

CAS LX 422 / GRS LX 722 Intermediate Syntax

CP & PRO
(8.1-8.2.5)

13

Types of sentences

Sentences come in several **types**. We've mainly seen **declarative clauses**.

1) Horton heard a Who.

But there are also questions (**interrogative clauses**)...

2) Did Horton hear a Who?

3) Who did Horton hear?

...**exclamatives**...

4) What a crazy elephant!

...**imperatives**...

5) Pass me the salt.

Declaratives & interrogatives

- Our syntactic theory should allow us to distinguish between clause types.

The basic content of *Phil will bake a cake* and *Will Phil bake a cake?* is the same.

Two DPs (*Phil*, nominative, and *a cake*, accusative), a modal (*will*), a transitive verb (*bake*) that assigns an Agent θ -role and a Theme θ -role. They are minimally different: **one's an interrogative, and one's a declarative**. One asserts that something is true, one requests a response about whether it is true.

Clause type

Given this motivation, we seem to need one more category of lexical items, the **clause type** category.

We'll call this category **C**, which traditionally stands for **complementizer**.

- The hypothesis is that a declarative sentence has a **declarative C** in its structure, while an interrogative sentence (a question) has an **interrogative C**.

Embedding clauses

The reason for calling this element a **complementizer** stems from viewing the problem from a different starting point.

It is possible to **embed** a sentence within another sentence:

1) I heard [Lenny retired].

And when you embed a declarative, you generally have the option of using the word *that*.

2) I heard **that** [Lenny retired].

So what is that *that*?

What's that ?

We can show that *that* "belongs" to the embedded sentence with constituency tests.

1) What I heard is that Lenny retired.

2) *What I heard that is Lenny retired.

There's a demonstrative *that*, but that's not what *that* is.

3) *I heard this Lenny retired.

So, *that* is its own kind of thing. It's an introducer of embedded clauses, a **complementizer**.

Complementizers

There are a couple of different kinds of complementizer. *That* is for embedding declarative sentences.

1) I understand **that** Alton dislikes unitaskers.

It's also possible to embed an interrogative sentence, like so:

2) I wonder **if** Alton dislikes unitaskers.

3) I wonder **whether** Alton dislikes unitaskers.

Here, *if* and *whether* serve as complementizers, introducing the embedded interrogative.

- I wonder about the answer to *Does Alton dislike unitaskers?*

Selection

Just like the verb *dislikes* takes the DP *unitaskers* as its object, some verbs take clauses as their object.

Some verbs specify what kind of clause they take:

- 1) I claimed that Alton dislikes unitaskers.
- 2) *I claimed if Alton dislikes unitaskers.
- 3) *I wondered that Alton dislikes unitaskers.
- 4) I wondered if Alton dislikes unitaskers.

This is a matter of **selection**. Some verbs select for declaratives, some verbs select for interrogatives. Some verbs can take either, some neither.

- 5) I know that Alton dislikes unitaskers.
- 6) I know if Alton dislikes unitaskers.
- 7) *I washed that Alton dislikes unitaskers.
- 8) *I washed if Alton dislikes unitaskers.

C

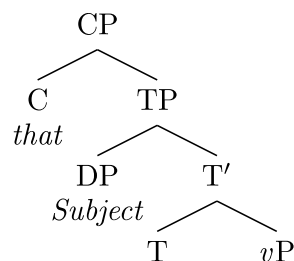
So, we have lexical items like *that* and *if*, which are complementizers (category: C), and have a value for clause type.

that [C, clause-type:decl, ...]

if [C, clause-type:Q, ...]

Where is it structurally? We know it forms a constituent with the clause it introduces. We know that verbs can select for different kinds of C. The natural conclusion is that it is a sister to TP, at the top of the tree, which projects.

CP



C is the head of CP.

Saying this also provides a natural explanation of why in SOV languages, complementizers are generally on the right.

- 1) Hanako-ga [Taroo-ga naita to] itta.
H.- nom T. -nom cried that said
'Hanako said that Taro cried.'

that or not that

C specifies the clause type; *that* indicates a declarative clause. Why then are both of these good?

1) Jack claimed that Jill fell.

2) Jack claimed Jill fell.

- In French, Spanish, probably most other languages you don't have the option to leave out the C.

3) J'ai dit **qu'** elle était malade
I've said **that** she was ill
'I said that she was ill'

4) *J'ai dit elle était malade

- Claim* doesn't embed interrogatives.

5) *Jack claimed if Jill fell.

- So *Jill fell* is declarative in *Jack claimed Jill fell*.

∅

- Where does *that* leave us?

1) Jack claimed Jill fell

- Claim* only takes declarative complements.

- Jill fell* is declarative.

- Clause type is a feature of C.

- Thus: There is a declarative C.
You just can't hear it.

- English has two declarative complementizers. One is *that*, one is ∅. In most cases, either one works equally well.

Jill fell is a declarative

But hold on a minute. *Jill fell*, just as its own sentence (not embedded) is also declarative.

Cf. *Did Jill fall?*

So, we'll suppose that since the function of C is to mark clause type, there's a C in simple sentences as well.

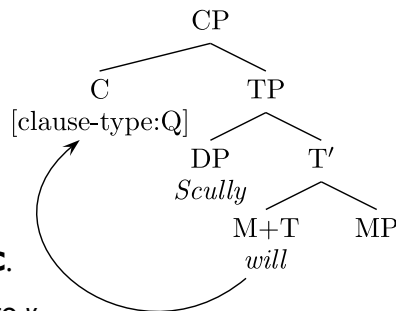
The C that heads the whole structure has somewhat special properties. Declarative C in that position is never pronounced. Interrogative C is not pronounced as a word, but makes its presence known by causing movement.

SAI in YNQs

In yes-no questions, the subject and auxiliary "invert" (Subject-Auxiliary Inversion):

- 1) Scully will perform the autopsy.
 - 2) Will Scully perform the autopsy?
- Assuming everything we've got so far:
 - T has a [μ D*] (EPP) feature to check, so *Scully* is in SpecTP.
 - The question is an interrogative.
 - (Unpronounced) C is to the left of TP.
 - So what must be happening in yes-no questions?

T-to-C

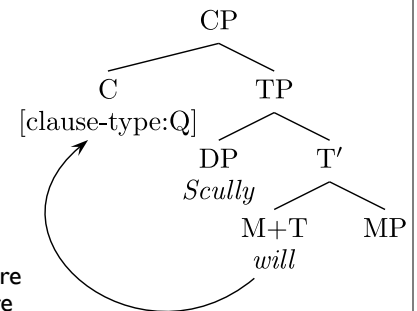


A natural way to look at this:
T is moving to C.

Just like V moves to v,
or like Aux (Perf, Prog, or Pass) moves to T, or like N moves to n.

In (main clause) questions, T moves to C.

T-to-C



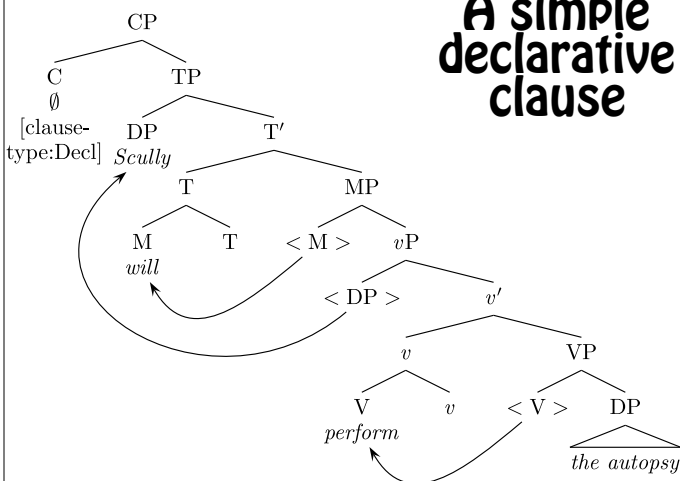
Specifically:

Suppose T has an uninterpretable feature that matches a feature of C: [μ clause-type:].

Suppose that when C values [μ clause-type:] as Q, the uninterpretable feature is strong.

- Cf. When T values [μ Infl:] on Aux (Prog, Perf, Pass), the feature is strong, and Aux moves to T.

A simple declarative clause

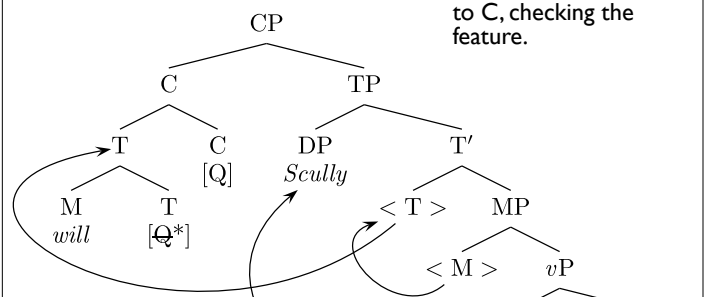


YNQ

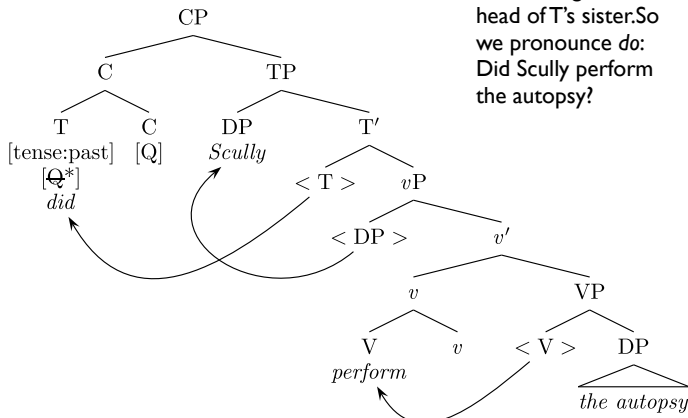
Abbreviations:
[Q] = [clause-type:Q]
[Q*] = [μ clause-type:Q*]
[μ clause-type] = [μ clause-type:]

In a YNQ, the [Q] feature of C matches and values the [μ clause-type] feature of T as strong ([Q*]).

- T moves up to adjoint to C, checking the feature.



YNQ



If T is just a past or present tense marker, v is no longer the head of T's sister. So we pronounce *do*: Did Scully perform the autopsy?

Embedding questions

So, you can embed declaratives and you can embed questions

- 1) I heard (that) Jill fell.
- 2) I asked if Jill fell.

- Notice that the main clause is different:

If the topmost C is interrogative, we get SAI. If the topmost C is declarative, it is pronounced \emptyset .

If an embedded C is declarative, it can be pronounced either as \emptyset or as *that*. If an embedded C is interrogative, C is audible (*if*) and no SAI.

- So, T moves to C only in main clause interrogatives. [clause-type:] is strong only when valued as Q by a main clause C.

Nonfinite clauses

Some verbs embed finite declaratives, as we have seen: *I heard (that) Jill fell*.

There are other verbs that embed **nonfinite** clauses. These come in a few types, but we'll start with the *try* type.

- 1) Scully tried to perform the autopsy.

This is two clauses: Scully tried something, and what it was was *to perform the autopsy*.

θ -roles

- 1) Scully performed the autopsy.
- 2) Scully tried to perform the autopsy.

The verb *perform* has an Agent and a Theme, here *Scully* and *the autopsy*, respectively.

The verb *try* also has two θ -roles, an Agent (the one trying) and a Theme (the thing attempted). Suppose that the Theme of *try* is [*to perform the autopsy*] here.

θ -roles

- 1) Scully performed the autopsy.
- 2) Scully tried to perform the autopsy.

In the second sentence, *Scully* is both the one trying and, if you think about it, the one performing the autopsy. The same individual is the Agent of both.

Agent θ -roles are assigned to the DP that is Merged into SpecvP.

However: You are not allowed to assign two different θ -roles to the same DP. Otherwise, it should be possible for *Scully admires* to mean *Scully admires herself*.

PRO

- 1) Scully tried to perform the autopsy.

So, we have something of a problem here. We need an Agent DP in the vP for *perform*, and an Agent DP in the vP for *try*. But it appears as if there is only one DP around, *Scully*.

- What to do? Once again gritting our teeth, we resolve ourselves to the fact that we need two DPs and can only see one— therefore, there must be a DP we can't see.
- The DP we can't see, we call **PRO**.

Control

- 1) Scully tried [PRO to perform the autopsy].

PRO is a DP that is the Agent of *perform*, *Scully* is a DP that is the Agent of *try*.

It is impossible to actually *pronounce* an Agent for *perform*.

- 2) *Scully tried [Mulder to perform the autopsy].

The PRO Agent of *perform* must be interpreted as being the same person as the Agent of *try*.

- PRO is a little bit like an anaphor in this respect; this fact is similar to the fact that *herself* in *Scully admires herself* must refer to *Scully*.

This obligatory co-reference goes by the name **control**. *Scully controls* PRO. Sentences with PRO in them are often called **control clauses**.

PRO

So why is it impossible to say this?

- *Scully tried [Mulder to perform the autopsy].

The answer we'll give is that **nonfinite T (to) does not have a case feature**.

Finite T has a [nom] feature which matches, values, and checks the [case] feature of the subject, checking itself in the process.

Nonfinite T has no case feature at all, so *Mulder* would be left with its case unchecked.

Null case

As for PRO, it is a DP so it has a [case] feature. If *Mulder* can't get its case checked by the nonfinite T, how does PRO get its case checked?

- A standard (and perhaps less than completely elegant) way to look at this:

PRO is special, it can only "show up" with "null case" ([ucase:null]).

Null case is special, it is only allowed on PRO.

Control clauses are special, they are introduced by a null C that has a [null] case feature, which can check the [case] feature on PRO.

Try

- So, *try* embeds a nonfinite CP, headed by the special null C with the [null] case feature.
- In turn, the subject must be PRO, in order to successfully check that feature of C.
- If the [case] feature of any other DP is valued and checked as [null], the derivation crashes: only PRO can have null case.
- The embedded clause must be nonfinite (T can't itself have a [nom] feature).
- If the [nom] feature of T checks the [case] feature of the subject, nothing is left to check C's [null] feature.

