Complementisers, word order and a non-cartographic approach to the CP-domain

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1 Introduction

complementiser – strictly speaking, an element that turns the clause into a complement clause (e.g. *that*)

(1)  
   a. Ralph has already finished the report.  
   b. I know [that Ralph has already finished the report].  
   c. [That Ralph has already finished the report] is surprising.

CP-domain: functional left periphery of the clause, more complex than just a single C

Doubly Filled COMP:

(2)  
They discussed a certain model, but they didn’t know *which model that* they discussed.  
   (Baltin 2010: 331, ex. 1)

multiple complementisers e.g. in hypothetical comparatives:

(3)  
   a. Mary speaks *as though* she were afraid.

   b. Tilla läuft, *als wenn* sie um ihr Leben lief.  
   ‘Tilla is running, as if she were running for her life.’  
   (Jäger 2010: 469)

question: how to model the CP-domain and maintain constraints on word order
various possibilities:

- COMP – as in Chomsky & Lasnik (1977)
- CP (compatible with normal X-bar theoretic notions)
- various designated CP layers, including information-structural notions – cartographic approach, going back to Rizzi (1997)
- flexible minimalist approach – no rigid X-bar-specific notions or cartographic template

proposal here: flexible approach (see Bacskai-Atkari 2018b) – focus on clause-typing elements (not on information structure)

2 Doubly Filled COMP

original idea of Chomsky & Lasnik (1977): COMP

\( (4) \)
  a. \([S'[\text{COMP} \text{for}][S \text{John to leave}] \ldots \text{would be a mistake} \)
  b. \([S'[\text{COMP} \text{that}][S \text{John has left}] \ldots \text{is obvious} \)
  c. \([S'[\text{COMP} \text{whether}][S \text{John left}] \ldots \text{is unclear} \)

(Chomsky & Lasnik 1977: 426, ex. 4)

all elements in (4) base-generated in COMP (whether an operator but no movement, see Bianchi & Cruschina 2016)

\(wh\)-movement also targets COMP:

\( (5) \)
  a. I know who has finished the report.
  b. I know the man who has finished the report.

\(wh\)-element placed to the left of the complementiser (Chomsky & Lasnik 1977: 434) – actual co-occurrence (doubly-filled COMP) blocked by a surface filter:

\( (6) \)
  \[^{\uparrow}[\text{COMP} \text{wh-phrase complementiser}]\)


problems:

- COMP not compatible with X-bar notions, head-adjunction of complex \(wh\)-phrases to COMP problematic \(\rightarrow\) CP instead of COMP
- filter not universal (not even in English)

complementisers in X-bar schema:

\( (7) \)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{C'} \\
\text{C} \quad \text{TP} \\
\text{that}
\end{array}
\]
wh-elements in X-bar schema:

\[(8) \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{who} \\
\text{C'} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{C} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{TP}
\end{array}\]

Doubly Filled COMP patterns common in West Germanic (dialectally):

\[(9) \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{a.} \quad \% \text{They discussed a certain model, but they didn’t know which model that they discussed.} \\
\text{(Baltin 2010: 331)}
\end{array}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{b.} \quad \% \text{I frog-me, fia wos dass-ma an zwoatn Fernseher braucht.} \\
\text{I ask-REFL for what that-one a second TV needs} \\
\text{‘I wonder what one needs a second TV for.’} \\
\text{(Bayer & Brandner 2008: 88)}
\end{array}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{c.} \quad \% \text{Peter vroeg wie dat er boeken leuk vindt.} \\
\text{Peter asked.3sg who that of.them books likeable finds} \\
\text{‘Peter asked who liked books.’} \\
\text{(Bacskaia-Atkari & Baudisch 2018)}
\end{array}\]

logical possibility:

\[(10) \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{which model} \\
\text{C'} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{C} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{TP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{that}
\end{array}\]

Doubly Filled COMP: (10)

\[\rightarrow \text{Doubly Filled COMP Filter: } *_{[\text{CP wh that]}^{(10)}}\]

notion of a filter problematic from a minimalist perspective – can alternatively be viewed as an economy principle ruling out the co-occurrence of elements with largely overlapping functions, cf. Van Gelderen (2009) – applicable in relative clauses but more problematic in embedded interrogatives

   ‘My father-in-law has birthday tomorrow.’

   b. Morgen hat mein Schwiegervater Geburtstag.
   ‘My father-in-law has birthday tomorrow.’

structure:

(12)

\[\begin{array}{l}
\text{CP} \\
\text{morgen C' } \\
\text{C TP} \\
\text{hat}
\end{array}\]

question: whether and how (10) and (12) are related

3 Doubly Filled COMP in a cartographic framework


schematic representation with features:

(13)

\[\begin{array}{l}
\text{CP} \\
\text{which model}_{[w-h]} C' \\
\text{C}_{[w-h]} CP \\
\text{C'} \\
\text{C}_{[fin]} TP \\
\text{that}_{[fin]}
\end{array}\]

fine structure of the left periphery by Rizzi (1997: 297):

(14) Force Top* Focus Top* Fin IP

modified fine structure of the left periphery by Rizzi (2004: 242):

(15) Force Top* Int Top* Focus Mod* Top* Fin IP
structure in (13) can correspond to:

- Force–Fin (probably most typical assumption in cartographic-style analyses, also by Baltin 2010)
- Int–Fin (interpreting *wh* primarily as interrogative)
- Focus–Fin (*wh*-elements targeting FocP, see Rizzi 1997)

Problem 1: *wh*-phrase + *that* word order always produces *that* as a Fin head

problem: *that* assumed to be primarily a Force head by Rizzi (1997), if the CP is split – extraction asymmetries (agreement between Fin and subject gap):

\[(16)\]

a. *Who do you think [that [t ∅ [t will win the prize]]]?  
b. Who do you think [t ∅ [t will win the prize]]?  
(Rizzi 1997: 312 and 314)

→ Doubly Filled COMP pattern apparently not in harmony with the basic cartographic template

Problem 2: (13) with a separate interrogative phrase does not exclude combinations like *if* *that* in English and *ob dass* in German

hypothetical structure:

\[(17)\]

\[
\text{cp}
\]

\[
\text{C'}
\]

\[
\text{C}_{[Q]}\text{CP}
\]

\[
\text{if}_{[Q]}\text{C'}
\]

\[
\text{C}_{[\text{fin}]}\text{TP}
\]

\[
\text{that}_{[\text{fin}]}\]

(17) could correspond to Force–Fin or to Int–Fin

difference between features [*wh*] and [*Q*] – interrogative and disjunctive (see Bayer 2004, Baśkai-Atkari to appear(c))

→ possible solution: *wh* in FocP and *if* in IntP (following Rizzi 2004) – difference between constituent questions and polar questions encoded in the template, different selectional restrictions
Problem: doubling in polar interrogatives possible – English whether and Dutch of

(18) a. If þai ani child miht haue, Queþer þat it ware scho or he
   ‘If they might have any child, whether it were a she or he.’
   (Cursor Mundi 10205, Van Gelderen 2009: 155)

b. I just wondered whether that as a next step we might look to see why this
   seems to be the case.
   (Corpus of Spoken English FACMT97, Van Gelderen 2004: 96)

c. Ik vraag me af of dat Ajax de volgende ronde haalt.
   ‘I wonder whether Ajax will make it to the next round.’
   (Bayer 2004: 65, quoting Hoekstra 1993)

status of interrogative element (operator vs. complementiser, cf. Boef 2013: 141–142 on
of) more decisive in Doubly Filled COMP than [Q] vs. [wh]

Problem 3: functional split not tenable in relative clauses (cf. Bacskaia-Atkari 2018b; Doubly Filled COMP Filter proposed mainly for relative clauses by Chomsky & Lasnik 1977)

English: wh-element + that both in interrogative and relative Doubly Filled COMP patterns

(19) a. %They discussed a certain model, but they didn’t know which model that
   they discussed.
   (Baltin 2010: 331)

b. %It’s down to the community in which that the people live.
   (Van Gelderen 2013: 59)

relative operators should be located in ForceP (Rizzi 1997)

status of that:

• finiteness marker: functional split (as in Baltin 2010) implies that is in Fin (again, clash with the assumption made by Rizzi 1997 that it is in Force)

• Force marker, in Force → Doubly Filled COMP pattern, which the proposal of Baltin (2010) intended to avoid
German: *wh*-element + *dass* in interrogatives, and relative pronoun + *wo* in relative clauses

(20)  a. I frog mich *wege wa dass* die zwei Autos bruchet.
    I ask REL for what that they two cars need
    ‘I wonder why they need two cars.’
    (Alemannic; Bayer & Brandner 2008: 88)

    the.N money that.N REL I earn.1SG that.N belongs I.DAT
    ‘The money that I earn belongs to me.’
    (Hessian; Fleischer 2017)

    c. Ich suech ebber *wo* mer helfe künst.
    I search REL I.DAT help.INF could
    ‘I am looking for someone who could help me.’
    (Alemannic; Brandner & Bräuning 2013: 140)

*wo*: general relative marker in South German dialects – (20c)

→ no functional split (two relative elements), hence no separate designated projections –
Doubly Filled COMP arises in relative clauses anyway, question why not in inter-
rogatives (not ruled out in principle, cf. also V2 and T-to-C)

→ cartographic-style split for avoiding Doubly Filled COMP problematic even for de-
scriptive adequacy

4 A feature-based approach to Doubly Filled COMP

proposal: single CP for canonical Doubly Filled COMP structures – direct merge to com-
plementiser

lexicalisation of [fin] in C: generally observed in German (and Germanic; English: T-to-C
structures: interrogatives)

declaratives in German:

(21)  a. Ralf *hat* eine Torte gebacken.
    Ralph has a.F cake baked.PTCP
    ‘Ralph has baked a cake.’

    I know.1SG that Ralph a.F cake baked.PTCP has
    ‘I know that Ralph has baked a cake.’
structures:

(22) a. CP
    Ralf[edge] C'
    C[fin][edge] TP
    hat C

b. CP
    C[fin] TP
    dass[fin]

polar interrogatives in German:

(23) a. **Hat** Ralf eine Torte gebacken?
    has Ralph a.F cake baked.PTCP
    ‘Has Ralph baked a cake?’

b. Ich weiß nicht, ob Ralf eine Torte gebacken hat.
    I know.1SG not if Ralph a.F cake baked.PTCP has
    ‘I don’t know if Ralph has baked a cake.’

structures:

(24) a. CP
    Op-[Q] C'
    C[fin][Q] TP
    hat C

b. CP
    Op-[Q] C'
    C[fin][Q] TP
    ob[fin][Q]

constituent questions in German:

(25) a. Wer **hat** eine Torte gebacken?
    who has a.F cake baked.PTCP
    ‘Who has baked a cake?’

b. Ich weiß nicht, wer (%dass) eine Torte gebacken hat.
    I know.1SG not who that a.F cake baked.PTCP has
    ‘I don’t know who has baked a cake.’

structures:

(26) a. CP
    wer[wh] C'
    C[fin][wh] TP
    hat C

b. CP
    wer[wh] C'
    C[fin][wh] TP
    dass[fin]
relative clauses in German:

(27) a. Der Mann, der am Fenster steht, ist mein Nachbar.
   the.M man who.M at.the window stands is my.M neighbour
   ‘The man who is standing by the window is my neighbour.

   b. %Der Mann, (der) wo am Fenster steht, ist mein Nachbar.
   the.M man who.M REL at.the window stands is my.M neighbour
   ‘The man who is standing by the window is my neighbour.

structures:

(28) a. CP
   \[ \text{def}_{rel} \quad C' \]
   \[ C_{[fin],[rel]} \quad \text{TP} \]
   \[ \emptyset_{[fin]} \]

   b. CP
   \[ (\text{der})_{rel} \quad C' \]
   \[ C_{[fin],[rel]} \quad \text{TP} \]
   \[ \text{wo}_{[fin],[rel]} \]

Doubly Filled COMP patterns in line with the general syntactic paradigm in German
(and Germanic; English: interrogatives)

word order: arises naturally (merge)

difference between standard and non-standard patterns: lexical difference (not in terms
of syntactic projections)

question: whether classical CP (specifier + head) always sufficient

proposal: more complex structures can arise (more features, more lexical elements)

split of [Q] and [wh] in Dutch dialects (and beyond, see Bayer 2004): multiple specifiers
or double CP (Bacskai-Atkari to appear(a))

(29) Ze weet wie of dat hij had willen opbellen
   she knows who if that he had want call
   ‘She knows who he wanted to call.’
   (Bayer 2004: 66, citing Hoekstra 1993)

double CP in comparative subclauses due to comparative semantics (Bacskai-Atkari
2018a; 2016; 2014)

(30) a. %Mary is taller than how tall Susan is.

   b. %Ich bin griesser als wie du
      I am taller than as you
      ‘I am taller than you.’ (Upper Saxonian)
      (Jäger 2016: 230, citing Weise 1918: 174)
double CP in hypothetical comparatives due to semantics reasons: combination of a conditional and a comparative clause (Bacskai-Atkari to appear(b))

(31)  

a. Mary speaks as though she were afraid.

b. Tilla läuft, als wenn sie um ihr Leben lief.
   Tilla runs than if she for her life run.SBJV.3SG
   ‘Tilla is running, as if she were running for her life.’
   (Jäger 2010: 469)

ordering restrictions: semantics

5 Conclusion

Doubly Filled COMP effects in Germanic and the CP

- COMP – not even descriptively adequate
- cartographic approach – problems regarding descriptive adequacy OR even more refined differences expressed via even more distinct projections: problematic for explanatory adequacy (amounts to description)
- single CP – sufficient for ordinary Doubly Filled COMP but not for more complex combinations
- flexible CP based on features

proposal takes into account more general properties of the given lexical element (cf. syntactic paradigm) and may explain why certain elements are preferably present

References


Bianchi, Valentina & Silvio Cruschina. 2016. The derivation and interpretation of polar questions with a fronted focus. Lingua 170, 47–68.


