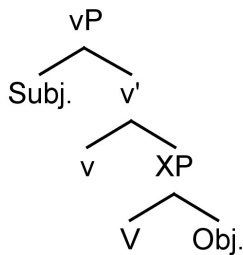


Categories and Transformations – 4.10, Part III (pp. 367 – 377)

4.10.3 Empirical Expectations on Minimalist Assumptions

We now turn to the question how the Minimalist Program fares with respect to empirical coverage. There are two things we don't want:

- (1) undergeneration, and
- (2) overgeneration



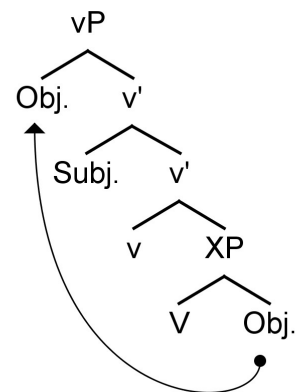
Note that everything in this section is restricted to the following: “We may continue to limit attention to simple transitive verb constructions, taken to be of the form (182) before T is added to yield TP. It suffices to consider overt V-raising, which brings up harder problems; the covert-raising alternatives fall out at once if this case is handled.” (367) This configuration is illustrated here to the left.

Quite independently from the internal structure of vP, we still have to deal with the word order problem we are left with if MSC are analyzed as constructions with two Spec T. With regard to this, NC says that there is the possibility “that the expletive in MSCs is overt in order to satisfy the V-second property, which may belong to the phonological component” (368). Chomsky’s remarks here are too enigmatic for me to interpret, but the idea seems to be that phonologically, the T head (with the verbal complex adjoined to it) moves past the subject in the phonological component, yielding the right order Expl. – V – Subj.

The paragraph that follows on the second half of the page is important enough for us to discuss in full.

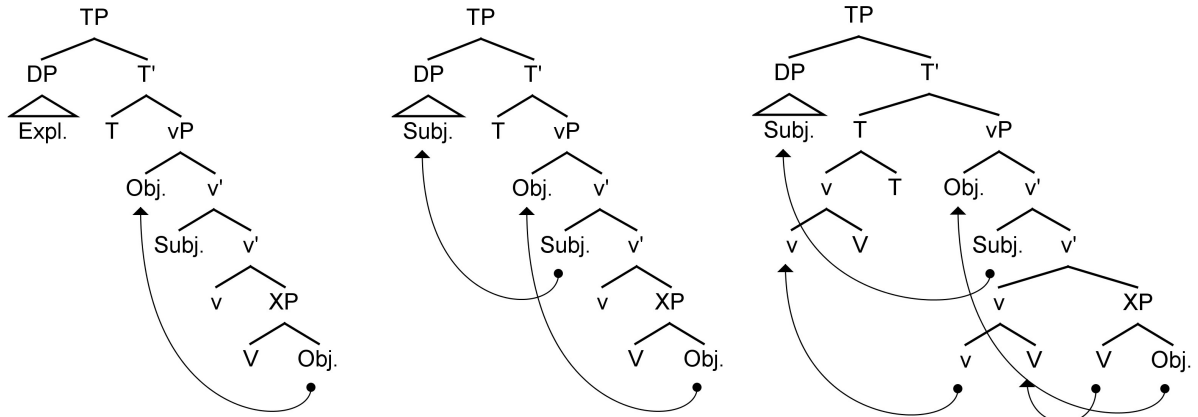
The paragraph immediately after sends us on the derivational track; assuming the more complex definition of “closer” from the preceding paragraphs, the *first* possible overt checking operation will be movement of Obj. to Spec₂ of v (adjunction of V to v is not a checking relation).

Arguments cannot be merged there for theta-theoretic reasons, and the same goes for expletives, as the previous sections have attempted to show. So the object must move there. As we still have equidistance (the more complex definition of “closer”), the subject can then move further to check features of T.



Why is raising of Subj., which is merged in Spec₁, to Spec₂ disallowed? The upshot of NC’s analysis is that in that case, the strong D feature on v that triggers overt movement of DPs in the first place has no effect on the PF or LF output of the derivation and is thus barred by (76). Despite the strong D feature on v, at PF Obj. would remain in situ, and so there is no reason to have that strong feature in the first place as the output is the same as if it were not there. The same goes for LF.

The next checking relation is in the first Spec T, by either Merge or Attract. The only candidate for Merge is Expl., which is also a candidate for Move from Spec T to Spec T. Arguments, for evident reasons and contra Hale/Keyser, are never merged in Spec T. They can only move there, and the only argument that can do so is Subj.



You see the two options here, to the left. Moreover, strong features on the verbal complex have by now already been eliminated by the derivational process (something that can't happen anymore later on). All the same, that complex can still enter into a checking relation with Subj. with regard to the subject ϕ -features of [v, V], and the features of course must match.

If Expl. is chosen to merge with TP, what we have is feature checking of FF Subj. against T, and if there was no overt Obj. raising, the same happens for FF Obj. (370-1).