

December 5, 2002

CLASS 7: Case and Complementation

Case and Complementation: Control vs. ECM

As we saw in the last class, Control structures are characterized by a **finite matrix clause** with a **control predicate** (*want, promise, try* etc.) whose overtly expressed **subject controls** (identifies) the **empty subject** of the **embedded infinitival complement** (the “Control clause”).

- (1) The teacher wanted [**PRO** to explain Control structures to the students].

ECM-constructions, on the other hand, look at first glance identical to Control structures, with the exception that the **embedded subject is overtly expressed** (different from the matrix one).

- (2) The teacher wanted [**the students / them** to understand Control structures].

But expressing the subject overtly or covertly is not enough to capture the differences. We would like to know **why** this should be so. A rule of nominal expressions in the grammar seems to be that they need to be **Case-marked: every DP/NP needs Case**. As Case-markings differ (*they* vs. *them*), it looks like each Case is licensed (“checked”) in a particular syntactic environment.

- (3) a. **He / *Him** will eat a bagel. *NOM (finite subject)*
 b. The princess **kissed *he / him** on the forehead. *OBJ (object of a verb)*
 c. The peasant thinks **of *she / her** every day. *OBJ (object of preposition)*
 d. ***She / Her** eat a bagel?! I don’t think so! *OBJ (root infinitival subject)*
 e. Max didn’t **want [*she / her to eat a bagel]**. *OBJ (non-finite subject)*
 f. Max **wanted [PRO to eat one himself]**. *PRO (empty subject) [??]*

(3a-c) are the **canonical environments**. Leaving (3d) aside, how can we capture (3e) vs. (3f)? In particular, if we only have **two morphological cases** to play with in English (NOMINATIVE and OBJECTIVE, which in other languages may surface as accusative or dative), **does PRO have Case**, and if so, **does its Case fall within the range of the common cases** in English, or is it different?

We say that ECM is called **exceptional** because the matrix verb licenses the objective Case in an unusual manner (cf. (3b)). This allows us to uphold an important generalization:

- (4) **Nominative Case is licensed by finite inflection.**

(In class, I briefly illustrate **how/why we can disregard (3d)** in this respect, viz. “default” Case.) Arguments in favour of the matrix verb licensing the objective Case of ECM-subjects come from **passivization** or **adverb placement** (see Radford 1997: 87, last hand-out). One option to include PRO in a **Case Theory** is to say that it bears **Null Case** (licensed by infinitival inflection).

Empty Inflection

We have already seen many instances where the position of inflection (Infl or I) is not expressed. Does that mean that we don’t have an I-node in these cases or could it also be sometimes empty?

- (5) a. [IP Miss Emma [r [I **will** / **has**] [VP eat-Ø / eaten her food passionately]]].
 b. [IP Miss Emma [r [I Ø] [VP eats her food passionately]]].

(It is not the case that in structures like (5b), *eats* shows up in I; see classes 8-9, in two weeks.) For **X²-theoretic reasons** alone, presence of I must be assumed (**endocentricity**). And rather than throwing X²-Theory out of the window, we bite the bullet and assume a **null I** in those cases where I is not filled with an overtly expressed inflectional head. The **size of this bullet** becomes **smaller the more evidence** we accumulate about **empty categories** in general — *theoretical* (such as from X²-Theory or Case Theory) as well as *empirical* (distribution, modification etc.).

Let’s look at some **empirical evidence for postulating an empty I-node** in some cases.

- **Gapping** (gapped or head-ellipsis auxiliary in I):

- (6) a. Miss Emma **could have eaten** her food faster, or [we Ø **have given** it to her earlier].
 b. ... or [IP we [r e [VP [v have] given it to her earlier]]]

- ① purported gapped/ellipsis auxiliary is *interpreted*
- ② the subject of that clause shows up in *nominative*
- ③ the perfective auxiliary is *uninflected (infinitive)*

- **Clitcization** (reduced auxiliary attaches to subject):

- (7) a. Miss Emma’s eaten her food fast. / *You’ve* learned syntax really well.
 b. Miss Emma could have eaten her food faster or [we **have** / *’ve given it to her earlier].

- **(Non-)Auxiliarhood** (perfective auxiliary vs. causative/experiential have):

- (8) a. The enthusiastic teacher **had assigned enough homework** for a month. *auxiliary*
 b. The tough teacher **had the poor students work hard** on their exercises. *causative*
 c. The distressed teacher **had the rebellious students walk out** in protest. *experiential*

- **Clausiness** (all clauses, finite or infinitival, form an IP):

- (9) [IP subject [r [I auxiliary / Ø] [VP predicate]]]

Empty Determiners

Keeping the best for last, we would then say that another “icky guy” can also be empty: **null D**. Claiming that **all nominals are DPs** allows for a **unitary analysis of nominal expressions**.

Homework: Exercise 8 NB: *NEXT CLASS IS CANCELLED — BACK IN TWO WEEKS!*

- Go over the entire **chapter 4** of Radford (1997) again!
- Prepare next class by thoroughly reading the entire **chapter 5!**
- Exercise VII** in Radford: p. 100 (recap of quite a lot of the stuff we’ve done so far).
- Sentences (2), (3) and (5) of **Exercise IX** in Radford: pp. 124f. (preview for next class).