Lecture 07: Complementizer Phrase.

Andrei Antonenko

LIN 311: Syntax

September 18, 2018
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.

A. Antonenko (Syntax)
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
  that
  coffee beans grow in Ethiopia

CP → C S
C → that, if, for, ...
V' → V CP
VP → (Spec) V'
```
Structure of subordinate clauses

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

```
S
 /       
NP      VP
  /  \   /  
John  V'  CP
   /    \   /    
  V     C    S    
 |     |    |    
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)  
  a. I think that the Earth is flat.  
  b. I know that he eats ramen.  
  c. *I know that he eat ramen.

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

  (13)  
  a. I want the Earth to be flat.  
  b. I’ve never seen him eat ramen  
  c. *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.

\[(14)\]
\[\begin{align*}
  a. & \text{ John arranged *for* me to receive $100.} \\
  b. & \text{ The President arranged *for* it to rain on Monday.}
\end{align*}\]

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

\[\text{Important difference: *for* in (14) is not a part of PP, compare (15) and (16):}\]

\[(15)\]
\[\begin{align*}
  a. & \text{ *For me, John arranged to receive $100.} \\
  b. & \text{ *For it, the President arranged to rain on Monday.}
\end{align*}\]

\[(16)\]
\[\begin{align*}
  a. & \text{ We bought a gift *for* Mary.} \\
  b. & \text{ For Mary, we bought a gift.}
\end{align*}\]
X-Bar structure for CP

X-Bar Scheme

\[ \begin{align*}
XP & \rightarrow (ZP) X' \\
X' & \rightarrow (YP) X' \text{ or } X' \rightarrow X' (YP) \\
X' & \rightarrow X \ (WP)
\end{align*} \]

**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

\[ \begin{align*}
CP & \rightarrow (Spec) C' \\
C' & \rightarrow (YP) C' \text{ or } C' \rightarrow C' (YP) \\
C' & \rightarrow C \ S
\end{align*} \]

**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

A. Antonenko  (Syntax)
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?

```
S
   /\   /
  /   /   \
NP  VP  \
     /   /
    /     \
   /       
  John  sleeps
```