

Lecture 07: Complementizer Phrase.

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LIN 311: Syntax

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Outline

- ① Complementizer Phrase
 - Subordinate Clauses and Their Properties
 - Structure of Subordinate Clauses
 - Types of Subordinate Clauses
- ② Problems With the Theory So Far

Complementizer Phrase

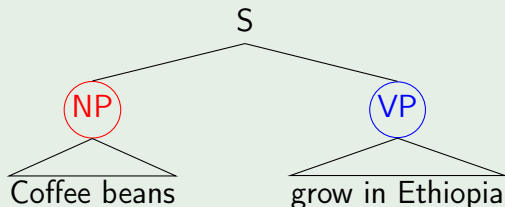
Embedded clauses

Clause structure

- The clause consists of:
 - **Subject** (usually NP): entity that is assigned some property
 - **Predicate Phrase** (usually VP): property assigned to the subject.

Example

- (1) a. **The King of Scotland** likes haggis.
b. **Coffee beans** grow in Ethiopia.



Embedded clauses

Embedded clauses

The sentence can consist of **multiple clauses**:

- (2)
 - a. Coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.
 - b. John said that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.
 - c. Mary thinks that John said that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.

- The **main clause** (or the **root clause**) is the outermost one.
- Other clauses are called **embedded** or **subordinate**.

Properties of embedded clauses

Embedded clauses are constituents

- (3) John said **that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia**.
- (4) **Substitution test:**
John said **that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia**, but Mary didn't believe **it**.
- (5) **Movement test:**
That coffee beans grow in Ethiopia is known to everybody.

Properties of embedded clauses

Embedded clauses can be arguments

- (6)
- a. John proved **the theorem**.
 - b. *John proved.
 - c. John proved **that syntax is the most important field**.
- **to prove** has two arguments: Agent and Theme.
 - **Theme** can be **an NP** (6-a) or **a clause** (6-c).

Properties of embedded clauses

Embedded clauses can be adjuncts

- (7) a. The man **that I saw in the bar** robbed the bank.
b. I will buy a computer **when Apple releases new MacBooks**.

- In (7), both embedded clauses can be omitted.
- Therefore, they are **adjuncts**.

Properties of embedded clauses

Embedded clauses can serve as subjects

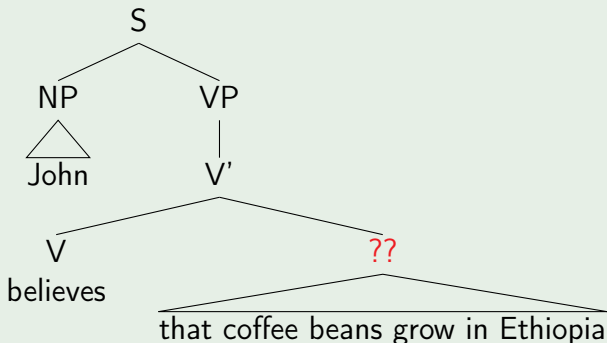
- (8) a. **That Don paid Stephanie** disappointed Mike.
b. **For Don to pay Stephanie** is a disgrace.

- In (8), both embedded clauses are **subjects**.

Structure of subordinate clauses

Basic structure

(9) John said that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.

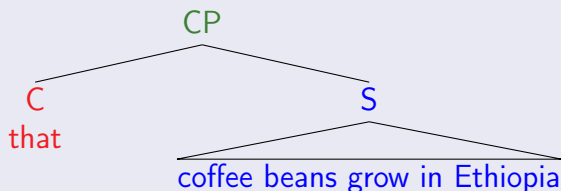


What is ??? Let's look at the structure of the embedded clause. . .

Complementizer phrase

(10) John believes **that** coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.

- Coffee beans grow in Ethiopia is a sentence (S).
- **that** is a **complementizer (C)**.
- **Complementizer** combines with **S** and forms a **CP**:



CP → C S

C → *that, if, for, ...*

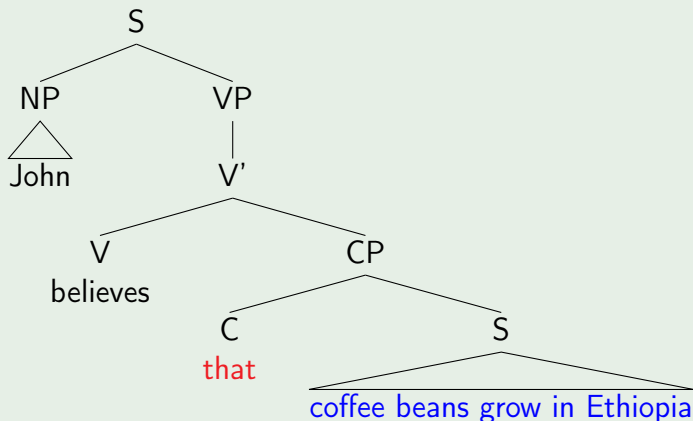
V' → V CP

VP → (Spec) V'

Structure of subordinate clauses

Embedded clauses structure

(11) John believes that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.



Finite vs. Non-finite clauses

- **Finite clause**: clause with the verb in a **finite/tensed** form, i.e. not an infinitive: agreement present.

- (12)
- I think **that the Earth is flat**.
 - I know **that he eats ramen**.
 - *I know **that he eat ramen**.

- **Non-finite clause**: clause with a verb in a **non-finite/infinitive** form: no agreement

- (13)
- I want **the Earth to be flat**.
 - I've never seen **him eat ramen**
 - *I've never seen **him eats ramen**

We will develop a theory of non-finite clauses later...

Complementizer *for*

- *for* can be a complementizer in English.
- It can only appear with **infinitival** subordinate clause.

- (14) a. John arranged **for** me to receive \$100.
 b. The President arranged **for** it to rain on Monday.

- Are **for me** and **for it** in (14) prepositional phrases?

- **Important difference:** *for* in (14) is not a part of PP, compare (15) and (16):

- (15) a. ***For me**, John arranged to receive \$100.
 b. ***For it**, the President arranged to rain on Monday.

- (16) a. We bought a gift **for Mary**.
 b. **For Mary**, we bought a gift.

X-Bar structure for CP

X-Bar Scheme

$$XP \rightarrow (ZP) X'$$

Specifier rule

$$X' \rightarrow (YP) X' \text{ or } X' \rightarrow X' (YP)$$

Adjunct rule

$$X' \rightarrow X (WP)$$

Complement rule

Note: the only Specifier (ZP) we saw so far was D in NP, and it was not even a phrase!

X-Bar Schema for CP

$$CP \rightarrow (\text{Spec}) C'$$

Specifier rule

$$C' \rightarrow (YP) C' \text{ or } C' \rightarrow C' (YP)$$

Adjunct rule

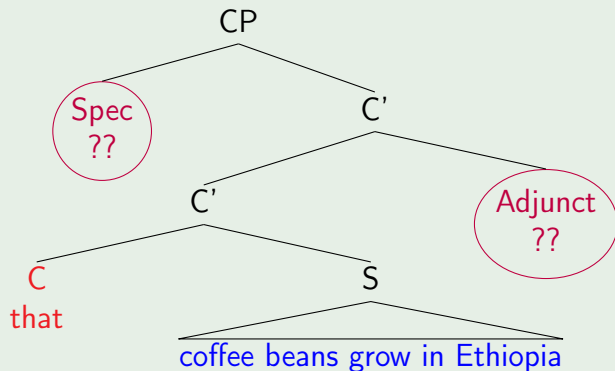
$$C' \rightarrow C S$$

Complement rule

Note: for CP, we haven't seen: [Specifiers](#), [Adjuncts](#)

X-Bar structure for CP

(17) John knows that coffee beans grow in Ethiopia.

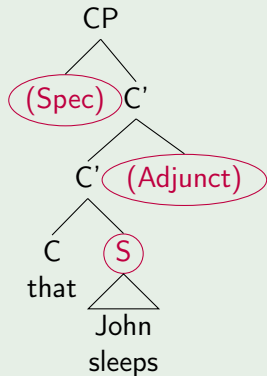


Problems With the Theory So Far

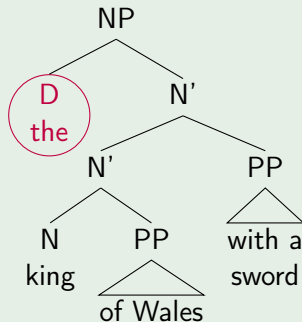
X-Bar structures

Examples of X-Bar Structures (problems are circled!)

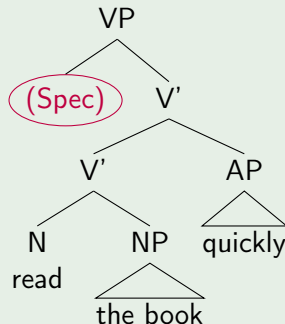
CP X-Bar



NP X-Bar



VP X-Bar



Problems so far

- Unclear nature of **Specifiers**.
 - We haven't seen any for CP or for VP
 - Specifier of NP is not a phrase, but a word (D).
- **Adjuncts to CP**? Do they exist?
- **What is wrong with S**? It doesn't follow X-Bar structure!
 - What is a head?
 - Where are the complements and adjuncts?

