

No escape hatch for A-movement: Evidence from causative/perception verbs

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[partly based on joint work with Sonia Cyrino]

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In this talk, I defend the position that A-movement does not have access to phase-edge escape hatches. The crucial context which illustrates this is the clausal complements of causative/perception verbs. Whereas passives of ECM are generally possible, this is not the case where the complement is a bare verb in English (Higginbotham 1983, Felser 1999). This is because such complements are phases (as defined by independent diagnostics such as VP-ellipsis and VP-fronting – Harwood 2015):

- (1) a. *Kim_i was made/had/let seen/heard/witnessed [t_i sing]
 b. Kim_i was made/seen/heard [t_i to sing].
 c. Kim was seen/heard/witnessed [t_i singing].
 d. Sam_i was made [t_i angry] by the news.

I show that if we adopt PIC2 (Chomsky 2001) and Legate's (2003) claim that all vPs are phases, we can explain these contrasts as a direct effect of phase theory: the lower vP is transferred before the matrix T probes. This is avoided in (1b-c) because a T-related projection is present and so an EPP helps the causee escape spell-out. In (1d), the small clause complement is non-verbal, hence non-phasal. As expected, such effects are not limited to English; they are widely attested in other languages with ECM complements (Brazilian Portuguese, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish). The same restriction extends, moreover, to languages which have more monoclausal causative constructions, where the causee receives dative case in transitive contexts (French, Italian, European Portuguese, Korean, Japanese – Kayne 1975, Folli & Harley 2007, Gonçalves 1999, Jung 2014, Miyagawa 1994, 1998, Harley 2017). This has important implications for phase theory. I argue that the 'monoclausality' in languages like Italian and French is actually mono-phasality: where a light verb selects a vP, they form a single vP phase. I also discuss morphological causatives. As predicted, 'lexical' causatives (Pylkkänen's 2002, 2008, root-selecting causatives) and VP-selecting causatives also generally permit passivisation, as they are simply monoclausal. What is more surprising, however, is the fact that in some languages, vP-selecting syntactic causatives (Pylkkänen's 2002, 2008 voice-selecting causatives) also permit passivisation (Haiki, Hindi, Zulu, Sotho – Harley 2017, Ramchand 2009, Key 2013, Buell 2005, Machobane 1991), even though these complements also seem to be vPs. I discuss potential ways of accommodating these kinds of languages.