

## A phase-based account of the optional EPP in Finnish

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Finnish subject position can be characterized as a mixture of syntax and discourse. Finite clauses typically require the subject position to be filled (1a-b), but the movement to the subject position can be discourse-driven (c) (see Holmberg and Nikanne, 2002, among others).

- (1)
- a. Pekka lähtee kotiin.  
Pekka leaves home.to  
'Pekka goes home.'
  - b. \*Lähtee Pekka kotiin. (without contrasting the verb)  
leaves Pekka home.to
  - c. Kotiin lähtee Pekka  
home.to leaves Pekka  
'It is Pekka who is going home.'

The requirement for finite clauses to have the subject position filled is called Extended Projection Principle (EPP) (Chomsky, 1981). However, Finnish has several types of finite clauses, where the EPP is not in effect. These clauses typically express an event or a state of affairs, as in examples (2a-d).

- (2) (Hakulinen et al., 2004, § 1378)
- a. Tarvitaan lisää tutkimusta.  
need.PASS more.PAR research.PAR  
'More research is needed.'
  - b. Täytyy lähteä kotiin.  
must leave home.to  
'One has to go home.'
  - c. On ihan liian kylmä.  
be.PRES.3SG way too cold  
'It's way too cold.'
  - d. Sataa vettä.  
rain.PRES.3SG water.PAR  
'It rains.'

I will show first, that the subject position is empty in the above sentences. The data from word order, binding and licensing of adverbials suggest that these sentences cannot contain a little *pro*-element, a generic null pronoun nor a null expletive at the spec,TP.

Holmberg and Nikanne (2002) suggest that the EPP can be *optional* in Finnish and that the EPP is triggered if the sentence contains a category that can function as a topic and move to the preverbal position. Holmberg (2005) refines this account and proposes that a category can check the EPP (a) if it is a subject or (b) if it is referential, 'in the sense that DPs and certain adverbials (locative, temporal, instrumental, but not for instance manner or reason) are referential' (Holmberg, 2005, 543). Thus, for example, the subject position can be empty in (2b), but as soon as the subject is present, some element has to move to the spec,TP, as in (3).

- (3) Jonkun täytyy lähteä kotiin. / \*Täytyy jonkun lähteä kotiin.  
 someone.GEN must leave.INF home.to  
 ‘Someone has to go home.’

In addition, time and place adverbials trigger the EPP in (4a-b), whereas manner adverbials or subject-oriented adverbials do not (c).

- (4) a. Huomenna sataa vettä. / \*Sataa huomenna vettä.  
 tomorrow rain.PRES.3SG water.PAR  
 ‘It will rain tomorrow’  
 b. Jossakin sataa vettä. / \*Sataa jossakin vettä.  
 somewhere rain.PRES.3SG water.PAR  
 ‘It rains somewhere’  
 c. Sataa rankasti/ehkä vettä.  
 rain.PRES.3SG heavily/maybe water.PAR  
 ‘It rains heavily.’ / ‘It maybe rains.’

As can be seen in the above examples, subjects or adverbials do not have to be topical or even referential in order to trigger the EPP. However, the same is not true for the object argument: the object may remain in-situ only if it is non-referential, as in (5a), but e.g. pronominals are forced to move (b). These examples show that the information content of the expression has a role in Finnish EPP.

- (5) a. Löydettiin mies. / Mies löydettiin.  
 find.PASS.PAST man.NOM man.NOM find.PASS.PAST  
 ‘A man was found.’ / ‘The man was found.’  
 b. \*?Löydettiin hänet. / Hänet löydettiin.  
 find.PASS.PAST s/he.ACC s/he.ACC find.PASS.PAST  
 ‘He/She was found.’

I present a unified approach for the movement to spec,TP by relying on the concepts of the phase theory (Chomsky, 2000, 2008). In the phase theory, an element is only able to move outside the phase  $\nu$ P, if it occupies the edge of  $\nu$ P. I propose here that in Finnish, the presence of some element at the edge of  $\nu$ P triggers EPP on T. First, this generalization accounts for the movement of the subject in (4), since the agentive subject occupies the specifier of  $\nu$ P. Second, certain adverbials move because they are base-generated as  $\nu$ P-adjuncts, and thus occupy the edge. And third, the discourse-old object argument moves in (5b), because it is scrambled to the edge of the  $\nu$ P. Scrambling of discourse-old elements to the edge of  $\nu$ P can be witnessed e.g. in Finnish ditransitive constructions (Kaiser, 2002).

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