

The Extended Projection Principle as a condition on phasal visibility

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The **Extended Projection Principle [EPP]**, as proposed by Chomsky (1981, 1982), required that every clause have a subject in the position we now identify as spec,TP. In finite clauses, the position was said to be associated with nominative Case.

It was originally put forward as a way of explaining the obligatory presence of an expletive element in spec,TP when the subject fails to raise in English.

However, the EPP is **conceptually problematic** because it is an **arbitrary stipulation** about clause structure which fails to explain why subjects appear where they do.

It is **empirically problematic** because it **does not hold** across all languages, like German, as concluded by *inter alia* Haider (1993), Rosengren (2002) and Biberauer (2008). For example:

*(There) is a cat in the garden.

*(It) is raining.



Dative-marked indirect objects may occur in spec,TP (the supposed subject position):

... dass dem Mann das Buch gegeben wurde.
 ... that the.DAT man the.NOM book given became
 '... that the book was given to the man.'

van Gelderen (1993:149)

Expletives may only surface clause initially in spec,CP and not in spec,TP:

Es kam gestern ein Junge.
 There came yesterday a.NOM boy

Gestern kam (*es) ein Junge.
 Yesterday came (*there) a.NOM boy

Richards & Biberauer (2005:126)

Subject may remain in their base-generated spec,*v**P position so an existential reading obtains:

...weil (Kinder) ja doch (Kinder) Fußball spielen.
 ...because (children) PARTICLE PARTICLE (children) football play
 GENERIC EXISTENTIAL

Generic: '...because children play football.' Existential: '...because children are playing football.' Diesing (1992:270)

So, if the EPP does not hold in German, why should it hold in English?

Answer: there is a general condition requiring **phonologically overt material** to be externally or internally merged **in every phase of the clause**. I call this the 'Phase Visibility Condition':

Phase Visibility Condition [PVC]

Every phase must contain at least one position which is obligatorily phonologically realised.

This is achieved by proposing that there is an **EPP feature on every phase head** which is **satisfied by Merger of an element associated with phonological structure**.

This potentially captures the observations by Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (2001) and Baker (2002) that material must always leave *v*P, although I claim that Select and External Merge are sufficient to satisfy an EPP feature.

But why should the PVC exist at all?

Answer: filling each phase with some material means that it can be **identified** by - i.e. it is 'visible' to - the interfaces.

The PVC prevents vacuous transfer to PF.

There may be a general principle of **computational efficiency** (a 'third-factor' explanation (cf. Chomsky 2005)) which requires that every phase make a contribution to the PF and LF interfaces.

Merging a verb and its argument structure will satisfy the PVC at the *v**P level, but languages could **differ parametrically** in the way they satisfy the condition in the **CP phase**. In particular, the EPP feature may appear on C and/or T and may be satisfied in different ways (Merger may target the head or specifier). Following Ouali (2008), I propose that there are three possibilities:

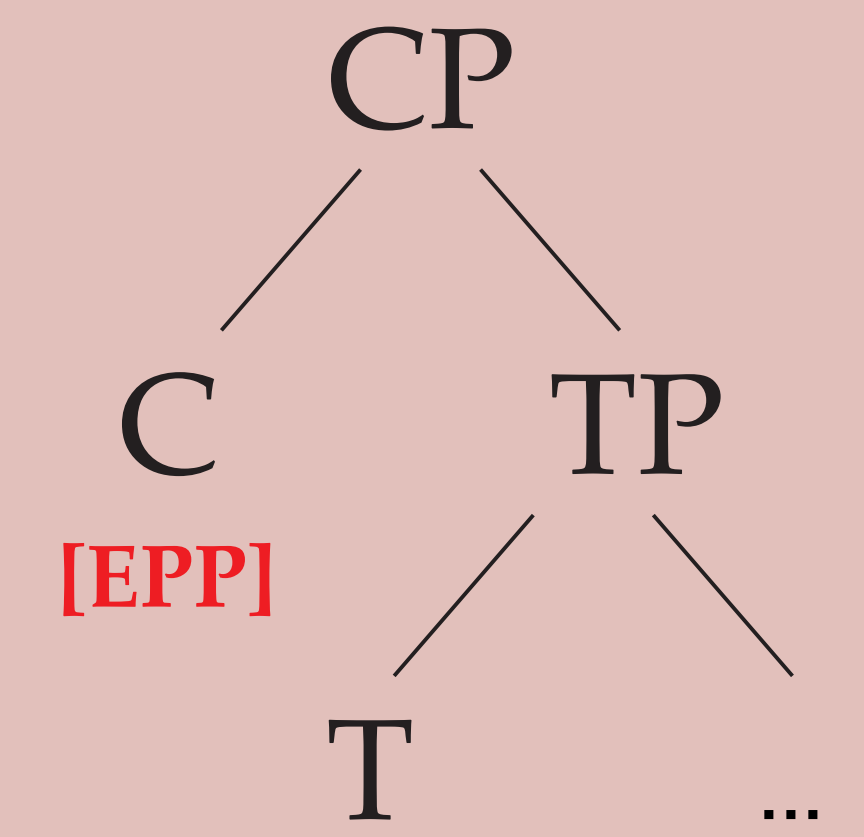
1

C may **KEEP** its EPP feature.

This is the option that German exploits. T may remain unfilled (there being no evidence for *v*-T movement), main clauses exhibit obligatory verb second [V2] and embedded clauses require an overt complementiser or else also exhibit V2:

Er sagte mir, dass er krank sei.
 he said.3SG.PAST to-me, that he ill is.SUBJUNCTIVE
 'He told me that he was ill.'

Er sagte mir, er sei krank.
 *Er sagte mir, er krank sei.



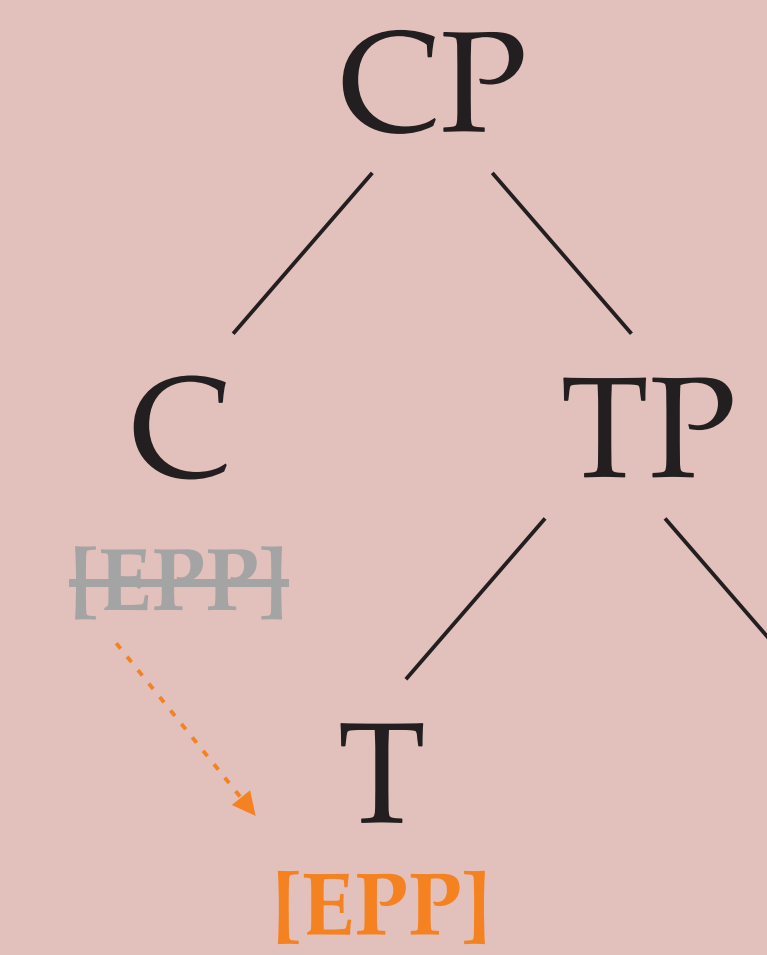
2

C may **DONATE** its EPP feature to T

(as Chomsky 2004 claims T inherits its phi-features from C).

This is the option chosen by English, as shown by the lack of V2 requirement and the possibility of optional complementisers.

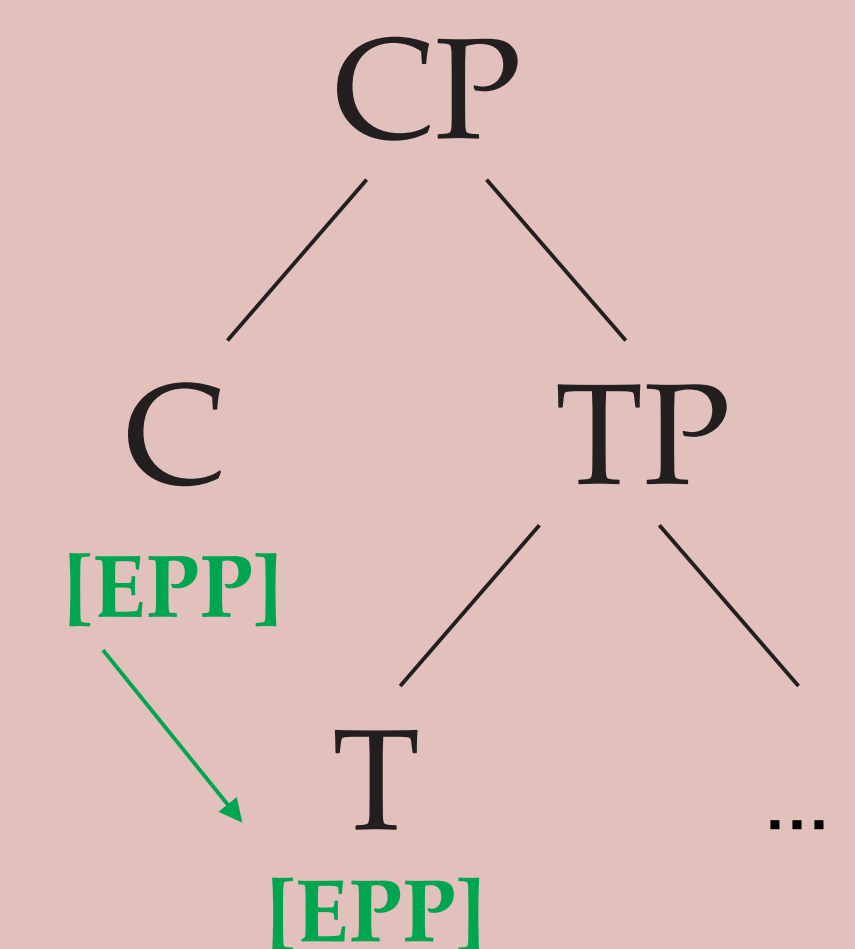
Furthermore, lack of *v*-T movement, canonical subject raising and expletive insertion in unaccusative constructions should lead the learner to posit that spec,TP is targeted.



3

C may **SHARE** its EPP feature with T.

This is the option chosen by Icelandic, as suggested by its symmetric V2 and *v*-T movement requirements.



The English-style EPP is **one specific instantiation** of this **more general principle**, which is also at work in German, even though the original EPP does not hold.

References

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