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The issue

Extrapolation of clausal/propositional arguments such as in (1) and (2) has been subject to extensive research during the last decades.

- (1) a. It really {sucks/blows/bites} that the Giants lost the World Series.
b. That the Giants lost the World Series really sucks/blows/bites.
(Alrenga, 2005, 176)
- (2) a. It {seems/happens/appears} that the Giants lost the World Series.
b. *That the Giants lost the World Series {seems/happens/appears}.
(Alrenga, 2005, 175)

Such examples have raised a number of questions, most prominently: Is extrapolation of propositional arguments a uniform phenomenon within a language/cross-linguistically? If not, which (sub)types have to be distinguished? While this question has been considered in more detail with respect to verbs, the same configuration with adjectives has been considered with less details.

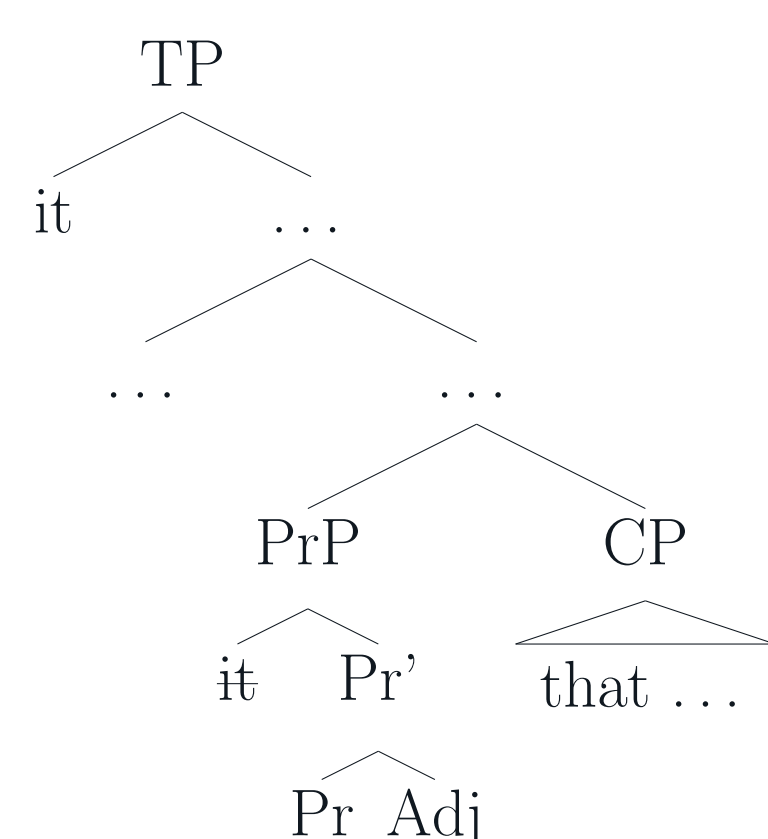
Contribution of the work here: Here, I provide some considerations for extraposed clauses with adjectival predicates in English and report on three different experimental studies, and relate them to current approaches to extraposition.

Note: The following other types of extraposition and right dislocation are set aside here: Relative clause extraposition, PP extraposition from NP, Heavy NP Shift, see for different analyses and proposals Büring & Hartmann (1997); Reinhart (1980, 1983); Baltin (1982, 2006); Müller (1994); Göbbel (2014); Hartmann (2013); Culicover & Rochemont (1990); Kayne (1994); Sheehan (2011); Hofmeister et al. (2015) among others;

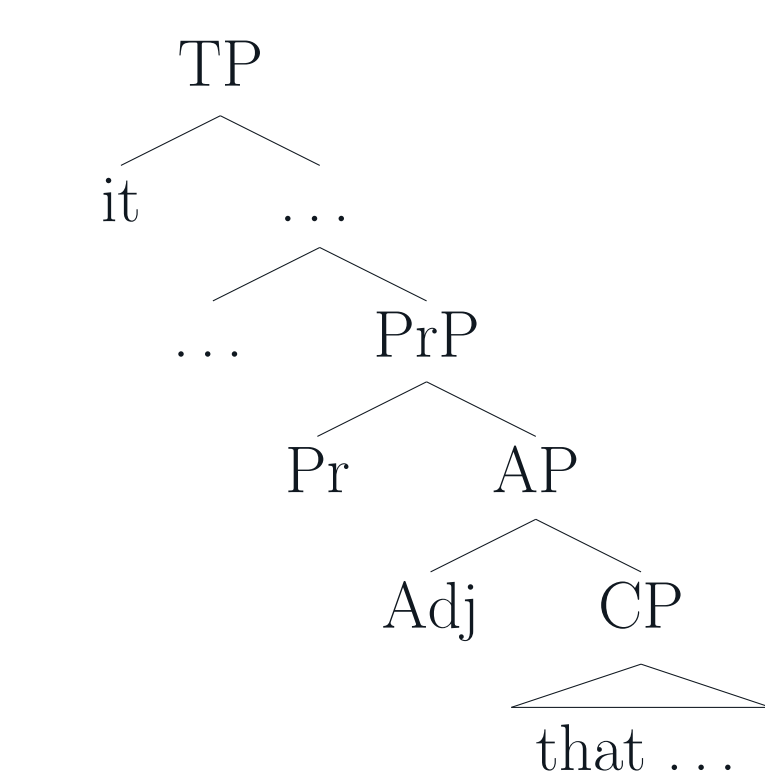
Theoretical Approaches

Three different types of analyses are to be distinguished: The **Adjunct Analyses (AAs)**: *it* is the selected subject and extraposed clause is an adjunct (see a.o. Koster 1978; Bennis 1986; Vikner 1995). The **Complement Analyses (=CAs)**: clause as a selected argument while *it* as an expletive (see for ergative adjectives Bennis 2000, for *seem* in Alrenga 2005). The **Complex Constituent Analyses (CCAs)**: *it*+CP form a nominal constituent from which the clause is necessarily extraposed (see Rosenbaum 1967; Sonnenberg 1992, partly Büring & Hartmann 1997; Müller 1995).

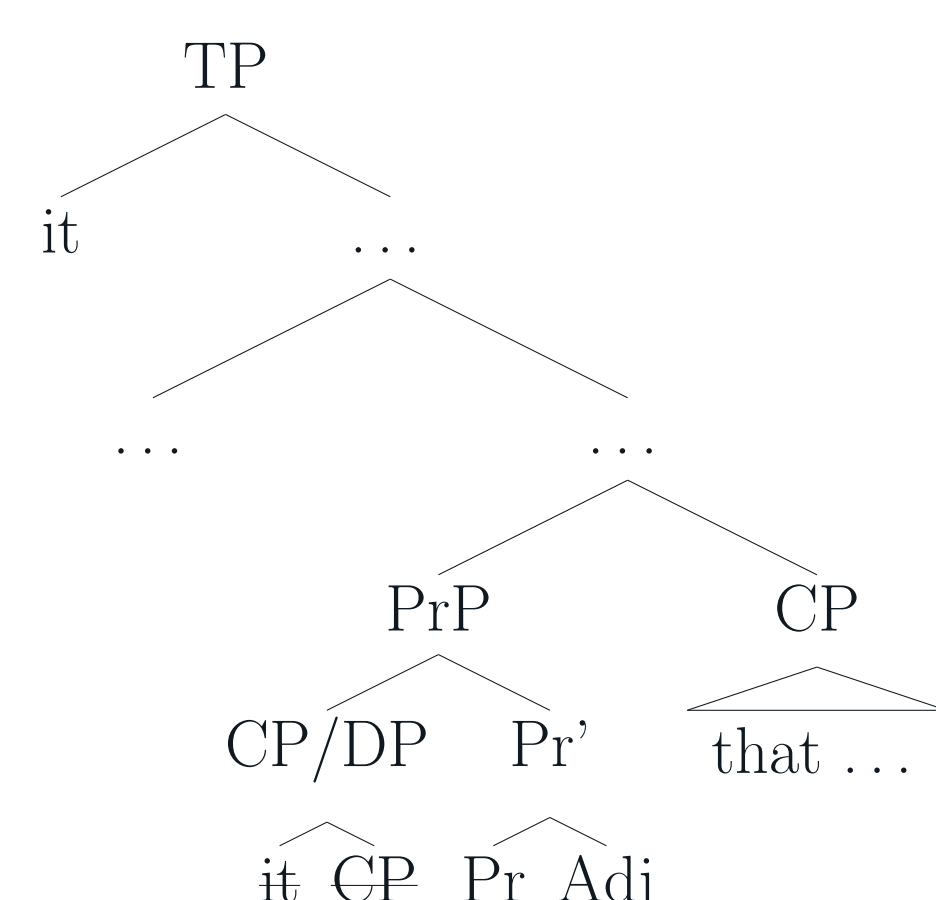
(3) Adjunct Analysis



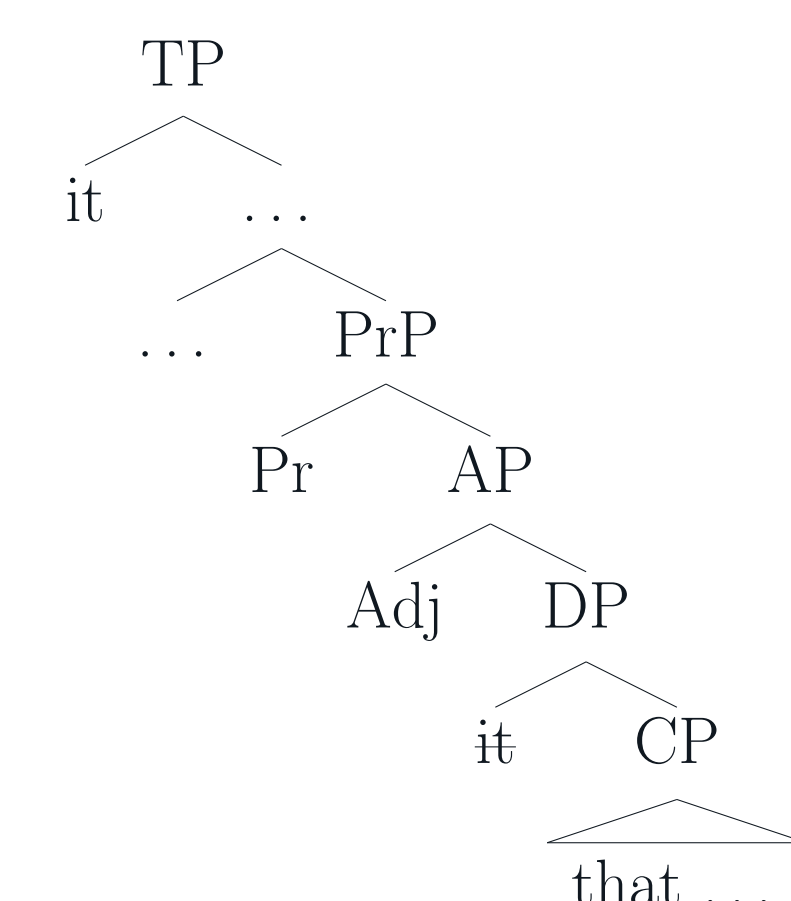
(5) Complement Analysis



(4) CCA: unergative



(6) CCA: ergative



Experimental Studies: Expectation

Relevance of wh-extraction: The different analyses make different predictions with respect to wh-extraction (also depending on the class of predicate):

| Analysis | Prediction |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| (3) adjunct analysis | * |
| (5) complement analysis | ✓ |
| (6) complex constituent analysis | * |

Experimental Studies: Design

Two different studies with the conditions in (7), (8)

- Adjectives 1: Adjectives with a finite clause, which usually do not occur with an additional PP argument (see Herbst et al. 2004; based on BNC data), including modal adjectives (possible, impossible, certain, probable, likely), adjectives of frequency (common, customary, rare, unusual), evaluative predicates (illegal, right, wrong, correct, true)

- (7) a. Extrapolation: It is possible that Peter sold his school books.
b. Extraction: Which books is it possible that ...?
c. In-situ Subject: That Peter sold his school books is possible.

- Adjectives 2: Adjectives, which occur with an additional PP argument (Predicates of Personal Taste (Experiencer PP = judge); Evaluative Predicates (PP ≠ judge); (distinction based on Bylina 2014)

- (8) 1. Extrapolation: It is clear that the parliament will vote against the proposal.
2. Extraction: Which proposal was it clear that the parliament will vote against?
3. In-situ subject: That the parliament will vote against the proposal was clear.
4. Extrapolation mit PP: It is clear to the public that the parliament will vote against the proposal.
5. Extraction with PP: Which proposal was it clear to the public that the parliament will vote against?

Experimental Studies: Results

The results show across all configurations (see the figures below) (i) that *that*-clauses are overall not tolerated in subject position (with the exception of a few selected adjectival predicates) and (ii) that *wh*-extraction is not possible out of *that*-clause with all investigated adjectival predicates. Post-hoc tests reveal that with a small set of unergative predicates (disallowing that-drop, occurrence in as-is constructions and DP+INF, see Cinque 1989; Bennis 2000, 2004) *wh*-extraction is rated significantly worse than clausal subjects, while *wh*-extraction and occurrence in subject position are rated equally bad with ergative adjectives.

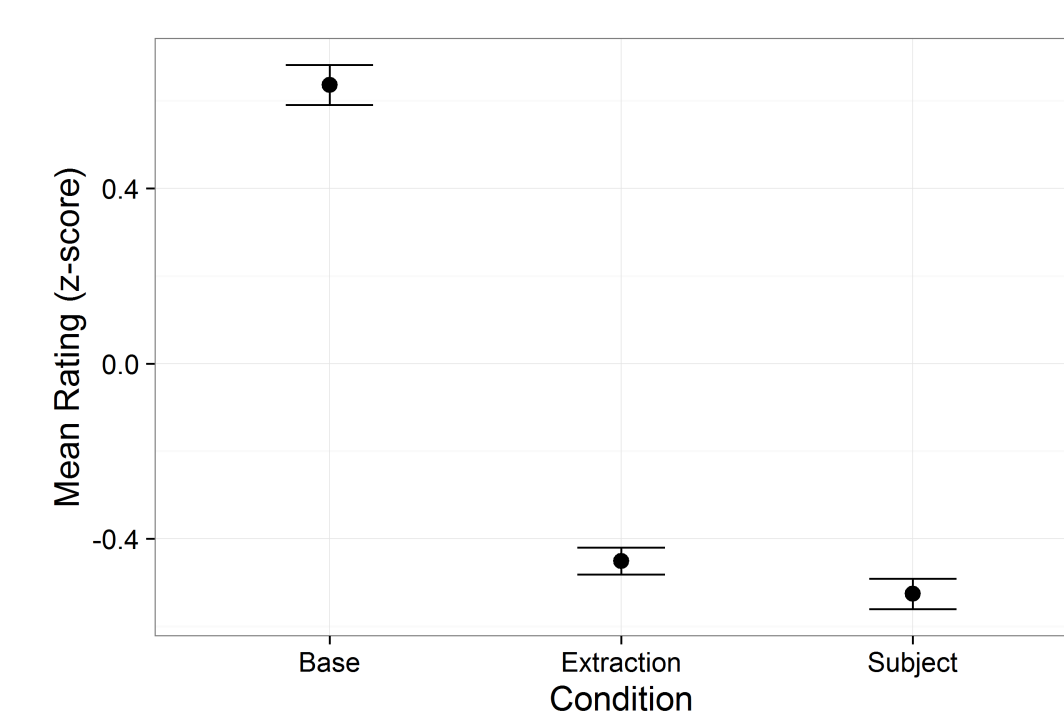


Fig. 2: Adjectives 1 (n=96)

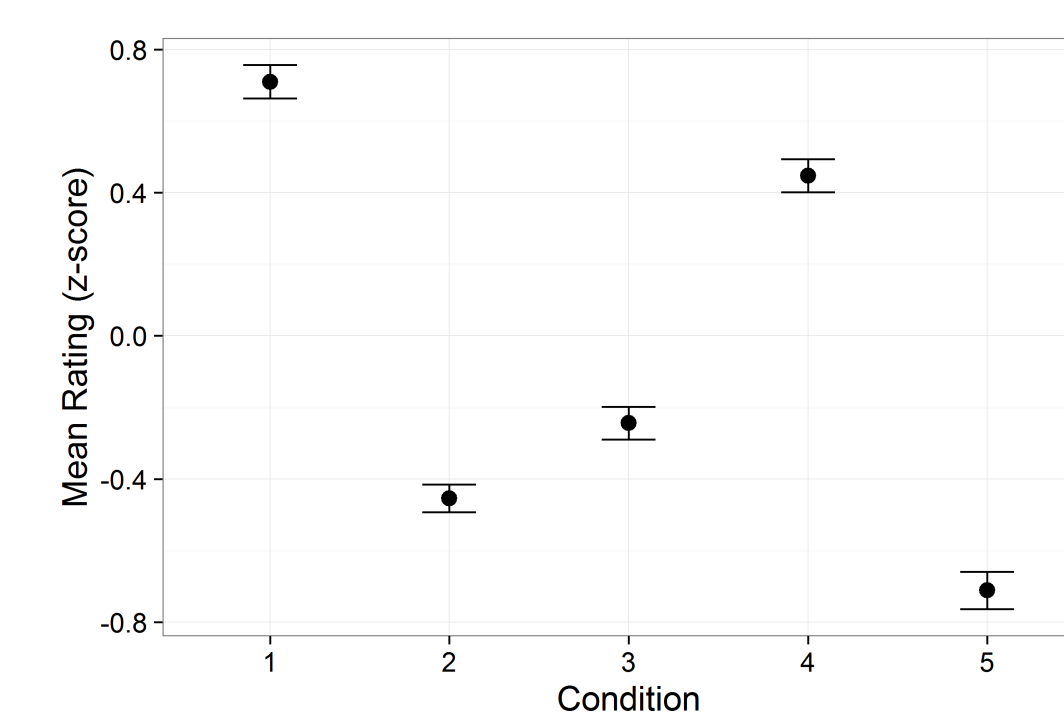


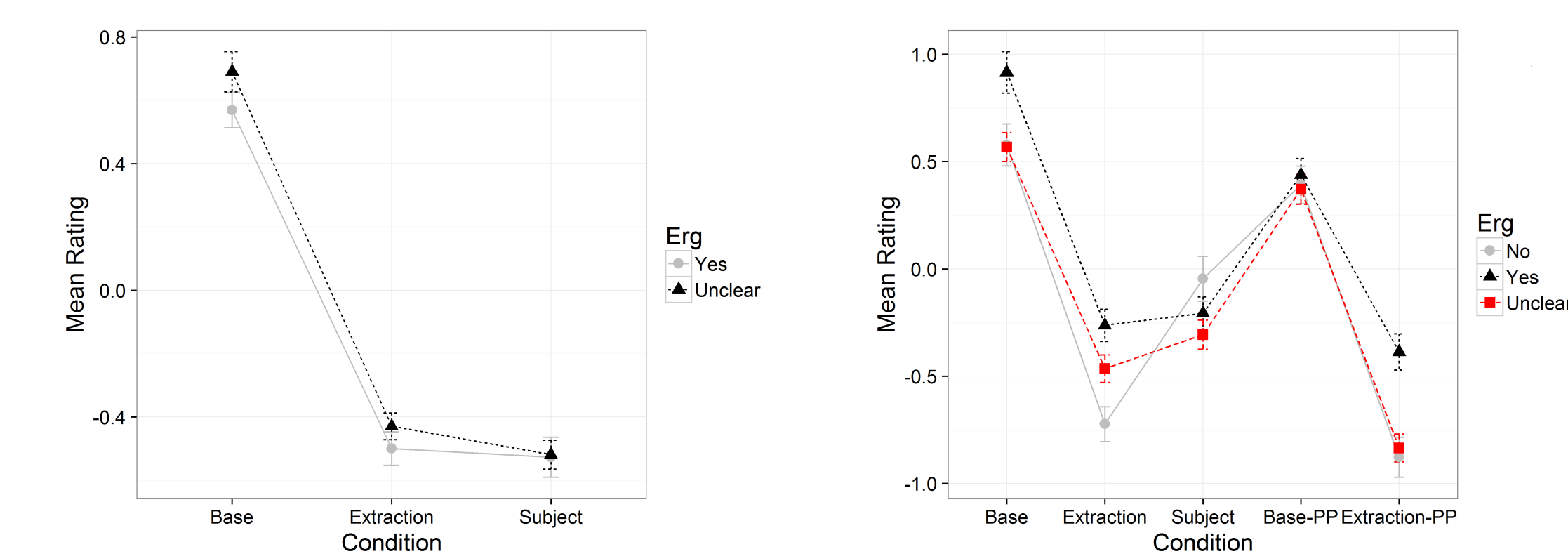
Fig. 3: Adjectives 2 (n=96)

Discussion

Based on this study, *wh*-extraction is generally not possible out of extraposed clauses, both with unergative and ergative adjectives. This result is not expected under the Complement Analyses, but it is under the Adjunct Analyses and Complex Constituent Analyses. Considering the availability of the clause in subject position being dependent on the nature of the predicate as unergative or ergative suggests that the *that*-clause without *it* can be a selected subject. Taking this together extraposed clauses are either adjoined with *it* as a kind of cataphoric pronoun in subject position (both with unergative and ergative adjectives) or they are base-generated in complement position with the correlate extracted to subject position (ergative adjectives) or they are base-generated as *that*-clauses in subject position (unergative adjectives).

Outlook

There is an issue whether or not the unergative vs. ergative distinction is also relevant with these adjectives. The adjectives used in the two studies can be grouped in these classes based on (i) Comp-drop (ii) Availability in *As is ADJ* contexts (iii) Raising available for adjective with infinitival complement. Even though it was not obvious how to group some of the adjectives, posthoc-analysis suggests that (un)ergativity indeed should be explored more.



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