

The Theta Phase: Successive Internal V-Merger

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1. Major Claims:

- (1) The external θ -role must be part of the verbal θ -grid in the lexicon.
- (2) There is actually no valid argument requiring that the lower phase be vP .
- (3) θ -assignment to arguments is implemented via successive re-merger of the lexical head V, until all its θ -roles have been discharged.

2. Against severing the external role from the lexical verb

There are no thematic reasons to assume vP :

- (4) a. Contra Kratzer (1996) and Marantz (1984),
 - (i) the alleged restriction on the appearance of external arguments in non-clausal idioms is only a statistical tendency (*Lady Luck smiled on X*; Hebrew: *ha-goral he'ir le-X panim* (lit.) the fate lit up to X face 'X had good luck'; *ha-ru'ax nasa et X* (lit.) the wind carried X 'X disappeared')
 - (ii) this statistical tendency can be accounted for based on two independently motivated cognitive principles that govern the formation of metaphors and idioms without reference to external argument status (Nunberg, Sag and Wasow 1994; Horvath and Siloni 2002)
- b. The interpretive asymmetry between object-V and subject-V relations follows from semantic composition applying to syntactic structure (Horvath and Siloni 2002).

Little v doesn't offer a definition of externality:

- (5) a. It doesn't define the external θ -role in terms of the type of role: the Theme role, which is usually mapped internally (transitives, unaccusatives), is mapped externally by certain one place predicates, which we label Theme-unergative verbs (e.g. the Hebrew *bahak* 'shined', *nacac* 'glimmered', or *hidhed* 'echoed').
 - b. There are alternations involving the internal versus external mapping of the Experiencer role in *worry* type verbs (the Experiencer *Dina* is internal in (6a) and external in (6b)).
- (6) a. *ha-ma'amar hirgiz et dina.* (Hebrew)
 the-article irritated ACC Dina
 - b. *dina hitragza.*
 Dina got+irritated

The external argument participates in lexical operations

There is robust evidence that the external role participates in lexical reflexivization, reciprocalization, middle formation (Reinhart and Siloni 2005).

Interim Conclusion: The External role is assigned by the lexical verb, not by little v .

3. What about the advantages of the extra structure introduced by little v ?

- (7) vP appears to obviate the problem of having to generate a contentless head V (in the Larsonian VP-shell) in order to provide a specifier for the external argument, and a landing site for raising the lexical verb – necessary to derive word order in case of ditransitive verbs.
- (8) $[_{VP} [_{SPEC} \theta_1] V^{+v} [_{VP} [_{SPEC} \theta_2] t [_{COMPL} \theta_3]]]$

But: Why does V move? And what about the *Extension Condition* (Chomsky 1995)?

- (9) vP allows a structural distinction between the subject of unaccusatives and unergatives.

Could (7) be accounted for by making use of multiple specifiers? A multiple specifier approach (10) to the accommodation of three arguments would require PF-linearization of V (to place V to the left of both internal arguments in ditransitives in English-type languages).

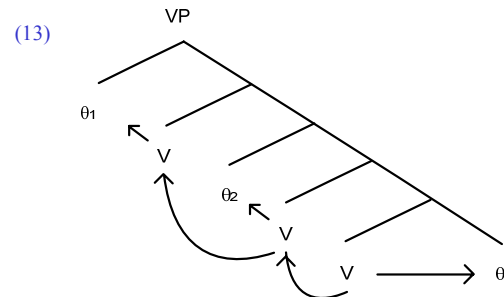
- (10) $[_{VP} [_{SPEC} \theta_1] [_{SPEC} \theta_2] V [_{COMPL} \theta_3]]$

But: There doesn't seem to be a non-ad-hoc linearization approach to the placement of V; moreover, V-movement is arguably syntactic: see VP coordination (11) and right node raising phenomena (12).

- (11) Bill will give [a book to John] and [a scarf to Mary].
- (12) Smith loaned, and his wife later donated, a valuable collection of manuscripts to the library.

4. Proposal: successive internal V-merger

θ -assignment by successive internal merger of the lexical verb (13).

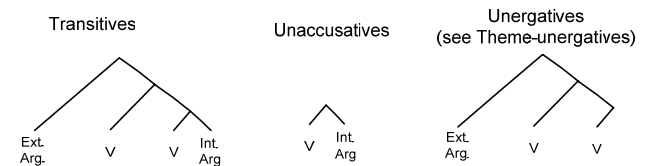


Each successive merger of V implements a θ -assignment relation with an argument merged by *External Merge* (i.e. an argument that is introduced into the structure, not moved).

- Biunique relation between θ -assigner and assignee
- Duality of semantics is reflected in the syntax, as before:
 - Argument structure: realized structurally by *External Merge* in the local domain of the θ -assigning head (θ -assignment at the "base" position).
 - Scope and discourse-related properties: involve displacement, i.e. *Internal Merge* of phrases.
- Successive V-merger creates the lower phase, which we label *the theta phase*.

5. Mapping the internal vs. external argument

(14)



- A θ -role of a two- (or more) place predicate is either marked in the lexicon as internal or external, or is unmarked, based on its feature composition (under Reinhart's 2002 system).
- An *internal argument* is merged with V that merges by *External Merge* (i.e., from the numeration).
- An *external argument* is merged at the edge of the *theta phase*.
- Unergatives always map their argument externally (on economy grounds).
- Unaccusatives are derived from their transitive alternates by decausativization, which reduces a Cause role; the remaining argument keeps the lexical marking assigned to the transitive input, and hence is merged internally (Reinhart 2002).
- Experiencers are unmarked for mapping and are therefore mapped externally if possible (i.e., if no other argument is marked as *external*) (Reinhart 2002).