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Argument Movement in English

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

In linguistics, the term argument is used to describe the role played by particular types of expression in the semantic structure of sentences. In a sentence such as ‘John hit Fred,’ the overall sentence is said to be a proposition (a term used to describe the semantic content of a clause), and to consist of the predicate hit and its two arguments John and Fred. The two arguments represent the two participants in the act of hitting, and the predicate is the expression (in this case the verb hit) which describes the activity in which they are engaged. Argument-movement (henceforth, A movement) is a movement from one A-position to another (typically, from a subject or complement position into another subject position. An A-position is a position that can be occupied by an argument. In specific, the term denotes a subject position.

The study tries to answer two questions:

1-What is A -movement?

2- How can we understand and recognize A -movement in English?

1-2 The Aims

The study aims to:

1-Present argument movement in English .

2- Investigate the functions of argument movement in English.

1-3 The Hypothesis

The study adopted the following hypotheses:

1. English exhibits A -movement.
2. This movement is triggered by lack of Case in argument in the object position.

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1-4 The Limits

The study is limited to the investigate A -movement in English and the reason behind this movement.

1-5 The Value

It is hoped that this study will be of value to people interested in linguistics, especially in syntax as it explores how and why A movement is carried out in English.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

2-1 A Movement: Definition

A-Movement is a movement from one A –position to another (typically, from a subject or complement position into another subject position:

Some students should get distinctions.

In this sentence, let's suppose that the derivation of runs parallel to the derivation of until the point where the auxiliary should merges with the VP some students get \emptyset distinctions to form the T-bar should some students get \emptyset distinctions. As before, let's assume that [T should] has an EPP feature requiring it to project a structural subject/specifier. But let's also suppose that the requirement for [T should] to have a specifier of its own cannot be satisfied by merging expletive there in spec-T because in standard varieties of English there can generally only occur in structures containing an intransitive verb like be, become, exist, occur, arise, remain etc. Instead, the EPP requirement for T to have a subject with person/number properties is satisfied by moving the subject some students from its original position in spec-V into a new position in spec-T, in the manner shown by the arrow below Figure (1):

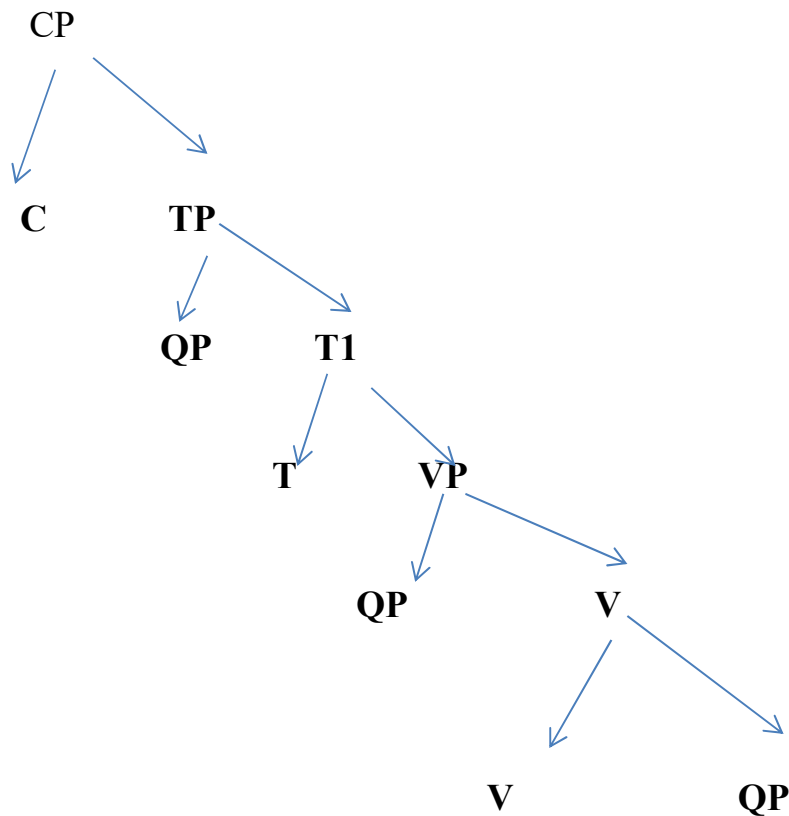


Figure (1)

Since spec-T is an A-position which can only be occupied by an argument expression (i.e. an expression which originates as the subject or complement of a verb or other predicate), the kind of movement operation illustrated by the dotted arrow in (1) is called A-movement.

2-2 passive

One familiar case of A-movement from traditional grammar instruction is that of passivization. Corresponding with an active sentence like (1), there is a passive counterpart (1):

- 1-Big Business killed music.
2- Music was killed by Big Business.

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In (1) and (2) are essentially synonymous. The active verb *kill* is replaced by its passive counterpart *be killed*, the direct object of the active verb appears as the subject of the passive, and the former subject of the active version appears in a PP. The question is: what is the relation between an active sentence and its passive counterpart? There are in principle two options. It could be that passive sentences are directly base-generated by our phrase-structure rules. The alternative is that sentences like (1) are derived by transformation from an underlying D-Structure.

In order to decide between these two options, let's take a closer look at some of the less obvious properties of passive sentences. English has two expletives, *it* and *there*, depending on whether the associate of the expletive is a CP or a DP. Either one can appear in Spec IP when the verb has been passivized.

- 3- There was a man killed.
4- It is believed that John is a fugitive from justice.

From the grammaticality of (3) and (4), we conclude that Spec IP is not a position in passives. That is, the subject of a passive verb is not a position to which zero -role is assigned.

In this sentence:

- 5-Music was killed by Big Business.

A seemingly natural way to explain this is to say that, in addition to not assigning a theta-role to their subjects, passive verbs also don't assign Accusative Case to

their objects.

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In this way, the following picture of passives emerges: the direct object, base generated in a position that receives a zero-role, but not Case, needs to move to a position to which Case is assigned. By the zero-criterion, this Case position can't be a θ -position, since the object's already got its one zero-role. Fortunately, the subject position in passives provides just such a position (Case, but no zero role), and so the direct object moves there.

In addition to passive verbs, there's another class of verbs (and adjectives, actually) which also have properties which seem to be best explained by a transformational analysis. These predicates are called *raising* predicates.

6-Which picture of himself does John, like it?

At S-Structure, *john*, the antecedent of the reflexive *himself*, fails to c-command it. (The first branching node dominating *john* is the matrix IP, which does not dominate Spec CP.) It is only at 0-Structure that the relevant c-command relationship exists between *john* and *himself*. It must therefore be the case that Principle A of the Binding Theory applies at 0-Structure.

θ -marking is another process which must take place at 0-Structure rather than S-Structure. passive and raising move elements into positions which are not assigned a θ -role, as evidenced by the fact that these positions allow expletive *it* and *there*:

7- There were three men killed.

8- It is likely that John is here.

If theta-marking took place at S-Structure, we would expect sentences like (9) and (10) to violate the theta -criterion:

9- Three men were killed t.

10- John is likely t to be here.

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At S-Structure, *three men* and *john* are not in positions which are assigned a theta-role, and would be predicted to be ungrammatical. We therefore conclude that theta-marking must take place at 0-Structure.

What about subject-verb agreement? This presents an interesting case, and one which will lead us directly into the next section, where we'll clarify the relationship between moved elements and their traces. that certain facts about subject-verb agreement provided an argument for transformations.

11- Which car did Bill say needs paint?

12- *Which car did Bill say need paint?

It is only at 0-Structure that the requisite Specifier-Head relationship exists between the wh-phrase which is in the lower Spec IP position and I. We therefore concluded that, in order to account for choice of *needs* over *need*, subject verb agreement had to take place at 0-Structure.

And Jackendoff (1972) argues at length that a number of constraints on passive structures can be accounted for in thematic terms. For example, he argues that the ill-formedness of passive sentences like:

13- *Five dollars are cost by this book

14- *Two hundred pounds are weighed by Bill.

2-3 The significance of A- Movement

1-A-movement involves copying, that scope is defined in terms of c-command (so that a scope-bearing constituent has scope over constituents which it c-commands), and that the scope of a universally quantified expression like everyone in negative structures Everyone hasn't finished the assignment yet.

2-A-movement it ends up in a position in which it c-commands (and so has scope over) not. The scope ambiguity therefore reflects the two different positions occupied by everyone in the course of the derivation

3-A-movement comes from scope properties in relation to sentences, which will have the syntactic structure shown in simplified form, if everyone originates as the subject of the verb finished and is then raised up (by A-movement) to become the subject of the present tense auxiliary have.

4-A-Movement (A- position) which can generally only be occupied by argument expressions), the operation by which subjects move into spec-T is traditionally known as A-movement.

5-Since operations which move a noun or pronoun expression into spec-T are instances of A-movement, long-distance passivisation involves a series of applications of the familiar A-movement operation: thus, each of the two arrowed movements is a particular instance of A-movement.

2-4 The different between A-movement and A –bar

In A-movement, the trace is not assigned Case, but the movement targets a position in which the noun phrase in question can be assigned Case. If this is correct, our conception of scrambling must change radically, because a position adjoined to VP is not the type of position in which Case is assigned, under standard assumptions of the Government and Binding framework. On the other hand, A-Bar position is a position which can be occupied by arguments or adjuncts alike. For example, the specifier position within CP is said to be an A-Bar position because it can contain not only an argument like wh-phrase in:

Which car did he fix?

But also, an adjunct like the:

How did he fix the car?

A-Bar movement is a movement operation which moves an argument or adjunct expression to an A-Bar position.

Chapter Three

Conclusion

A – Movement in traditional grammar means passive such as:

Ali opened the door (active)

The door was opened by Ali (passive)

In natural language which involve movement to the specifier of IP, an A-position. One familiar case of A-movement from traditional grammar instruction is that of passive. Corresponding with an active sentence like, there is a passive, in which overt A-movement *isn't* possible and seeing whether an expletive associate relationship is possible. For example illustrates that raising:

There seems to be a man in the garden. (raising)

A man seems to be in the garden.

Raising is possible when the embedded clause is infinitival. However, raising is not possible when the embedded clause is tensed.

In A-movement, the issue is not assigned Case, but the movement goal is a position in which the noun phrase in question can be assigned Case.

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