The Dark Side of Clausal Complements

**Puzzle:** It has been pointed out that a clausal complement (CC) is allowed to move only if its base-generated position is a position in which a DP can appear (Alrenga 2005, among others). This is puzzling because a moved CC is superficially a CP. This puzzle can be appreciated by considering the following set of facts. First, if predicates cannot take a DP complement, as in (1)a-b (*hope*-class predicates), such predicates do not allow for movement of a CC, as in (1)c-d. In contrast, when a CC is selected by predicates that can only combine with a DP complement, as in (2)a-b (*capture*-class predicates), movement of a CC is permitted, as in (2)c-e.

**Previous Analysis and New Counterevidence:** There is a previously proposed analysis of sentential subjects that may solve the puzzle. Koster (1978) claims that an apparently dislocated CC is a base-generated topic and a null operator, which is assumed to be a DP, undergoes movement, as in (3). An argument against this analysis comes from the fact that a reconstruction effect can be seen in (4) and (5), where a pronoun within a CC can be bound by a quantifier. This fact indicates that the CC actually undergoes movement in these cases. The reconstruction effect is not predicted by Koster-style analysis because it does not postulate movement of a CC.

**Proposal:** I claim that when a CC moves, it must involve a DP structure headed by a covert definite Det (THE), as in (6) (see Elbourne 2005 for THE in English). This structural requirement is ascribable to properties of an independently motivated mechanism for interpreting copies, or Trace Conversion in (7) (Fox 2002 and Sauerland 2004). When an item moves, Trace Conversion must apply to copies to convert an uninterpretable chain into an interpretable syntactic object. But, it is applicable only when a moved item is a constituent headed by a Det because the existence of a Det is a prerequisite for the rule application. In order to derive (1)c-d and (2)c-e under the proposed approach, it is necessary to first construct the structures in (8)a and (8)b, respectively. However, due to the complementation properties of *hope*-class and *capture*-class predicates, (8)a is ruled out and (8)b is legitimate, which explains the facts discussed above. Unlike moved CCs, the covert Det should not be available for non-moved CCs. Otherwise, (9)a would incorrectly be predicted to be grammatical because (9)b could be posited for (9)a. In other words, overt movement is necessary for licensing the covert Det. Linking this issue to the fact that sentential subjects must occupy a position higher than the Spec of TP (see (10) and (11) for evidence), I suggest that the covert Det structure is licensed only when it overtly moves to the Spec of TopicP (see Koster 1978 for related idea). One way to implement this idea is to assume that the covert Det has an uninterpretable feature, which must be checked off by the Topic head and that it has an EPP feature, which induces overt movement of a CC, as in (12). Thus, the covert Det structure is not available for non-moved CCs.

**Further Arguments:** The first evidence comes from the fact that movement of a CC bleeds Condition C, as in (13). To set the stage for making an argument, let us first consider the fact that A-movement of DPs also bleeds Condition C, as in (14). Takahashi (2006) proposes that a particular theory of counter-cyclic merger explains (14) in a way compatible with the copy theory of movement. He claims that only a Det is base-generated and the restrictor of the Det is merged with the Det after it moves out of the c-command domain of the pronoun, as in (15). (Note that the structure in (15) becomes interpretable once Trace Conversion applies.) If a moved CC also involves a Det, Takahashi’s analysis can directly be extended to (13), as in (16). Since there is no obvious alternative approach that captures (13), I take it to be supporting evidence. Secondly, the proposal receives support from the cross-linguistic fact that a Det, which I claim is covert in English, is realized overtly in various languages (e.g., in Basque, Modern Greek, and Persian). A fact from Modern Greek is given in (17).

**Conclusion:** I have claimed that a moved CC must involve a covert Det structure, which is required by the properties of Trace Conversion. This claim entails that if a constituent moves and creates a chain, it must be a DP. The flip side of this claim is that movement of a non-DP should not be able to create a chain. In other words, such movement should be semantically vacuous. This appears to be the case. Movement of a predicate phrase like (18)a is analyzed as involving movement of a non-DP and it is well-known that movement of this sort is semantically vacuous, as evidenced by (18)b (Takano 1995 and Heycock 1995, among others).
(1) a. Most baseball fans {hoped/insisted/reasoned} that the Giants would win the World Series.
b. *Most baseball fans {hoped/insisted/reasoned} that.
c. *That the Giants would win the World Series was {hoped/insisted/ reasoned}.
d. *That the Giants would probably win the World Series, (I think that) most baseball fans
   {hoped/insisted/reasoned}.

(2) a. This formulation of the rule {captures/brings out} *(the fact) that these nouns behave differently.
b. We have given *{(the possibility) that Jack is a double agent serious consideration.
c. That these nouns behave differently is {captured/brought out} by this formulation of the rule.
d. That Jack might be a double agent has been given serious consideration.

(3) [TopP [CP that these nouns behave differently] OP1 [TP t1 is [captured t1 by this formulation of the rule]]]

(4) a. *[That a student from his class cheated] doesn’t seem to [any professor], to be captured by the document.
b. *[That a student from his class cheated] doesn’t seem to [any professor], to be given serious
   consideration by the dean.

(5) a. *[That a student from his class cheated], I don’t think that [any professor], brought out.
b. *[That a student from his class cheated], I don’t think that [any professor], gave serious consideration.

(6) [DP THE [CP . . . . .]]

(7) Trace Conversion

Variable Insertion: Det (Pred) → Det [(Pred) λy(y=x)]
Determiner Replacement: Det [(Pred) λy(y=x)] → the [(Pred) λy(y=x)]

(8) a. *[[hope-class V [DP THE [CP . . . . .]]]
   b. [capture-class V [DP THE [CP . . . . .]]]

(9) a. *This formulation of the rule captures that these nouns behave differently.
b. [this formulation of the rule captures [DP THE [CP that these nouns behave differently]]]

(10) a. *Does that the Giants lost the World Series really suck?
    b. Does the article that reported that the Giants lost the World Series really suck?

(11) a. *John, that the Giants lost the World Series shouldn’t have bothered.
b. John, the fact that the Giants lost the World Series shouldn’t have bothered.

(12) [TopP [DP THE[α] [CP that these nouns behave differently]], Topic[α] [TP t1 is [captured [DP THE[α] [CP that
                    these nouns behave differently]], by this formulation of the rule]]]

(13) a. *[That John’s sister cheated in the exam] seems to him, to be captured by this document.
b. *[That John’s sister cheated in the exam], I don’t think that [any professor], to be untrue.

(14) [Every argument that John, is a genius] seems to him, to be flawless.

(15) [[every [argument that John, is a genius]] seems to him, [[every] to be [[every] flawless]]

(16) a. [[THE [that John’s sister cheated in the exam]] seems to him, to be [captured [THE] by this document]]
   b. [[THE [that John’s sister cheated in the exam]] [he, believes [[THE] to be [[THE] untrue]]]

(17) [DP to [CP oti ehis filus]] simeni pola. (Modern Greek)
    ‘That you have friends means a lot.’ (Roussou 1991:78)

(18) a. [Criticize John], I think Mary did.
    b. *[Criticize John], I think he, said Mary did.

Selected References

