

Assignment 12

The following describes formations involving non-finite complementizers in English and various movements in both active and passive sentences. Modifications are made to our current understanding of non-finite complementizers, and there are additional nuanced interactions in light of these modifications. Additionally, a marginalized variety of English is investigated. This variety is revealed to have its own unique syntactic regularities which set it aside from privileged varieties of English. These interactions are also structurally nuanced.

Part One

Consider the sentence:

(1) How likely to get elected is she?

Notice the element *to* followed by a verb in its infinitive form; Thus, a [-FIN] element must exist underlying. Also notice the *wh*-element *how*; as *wh*-words always move in English, it must have raised to its seated position from a lower place in deep structure. *Elected* is a verb requiring a DP complement:

(1a) I elected her

(1b) *I elected

Notice *she* is getting elected; *she* is also the only noun present. *She* must then originate as a complement to the verb *elected*. Within a [-FIN] complementizer phrase headed by *for* and with *she* being the only possible DP present, *she* must raise to specifier of *to* as it bears a feature [EPP: D] requiring a DP in its specifier. The CP, then, will look like:

(0) For *she* to get elected.

Notice, that *how* is a degree word modifying the likeliness of an event. *Likely* is an adjective subcategorizing for a CP. Thus, fragment (0) must be a complement to *likely*, and *likely* must be modified by *how*:

(00) How likely for *she* to get elected

If the CP is a complement to likely, there must be a remaining structure where the verb is present. Is may subcategorize for a CP:

(0') Is how likely for she to get elected

As this necessitates an even higher TP, she must then again move to specifier of T bearing [EPP: D]

(00') She is how likely for to get elected.

For gets deleted in a Control operation; the trace left behind by she must also refer to the same she. Recall that copula is raises to T; in a question, elements with T again raise to C:

(0'') Is she how likely to get elected?

Finally, wh-element how grants its host phrase the [+WH] feature via pied-piping. This then moves to the specifier of C:

(1) How likely to get elected is she?

Part Two

First task

Consider the following sentence:

(10a) Sheila wondered whether to complain to the management

Notice [-FIN] to accompanied by infinitive complain. Also notice lack of for but presence of fellow complementizer whether. Also notice:

(12a) *Sheila wondered whether for her to complain to the management

There must also exist another [-FIN] complementizer homophonous with the [+FIN] complementizer whether. This [-FIN] whether should be able to undergo a similar Control operation:

(10a') Sheilai wondered whether heri to complain to the management

The CP is begotten by wonder:

- (10a) Sheila wondered whether to complain to the management
(10c) Sheila wondered if she should complain to the management
(10d) *Sheila wondered

Second task

Now notice another phenomenon concerning [-FIN] complementizers:

- (10a) Vincent will ask you where to put the rabbits
(10b) She couldn't decide whose proposals to argue against
(10c) I have no clue which problem to tackle

Where infinitives put, argue, and tackle immediately follow the T to. To, being [-FIN], must appear only when the complementizer is also [-FIN]. Sentences in set (10) have no complementizer. Wh-elements still naturally appear in their positions seated into specifier of C. Also notice:

- (10d) *Vincenti will ask you where for himi to put the rabbits

Even after the deletion of coreferent him:

- (10d') *Vincent will ask you where for to put the rabbits

Where sentence (10d') seems only marginally grammatical (at best) in my English.

Thus, an unrealized [-FIN] C or a deleted for must be present cause T to take the [-FIN] form to. The wh-element, like in regular wh-movement moves to specifier of C. Put requires where as an argument; where will originate here in deep structure before being ultimately seated as the specifier of C.

- (10a) Vincent will ask you where for him to put the rabbits ____.

Third task

The following sentences must be ungrammatical:

- (12a) *Sheila wondered whether for her to complain to the management
(12b) *Whether for them to resign is not clear
(12c) *We should ask Susan whether for sophomores to take this course

Where sentences in set (12) do not see their for nor coreferent or following DP deleted. A mandatory control operation will remedy these sentences:

- (12a) Sheila wondered whether for her to complain to the management
- (12b) Whether for them to resign is not clear
- (12c) Wei should ask Susan whether for sophomores to take this course

Where we in (12c) seems to belong to a set of sophomores. Neither the for nor the DP may remain at surface structure.

Fourth task

Now consider sentences:

- (13a) *Vincent will ask you where for Joe to put the rabbits
- (13b) *I wondered what for them to do after the quarter ended
- (13c) *We should ask Susan which courses for sophomores to take

Compare:

- (11a) Vincent will ask you where for him to put the rabbits
- (13b') I wondered what for me to do after the quarter ended
- (13c') We should ask Susan which courses for sophomores to take

Again, to + infinitive makes an appearance, and indicates the presence of a [-FIN] complementizer. However, notice the ungrammaticality of sentences in set (13) unable to undergo Control—where for is not followed by a coreferent DP. Thus, in these [-FIN] complementizer phrases, Control must not only be allowed but must also be obligatory. Coreferents must be deleted, and the complementizer must be deleted along with them. As such, the following sentences are ungrammatical as both elements are not deleted:

- (14a) *Vincent will ask you where for Joe to put the rabbits
- (14b) *I wondered what for them to do after the quarter ended
- (14c) *We should ask Susan which courses for sophomores to take

Also notice the absence of to in the following grammatical sentences. As to is absent, these complementizers must not be [-FIN]:

- (15a) Vincent will ask you where Joe should put the rabbits
- (15b) I wondered what they should do after the quarter ended
- (15c) We should ask Susan which courses sophomores should take

Where Control cannot occur in the absence of [-FIN] for. There is no coreferent obligation with [+FIN]. Wh-movement occurs just as it would prior:

(15a) Vincent will ask you where Joe should put the rabbits ___

(15b) I wondered what they should do ___ after the quarter ended

(15c) We should ask Susan which courses sophomores should take ___

A complementizer that is deleted as a wh-element raises to become to specifier of C. Consider the echo questions:

(15a') Vincent will ask you that Joe should put the rabbits where?

(15b') I wondered that they should do what after the quarter ended?

(15c') We should ask Susan that sophomores should take which courses?

Where complementizer that is present when wh-movement has not occurred.

Part Three

Consider the following sentence in a marginalized variety of English:

(16a) I ain't no fool

(16b) You ain't going nowhere

(16c) They ain't always blond

Where ain't is a fusion of three contiguous heads: Vaux + Tpres + Polneg. This is analogous to other n't constructions in privileged English:

(23) They haven't applied to college yet

(24a) They aren't poor

(24b) She isn't leaving yet

Where in set (16), ain't is a fusion partly composed with be. In the following set, ain't is partly composed of have:

(17a) I ain't got no money

(17b) They ain't seen nothing yet

(17c) He ain't been charged yet

(17d) They ain't found shit

Where the immediate verbs are seen in their [-EN] forms much like in the sentence (23).

Questions are formed much like in the privileged dialect:

- (18a) Ain't I been good to you?
- (18a') Have I not been good to you?
- (18b) Ain't I done enough?
- (18b') Have I not done enough?
- (18c) Why ain't they attracted to me?
- (18c') Why are they not attracted to me?

Where the T moves to C in Subject-Aux-Inversion.

But now consider some word orders seemingly inconsistent with the ones above:

- (26a) Can't nobody beat 'em
- (26b) Don't nobody want no tea
- (26c) Ain't nothin happenin
- (26d) Didn't no money make it back to the community

Where sentences in set (26) see the T element occurring before the DP. It is key to note that these sentences are declaratives; they have not undergone SAI, and are not interpreted as questions. Contrast this to privileged English's:

- (27a) Nobody can beat them
- (27b) Nobody wants any tea
- (27c) Nothing is happening
- (27d) No money made it back to the community

Where the DP comes before the T element, and swapping these positions necessarily reads as a question:

- (27a') Can nobody beat them?
- (27b') Does nobody want any tea?
- (27c') Is nothing happening?
- (27d) Did no money make it back to the community?

Now notice an unexpected contrast between declaratives within this marginalized variety:

- (16a) I ain't no fool
- (16b) You ain't going nowhere

(16c) They ain't always blond

(26a) Can't nobody beat 'em

(26b) Don't nobody want no tea

(26c) Ain't nothin' happenin'

(26d) Didn't no money make it back to the community

Where sentences in set (16) are declaratives, and sentences in set (26) are also declaratives. Strangely, while these two sets of sentences retain their identities as declarative sentences, sentences in set (16) see the DP come before the T element, in a subject movement identical to privileged English—but sentences in set (26) maintain the DP after the T. Additional evidence of grammatical declarative constructions like set (26) can be seen in the following sentences:

(28a) Don't nobody break up a fight

(29a) Couldn't neither of 'em fit in that car

(30a) Ain't nobody doin' nothin' wrong, are they?

(31) Don't nobody be drinkin' tea

And again, in embedded elements:

(32a) She tol' me that wasn't nobody gon run her out tonight

(33a) She said that wasn't no cars at the mall

(34a) This is the class that didn't nobody sign up for

However, mirroring the movement seen in set (16) will yield ungrammatical sentences in set (26):

(35a) *Nobody can't beat 'em

(35b) *Nobody don't want no tea

(35c) *Nothin' aint happenin'

(35d) *No money didn't make it back to the community

Conversely, undoing the movement in set (16) to more closely match set (26) will also yield ungrammatical declarative sentences:

(41a) I ain't seen nobody today

(41b) *Ain't I seen nobody today

(43a) We wasn't doin' nothin'

(43b) *Wasn't we doin' nothin'

(45a) Jack ain't seen the baby yet

(45b) *Ain't Jack seen the baby yet

Declarative sentences in this marginalized variety seems to have two seemingly at-odds formations:

Sentences like:

(16a) I ain't no fool

Where the T element is seen after a raised DP deposited into its specifier.

Are at-odds with sentences like:

(26a) Can't nobody beat 'em

Where the T is seen before the DP. It may be that the DP raises to specifier of T, and the T once again raises, or it may be that the DP is untouched by any sort of raising operation and remains as specifier of V. (It is parsimonious to assume that no movement is undergone by sentences like (26a); This is seen especially clearly in the following set):

(47a) Don't nobody be drinkin' tea

(47d) Wasn't no more than ten people allowed in at a time

(47e) Ain't nobody bein' hired

Where the DP is seen untouched between T and V, where it would originate in deep structure.

But to reconcile this variety's two different declarative formations, interrogating them further reveals they display some regular alternations:

(26a) Can't nobody beat 'em

(35a) *Nobody can't beat 'em

(41a) I ain't seen nobody today

(41b) *Ain't I seen nobody today

Notice beat and see subcategorize for a DP complement, and are identical in this regard:

- (0) *I beat
- (0') I beat them
- (00) *I see
- (00') I see them

Thus, replacing one with the other is of no structural consequence. The same is true for T:

- (16a') Ain't nobody seen 'em
- (35a') *Nobody ain't seen 'em

- (41a') I ain't seen 'em
- (41b') *Ain't I seen 'em

(16a') and (41a') are minimal pairs with merely a difference in their DP. However, there still exists an alternation. Thus, the placement of T and DP in these declarative formations seems to be a result of the DP at play. Notice that these alternations are only seen where sentences differ in the positivity or negativity of their DPs:

- (26c) Ain't nothin happenin
- (45a) Jack ain't seen the baby yet

- (26b) Don't nobody want no tea
- (17d) They ain't found shit

It is seen throughout the data that the presence of a positive DP will have it as the specifier of T; the presence of a negative DP will have it remain in its originating position as specifier of V. In order for the raising operation to discriminate between the two, an EPP feature must be present that selects only positive DPs to be deposited in its specifier. This [EPP: AFF]irnative feature will look for a nominative DP with a matching feature [AFF]. If this nominative DP does not have an [AFF] feature, it is [NEG]ative, and will remain seated in its originating position. The potential DP selected must be nominative, as an accusative element cannot raise to be the specifier of T. Also note that this leaves the specifier of T empty: this variety of English must have also lost its [EPP: D] feature. Older dialects once satisfied this feature with insertion:

- (48a) There can't nobody ride him

(48b) There won't nobody know you're gone

(48c) It ain't nothin can stop it

(48d) There wouldn't nothin go down through there

The alternation in this marginalized variety can be explained by an EPP feature on T, where T may only be satisfied with another affirmative DP element.