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MOD(ALITI)ES OF LIFTING WH-QUESTIONS* Christos Vlachos Queen Mary University of London c.vlachos@qmul.ac.uk

Περίληψη

Η δομή ανήψωσης ερωτηματικής πρότασης μερικής αγνοίας, εκτός από την ερωτηματική τροπικότητα, φέρει και στοιχεία αυτοοπτικότητας αντίστοιχα με αυτά που παρατηρούνται στις παρενθετικές προτάσεις. Αντίθετα με μία πρόσφατη μελέτη που προτείνει ότι η αυτοοπτικότητα αντιστοιχεί σε μία ανεξάρτητη λειτουργική κεφαλή και οδηγεί σε παρατακτική σύνταξη, το παρόν άρθρο προτείνει ότι η αυτοοπτικότητα είναι ιδιότητα του ρήματος που επιλέγει την ερωτηματική πρόταση μερικής αγνοίας και οδηγεί σε υποτακτική σύνταξη.

Keywords: wh-slifting, evidentiality, parentheticals, complementation, clausal pied-piping

This paper is part of an ongoing project on clausal complement selection in the context of wh-slifting, wh-scope marking, and clausal pied-piping. Pieces of this project have been presented at the conference "Generative Syntax in the Twenty-first Century: The Road Ahead" (Athens, May 2015), the "12th International Conference on Greek Linguistics" (Berlin, September 2015), the workshop "On Wh-doubling" (Konstanz, October 2015), the linglunch talk of the Linguistics Department of Queen Mary University of London (London, March 2016), and the University of Reading (Reading, June 2016). For insightful comments, challenging debates, and ongoing support, I am indebted to David Adger and Hagit Borer. Also, I cordially thank the audiences of the above events, and more in particular: Mark Baker, Sjef Barbiers, Josef Bayers, Ellen Brandner, Ian Cunnings, Alex Drummond, David Hall, Daniel Harbour, Syla Kleidi, George Kotzoglou, Diego Gabriel Krivochen, Elliot Lash, Julie Anne Legate, Rita Manzini, Anna Maria Margariti, Theodoros Marinis, Luisa Marti, Gereon Müller, Nicola Munaro, Fryni Panayidou, Josep Quer, Anna Roussou, Douglas Saddy, Ourania Sinopoulou, Linnaea Stockall, Peter Svenonious, Aggeliki Tsokoglou, George Tsoulas, and Coppe van Urk. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 656044. This project reflects only my view and the REA is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains. All remaining errors are mine.

2. Introduction

A rarely-documented phenomenon, with important implications about the grammar of clausal complement selection, is wh-slifting, exemplified in English as in (1) (due to space limitation, English will be the language of exemplification throughout the present paper).

(1) Who did Mary meet, do you think?

(1) shows that a *wh*-interrogative clause with root-properties, hereafter CP2, surfaces at the left of a typical yes/no question, henceforth CP1. A non-trivial question, then, arises as to how CP2 is linked to CP1, on the observation that the verb *think* in CP1 does not typically select questions, but propositions, as the ungrammaticality of **I think who Mary met* suggests.

Haddican et al. (2014), which is the first detailed attempt to account for the properties of *wh*-slifting, propose the parse in (2) (which repeats only the part of their parse in (96) that is most relevant for present purposes, a general strategy employed hereafter).

(2) $[F_{OCP} \ [CP_2 How old is she]_i \ [F_{OC} \ [MOODEVIDP \ [CP_1 Op_i did she say t_{OP}][MOODEVID \ [t_{CP_2}]]]]$?

Glossing over unnecessary technical details, we see in (2) that an evidential head mediates between the two CPs, taking CP2 as its complement, and CP1 as its specifier. A null Op(erator) moves from the argument position of the verb in CP1 to [Spec,CP1], and is co-indexed with CP2, which moves to a F(ocus) P(hrase), past CP1, yielding the observed linear arrangement. In short, for Haddican et al., *wh*-slifting features evidential properties which arise from an independent functional head that flanks the two CPs under consideration, in a paratactic fashion.

In the present paper, I will follow Haddican et al. (2014) in assuming that wh-slifting bears evidential properties. However, unlike Haddican et al., I will argue that these properties arise from the modal requirements imposed on the verb in CP1 (section <u>2</u>). This conclusion, in turn, supports a hypotactic treatment of wh-slifting, as the one panned out in Vlachos (in progress), which argues that the complement of the verb in CP1 is a nominal element that heads CP2, and triggers (typical) wh-movement coupled with clausal pied-piping; hence, the corresponding arrangement (section <u>3</u>).

2. Describing evidentiality

Haddican et al. (2014) were the first to observe that the set of verbs that support *wh*-slifting is a proper subset of the proposition-selecting verbs discussed in Hooper (1975). Specifically, the verbs supporting *wh*-slifting seem to be limited to the set in (3) (repeated from Haddican et al. 2014: 95, (58); judgments are theirs).

- (3) How old is she,
 - a. do you think/suppose/believe/expect/guess/imagine/figure/predict/ reckon?
 - b. did you say/*insist/*declare/*maintain/*promise/*mutter/*shout?
 - c. * do you hope?
 - d. ? does it seem/appear?
 - e. * do you realize/regret/admit/don't you deny/have you discovered?

As we may observe, (3) includes verbs of belief (cf., (3)a), but excludes verbs of communication (e.g., manner of speaking verbs as in (3)b)—apart from *say*—verbs of longing (cf., (3)c), raising verbs (cf., (3)d), as well as factives (cf., (3)e).

Let us put Haddican et al.'s (2014) observations into perspective, by considering them in the context of Hooper's (1975) early classification of proposition-selecting predicates, a representative sample of which is given in (4) (repeated from Hooper 1975: 92, Table 1).

Hooper, building on Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1971) and Karttunen (1971), categorizes the predicates that select propositions into 4 classes, on the basis of two factors that intersect with each other: "assertiveness" and "factivity". As the distinction between assertives and factives is tangential to the present discussion, it suffices to say that, according to Hooper, the major difference between the two classes of predicates is this: while assertive predicates assert the truth of their complement proposition, factive predicates presuppose the truth of their complement proposition (see also Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1971). Assertive nonfactive predicates are further distinguished into "weak" and "strong", because they differ as to the degree of certainty the speaker has towards the truth of the complement proposition: unlike strong assertives, weak assertives imply that the speaker has no absolute knowledge that the proposition is true.

The validity of Hooper's classification has not remained unchallenged (see, for example, Palmer 2001, and Simons 2007, for some recent criticism), but this issue is orthogonal to our present concerns. What makes Hooper's classification quite handy (4)

Nonfactive		
Assertive		
Weak Assertive	STRONG ASSERTIVE	Nonassertive
think	acknowledge	Non-negative:
believe	admit	be likely
suppose	affirm	be possible
expect	allege	be probable
imagine	answer	Negative:
guess	argue	be unlikely
seem	assert	be impossible
appear	certify	doubt
figure	claim	deny
	predict	
	say	
Factive		
Assertive (semifactive)		Nonassertive (true factive)
find out		regret
discover		resent
know		forget
learn		amuse
note		make sure
remember		be odd
see		be relevant

for our present purposes is the fact that it offers a heuristic method to narrow down the class of the proposition-selecting predicates that support *wh*-slifting. More precisely, if we look at Haddican's et al. judgements in (3), under the light of the table in (4), we see that only weak assertive predicates support *wh*-slifting, along with the strong assertive *say*, while all nonassertives—that is, factives or otherwise—are excluded.²

² In passing, notice that, although the raising predicates, *seem* and *appear*, belong to the weak assertive class, they sound marginal (or, downright ungrammatical) in *wh*-slifting. This marginality seems to turn on Case-marking (as suggested to me by David Adger), and raises a number of implications that revolve around selection and clausal movement (of the kind, perhaps, addressed in Alrenga 2005). As a comprehensive discussion of the relevant issues would lead us too far afield, I will take it up on a future occasion.

Hooper argues that the primary syntactic difference between assertive (weak and strong) and nonassertive predicates is that assertives permit the preposing of their complement proposition, while nonassertives do not. For example, witness (5) (fashioned over Hooper's 1975: 94, (1), (3), (9), and (12)).

- (5) a. I think the wizard will deny your request.
 - b. The wizard will deny your request, I think.
 - c. The guide explained that the winters are very cold here.
 - d. The winters are very cold here, the guide explained.
 - e. It's probable that factivity is important in other constructions as well.
 - f. * Factivity is important in other constructions as well, it's probable.

(5) shows that both the weak assertive *think* (cf., (5)a), and the strong assertive *explain* (cf., (5)b), allow proposition-preposing, as in (5)b and (5)d respectively. However, the nonassertive *it's probable* (cf., (5)e) does not allow such preposing, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (5)f.

At least as early as Urmson (1952), the property of certain predicates, as opposed to others, to permit the preposing of their complement proposition has been taken as an indication of the "parenthetical" use of such verbs. So, Hooper's claim is that, unlike nonassertive predicates, both weak and strong assertives have a parenthetical status when their complement proposition is preposed, as in (5)b and (5)d respectively.

Several authors, among them Bresnan (1968), Jackendoff (1972), Ross (1973), Hooper (1975), Emonds (1976, 1979), McCawley (1982), Reinhart (1983), and more recently, Rooryck (2001), have shown that the constructions that weak assertive predicates (among others) support, in their parentetical use, exhibit certain syntactic and semantic properties (see also Simons 2007 for a pragmatically-oriented treatment). In what follows, I will show that some of these properties figure in *wh*-slifting, as well. A remark is in order before I embark on the aforementioned task: for expository purposes, I will maintain the term "complement (proposition)" when referring to the declarative *that*-clause that may be construed with weak assertive parentheticals. However, by doing so, I take no stand on what the correct structural representation of the relevant configurations may (turn out to) be. In section <u>3</u>, I take Rooryck's (2001) complementation analysis of parentheticals at face value, but it should be noted at the outset that parentheticals have lend themselves to adjunct-like treatments, as well (see,

for example, Jackendoff 1972 for an early discussion; yet, it seems possible to make the complementation approach compatible with the adjunct view, as in Rooryck 2001).

With the previous as much, witness (6), which is modelled on Rooryck (2001: 128, (12) & (13)).

(6) a. Jules is back, they (*really) say.b. Jules is back, I (*firmly) believe.

It is a long-standing observation that parenthetical verbs have impoverished meaning or, as Urmson (1952: 482) puts it, "parenthetical verbs are not psychological descriptions". For example, the parenthetical *they say* (cf., (6)a) does not necessarily describe the information obtained by someone actually "saying" something, but the information obtained just by reading the tabloids (as Rooryck 2001: 128 says). In this sense, the meaning of parenthetical verbs is semantically bleached, or "di-intensified", in Bresnan's (1968) terminology. This semantic reduction is further supported by the fact that a parenthetical cannot be modified by adverbs that require the original meaning of the verb, as the ungrammaticality of *really* and *firmly* demonstrates in (6)a and (6)b respectively. In a similar context, for (6)b, Rooryck (2001: 128) quotes Vet (1994), who notes that "...in the parenthetical I think, there is no conviction expressed, but a reservation limiting the assertion to the opinion of the speaker." Or, as Hooper (1975: 101) argues, concentrating on weak assertive predicates of the type in (6)b, their semantic content makes no assertion, in and of itself, but describes the attitude of the speaker towards the truth of the asserted proposition, which lies in the complement clause. The contribution of the weak assertive verb, then, is to suspend the implication that the speaker *knows* the proposition expressed by the complement to be true.

According to Hooper (1975), maximal semantic reduction of the parenthetical verb is obtained with simple present, first-person singular subject, which represents the "op-timal" parenthetical use of a weak assertive verb (cf., (6)b, for example). With future tense and third-person subject, for example, semantic content is added to the verb, to the extent that it becomes difficult to obtain a parenthetical reading. This is illustrated in (7), where the "#" notation marks the absence of a parenthetical reading, to be main-tained throughout the current section ((7) is modelled on Hooper's 1975: 102, (57)).

(7) # We should take the bus, John will believe.

In line with Hooper, the parenthetical clause enriches the semantic content by attributing the assertion of the complement proposition to another person (here, *John*), in the future. This has the effect of cancelling the parenthetical reading of *believe*.

Turning to *wh*-slifting, we see that a similar situation obtains, in the sense that the semantic content of the verb in CP1 must be maximally reduced, as (8) demonstrates.

- (8) a. How long will the strike take, do you think?
 - b. ? How long will the strike take, does John think?
 - c. # How long will the strike take, do most demonstrators think?
 - d. # How long will the strike take, does every demonstrator think?
 - e. #How long will the strike take, does some demonstrator think?
 - f. # How long will the strike take, do two demonstrators think?
 - g. # How long will the strike take, does anyone think?

(8) shows that the "optimal" use of the CP1 verb is with simple present, second-person singular subject (cf., (8)a). Felicity degrades as semantic content is added: the subject may not be a proper name (cf., (8)b), an overtly realized referential NP (cf., (8)b), a quantifier (cf., (8)c), an indefinite, either strong (cf., (8)d) or weak (cf., (8)e), a numeral (cf., (8)f), or a NPI (cf., (8)g).³

Probing further, parenthetical verbs must have affirmative reading, as illustrated in (9), fashioned over Hooper's (1975: 95, (16) and (17)) respectively (see also Ross 1973).

(9) a. Many of the applicants are women, it does (* not) seem.b. He wants to hire a woman, he does (* not) say.

In the presence of sentential negation, both (9)a and (9)b become ungrammatical. A similar situation holds for *wh*-slifting, as shown in (10).

(10) * Who does John like, don't you believe?

(10) is ungrammatical if negation is present.

(11)a and (11)b exemplify two further properties of parenthetical constructions (modelled on Hooper's 1975, (40) & (64) respectively).

³ Many thanks to David Adger for this evidence. See also Haddican et al. (2014) for similar observations regarding the subject of the parenthetical, which they formulate as a "second-person" constraint.

(11) a. Sally plans for Gary to mary her, and marry her he will, it seems.b. This car needs a tune-up, I think, doesn't it?

(11)a is an instance of "VP preposing", where the VP *marry her* linearly precedes the sentential subject *he* for reasons of emphasis. "VP preposing" belongs to a group of structural configurations that are named by Emonds (1970) as "Root Transformations", because they are assumed to be restricted to root (main) clauses. Yet, Hooper (1975) shows that some of these arrangements may also figure in the complement proposition of weak assertive verbs, as (11)a demonstrates (see also Hooper & Thompson 1973 for an extensive commentary on Emonds's 1970 evidence). (11)b additionally illustrates that the assertion that lies in the complement proposition of a weak assertive verb may be questioned by a tag.

Taken together, both properties in (11) can be seen to figure in a typical *wh*-slifting construction, as in (12).

(12) Who did Mary meet, do you think?

(12) shows that the complement to the parenthetical *think* is a *wh*-question with root properties, as is evident by the T-to-C substitution.

A final piece of corroborating evidence to the hypothesis that *wh*-slifting is comparable to parenthetical constructions comes from binding-theoretic considerations. Consider (13) and (14) ((13) is repeated from Rooryck 2001: 128–129, (18)a & (23)b respectively, and (14) from (18)b and (24)b respectively).

- (13) Subject-oriented, quotative
 - a. He, would be late, Jules, said.
 - b. That picture of herself, was bad, Jules, said.
- (14) Speaker-oriented, inferential/hearsay

a. Jules, will be late, he, said.

b. * That picture of herself, was bad, Jules, said, although it wasn't.

Building on Reinhart (1983), Rooryck (2001) maintains her distinction between two types of parentheticals, which he then tailors to interpretation, and more precisely to the distinction between two evidential categories: *subject-oriented* parentheticals are

"quotative" evidentials, in the sense that they facilitate readings akin to Free Indirect Speech. For example, in (13)a, the 3rd person *he* stands in for a 1st person *I*, giving rise to a reading that mimics direct speech by *Jules*, as in *I will be late*. On the other hand, *speaker-oriented* parentheticals involve "hearsay" or "inference". For example, a parenthetical of the form *he said*, as in (14)a, favours a reading similar to *I think* or *probably* (as Rooryck 2001: 128 puts it). Notice that, as cited by Rooryck (2001: 129), according to Reinhart (1983: 182, fn: 6), the presence of the adverbial introduced by *although* ensures the speaker-oriented reading of the parenthetical.

Now, as we may observe, each type of parenthetical above yields radically different binding effects (see Reinhart 1983 for a first observation). More precisely, for both (13) a and (13)b to be grammatical, we must assume that, at some point in the derivation, *Jules* c-commands *he*, in (13)a, and *herself*, in (13)b. If so, then, it must be the case that the sentence containing the two bindees originate as complements to the parenthetical verbs. This contrasts sharply with both (14)a and (14)b: (14)a is grammatical only under the assumption that the proposition containing *Jules* is not the complement of the parenthetical verb, and the same assumption extends to the ungrammaticality of (14 b, where the reflexive remains unbound.⁴

Interestingly, *wh*-slifting yields the same contradictory binding requirements. Consider the two minimal pairs in (15) and (16).

- (15) a. What did he, buy, did John, say?
 - b. Which picture of himself, was downloaded most, does he, think?
- (16) a. What did John_i buy, did he_i say?
 - b. * Which picture of himself, was downloaded most, did he, think?

As we may observe, (15) patterns with the quoative reading of the parenthetical in (13), in respecting both conditions A (cf., (15)b) and C (cf., (15)a). On the other hand, (16) bleeds both conditions A (cf., (16)b) and C (cf., (16)a). So, (16) is akin to the inferential/hearsay interpretation of the parenthetical in (14).

⁴ As Rooryck (2001) correctly points out, the fact that the effects of binding theory vary in subject-oriented and speaker-oriented contexts should be no surprise on the observation that the status of a clause as direct, indirect or free indirect speech is well known to have implications about binding-theoretic relations (see, among others, Banfield 1973, 1981; Schlenker 2000).

To sum up, the set of predicates supporting *wh*-slifting is restricted to a class of proposition-selecting verbs, whose distribution is comparable to that of parentheticals. In the next section, I will capitalize on this conclusion.

3. Deriving evidentiality

As regards parenthetical constructions, Rooryck (2001) commences from the observation that parenthetical verbs express a large range of evidential meanings, a sample of which is given in (17) (his, (12), p. 126).

(17) Jules is back

a. I feel / I sense. (nonvisual sensorial)

b. I see. (sensory inferential, visual deduction)

c. I hear / they say. (sensory evidence, hearsay)

d. Sarah said. (quotative) e. I realize / I found out (memory / circumstantial inferential)

f. it seems / it appears (unspecified source, circumstantial)

g. I believe / think / guess / suppose / presume / suspect / assume / take it / gather. (speculative)

e. I'm afraid / I'm sorry to say. (surprisal: to attenuate hearer's surprise)

According to Rooryck, evidentials carry information about the source of a claim (e.g., inference, hearsay, visual, etc.), along with the speaker's attitude towards the truth of the relevant information (e.g., "feel", "think", "believe", etc.) (see Chafe & Nichols 1986 for an overview). So, for example, parentheticals like "feel" and "sense" facilitate a "nonvisual sensorial" reading, as in (17)a, and accordingly for the other verbs in (17).

Building on the close relation of parentheticals to evidentials, Rooryck derives the syntax and semantics of parenthetical constructions from evidentiality, through the use of Cinque's (1999) universal hierarchy of the placement of adverbs. More in particular, witness the two parses in (18), where, for convenience, I resort to the same notational device I have been using all along in order to distinguish between the two CPs (other than that, (18)a and (18)b correspond to Rooryck's (33)a and (33)b respectively).

(18) a.
$$\left[_{_{CP_1}} \left[_{_{CP_2}} Jules is back \right] \left[_{_{_{MOODEVID}}} \right] \left[_{_{TP}} I \left[_{_{T}} \right] \left[_{_{VP}} I think t_{_{CP_2}} \right] \right] \right] \right]$$

b. $\left[_{_{CP_1}} \left[_{_{_{MOODEVID}}} Jules is back \right] \left[_{_{_{MOODEVID}}} said \right] \left[_{_{TP}} she \left[_{_{T}} t_{_{said}} \right] \left[_{_{VP}} she t_{_{said}} t_{_{CP_2}} \right] \right] \right]$

(18)a illustrates that CP2 originates as the complement of the parenthetical. The parenthetical moves (covertly, through the relevant functional heads) to the evidential modal projection (MoodEvid), which is an adverbial head that sits on top of the inflectional/tense domain of CP1. The sentential moves (overtly) to the specifier of this head. (18)b additionally shows that movement of the parenthetical to MoodEvid can be overt, triggering the corresponding T-to-C raising (i.e., quotative) inversion, for reasons of emphasis. In short, Rooryck's take on parentheticals is that CP2 is hypotactically linked to CP1, whose verb is "de-intensified" (semantically impoverished) due to the evidential mood to which the verb surfaces at.

Turning to *wh*-slifting, we have seen in section $\underline{2}$ that the verb in CP1 is indeed comparable to parenthetical verbs. However, the two sets of facts in (19) and (20), among others, suggest that *wh*-slifting is not a *prima facie* parenthetical construction ((20)a and (20)b are repeated from Haddican et al. 2014: 98–99, (81) and (82) respectively).

- (19) Who did Mary meet,
 - a. do you think / believe / suppose / expect / imagine / guess / figure. (speculative)
 - b. did she say? (quotative)
 - c. ?? did you hear? (sensory evidence, hearsay)
 - d. ? does it seem / does it appear? (unspecified source, circumstantial)
- (20) a. The children (she said) will (she said) come back (she said) in two days (she said).

b. When on earth (do you think) will (?? do you think) the children (?? do you think) come back (do you think)?

Compared to (17), (19) shows that *wh*-slifting assumes a restricted set of evidential meanings, which ranges over only speculative (cf., (19)a) and quotative (cf., (19)b) interpretations, while hearsay (cf., (19)c) and circumstantial meanings that leave the information source unspecified are marginal (at best). In terms of word order, (20) shows that parenthetical sentences, like *she said* in (20)a, may surface freely in several positions in-between the sentential (here, *the children will come back*). Yet, *wh*-slifting

exhibits a more rigid word order: CP1 may either follow immediately after the initial *wh*-element, or surface at the end.

Drawing from several properties of *wh*-slifting, alongside these in (19) and (20), in Vlachos (in progress), I propose that a typical *wh*-slifting parse is best analyzed as in (21), which reconciles the evidential properties of the verb in CP1 with the lack of a parenthetical syntax.⁵

(21) $[_{CP_1} [_{DP} Who [_{D} [_{CP_2} t_{who} did [C_2 Mary meet t_{who}]]]] [_{C_1} do [_{MOODEVIDP} [_{MOODEVID} t_{do} [_{TP_1} you [_{T} t_{do} [_{vP_1} think t_{DP}]]]]]]]?$

(21) says that CP1 features an evidential head that sits on top of the relevant inflectional/tense domain, and as such, *think* picks up two modalities, via auxiliary *do*support: an evidential reading, due to MoodEvid, and an interrogative interpretation from C1. Probing further, I argue that a functional D-layer mediates the association of the verb in CP1 with CP2. D, which is the argument of the verb in CP1, probes for a *wh*-element, and translates to an indefinite that takes a proposition as its complement, namely, CP2. CP2 is a typical *wh*-question, where *who* moves from its argument position to [Spec,CP2]. After agreement with D, and then with C1, *who* moves to [Spec,DP], and lands at [Spec,CP1], pied-piping CP2; hence, the corresponding word order. As I show extensively in Vlachos (in progress), the syntax of *wh*-slifting, as prefigured in (21), is comparable with that of *wh*-scope marking in German/Hindi and clausal pied-piping in Basque, raises important implications about clausal complementation, and provides a new solution to an old problem: the trigger for successive cyclic *wh*-movement.

4. Conclusion

Maintaining a recent assumption that *wh*-slifting, alongside interrogative modality, bears evidential meaning, this paper argued that evidentiality arises from a dedicated modal head that supports a hypotactic syntax: a propositional attitude verb picks up an

⁵ In fact, (21) represents only one of the three *wh*-slifting variants I propose in Vlachos (in progress), all of which handle, among others, the contradictory binding facts (cf., (15) and (16)), and the relevant restrictions regarding complementation (cf., (19)) and word order (cf., (20)), in a natural way.

interrogative and evidential modality, and embeds a functional D-layer, which sits on top of a *wh*-interrogative clause, and facilitates *wh*-movement accompanied by clausal pied-piping.

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