive verbs behave like transitives, in that they can be passivized with the passive morpheme -wa: (Note: -wa can trigger raising of the preceding vowel.)

(36) Transitive ‘kill’:
   a. ‘ume ‘o’ow-im ‘uka maaso-ta me’a-k
      DET.PL man-PL DET.ACC deer-ACC kill-TR-PERF
      ‘The men killed the deer.’
   b. ‘u maaso me’a-wa-k
      DET deer kill-TR-PASS-PERF
      ‘The deer was killed.’
(37) Unergative ‘dance’:
   a. ‘ume ’o‘ow-im pahko-po ye‘e-ka
      DET.PL man-PL ceremony-PP dance-INTR-PERF
      The men danced at the ceremony.
   b. pahko-po yi‘i-wa-k
      ceremony-PP dance-INTR-PASS-PERF
      People danced / there was dancing at the ceremony.

(38) Unaccusative ‘burn’:
   a. ‘u kari vee-te
      DET house burn-INTR
      The house is burning.
   b. * vee-ti-wa
      burn-INTR-PASS
      Intended: ‘There is something burning.’

References