

## The syntax of fronting phenomena

### The Complementiser Phrase

- (1) *Nucky thinks (that) he can have everything.*
- (2) *Margaret wonders if she will get in trouble.*
- (3) *It was important for Jimmy to escape.*

Optional *that*, no complementiser in main clauses: even then, we assume them to be CPs due to the notion of **canonical structural realisation principles**, since they do have a force interpretation very similarly to clauses with overt complementisers.

**Every clause is a CP unless you can prove it is not.**

Question formation involves the complementiser system (force!), complementary distribution bw inverted auxiliaries and complementisers.

- (4) *If I had known...*
- (5) *Had I known...*

### 1 Wh-movement

Necessary for the interrogative interpretation coming from the C-head. (Echo-questions are not real interrogatives, they have a different function.)

- (6) *I wonder what you will write about.*

**Doubly Filled COMP Filter:** no CP can have both an overt specifier and an overt complementiser generated in C.

In order to get the interrogative interpretation the *wh*-word moves to [Spec,CP] to get the [+wh] feature through specifier-head agreement with the zero C head. Only a fronted *wh*-word can be interpreted as an **operator** (a constituent that indicates a process that is needed to work out the meaning of the sentence that contains them).

- (7) *Who<sub>1</sub> said what<sub>1</sub>?*

**Interpret a *wh*-element as an operator if it is in Spec,CP or is coindexed with a *wh*-element in Spec,CP.**

**A(rgument)-movement:** the syntactically motivated movement of arguments (for Case).

**A'-movement (non-argument movement):** semantically motivated movement not restricted to arguments, adjuncts can also easily undergo it, e.g. *wh*-movement (11).

**SAI: I-to-C movement!** The trigger for movement: the zero bound interrogative morpheme.

What about embedded questions? No inversion!

- (8) *Peter asked where we should go.*

Difference bw the complementiser system of main clauses and embedded clauses in general. Visible vs. invisible in declaratives, bound vs. free in interrogatives. The embedded interrogative zero C head is not bound but free (similarly to its overt counterpart *if*), does not trigger inversion.

(Alternative analysis: there is nothing in the C-head in interrogative main clauses, only zero Specifier similar to embedded *whether*. The movement itself can be triggered by the emptiness of the head. Problem: how is the CP projected at all if there is nothing in the head position?)

**On the status of *whether*:** introduces embedded questions, but it cannot be a complementiser

**Subject questions:** linear ordering gives absolutely no indication of movement. We would need movement in order to get the interrogative interpretation, but what do the data say?

(9) *Who did you meet?*

(10) *Who met you?*

Why can the main verb not move to C in (14)? Why are subject questions different from all the other types triggering SAI? SAI involves the subject!!! Identification of subjects in English: based on position: the constituents preceding the verb.

We have seen cases when the main verb could not move to I before: negation. Explanation: HMC. No intervening head this time, movement to C OK (contrary to standard analyses, where the main verb is not assumed to be able to undergo movement even to I due to the restricted position of the adverb, as I'-adjunction is not allowed)!

## 2 Relative clauses

Structure similar to embedded questions, function and interpretation very different. Relative clauses are modifiers inside the DP, they modify nouns, so we expect them to appear within the NP: NP or N' adjunction. N'-adjunction:

(11) *my favourite [places I like to go] and [people I like to visit]*

favourite: N'-adjunct (the many famous people)

**Non-restrictive relatives:** *my supervisor, who you have already met*

Differences bw restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses:

- only restrictive relatives can be introduced by *that*
- prosodic differences: comma-intonation in non-restrictives, slight pause bw noun and clause
- interpretation: restrictives focus on one element out of a set of possible referents, not a range of possible referents in non-restrictives.
- only restrictive relatives and their nouns can be substituted by the proform *one*:

*this man who you met is taller than that one*

\**my mother who you met is taller than his one*

→ non-restrictive relative clauses are more distant from the noun they modify than restrictive relatives.

Restrictive relatives: N'-adjuncts

Non-restrictive relatives: NP-adjuncts

## A comparison of relative and interrogative clauses

The differences follow from the different functions of the two constructions.

Hungarian: different pronouns *ki/aki*

English: *what* is not a basic relative pronoun, can appear only in **headless relatives** (=the thing that)

*What you should do now* = *The thing that you should do now*

Types of restrictive relatives: *wh*-relative, *that*-relative (*that* being a complementiser, never introducing non-finite clauses, not ok, with pied-piped prepositions, only preposition stranding is possible), zero-relative (only for non-subject relatives)

	<b>relative clauses</b>	<b>interrogative clauses</b>
<b>interpretation</b>	declarative (can be introduced by <i>that</i> )	interrogative
<b>feature</b>	[-wh]	[+wh]
<b>gap</b>	yes, independently of type <i>the man (who<sub>1</sub>)/that Sherlock suspects t<sub>1</sub></i>	yes, trace of <i>wh</i> -word <i>ask who<sub>1</sub> Sherlock suspects t<sub>1</sub></i>
<b>null <i>wh</i>-operator</b>	allowed <i>the man [Op<sub>1</sub> (that) Sherlock suspects t<sub>1</sub>]</i>	not allowed (but there can be a zero operator in yes-no questions)
<b>motivation for movement</b>	mediating bw noun and clause	interrogative interpretation
<b>nature of operator</b>	quantificational ( <i>every, some</i> )	anaphoric ( <i>himself</i> )
<b>recoverability of empty operators</b>	from modified noun as antecedent	the <i>wh</i> -word is not recoverable, it cannot be empty, there is no antecedent

**Similarities:** both movements have semantic motivations related to CP, *wh*-word is an operator.