Transitivity Requirement Effects and the EPP[*]

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1. Introduction

At the clausal level, a subject position whether it is internal to VP or externalized in the Spec of a higher functional projection is obligatory. Thus even when a verb does not select a semantically active subject, a subject position must still be projected. On the other hand, a VP-internal complement position is present only if the verb has properties that force this presence.

In both GB and Minimalism, for the subject position, the crucial concept is the EPP, seen either as a stipulation (Lasnik 2001) or motivated in terms of feature checking. Simply stated, the EPP forces the presence of a subject position at the clausal level.

For the object position, there is no such concept. In fact, the EPP is simply seen as irrelevant for objects (Davies and Dubinsky 2001).

It is argued here that effects similar to, but crucially different from, that of the EPP on the subject position exist for objects. This leads to the hypothesis that a VP-internal object position is obligatory for conceptual and empirical reasons.

In other words, the configuration in (1) -- order irrelevant – is given by UG, independently of lexical choice:

(1)　　　　　　V
　　　　　　／＼
　　　　V　　　Obj
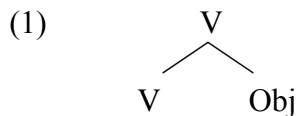
This *Transitivity Requirement* (TR) is compared to the EPP. Assuming that TR applies in the thematic layer of the clause whereas the EPP applies in the functional layer, TR involves broadly defined semantic recoverability whereas the EPP involves morphological recoverability conditions.

1. On two differences between subjects and objects

1. 1. Cognate subjects?

While cognate objects are widespread, cognate subjects seem conspicuously non-existent.

Unergative verbs appear quite freely with objects.

(2) English (Massam 1990, Jones 1988)
　　　John smiled a wicked smile.

(3) Tosca sang an aria.

Unaccusative verbs, unsurprisingly, do not accept cognate objects.

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(4) a. *Il venait souvent son chemin.[1]
'He often went his route.'
b. *He arrived an early arrival.

French examples (also called *figure étymologique* or *objet interne*); see Blinkenberg (1960), Larjavaara (2000). Most of the examples here are from Larjavaara.

(5) a. Jouer le jeu.
'To play the game.'
b. Combattre le dernier combat.
'To fight the last fight.'
c. Vivre sa vie.
'To live one's life.'
d. Quel rêve je rêvai!
'What a dream I dreamt.'

Cognate objects in French represent only part of the possibilities for an unergative verb to appear with an object.[2]

(6) a. Élise <u>a grimacé</u>. Elle n'aime pas quand on la prend à l'improviste.
'Elise grinned. She does not like to be surprised.'
b. Elle <u>grimaca un rictus résigné</u>.
'She grinned a resigned grin.'

(7) a. Reinhard <u>bougonne</u> tout seul dans son coin.
'Reinhard grumbles all alone.'
b. Reinhard <u>bougonne un truc inaudible</u>.
'Reinhard grumbles something inaudible.'

(8) a. Il <u>pleure</u>.
'He is crying.'
b. Il <u>pleure des larmes de joie</u>.
'He cries tears of joy.'
c. Les fruits tombés se sont ouverts et <u>pleurent une chair</u> abricot brunie par la terre mouillée.
'The fallen fruit opened up and cry a flesh the color of an apricot darkened by the   wet soil.'

(9) a. Chouchoutez-vous une image à vous.
'Pamper yourself your own look.'
b. En jacassant toutes sortes de syllabes.
'While chattering all kinds of syllables.'
c. En gesticulant des airs de Line Renaud.
'While gesticulating a Line Renaud tune.'

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[1] But the following expression exists: *Aller son petit bonhomme de chemin.* (Similar to "Go it alone.")

[2] Objects and aspect are often linked in the literature in work by Tenny, Zagona, Borer, Travis, Erteschik-Shir & Rapoport, among others. This extends to Cognate Objects: Massam (1990:179): "The result of the cognate object construction-forming lexical subordination process is the creation of a transitional verb or the spell-out of the transitional aspect of the verb." It could very well be therefore that a Cognate Object be used to check an aspectual feature of the clause.

d. Les Toulousains ont d'abord balayé leurs adversaires avant de balbutier leur rugby.
    'The Toulouse team first swept their opponent until they stammered their rugby.'
e. Bâiller mon temps dans un bureau.
    'To yawn my time in an office.'

Furthermore, the object is without a doubt an internal argument.

(10) a. Face aux grands événements que nous vivons.
         'Given the important events we are living.'
b. On sentait là, sous sa poitrine, de gros battements qui la haletaient.
    'You could feel, in her chest, a deep beat panting her.'

Unergative verbs can thus appear with a referential internal argument.

Do cognate subjects exist? The following examples are not valid as they involve a subject that is simply etymologically related to the verb.

(11) a. This employer employs many students.
b. Cet employeur emploie beaucoup d'étudiants.

(12) This company employs many employees.

Cognate subjects in Russian? (D. Liakin, p.c.)

(13) a. Etot svistok svistit gromko   (14) a. Iarkiy svet svetit v glaza
         this whistle whistles loud   bright light lights in eyes

b. Rebenok svistit   gromko   b. Solntse svetit v glaza
    child   whistles loud   sun   lights in eyes

A cognate subject would have to be non-expletive and appear in external argument position in a clause with an impersonal verb (which normally appears with an expletive subject or a raised subject).

(15) a. *This seeming really seemed (that John had left).
b. *The evidence seems that John has left.

Therefore, although a subject position is given, an impersonal construction does not seem able to provide enough content to allow for the presence of a referential external argument.

Conclusion: While it could be that different lexical items (i.e. $sleep_1$ = unergative, $sleep_2$ = transitive) are assumed or lexical subordination rules are applied, the descriptive generalization is that an object position is given by the syntax and that it can be filled, subject to interpretation.

1.2. Understood and implicit subjects?

While null subjects and null objects exist there are significant differences between the two.

(16) a. __ ha mangiato
         'He has eaten.'
b. Sophie le connaît __
    'Sophie knows him.'

A specific type of null object in Italian, French, and other languages (but not English) has been studied extensively (Rizzi 1986, Authier 1989, Roberge 1991)

(17) Ceci mène à conclure _ que cette position existe.
'This leads to conclude that this position exists.'

(18) a.   Ce gouvernement rend _ malheureux.
'This government makes unhappy.'
b.   *Ce gouvernement croit _ malheureux.
'This governement believes unhappy.'

The null object is assumed to be pro. The arbitrary interpretation is the result of operator binding at LF. The null object must be human and affected.

Other types of null object constructions exist.

(19) a.   Donne!
'Give!'
b.   Faites voir!
'Let me see!'
c.   Je sais!
'I know.'

(20) a.   Bon intellectuel, il ne voulait pas seulement expliquer mais convaincre.
As a good intelectual, he did not simply want to explain but also to convince.'
b.   Tu veux manger? Non merci, j'ai déjà mangé.
'Do you want to eat? No, thanks, I ate already.'
c.   Eves is not the only one announcing this week, so-and-so is expected to….

(21) a.   Je simplifie.
'I am simplifying.'
b.   Il simplifiait toujours.
'He would always simplify.'
c.   Ben là, tu as simplifié pas mal.
'Well, you simplified quite a bit.'
d.   Simplifie!
'Simplify!'
e.   Je sais qu'il simplifie.
'I know he is simplifying.'
f.   Il n'a pas simplifié. Bien au contraire.
'He did not simplify. Quite the contrary.'

We can settle on two general types:

A) Generic (implicit object) : not referential, no contextually determined antecedent.

(22) Larjavaara (2000)
a.   Un peintre dérange bien moins qu'un écrivain.
'A painter disturbs less than a writer.'
b.   On voit bien que ce n'est pas lui qui lave.
'You can tell it is not him who cleans.'
c.   Certaines ressemblances surprennent.
'Certain similarities can surprise.'

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d. Seulement, moi, je n'assassine pas, je ressuscite.
    'It is just that, myself, I don't assasinate, I resuscitate.'
e. Un cambrioleur, ça cambriole.
    'A burglar burglarizes.'

B) Anaphoric (null object) : referential, contextually determined antecedent .

(23) Larjavaara (2000)
a. « Tu as lu les pages? » Il avait lu.
    ' "Did you read those pages?" He had read.'
b. - Pourquoi devrais-je acheter cet ordinateur?
    - Voyez je mets en marche il s'allume et ensuite il n'est guidé qu'à la voix…
    '- And why should I buy this particular computer?
    - Well, you see, I turn on, it starts and then it is guided only by voice…'
c. Tu quémandes une impression, un avis, sur le pas de ta loge. Tu t'enquiers :
    « Alors, comment avez-vous trouvé? »
    'You seek an impression, an opinion, next to your dressing room. You ask: "So,
    how this you find." '
d. Le hululement du chien annonçait l'irréparable. Et son regard confirmait.
    'The dog's screeching announced that was too late. And the expression in his eye
    confirmed.'
e. - Maîtrisez-vous vos interviews? C'est capital, les interviews.
    - Je maîtrise.
    '- Do you master (control) the interview process? Interviews are very important.
    - I master.'

García Velasco and Portero Muñoz (2002) point out that structural contexts seem to favour
implicit objects; a conclusion also argued for extensively for French in Larjavaara (2000).

(24) Imperatives (see also Massam and Roberge (1989); Pirvulescu and Roberge (1999)):
      a. Drain and serve immediately.
      b. Push hard.

(25) Non-finite verb forms:
      Il y a des gens qui ne savent plus fabriquer comme avant.
      'There are people who do not know how to make like before.'

(26) Linking or sequences of verbs:
      a. When he wants, he goes out and gets.
      b. Ce film inquiète, fascine, révulse.
          'This movie worries, fascinates, disgusts.'

The main consideration in null and implicit object constructions is the availability of an
antecedent or reference for the object.

As for null subjects, the situation is different. The closest constructions with similar
properties.

(27) a. Control: I want __ to leave.
     b. Arbitrary PRO: __ to leave now would be a mistake.
                           __ eating is good.

(28) a. Je l'ai verrouillé __.
    'I locked it.'

(29) a. Tu as verrouillé __?
    'Did you lock?'

(30) On y mangera du steak ou des pâtes.
    'One will eat steak or pasta.'

Therefore, similar interpretations are realized differently for subjects and objects. In most cases, the recoverability of null subjects is morphologically driven. In most cases, the recoverability of null objects is semantically driven.[3]

A lexical approach is possible.

(31) a. I have eaten already.
    b. I have eaten a slice of pizza.

(32) a. *Eat*$_1$, unergative, 'eat a meal', incorporates an object component.
    b. *Eat*$_2$, transitive, 'ingest food in some manner', incorporates a manner component which forces the presence of an object.

In other words, if the verb incorporates an object it is unergative (!). See García Velasco and Portero Muñoz (2002) who argue against such an approach in terms of the wrong predictions it makes.

Also, a null object seems available for a parasitic gap interpretation. The sentence in (33b) is thus ambiguous, which is not predicted if the object is not structurally present.

(33) a. He left without eating.
    b. Which article did he file before eating?

Therefore, a discourse-based account is not sufficient. Larjavaara (2000 :53): Quand il n'y a pas d'objet, "le référent de l'objet absent peut être identifié grâce à l'énoncé et à son contexte, mais il n'est représenté que par un vide". What allows this empty object to appear in the first place?

Transitives without objects do not become unergatives, they have an object (whether it is null or implicit). Therefore, not a property of given verbs, hence it is a property independent of lexical choice.

Conclusion: Again, as was the case for cognate objects, the descriptive generalization is that an object position is given by the syntax and that it can be left empty subject to interpretation.

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[3] Note that past participle agreement does not seem to be involved in the recoverability mecanism for the null object.

(i) Larjavaara (2000), from Amary (1997)
    a. Tu as dit la vérité à Pierre? Oui, je lui ai dit (*dite).
        'You told Pierre the truth? Yes, I have told (*FEM) him. »
    b. Tu as promis une bière à Pierre? Oui, je lui ai promis (?promise).
        'You promised Pierre a beer? Yes, I have promised (?FEM) him.'

2. The structural component of transitivity

The concept of transitivity is often interpreted as a continuum and a distinction is postulated to exist between syntactic transitivity and semantic transitivity; see, among many others, Blinkenberg (1960), Desclés (1998), Hopper et Thompson (1980), Lazard (1994).

Surprisingly little is ever said about the object position itself. The hypothesis:

Transitivity Requirement:　An Obj position is always included in VP, independently of lexical choice of V.

TR is the internal argument counterpart to the EPP.

In other words, there are only 2 possible frames: SVO (transitive and unergative verbs), VO (unaccusative verbs; extends to SVO with the EPP); this has already been proposed by Hale and Keyser (1993) for lexical structure representations.

The issue obviously is to determine what accounts for TR. To do so, we will draw comparisons with the EPP.

3. EPP and TR

3.1. EPP

Chomsky (1982): Clauses have subjects.

(Chomsky 1995:199): The Extended Projection Principle, which requires that [Spec, IP] be realized (perhaps by an empty category) reduces to a morphological property of Tense: strong or weak NP features.

Lasnik (2000: 357): "Given this, the EPP reduces to a strong feature of a functional head high in the clausal structure (causing the relevant feature to raise), combined with a PF-based generalized pied-piping requirement (causing the residual constituent to raise)."

Chomsky (1998, 1999) proposes that EPP is a selectional property of a probe, which requires an element within its local domain (specifier). Therefore, there is a relation between the EPP and the application of an Agree operation; see Hiraiwa (2001) for a discussion.

Lasnik (2001: 360) "… formulate the EPP so that it demands that the functional head of the clause have a specifier, just as in Chomsky 1982 and Chomsky 2000, as opposed to Chomsky 1995."

This helps to account for pleonastic subjects, passives, impersonal constructions, non-arguments as subjects, etc.

The EPP is clearly a requirement of the clause, in the functional layer of a clausal structure. The intuitive basis for the EPP is the concept of predication.

3.2. TR

Chomsky (1981: 37): "We will say that α θ-marks the category β if α θ-marks the position occupied by β or a trace of β. Note that α subcategorizes a position but θ-marks both a position and a category […] Clearly, θ-marking is closely related to subcategorization. The notions are not identical, however." This in reference to the subject, leading to the EPP.

Our hypothesis is that this is also true of the object position within VP. The subcategorization component of the presence of a subject is the EPP. The subcategorization part of the presence of an object is TR. This helps account for cognate objects, null objects, unaccusative constructions, expletive objects.[4]

TR appears to be a requirement of the VP, in the thematic layer of the clause.

But how does this translate into theory? What is the intuitive basis for TR?

4. Analyses

- TR cannot be a purely lexical condition. It is not an idiosyncratic property of certain verbs.

- TR cannot be a purely semantic condition. It makes reference to a position not to features of this position.

- The EPP also makes reference to a position and as such is a syntactic condition but it is closely related to semantic (logic) considerations. In fact, it could be argued that the EPP exists because of predication.

- For TR, we find the exact opposite. The semantic considerations (recoverability) follow from TR as a syntactic condition.

Pirvulescu et Roberge (1999): A predicate must have a projected argument.

Erteschik-Shir and Rapoport (2000): A verb always projects as a verb-complement structure, a predicate. The merged complement realizes a meaning component of the verb. "We expect to derive the necessity of the predicate structure from the need for typing the dynamic event represented by the verb." (p.2)

Bowers (2002). Postulates the existence of a TrP (transitive phrase). A universal typology of verbs. Tr assigns accusative Case to the object and the object moves up to Spec Tr to statisfy an EPP feature of Tr.

Basilico (1998) : A functional category (also Tr) between the two VPs of the VP shell. An object can be merged directly in the Spec of Tr position or in the inner VP. Two object positions corresponding to two interpretations (thetic vs. categorical; see Kuroda 1972, Cardinaletti 2002). The thetic interpretation (inner position) gives emphasis to the event involving the object but does not single out the object. The categorical interpretation (outer position) ascribes a property to the object.

Possibility: Application of Merge (V – OBJ) to create a VP always applies as a result of a property of the computational system requiring unambiguous interpretation of Vmin and Vmax (following Canac Marquis 2000). Merging of OBJ defines V as Vmin, a necessary condition for head-to-head movement of V to higher functional projections. This implies that Merge applies independently of lexical content of V.

A combination of this proposal with Basilico`s application of the thetic vs. categorical distinction leads to the hypothsesis that the Vmax resulting from merge of OBJ corresponds to

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[4] We set aside here the question of whether or not true expletives can appear in object positions; see Rosenbaum (1967), Postal & Pullum (1988), Authier (1989), Runner (2000), among others.

the thetic interpretation of this predicate (transitives with implicit objects, unergatives without a lexical cognate object). What can then give rise to a categorical predicate interpretation is further "manipulation" of the object, such as θ-marking (transitives with lexical object), move to higher functional projections (unergatives with lexical cognate object)[5] or operator binding (transitives with null object).

Following Chomsky (1998), two Merge operations: Set-Merge and Pair-Merge. Set-Merge applies to V and Obj. Applications of (external) Set-Merge are dictated by selectional properties of one of the elements merged (here, V). Pair-Merge applies to independent elements, there is no "selector". If, as we argue here, Obj does not need to be selected to merge with V, then the building of VP raises important issues for analyses of Merge operations and predicate formation in narrow syntax.

5. **Conclusion**

We have argued for the existence of a Transitivity Requirement as a syntactic condition based on structural requirements relating to V. This requirement gives rise to a thetic interpretation of the predicate (emphasis on the event involving the object, not on the object itself). The predicate is then opened to further interpretation based on lexical choice of V and the functional make-up of the clause.

Can this requirement be extended to other predicates (adjectives and prepositions)?

(34) Zribi-Hertz (1984)
           Je suis venu avec _ mais je suis reparti sans _.
           'I came with but I left without.'

(35) Bouchard (to appear), Sleeman (1996)
           La prochaine _ est très belle.
           'The next (one) is very beautiful.' (about a painting)

Finally, McCloskey (2001) argues that the EPP is probably not active in Irish. Is this an option that could exist for TR? In other words, if Irish can have actual subjectless sentences, there could also be languages that can have actual objectless sentences.

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[5] In colloquial Québec French, unergatives can appear with a *ça* object that seems to act as an expletive cognate object providing a bounded reading to the event.

     (i)   Je t'ai dormi ça!
                'I really slept (it).'

Vinet (2001, 2002) discusses another *ça* in Swiss French variety and argues that it serves to mark a generic quantification over the event.

     (ii)   On ça met dans l'eau.
                'One (it) puts in water.'

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