

Copy Raising: At the Limits of Syntax

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Overview

- **Next:** Lay out this phenomenon, whose apparent simplicity belies an extremely rich set of complex, interacting factors
- **Then:** Briefly sketch the sorts of analyses I have pursued, in my own work and in collaboration with Professor Ida Toivonen and students of ours
- **Lastly:** Conclude and consider some directions for future work

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Introduction

- Copy raising is a fascinating phenomenon that tests the limits of our current understanding of syntax and how it interacts with other parts of the language system (Rogers 1973, Postal 1974, Perlmutter & Soames 1979, Potsdam & Runner 2001, Asudeh 2002, 2004, 2012, Asudeh & Toivonen 2006, 2007, 2012, Landau 2009, 2011, Rett & Hyams 2014, Brook 2016).

1. **Thora** seems like/as if/as though **she** is on time for school.
2. **It** seems like/as if/as though Thora is on time for school.
3. * **Thora** seems like/as if/as though **Harry** is on time for school.

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At the Limits of Syntax

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Copy Pronouns and Expletives

- There is an obligatory (for most speakers) “copy” pronoun when the matrix subject is a non-expletive.
 - Yet, like other raising verbs, the subject *can* be an expletive, in which case the expletive *must* be the expletive *it* (in English):
 4. * There seems like/as if/as though Thora is on time for school.
 - Unless an expletive *there* is copied in the subordinate finite clause:
 5. **There** seems like **there** is a party downstairs.
 - This raises the question of whether a matrix *it* expletive is independently generated or “copied” when there is a subordinate *it* expletive (Horn 1981, Asudeh 2012):
 6. **It** seems like **it** is raining.

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A Complementizer?

- Based largely on superficial similarities with the version of *seem* with a bare or *that* finite complement, the complement of copy raising has sometimes been assumed to be a finite clause introduced by a “comparative complementizer”, *like/as if/as though*. (Rooryck 2000, López-Couso & Méndez-Naya, 2012)
- However, this misses another obvious point of comparison, which is with predicative complements of *seem*, as in:
 11. Kim seems sick.
 12. Kim seems under the weather.
 13. Kim seems like a nice person.

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The Finite Subordinate Clause

- The finite subordinate clause is introduced by an obligatory *like* or *as if* or *as though*, not the standard finite *that* complementizer, and it also cannot be a bare finite clause:
 7. * Thora seems **that** she is on time for school.
 8. * Thora seems she is on time for school.
- Contrast:
 9. It seems that Thora is on time for school.
 10. It seems Thora is on time for school.

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A Complementizer?

- An alternative, then, is that the complement of copy raising is in fact a predicative phrase of some kind (both PP and AP have been suggested in the literature), headed by a predicative head that takes a finite clause as a complement, which is independently possible:
 14. Kim seems proud that Robin scored a goal.

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The Nature of the Comparison

- The head of the complement in copy raising, *like* or *as*, is an element that is independently used in comparatives:

15. Kim is **as** tall as Robin.

16. Kim is **more like** Robin than like Sandy.

17. Kim greeted Robin **very much like/as if/as though** they had not seen each other in a very long time.

The Nature of the Comparison

- It would seem to miss a generalization to treat these occurrences of these comparative phrases substantially differently than the occurrences in copy raising, but what prospect is there for a unified syntactic treatment across the cases, especially as some are predicative arguments and others are adjuncts?
- Additionally, what is the semantic basis of the comparison?
 - In copy raising, the comparison seems to be between an individual and a clause, but this does not make much sense: What is the actual standard of comparison?
 - This could reveal something important about the syntax and semantics of comparatives and the relationship between syntax and semantics, more broadly.

The Syntax of Perception

- There is a parallel paradigm of *perceptual resemblance verbs* (Asudeh 2004, 2012, Asudeh & Toivonen 2012):

18. **These fries** look/sound/smell/taste/feel like/as if/as though **they** have been quadruple deep-fried.

19. It looks/sounds/smells/tastes/feels like/as if/as though these fries have been quadruple deep-fried.

The Syntax of Perception

- These verbs systematically occur in a number of paradigms, though (Rogers 1973, Viberg 1983, 2001, Gisborne 2010):

Modality	Percept subj	Agentive subj	Experiencer subj
Vision	<i>look</i>	<i>look (at)/watch</i>	<i>see</i>
Hearing	<i>sound</i>	<i>listen (to)</i>	<i>hear</i>
Smell	<i>smell</i>	<i>smell</i>	<i>smell</i>
Taste	<i>taste</i>	<i>taste</i>	<i>taste</i>
Touch	<i>feel</i>	<i>feel/touch</i>	<i>feel</i>

- Copy raising is therefore part of a larger enquiry into the syntax of perception.

Perceptual Entailments

- Moreover, it is well-known that perception verbs have different entailments depending on the structure of their complements (Barwise 1981, Barwise & Perry 1983):

20. Kim heard that Robin crashed the car.
⇒ Kim heard the accident

21. Kim heard Robin crash the car.
⇒ Kim heard the accident
⇒ Kim heard Robin

22. Kim heard Robin.
⇒ Kim heard Robin

- There is therefore a very interesting relationship between the syntax and semantics of perception, which copy raising could shed further light on.

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The Argument Structure of Copy Raising

- It might be tempting to assume that the alternation between copy raising and its expletive-subject variant enjoys the same long-established semantic equivalence as between subject-to-subject raising and its finite variant:

23. Thora seems to be tired.

24. = It seems that Thora is tired.

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The Syntax of Evidentiality

- Copy raising and perceptual resemblance seem to involve syntactic/constructional encoding of *evidentiality* (Aikhenvald 2004, Faller 2002, Garrett 2002, Murray 2010, 2017).
- This has sometimes been claimed to be *direct* evidentiality (Rett & Hyams 2014)
- However, perhaps it is in fact *indirect* evidentiality (Asudeh, Sullivan & Toivonen 2017)
- Asudeh & Toivonen (in prep):
 - Argue *contra* Aikhenvald that evidentiality is necessarily morphosyntactically marked ('grammaticalized evidentiality')
 - Argue instead that we need a common semantic vocabulary for capturing grammaticalized evidentiality and non-grammaticalized evidentiality

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Passive

25. The doctor seemed to examine the patient.

26. = The patient seemed to be examined by the doctor.

Rosenbaum (1967), Postal (1974)

27. The doctor seemed like she examined the patient.

28. ≠ The patient seemed like he was examined by the doctor.

Asudeh & Toivonen (2012)

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The Puzzle of the Absent Cook

• **Context:** Kim and Robin walk into Tom's kitchen. Tom is at the stove doing something, but exactly what is unclear. Kim says:

- 29. It seems that Tom is cooking.
- 30. Tom seems to be cooking.
- 31. It seems like Tom is cooking.
- 32. Tom seems like he is cooking.

• **Context:** Kim and Robin walk into Tom's kitchen. There's no sign of Tom, but there are various things bubbling away on the stove and there are several ingredients on the counter, apparently waiting to be used. Kim says:

- 33. It seems that Tom is cooking.
- 34. Tom seems to be cooking.
- 35. It seems like Tom is cooking.
- 36. * Tom seems like he is cooking.

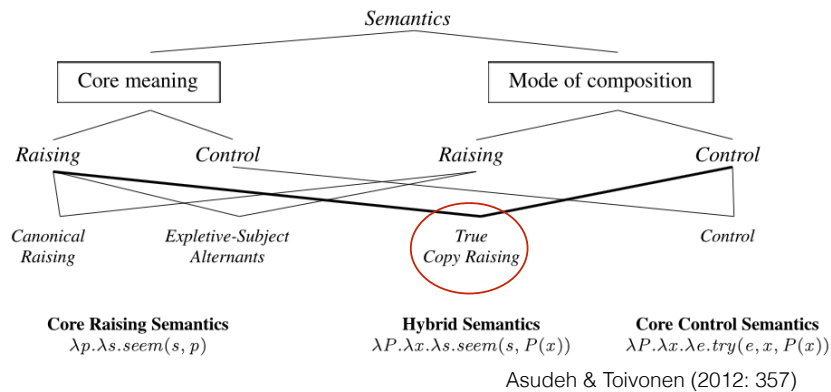
Asudeh & Toivonen (2012)
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Control or Raising?

- The non-equivalence under passive and the puzzle of the absent cook indicate that perhaps the subject of copy raising is somehow thematic.
- This means that copy raising is in some sense like a control construction.
- Problems:
 - Why, then, do we see an alternation with an expletive subject?
 - What would *seem* mean as a control predicate?
 - What kind of role would the non-expletive subject play in argument structure, given that it is a subject, but neither an *agent* nor an *experiencer*?

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Control *and* Raising



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Microvariation: English

	% of speakers (n = 110)	Description
Dialect A	6.35%	No copy raising subcategorization with non-expletive matrix subject
Dialect B	45.1%	True copy raising I — copy pronoun must be highest subject in complement of <i>like/as</i>
Dialect C	42.2%	True copy raising II — copy pronoun not necessarily highest subject
Dialect D	6.35%	Copy raising subcategorization with non-expletive matrix subject and no copy pronoun in complement

Asudeh (2012: 328)

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Microvariation: English

Example	Dialect			
	A	B	C	D
It seems like Harry fell.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alfred seems like he hurt Thora.	*	✓	✓	✓
Alfred seems like Madeline claimed that he hurt Thora.	*	*	✓	✓
Alfred seems like Thora hurt him.	*	*	✓	✓
Alfred seems like Thora's hurt.	*	*	*	✓

Asudeh (2012: 328)

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Copy Raising in Other Languages

- Swedish (Asudeh & Toivonen 2012)

37. Han verkar som om han är lugnare nu.
he seems as if he is calmer now
'He seems like he is calmer now.'

38. Det verkar på honom som om han är lugnare nu.
it seems on him as if he is calmer now
'He seems like he is calmer now.'

39. Det verkar som om han är lugnare nu.
it seems as if he is calmer now
'It seems like he is calmer now.'

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Copy Raising in Other Languages

- Greek (Joseph 1976, Perlmutter & Soames 1979)

40. Fenete oti i kopeles θa fevgun.
seem.3SG COMP the girls.NOM FUT leave
'It seems that the girls will be leaving.'

41. I kopeles fenonde na fevgun.
the girls.NOM seem.3PL SUBJUNC. leave
'The girls seem to be leaving.'

- Persian (Darzi 1996)

42. Benəzər miad (ke) bəcheha khəste həstənd.
opinion PRES.come.3SG (COMP) children tired be.3PL
'It seems that the children are tired.'

43. % Bəcheha benəzər miad (ke) khəste həstənd.
children opinion PRES.come.3PL (COMP) tired be.3PL
'The children seem to be tired.'

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Hyperraising

- Apparent raising from a finite clause:

Bantu (Harford Perez 1985, Carstens 2011, Carstens & Diercks 2013), Brazilian Portuguese (Martins & Nunes 2005), ...

- 44. Lubukusu (Carstens & Diercks 2013)

a. Ka-lolekhana (mbo) babaandu ba-kwa
6SA-seem (that) 2people 2SA.PST-fall1
'It seems that the people fell.'

b. babaandu ba-lolekhana (mbo) ba-kwa
2people 2SA-seem (that) 2SA.PST-fall
'The people seem like they fell/
The people seem to have fallen.'

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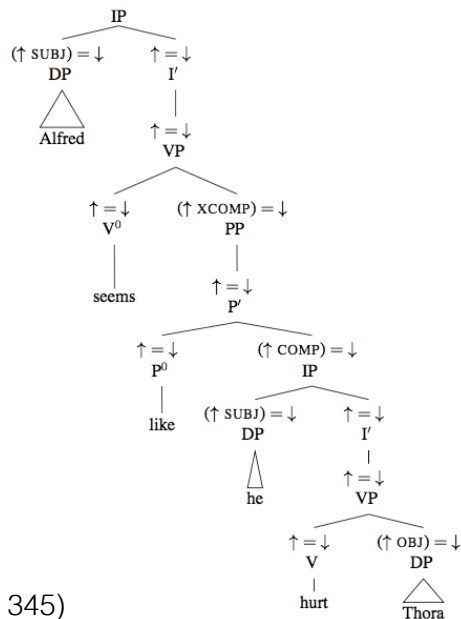
Hyperraising

- Apparent raising from a finite clause:
Brazilian Portuguese, Bantu, ...

45. Lusaamia (Carstens & Diercks 2013)

- Bi-bonekhana koti Ouma a-kusa enyumba eyaye
8SA-appear that O. 1SA-sell 9house 9POSS
'It appears that Ouma is selling his house.'
- Ouma a-bonekhana (koti) a-kusa enyumba eyaye
O. 1SA-appear (that) 1SA-sell 9house 9POSS
'Ouma appears as if he's selling his house/
Ouma appears to be selling his house.'

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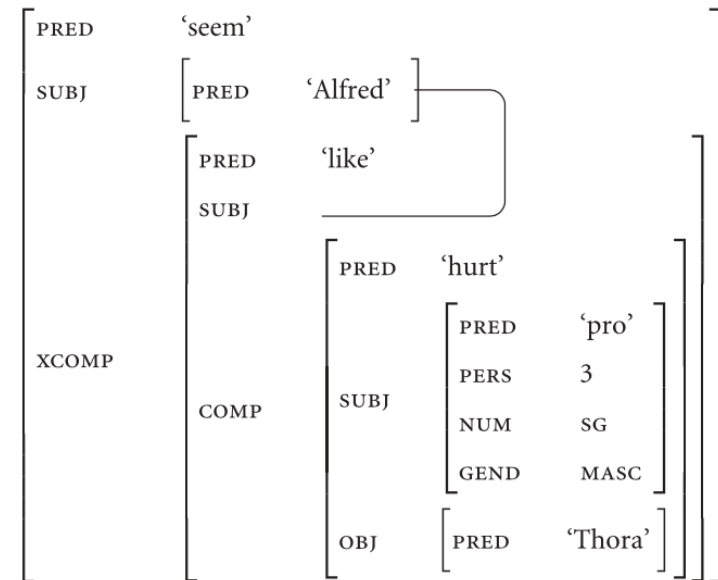


Asudeh (2012: 345)

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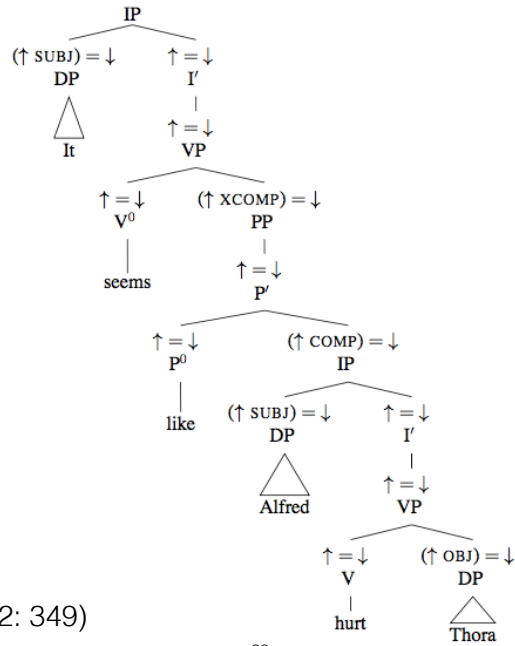
Analysis

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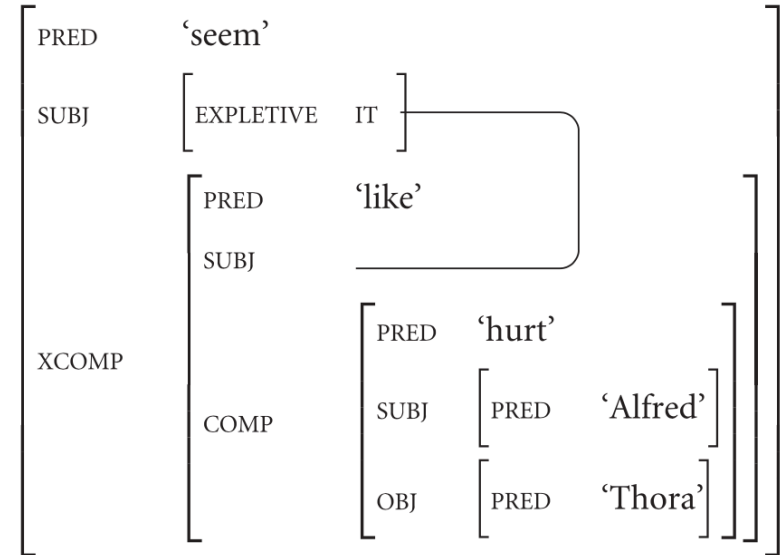


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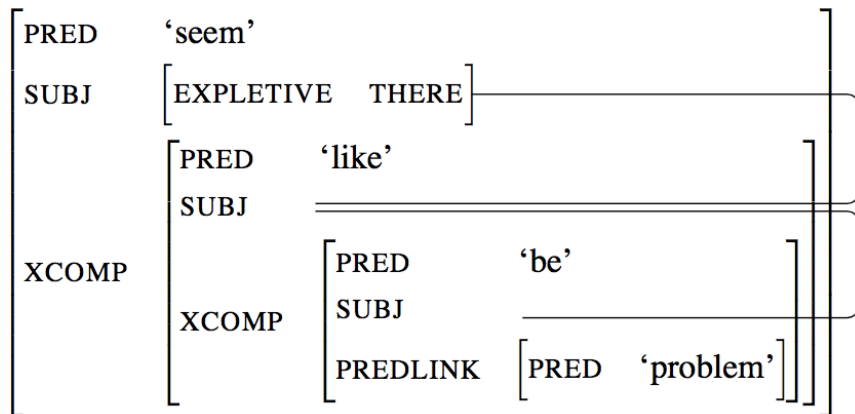
Asudeh (2012: 345)



Asudeh (2012: 349)



Asudeh (2012: 349)



Asudeh (2012: 355)

Copy Pronouns: The True Limits of Syntax

- Asudeh (2004,2012):
Copy pronouns are to raising (a local dependency)
as resumptive pronouns are to constituent
questions and relative clauses (unbounded
dependencies)
- *McCloskey's Generalization* (Asudeh 2011: 122):
Resumptive pronouns are ordinary pronouns.

Copy Pronouns: The True Limits of Syntax

- Given McCloskey's Generalization and given that copy raising is a lexically controlled dependency, it follows that the copy pronoun must be a) a morphosyntactically ordinary pronoun that is b) licensed by the copy raising verb.
- Therefore the licensing mechanism must ultimately *not* be a special morphosyntactic mechanism (which would be contra McCloskey's Generalization), but rather a mechanism about the mapping from syntax to semantics (Asudeh 2004, 2011, 2012).
- The copy pronoun truly is at the limits of syntax:
A morphosyntactically ordinary pronoun that behaves exceptionally at the syntax–semantics interface, due to a mechanism associated with a lexical predicate (*resource management*)

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Future Work

- A better typological understanding
- A better understanding of the relationship between copy raising and hyperraising
- The nature of the comparison in copy raising
- The syntax and semantics of perception
- The syntax and semantics of evidentiality

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Conclusion

- Copy raising is an apparently simple but actually complex phenomenon.
- It reveals much about the nature of the syntactic system.
- It reveals yet more about the limits of pursuing narrowly syntactocentric explanations.
- In order to solve the many puzzles of copy raising, we need to look carefully at the interactions between syntax and semantics, both compositional and lexical, between syntax and pragmatics, and between syntax and morphology.

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