On the need for specifiers
Rowlett, PA

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On the need for specifiers
University College London, 29 November 2000
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1 Introduction

(1) What is the nature of the relationship between a head and its specifier?


(3) Specifiers:
   a. They occupy a clearly defined position with respect to a relevant head; and/or,
   b. they enter into a clearly defined relationship with that head.

(4) IP Spec

   ([Jean] fume . . . J. smokes)
   ‘Jean smokes.’

(5) NegP Spec

   (Jean ne fume . . . [NegP [Spec pas] t . . . J. NEG smokes NEG)
   ‘Jean doesn’t smoke.’

(6) (In certain functional projections,) in the absence of an overt specifier:
   a. the specifier position is nevertheless projected;
   b. this position is occupied by a non-overt phrase; and,
   c. this non-overt phrase enters into the same kind of relationship with the relevant head (for example, spec–head agreement) as do overt specifiers.

(7) IP Spec

   ([Spec pro] fuma . . . )
   smokes
   ‘He/She smokes.’

(8) NegP Spec

   (Juan no fuma [OP] t . . . J. NEG smokes)
   ‘Juan doesn’t smoke.’

(9) Conclusions:
   a. There is no need to claim that, as a matter of principle, the specifier position is active in functional projections, and occupied by a possibly non-overt phrase.
   b. Under considerations of economy, we should therefore deem that the specifier is not projected, unless there are good reasons to believe otherwise (Rowlett 1998a; see below).
   c. Consequently, some functional projections, previously thought to project a position occupied by a non-overt specifier, are in fact specifier-free.

2 What are specifiers?

(10) Semantic specifiers:
   a. too strong     b. safely arrive
(11) Syntactic specifiers:

```
   XP
     \ (Specifier) /   X'
      \           /   (Complement)
       X
```

(12) Hoekstra (1991: 24): “A specifier is an adjunct which agrees with a head.”

(13) Specifiers versus adjuncts:

```
   XP
     \ ZP /   XP
        \ (Adjunct) /   XP
             \ YP /   X
```

3 What are specifiers for?

(14) The specifier generalisation: 
“Categorial restrictions on specifiers follow from the nature of the type of agreement that is involved” (Hoekstra 1991: 28, (42)).

4 Claims for non-overt specifiers

(15) \[ Spec \?

(smokes)

“He/She smokes.”

(16) Juan no \[ Spec \?

(smokes)

‘Juan doesn’t smoke.’

a. SpecIP

(17) a. (Io) parlo italiano.
   b. (Yo) hablo español.
   c. *(I) speak English.
   d. *(Je) parle français.
   ‘I speak Italian/Spanish/English/French.’

(18) Extended Projection Principle (Chomsky 1982: 10):

```
   S \→ NP \→ AUX \→ VP
```

(19) a. pro parlo italiano.
    b. pro hablo español.
    (=(17a, b))

(20) \[ Spec

(Rizzi 1982a)
Properties co-distributing with null subjects:

a. the absence of overt expletive pronouns;
b. the possibility of post-verbal subjects; and,
c. the absence of that-trace filter violations.

b. SpecNegP

"Negative sentences are sentences which minimally have a NEG-feature associated with a functional head of the extended projection of V, i.e., of the clausal domain."

(23)

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{a. French} & \text{Neg}^\prime \quad \text{SpecNegP} \\
\text{b. Fon} & \text{pas} \\
\text{c. Navajo} & \text{da} \\
\text{d. West Flemish} & \text{nie} \\
\text{e. Breton} & \text{ket} \\
\end{array}
\]

(Pollock 1989; Rowlett 1993)
(da Cruz 1992, reported in DeGraff 1993: 87)
(Speas 1991: 394–395)
(Haegeman 1995)
(Stephens 1993: 397–398; Borsley et al. 1996: 67)

(24) Juan no fuma [NegP [Spec OP] t . . . ]

J. NEG smokes
‘Juan doesn’t smoke.’

(25) a. Perché hai detto che Gianni è partito ?
   why have:2SG said that Gianni is left
   ‘Why did you say that Gianni left?’

b. Perché non hai detto che Gianni è partito ?
   why NEG have:2SG said that Gianni is left
   ‘Why didn’t you say that Gianni left?’

(26)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Spec} \\
\text{Neg}^\prime \\
\text{OP} \\
\text{ne}
\end{array}
\]

(27)

[CP . . . [IP [IP . . . [IP . . . [IP . . . ]]]]]

a. (25a) Perché t t

b. (25b) Perché t OP non *t

(28) Acquaviva (1996: 295): “This approach to negative islands therefore involves the additional assumption that the SpecNegP position is filled even when it contains no lexical material.”

(29) Haegeman (1995: 200): “. . . we assume that there is a non-overt contentive operator in the relevant spec–head relation with non. We propose that the non-overt operator occupies SpecNegP.”

(30) Gde ty skazal, čto Ivan ukral den’gi t? (Colloquial Russian, Brown 1999: 25, (18))
   where you said that Ivan stole money
   ‘Where did you say Ivan stole the money?’
5 Are non-overt specifiers really needed?

(32) The negative cycle in the history of French (Rowlett 1998b: 90, (4)):
   a. jeo ne di.
   b. je ne dis (pas).
   c. je ne dis pas.
   d. je (ne) dis pas.
   e. je dis pas.
   ‘I don’t say.’

(33) Julie ne veut voir personne.
   Julie ne wants to see personne
   ‘Julie doesn’t want to see anyone.’

(34) Assumptions being questioned:
   a. Certain specifier positions are always projected and syntactically active; where they are not
      filled by an overt phrase, they are occupied by null constituents; and,
   b. SpecIP is projected in canonical null-subject languages; SpecNegP is projected in languages
      whose negative marker is a head.

a. SpecIP

(35) a. O Janis xtes meta apo poles prospathies sinandise ti Maria.
   the-John- NOM yesterday after from many efforts met the-Mary-ACC
   ‘John finally met Mary yesterday.’  (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (13))

   b. *John after many efforts has met Mary.

(36) a. . . . epidi o Janis an erthi i Maria tha figi.
    because the-John- NOM if comes the-Mary- NOM FUT leave
    ‘. . . because if Mary comes, John will leave.’  (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (14))

   b. * . . . because John if Mary comes will leave.

(37) Enas heretise ti Maria.  (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (15a))
   one greeted the-Mary-ACC
   ‘A certain person/one of the people greeted Mary.’
   ≠ ‘Someone greeted Mary.’

(38) a. A student filed every article.
    \( \exists x (x \text{ student}) \forall y (y \text{ article}) (x \text{ filed } y) \)
    \( \forall y (y \text{ article}) \exists x (x \text{ student}) (x \text{ filed } y) \)

   b. kapjos fititis arhiothetise tahe arthro.  (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (16a))
    some student-NOM filed every article
    \( \exists x (x \text{ student}) \forall y (y \text{ article}) (x \text{ filed } y) \)

(39) a. *Tots els estudiants, es pensen que ells, aprovaran.  (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (20))
    all the students think that they will-pass
    ‘All the students, think that they, will pass.’
b. Tots els jugadors, estan convencus que guanyaran ells,
all the players are convinced that will-win they
‘All the players, are convinced that they, are the ones who will win.’

(40) a. There arrived a man/*the man/*every man. (English)

b. Il est arrivé un homme/"l’ homme. (French)
EXPL is arrived a man/ the man

(41) Efase ena pedi/ o Jorgos/ kathe filos mu
arrived a child-NOM/the-George-NOM/every friend mine
‘A child/George/every friend of mine arrived.’ (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (24))

(42) a. EXPL-V-S (e.g., There arrived a man.)
b. pro-V-S (e.g., pro fuma un hombre.)

(43) The null-subject parameter:
a. Null subjects
b. Absence of expletives
c. Free inversion
d. Absence of that-trace effects

(44) a. *Who did you say that t was coming?

b. Quien has dicho que viene?
who have:2SG said that comes
‘Who did you was coming?’

b. SpecNegP

(45) Expletive negation in French (Rowlett 1998b: 27–28, (57), (58a))
a. Je doute qu’ il ne soit là.
I doubt that he ne be:SUBJ there
‘I doubt he’s there.’

b. Marie est plus grande que n’ est son frère.
Marie is more tall than ne is her brother
‘Marie is taller than her brother is.’

c. Qui ne souhaite partir en vacances?
who ne wishes leave on holidays
‘Who (on earth) doesn’t want to go on holiday?’

d. Elle a peur que tu ne sois là.
she has fear that you ne be:SUBJ there
‘She’s worried you might be there.’

why fear you that she ne say:SUBJ that she you loves
‘Why are you afraid she might say she loves you?’

b. Comment crains-tu qu’ il ne se comporte? (Haegeman 1995: 161, (5b))
how fear you that he ne REFL behaves
‘How do you fear he will behave?’
Pourquoi ne t'as-tu pas vu aujourd'hui ?

Juan no ha visto a nadie.

Perché non hai detto che Gianni è partito ?

The Neg Criterion:
   a. Each Neg X must be in a spec–head relationship with a Neg operator.
   b. Each Neg operator must be in a spec–head relationship with a Neg X.

Never would I do that.

* . . . da Valère [ketent [me niets ]] en- was.
   that Valère satisfied with nothing NEG was

b. . . . da Valère [me niets ] [ketent t ] en- was.
   that Valère with nothing satisfied NEG was

6 Conclusion and summary

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