

NOTES ON SESSION 8 (15.12.2008)

The first important thing is that we concluded Chomsky's 1993 article. But, as it is the case almost always, some questions remain. The first of these questions is still the nature of ex. (26) (b). This sentence seems to be alright, if we replace the expletive *there* with the lexeme *it*. Then, (26) (b) does not seem to be so gibberish¹ at all.

(1) It seems to [_{logical subject = α} a strange man] that it is raining outside.

This looks grammatical and somewhat more felicitous to me. As Neven, I think, pointed out, the problem is simply that *it* and *there* are assumed to be semantically empty and that they therefore should be interchangeable at least to some degree; but there appears to be a slight difference in meaning here.

An additional comment was that the lexical entry for the verb *seem* maybe has different realizations – different entries would result in a more differentiated “distribution”. As far as we got with this one, the semigibberish convergent derivation does not seem to converge at all. As far as I remember, a further reason was that there are problems with [Nom] Case marking on the logical subject. I think that α can not raise to have its Case checked so the question is how does α receive Case?

Another topic was to make clear why we need something such as covert anaphor movement. Put simply, if **anaphor agreement involves a local relationship** with its antecedent, then we can let the anaphor move to its antecedent prior to LF so that the elements can establish **locality**. The relevant passages are UndMin: 267 (ex. (53-5)). In the given examples, the diehard application of the **Preference Principle**² would yield ungrammatical derivations. This is the reason why the **Preference**

¹ It is pronounced [dʒ]. That's what the Longman says. (Guitar fans: “Gibson” is [Gi].)

² **Preference Principle**: “Do it when you can (i.e., try to minimize the restriction in the operator position)” (Chomsky 1993: 41).

Principle can be suspended for the derivation at hand. Also note that, conclusively, “[...] the **Preference Principle** always applies to constructions involving Principle B and C, but not Principle A” (UndMin: 267). Now on to binding phenomena in Complements and Adjuncts.

We played around with this a bit and came up with a couple of alternative counter-sentences. The relevant examples in Chomsky are:

(2)

(a) Which claim [_{Complement} that John_i was asleep] was he_{*i} willing to discuss?

(b) Which claim [_{Adjunct} that John_i made] was he_i willing to discuss?

In the Complement case, *John* cannot be coreferential with *he*, in the Adjunct case, coreferentiality is possible. Now what happens in (3)?

(3) Which claim [_{Complement} that John_i was alert] seems to him_{???i} to be correct?

Put simply: **We were not sure whether the pronoun in (3) could possibly be interpreted as being coreferential with John.** Again, perhaps it is a lexical property of the item *seem* that could lead to a clarification of this problem. Maybe also prosodic considerations should be taken into account here. Maybe the Complement could be intoned in such a way as to mark it as an apposition of some sort, pressing it into an interpretation that would favour Adjunct reading. E.g. when there is a pause between *claim* and *that* and then again a pause after *asleep/alert*. Anyhow, this is a complicated matter, and Chomsky does not say a word on this.

Some more on *wh*- Copying and Movement:

- In a given *wh*-Phrase, you can either Copy/Move the whole *wh*-Phrase (pied-piping) or the mere *wh*-Element. This would be something like the Operator Head Copy or Operator Phrase Copy. There is no possibility for Copy/Move “in between”, so to speak.

- Since we assume anaphor movement, there may be opened up possibilities to abandon Principle A as a remnant from the *Government and Binding Theory*. Chomsky says:

Condition A may be dispensable if the approach based upon cliticization_{LF} is correct and the effects of Condition A follow from the theory of movement (which is not obvious); and further discussion is necessary at many points. (Chomsky 1993: 43)

As Andreas remarked, he does not know whether *today* anyone in the field of *Generative Grammar* works with such an approach. Anyway, I wanted to know if there are **overt cliticization phenomena** in languages other than English. And yes, in French and Italian, there seem to be such processes, which have an overt morphological reflex.

Ex. (45) (a) raised a problem: To what extent does the cliticization of *self* onto the matrix V *wondered* **violate the Head Movement Constraint (HMC)**? As far as we know, the syntactic operations and constraints in overt *and* covert syntax should be **identical**, thus (45) (a) should be highly problematic. My memory just tells me we decided to be lenient towards Chomsky in that his ideas still had to be developed and furthered in 1993.

Afterthoughts:

- (i) To me, the tendencies towards a simplification of the Grammar along a Minimalist path have already been put forward in Chomsky’s early work (e.g. in *LSLT*). Grammars are **simple** and **variation is epiphenomenal**. Recall the Martian visiting earth and concluding that what comes out of our mouths is more or less the same everywhere.
- (ii) The so-called Economy Principles are just a reflex of these old “simplicity assumptions”. Economy Principles are merely the state-of-the-art phrasing. If taken literally, Economy Principles are fairly clear-cut and *not* mere tendencies. “Economy can be given a fairly narrow interpretation” (Chomsky 1993: 44). It is not solely a statistical tendency for this or that language to exhibit something like **Full Interpretation (FI)** – it is a **design feature** (of most probably *all* languages).
- (iii) Is Linguistic Minimalism a “revolution”? Of course not. It is thinking through long-held ideas. I simply find it wrong and irritating when Gert Webelhuth calls the Minimalist Programme “revolutionary”.³ This will not sell more copies of such literature. Writing Minimalism well will. Unfortunately, Chomsky is not a master in *that*.

³ Cf. the book cover that contains Chomsky’s *Bare Phrase Structure*.