

July 24, 2003

CLASS 10: Subjects and Raising vs. Control

Explicative *there*

Consider ***there*** in **subject position** in (1): it doesn't bear semantic meaning (it lacks a theta-role, is not an argument of the verb), but only fulfills the purpose that the **subject position be filled**.

- (1) a. **There** is a student there. (cf. ***There*** is a student over there / here / in the hall.)
- b. **There** is someone / nobody waiting for you.
- c. **There** are several professors / many students / some secretaries demonstrating today.
- d. * **There** is/are the best student / this professor / those secretaries waiting for you.

Properties of *there* include obligatory occurrence in **subject position** and **agreement** with the auxiliary (*is/are*). And of course, lack of semantic content/argument status/theta-role — it's an **expletive** (*pleonastic* or *dummy* element), unlike the **contentful locative *there*** (cf. (1a)).

But it **acts like a subject** in participating in **tags** and subject-auxiliary **inversion**, for example:

- (2) a. **There's** a student there, isn't ***there***?
- b. **There** are some secretaries demonstrating today, aren't ***there***?
- (3) a. **Is there** a student at the door?
- b. **Are there** some secretaries demonstrating today or?

Fair enough. Expletive *there* is a dummy subject. Its position is clear: SpecIP. **But what about the real subject?** Clearly we do have a real argument subject bearing a theta-role in (1a-d).

Welcome to the world of the **VP-internal subject hypothesis** (or better **predicate-internal**).

- (4) a. [_{IP} there is [_{VP} nobody [_V waiting for you]]]
- b. [_{IP} there are [_{VP} some secretaries [_V demonstrating] today]]]

If this is so, we would expect **all subjects to be derived**, i.e. moved from **SpecVP to SpecIP**.

Predicate-Internal Subject Hypothesis

We've seen first evidence that the **subject originates in a lower position** — not SpecIP, but **SpecVP**, from where it subsequently moves to SpecIP. This **PISH** buys us quite a few things.

- (5) a. The students want [_{IP} **PRO** to [_{VP} learn more]].
- b. The students want [_{IP} to [_{VP} **PRO** learn more]].
- c. The students **wanna** learn more.
- d. * Who do you **wanna** learn more?

In other words, this hypothesis solves the **puzzle with *wanna*-contraction** in control structures. Also, it allows us to maintain a **very local licensing relation** of certain elements (phi-features of anaphors, number in predicate nominals etc.) — even if the constituent containing it has **moved**:

- (6) a. [_{t_i} Hate *herself* / **themselves*], **Mary_i** really mustn't.
- b. [_{t_i} *Lucky guys* / **a lucky guy*], John considers **the students_i**;
- c. [_{t_i} Walking *together* in the rain], ***he_i** / **they_i** they've always liked.

Next class we'll look at the **type of movement** — clearly, it's not head movement (full phrase!), and equally clearly, we're not dealing with Wh-movement nor with generalized operator-movement (A'-movement): we don't move an operator-like element, "just" the subject. We will see that we can characterize this type of movement, **A(argument)-movement**, slightly differently from the types of movement seen so far. In the meantime, let's look at some more arguments.

Quantifiers and Idiomatic Expressions

It's an interesting fact that English allows **floating quantifiers**:

- (7) a. **All the students** have really enjoyed syntax tremendously.
- b. **The students** have **all** really enjoyed syntax tremendously.
- c. **The students** have really **all** enjoyed syntax tremendously.
- d. * **The students** have really enjoyed **all** syntax tremendously.
- e. * **The students** have really enjoyed syntax **all** tremendously.

If we assume that the surface subject (SpecIP) is a **derived subject** (from SpecVP), we have a way of analyzing these constructions, namely by **stranding the quantifier** in its base position:

- (8) [_{IP} **DP The students**]_i have [_{VP} really [_{VP} **DP all**] [_{VP} **DP t**]]]

In other words, a floating quantifier is the **result of being left behind** after its complement has moved. It **accounts for why we have the possibilities** in (7a-c) and it **rules out the illegitimate cases** (7d-e). In the latter cases, the position of *all* is not a possible subject base position, hence it could not have moved from or through that spot. In the former cases, this is the case (assuming, for example, that *really* may be adjoined above or below the subject base position).

Another interesting structure to look at concerns **idioms**. Arguably, idiomatic expressions are **assembled in one piece** in our lexicon, rather than being built up by merging operations. This gives us, for example, the fact that **only constituents can form an idiomatic expression**, such as *verb + complement (V')* or *subject + verb + complement (VP)*. The latter only follows if the subject really comes from within VP. But if we assume that, **we get the following facts for free**:

- (9) a. The shit hit the fan. *Idiomatic expression is assembled in one piece, can be modified, e.g. in I, but cannot be passivized!*
- b. * Excrements came in contact with a air-flow system.
- c. The shit has / will / could / must hit the fan.
- d. * The fan was hit by the shit.

Naturally, we also predict that *subject + verb alone shouldn't* ever form an idiomatic expression (they don't form a complete constituent) — correctly, as far as I know.

Argument Structure and Theta Theory

Let's finally turn briefly to arguments, argument structure, and the component that rules them all: **Theta Theory** or **Θ-Theory** (which is different from Checking Theory: Predication Principle?).

- **Propositions** consist of a **predicate** and its **arguments**.
- Predicates **select** their arguments (cf. **subcategorization frames**).
- **One-place predicates** have one, **two-place predicates** two arguments.
- Arguments are either **internal** (“direct/indirect object”) or **external** (“subject”).
- All the stuff not selected by a predicate, yet modifying the expression, are **adjuncts**.
- Internal arguments are **directly theta-marked** by the predicate, external ones **indirectly**.
- The process of theta-/θ-marking (*assigning θ-roles*) is arguably **different from checking**.
- Θ-roles further specify the “function” of an argument (e.g. **agent, theme, patient, goal...**).

- (10) [p John_i [₁ will [_{VP} t_i [_{V'} kiss Mary [_{V'} on the cheek]]]]]
- $\xrightarrow{\text{Case}_{\text{NOM}}}$ $\xrightarrow{\text{θ-role}_{\text{IG}}}$ $\xrightarrow{\text{θ-role}_{\text{PAT}}}$ $\xrightarrow{\text{adjunct}}$
(first θ-role, then movement, then Case) Case_{ACC}

Homework: Exercise 11 [LAST-MINUTE CHANCE FOR SOME]

- Prepare next class by thoroughly reading the entire **chapter 7**.
- Do any 5 pairs of **Exercise XIII** in Radford: pp. 168-169.
- Do any 5 sentences of **Exercise XIV** in Radford: pp. 171-172.
- Do any 5 sentences of **Exercise XVI** in Radford: pp. 195-196.