

Chapter 5 Syntax Joyce Bruhn de Garavito

“Delving Deeper”

Head Movement Revisited: Verb Raising in French

We have seen that, in English questions, the [+Q] feature in C attracts T, causing movement of T to C. In this section, we will see that in some languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese) V moves to T even in statements. This movement is referred to as **verb raising**.

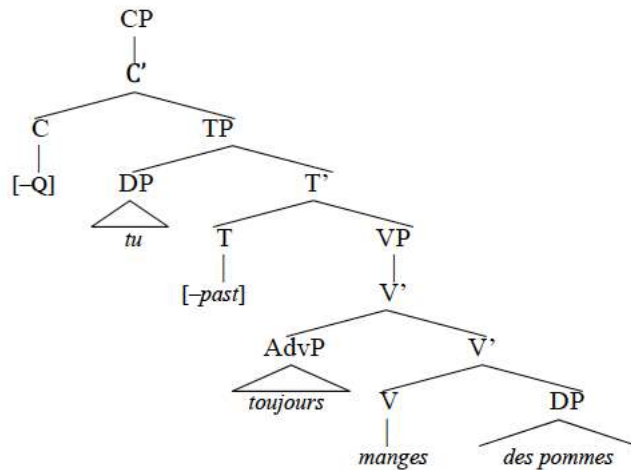
Word Order as Evidence for Verb Raising

Compare the English sentences in (1) with the French sentences in (2). Focus on the position of the adverb *always* in relation to the verb *eat* and the complement *apples*. Recall that adverb phrases are always adjuncts, never complements.

- (1) a. You always eat apples.
 b. *You eat always apples.
- (2) a. Tu manges toujours des pommes.
 you eat always D apples (D = Determiner)
 ‘You always eat apples.’
- b. *Tu toujours manges des pommes.
 you always eat D apples (D = Determiner)
 ‘You always eat apples.’

In English, the adverb precedes the verb (1a) and the reverse is ungrammatical (1b). In French, the adverb follows the verb (2a) and appears between the verb and the complement. We know that complements must always be close to the head, so the position of the adverb in between poses an interesting problem. We will make the simplest assumption, that the basic structure of French is not different from English. This is illustrated in the tree in (3).

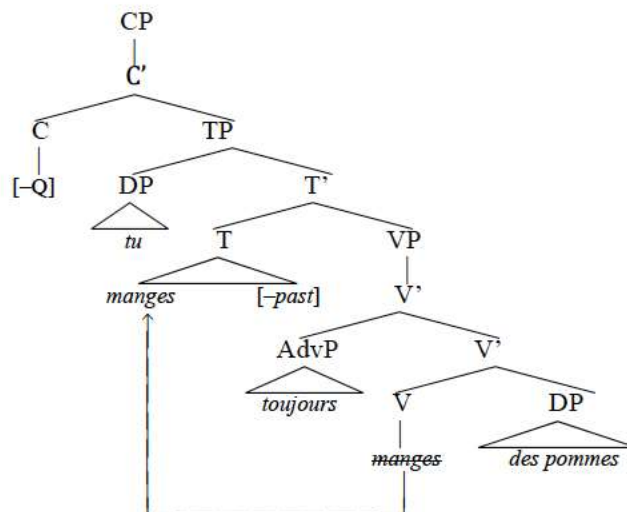
- (3) a. Tu manges toujours des pommes



The tree in (3) correctly represents the complement as sister to the head. As you can see, the complement *des pommes* ‘apples’, is sister to the head of the VP that contains it, the V *manges* ‘eat’. However, recall that a tree diagram represents, among other things, word order. The tree in (3) fails to do this, as it would read out: **tu toujours manges des pommes*, which we saw in (2b) is ungrammatical in French. So what is the explanation?

The explanation lies in verb raising: V moves to T where it joins the tense feature, [+/-past] there, as shown in (4). We say that the tense features in French attract the verb, even in declarative sentences. The result is correct in regards to word order and to the position of the complement in relation to the head, V. As always, the verb leaves behind a copy of itself which we can cross out. The complete representation is therefore found in (4), not in (3).

- (4) Tu manges toujours des pommes.



Negation as Evidence for Verb Raising

Additional evidence for verb raising in French comes from negation. Compare the negative sentences in (5) for English and (6) for French¹.

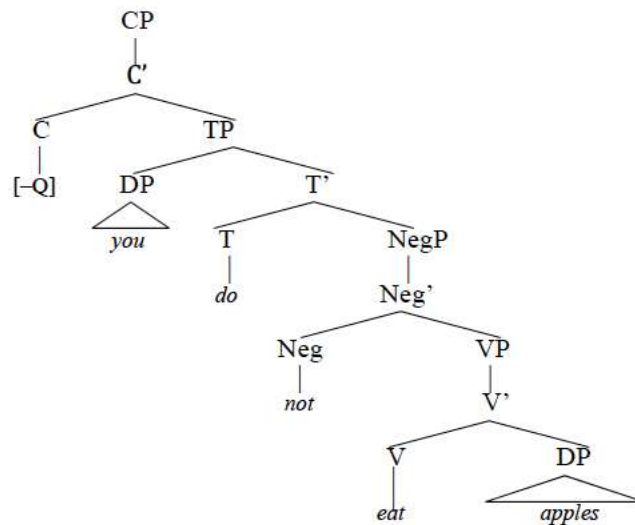
(5) You do not eat apples.

(6) Tu manges pas des pommes.
you eat not apples
'You don't eat apples.'

In (5), the presence of negation triggers the use of dummy *do*. The main verb follows the negative word *not*. In French, however, the main verb precedes the negative word *pas* (6).

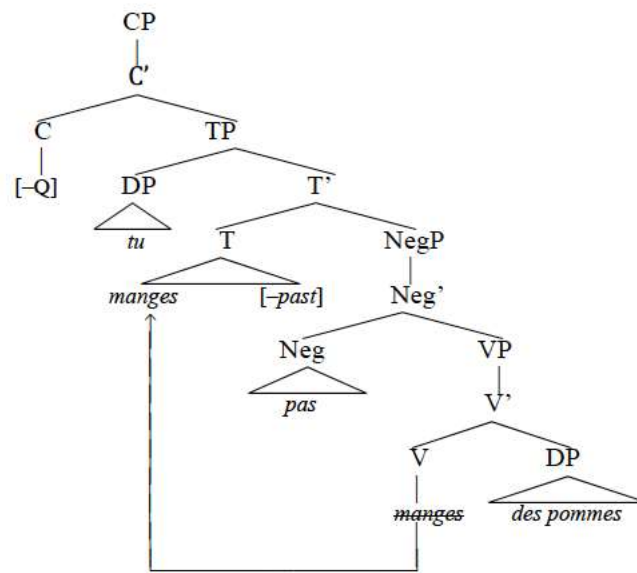
As you will see below, negation (Neg) is a functional category which projects the phrase NegP (and the intermediate Neg'). From languages such as French and English we know that NegP occupies a position between TP and VP, as you will see in the tree representation of the English (7) and French negative sentences (8). Note that negation in English triggers dummy *do* (e.g. *you do not eat apples*), unless there is a modal or auxiliary (e.g., *You cannot eat apples*; *you have not eaten apples*).

(7) You do not eat apples



¹ Most second language learners of French were taught that negation in French consists of *ne...pas*. However, *ne* is left out in many varieties of French, so we will ignore it here.

(8) Tu manges pas des pommes.

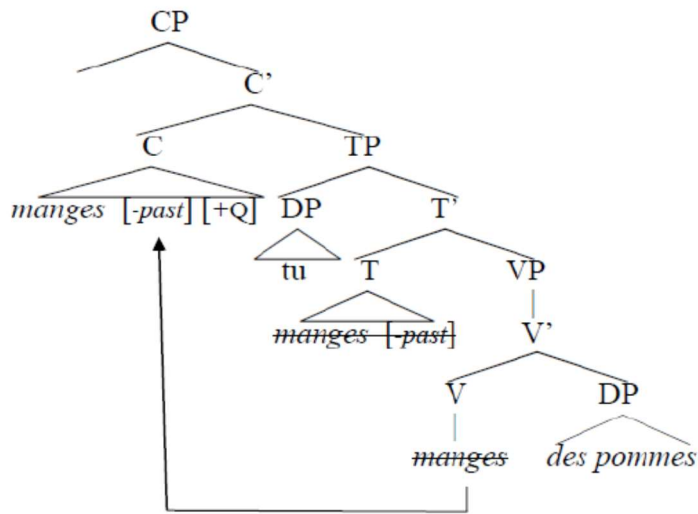


The negative structure in (7) shows that the verb in English must remain in the VP, giving us the resulting phrase *not eat apples*. In French (8), in contrast, the word order can only be explained if the verb has moved into T.

Question formation as Evidence for Verb Raising

Finally, evidence for verb raising in French comes from questions. In questions, T moves to C in French, as it does in English. Therefore, in French, because the main verb has already moved to T, when T moves to C, it will take the main verb with it, producing inversion, when the subject follows the main verb. In other words, we should be able to say *manges-tu*, unlike the ungrammatical English *eat you*. This is indeed what happens. The structure of a *yes/no* question is found in (9).

(9) Manges-tu des pommes?



In (9) the DP *des pommes* ‘the apples’ is merged with the V *manges* ‘eat’ to form the VP. The VP in turn merges with T to form T’ and then TP. Finally, the subject *tu* ‘you’ is merged in the specifier of T. The move operation first moves V to T, where the verb joins up with the tense feature. It leaves behind a copy in the VP, where it first merged. The [+Q] feature in C then attracts T to itself, forcing T to move. Again, a copy is left behind.

Reasons for the Verb Raising Contrast between English and French.

Recall that we suggested that for the move operation to take place there had to be some sort of justification. It is believed that the rich morphology of the French verb makes the tense features in French stronger, able to attract V to T. Therefore, French will always have V to T movement, and, in questions, it also has T-to-C.

Points to remember about verb raising and the position of subjects

- In English, verbs remain within the verb phrase.
- In some languages, for example French, Spanish, Arabic, among others, V moves to T.

Exercises (Answers are at the end)

1. We know that when the verb *have* is an auxiliary, it moves with T to C, as the examples in (i) show. In these cases it has merged under T.

- i.
 - a. Lucas has seen the movie several times.
 - b. Has Lucas seen the movie several times?

However, the verb *have* has another meaning: possession. In this case, we find an interesting difference between British and North American English. In British English *have*, even when it

means possession, may appear before the subject. In North America, we use dummy *do* in these occasions.

- ii. a. Have you a pen? (British)
b. Do you have a pen? (North American)

Build trees for the two questions in (ii). This will allow you to understand the difference between the two dialects. Assume that when *have* means possession it is merged under V because it is the main verb.

2. Verb raising languages such as French have rich morphology. Draw the trees for the following sentences in English. The verb *to be* is the main verb in these examples. What property of the verb *to be* do you think explains the position of the verb, adverb and negation? The APs *tired* and *happy* can be positioned as complements of *be*. You may use triangles for the DPs and APs.

- i. I am always tired.
- ii. My sister is not happy.

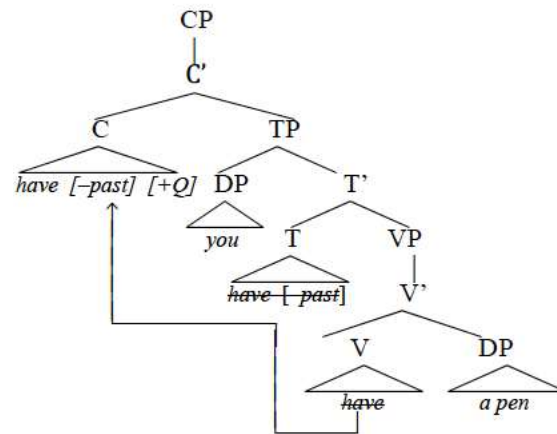
3. Draw a tree for the following Greek and European Portuguese sentences. Do these languages have verb raising? You can use triangles for the DPs and PPs.

- i. Petros egrafe panda megala grammata. (Greek)
the Peter wrote always long letters
'Peter always wrote long letters.'
- ii. Os meninos comiam sempre as suas merendas na cafeteria. (Eur. Port.)
the children ate always the their snacks in the cafeteria
'The children always ate their snacks in the cafeteria.'

Answers to Exercises

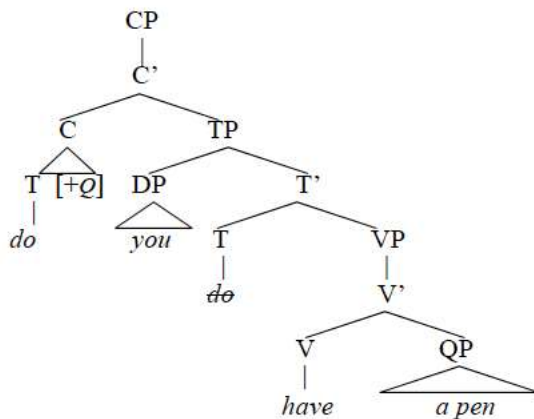
Exercise 1

a. Have you a pen? (British)



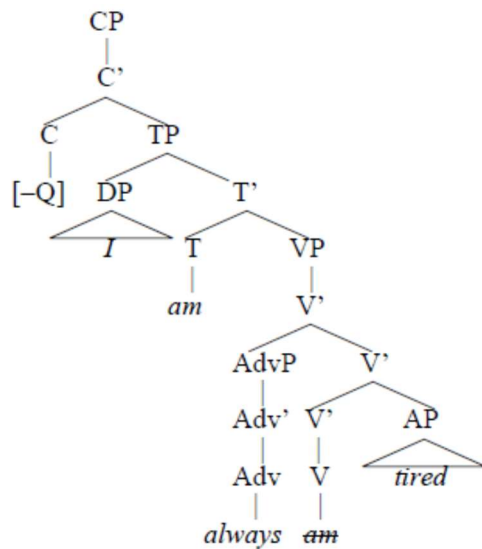
In British English the verb *have*, with the meaning of possession, must move to T. It can then move to C in questions.

b. Do you have a pen? (North American)



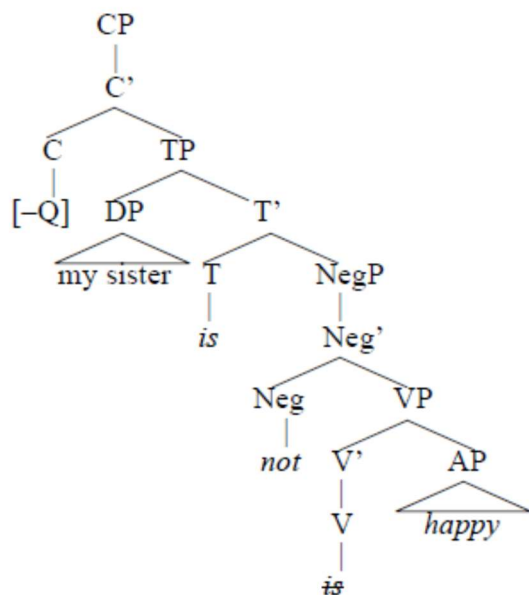
Exercise 2

- i. I am always tired.



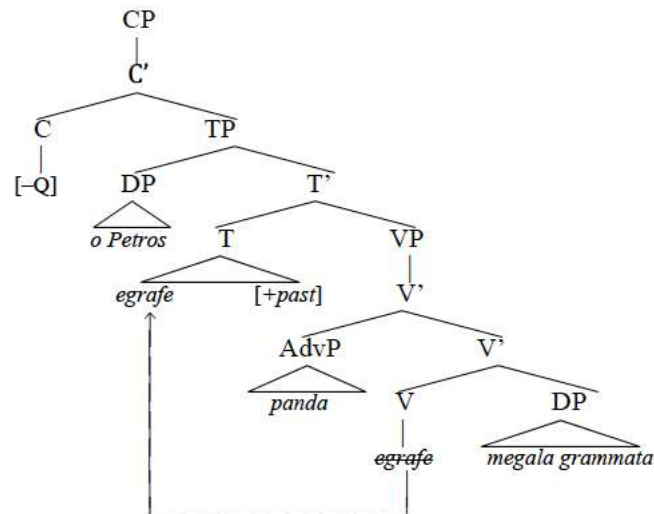
Given that *am* precedes the adverb *always*, unlike other main verbs (*I always eat cranberries*), it must be the case that the verb has moved over the adverb, in the same way French verbs do.

- ii. My sister is not happy.



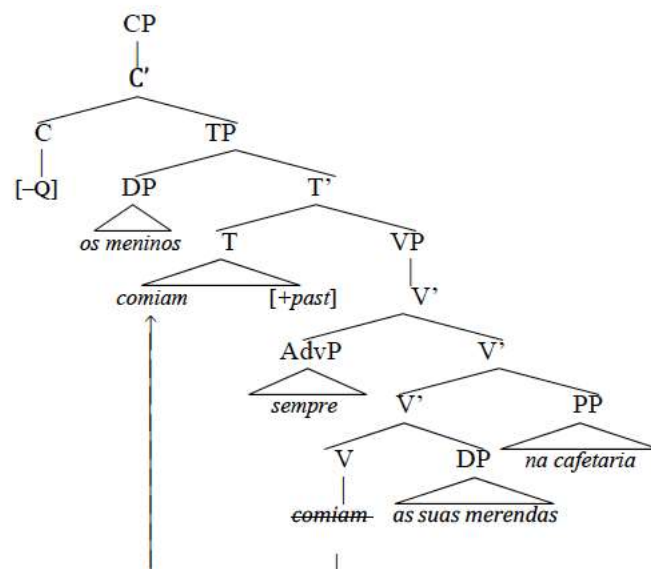
Additional evidence that the verb *to be* moves to T, even when it is the main verb, is the fact that it precedes negation, unlike other main verbs (*I do not eat cranberries*). The explanation for this probably lies in the fact that the verb *to be* in English, like all verbs in French, exhibits rich morphology. Each verbal person is different (*I am, you are, he is*).

Exercise 3



Greek does exhibit verb raising, it is the only explanation for the position of the verb in relation to the adverb.

- b. Os meninos comiam sempre as suas merendas na cafeteria.
 the children ate always the their snacks in the cafeteria
 ‘The children always ate their snacks in the cafeteria.’



European Portuguese also exhibits verb raising, as seen by the word order of the verb in relation to the adverb.