VP internal subjects

The subject is merged as the specifier of VP
What matters in syntax?

• Linear order - *Batman the joker caught.

• Morphosyntactic features - *I saw he.

• C-command - *[John]i’s brother saw himselfi.

• Locality – things need to be local
What is locality?

• Feature checking and theta role assignment must be local.

Q: What does it mean to be local?
A: A head-specifier or head-complement relationship.

1. \([_{TP} \text{Bill says } ]_{CP} \text{ that } [_{TP} \text{time passes slowly in the tropics.}])\]
2. \(*[_{TP} \text{Time says } ]_{CP} \text{ that } [_{TP} \text{Bill passes slowly in the tropics.}]\]
What about...

3. \([_{TP} \text{All the students must } \text{[}_{VP} \text{take the exam before Friday}]]\).

The subject is not in a head-spec or head-comp relationship with the verb, yet it gets a theta role from the verb.

4. \([_{TP} [\text{All the students}] \text{ must } \text{[}_{VP} t \text{ take the exam before Friday}]]\).
all the students must take the exam before Friday
Evidence – Quantifier float

Quantifiers are words like *some, all, every, none, etc.* They are heads of quantifier phrases and can take DPs as their complements.

```
 QP
  | Q'
  | Q
  | DP
  | all
  | D'
  | D
  | the
  | N
  | N'
  | students
```

VP internal subjects
Evidence – Quantifier float

In English, the quantifier may move with the DP (5), or it may be a *floating quantifier* and come before the main verb while DP is in spec TP (6).

5. \[ TP [QP All the students] must [VP \(t_{QP}\) take the exam]].

6. \[ TP [DP The students] must [VP [QP all \(t_{DP}\) take the exam]]].
Notice that there are restrictions on Q; its position is not random. You can't say 7 and mean the same thing as 5 & 6.

7. The students must take all the exam before Friday.

Our analysis explains this fact: Q may only occupy positions that the subject has occupied (spec TP and spec VP).
Evidence – Idioms

**Idioms** are expressions that get their meanings not from the combined meaning of their individual parts but rather from the expression as a whole.

**Type I = V+O (sentence 13)**

12. Jeter stepped up to the plate and awaited the pitch.
13. He's really **stepped up to the plate**.

You can change the subject (14) but not the object (15).

14. She's really **stepped up to the plate**.
15. She stepped up to home plate.

- VP internal subjects
Evidence – Idioms

**Type 2 = S+V+O**

You can change neither the subject nor the object.

16. The cat is out of the bag.
17. The cat is out of the sack.
18. The feline is out of the bag.
19. The secret is out of the bag.

However, it is ok to change tense.

20. The cat will be out of the bag by then.
21. The cat was out of the bag at that point.

> **VP internal subjects**
Evidence – Idioms

What does this tell us about subjects?

You can change neither the subject nor the object.
• With type 2 idioms, the verb places restrictions on the subject. Therefore it must be selecting the subject.

However, it is ok to change tense.
• The idiom consists of the subject, verb and object but not Tense.

Therefore, the subject must starts out in spec VP!

 VP internal subjects
Evidence – dummy subjects

22. Someone is waiting in the house
23. Several patients are waiting to see the doctor.

Compare 22 and 23 with 24 and 25. Their meanings are virtually identical.

24. There is someone waiting in the house.
25. There are several patients waiting to see the doctor.

How does the subject end up between BE and the main verb? It starts out there!

VP internal subjects
Evidence – dummy subjects

22. Someone is waiting in the house
24. There is someone waiting in the house
Evidence for VP internal subjects

- Locality of theta role assignments: the verb can only assign a theta role to its complement or its specifier.

- Floating quantifiers:
  6. $[\text{TP} \ [\text{DP} \text{The students}] \text{ must} \ [\text{VP} \ [\text{QP} \text{ all } t_{\text{DP}}] \text{ take the exam}]]$.

- Idioms: the verb forms a unit with the object AND the subject.

- Dummy subjects
  24. $[\text{TP} \text{ There is } [\text{VP} \text{ someone waiting in the house}]]$. 
Hate & theta roles

What theta role does Shrek get?

26. $[_{TP}\text{ Shrek seems }[_{TP}\text{ to hate donkey}]].$
27. $*[_{TP}\text{ It seems }[_{TP}\text{ Shrek to hate donkey}]].$
28. $[_{TP}\text{ It seems }[_{CP}\text{ that }[_{TP}\text{ Shrek hates donkey}]].$
29. $*[_{TP}\text{ Shrek seems }[_{CP}\text{ that }[_{TP}\text{ hates donkey}]].$

• Experiencer of hate.

Why do subjects move?
Hate & theta roles

Where is Shrek merged?

- Spec VP of hate

26. \([_{TP} \text{Shrek seems } [_{TP} \text{ to } [_{VP} \text{ t}_{DP} \text{ hate donkey}]}}\].
28. \([_{TP} \text{ It seems } [_{CP} \text{ that } [_{TP} \text{ Shrek } [_{VP} \text{ t}_{DP} \text{ hates donkey}]}}\].

Why do subjects move?
Seem & theta roles

What theta role does it get?

28. \([_{TP} \text{It} \ [_{VP} \text{seems \ [_{CP} \text{that \ [_{TP} \text{Shrek \ [_{VP} t_{DP} \text{hates donkey}]]}]}}]]\).

• None
• \text{It} is a dummy subject & doesn't require a theta role.

Seem is a raising verb, & doesn't assign a theta role to the subject (but it does assign one to the CP).
More on these sentences

What is the difference between these two pairs (26 & 27 vs. 28 & 29)?

26. $[\text{TP Shrek seems } [\text{TP to hate donkey}]].$
   
   $[+T] \quad [-T]$

27. $*[\text{TP It seems } [\text{TP Shrek to hate donkey}]].$
   
   $[+T] \quad [-T]$

28. $[\text{TP It seems } [\text{CP that } [\text{TP Shrek hates donkey}]].$
   
   $[+T] \quad [+T]$

29. $*[\text{TP Shrek seems } [\text{CP that } [\text{TP hates donkey}]].$
   
   $[+T] \quad [+T]$

The lower TP is $[-T]$ in 26-27. It is $[+T]$ in 28-29.

Why do subjects move
Describe the distribution of *Shrek*.

26. \([_{TP} \text{Shrek seems } _{TP} \text{to hate donkey}]]\).
   \( [+T] \quad [-T] \)

27. \(*[_{TP} \text{It seems } _{TP} \text{Shrek to hate donkey}]]\).
   \( [+T] \quad [-T] \)

28. \([_{TP} \text{It seems } _{CP} \text{that } _{TP} \text{Shrek hates donkey}]]\).
   \( [+T] \quad [+T] \)

29. \([_{TP} *\text{Shrek seems } _{CP} \text{that } _{TP} \text{hates donkey}]]\).
   \( [+T] \quad [+T] \)

*Shrek* can only appear in the lower TP when it’s \([+T]\).
Summary

• *Hate* assigns the experiencer theta role to *Shrek*.
• *Seems* does not have a theta role to assign (to the subject).
• *Shrek* starts in the embedded spec VP and moves to spec TP.
• *Shrek* moves to spec TP of the embedded clause when it’s [+T].
• *Shrek* moves to spec TP of the main clause when the embedded TP is [-T].
Why do the features of T determine the position of the subject & how does that relate to why the subject moves to spec TP?

- The finite T head ([+T]) is [+nom] and checks the nominative case of the subject.
- The nonfinite T head to ([−T]) is [−nom] and cannot check the nominative case of the subject.
- The subject (which is [+nom]) must move to the specifier of a tense phrase that has a [+T] ([+nom]) head to check case.
Nonfinite embedded TP

26. \([_{TP}\text{Shrek }T\text{ seems }_{TP}\text{ }t_{DP}\text{ to }_{VP}\text{ }t_{DP}\text{ hate }\text{donkey}]\).  

\[ [+T] \quad [-T] \]

\[ [+\text{nom}] \quad [+\text{nom}] \quad [-\text{nom}] \quad [+\text{acc}] \quad [+\text{acc}] \]

27. \(*_{[TP}\text{It }T\text{ seems }_{[TP}\text{Shrek to }_{[VP}\text{ }t_{DP}\text{ hate }\text{donkey}]\).  

\[ [+T] \quad [-T] \]

\[ [+\text{nom}] \quad [+\text{nom}] \quad [-\text{nom}] \quad [+\text{acc}] \quad [+\text{acc}] \]

The [+nom] feature of Shrek is not checked, so the sentence is ungrammatical.
Finite embedded TP

28. \([_{TP} \text{It} \ T \ [+T] \ [+nom][+nom]} \)

\([\text{seems} \ [_{CP} \text{that} \ [_{TP} \text{Shrek} \ T \ [_{VP} \text{t}_{DP} \text{hates donkey}]]. \ [+T] \ [+T] \ [+nom][+nom] \ [+acc][+acc]]\)

The [+nom] feature of the main T is not checked, so the sentence is ungrammatical.
Why subjects move

26. \[\text{TP Shrek seems } [\text{CP } \text{TP to hate donkey}]]\).
27. \[\text{*TP It seems } [\text{CP } \text{TP Shrek to hate donkey}]]\).
28. \[\text{TP It seems } [\text{CP that } \text{TP Shrek hates donkey}]]\).
29. \[\text{*TP Shrek seems } [\text{CP that } \text{TP hates donkey}]]\).

What theta role(s) does seems assign?
What theta role does it get?
What theta role does Shrek get & where is it merged?
In each sentence, where does Shrek move?
Why subjects move

26. $[\text{TP } \text{Shrek seems } [\text{CP } [\text{TP to hate donkey}]]]$.  
27. $^*[\text{TP } \text{It seems } [\text{CP } [\text{TP Shrek to hate donkey}]]]$.  
28. $[\text{TP } \text{It seems } [\text{CP that } [\text{TP Shrek hates donkey}]]]$.  
29. $^*[\text{TP } \text{Shrek seems } [\text{CP that } [\text{TP hates donkey}]]]$.  

• *Seems* assigns the proposition theta role to the CP.  
• *It* does not receive a theta role.  
• *Hate* assigns the experiencer theta role to *Shrek*, and therefore *Shrek* is merged as embedded spec VP  
• *Shrek* moves to spec TP of the embedded clause when it’s $[+T]$.  
• *Shrek* moves to spec TP of the main clause when the embedded TP is $[-T]$. 

Review