

Expletive Noun Phrases in Subcategorized Positions

Author(s): Paul M. Postal and Geoffrey K. Pullum

Source: *Linguistic Inquiry*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 635-670

Published by: The MIT Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4178599>

Accessed: 10-05-2020 00:51 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

The MIT Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Linguistic Inquiry*

Expletive Noun Phrases in Subcategorized Positions

In this article we first offer a working characterization of the notion “expletive NP,” which, in both traditional and modern work, has generally been given only an ostensive definition. We then elucidate the status of a particular claim about expletive NPs, namely, that they do not occur in strictly subcategorized positions. We point out that, under certain currently defended versions of grammatical theory, this claim is the sole independent support that has been given for the claim that subcategorized positions are always θ -marked; and the latter claim is the sole basis of an intratheoretical bar against analyzing the accusative NP in an accusative and infinitive construction as a derived matrix clause direct object (and also against a variety of other analyses involving movement to nonsubject positions).

In subsequent sections we offer several kinds of evidence that expletive NPs do occur in subcategorized positions in English and we sketch the outlines of analyses in terms that are broadly consonant with widely maintained assumptions about expletives, θ -roles, and related matters, but which involve expletives in subcategorized positions. If it is assumed that expletives cannot occur in θ -marked positions, this is evidence that subcategorized positions are not uniformly θ -marked. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that expletives can occur in θ -marked positions, evidence from the distribution of expletives cannot be used (as it has been) to argue that movement into those positions is excluded. Either way, no grounds remain for the principled exclusion of movement into direct object (or other subcategorized) positions. We consider and rebut a number of potential objections to our position, and we comment on various matters that might seem to bear on the relevance of expletive NPs in syntactic argumentation.

1. The Category of English Expletive NPs

Both traditional and recent accounts of English grammar recognize that there is a class of “expletive” or “pleonastic” or “dummy” NPs. These are hereinafter called exple-

This work was partially supported by the Syntax Research Center, University of California, Santa Cruz. Thanks are due to Chris Barker, Sandra Chung, Georgia M. Green, Thomas E. Hukari, David E. Johnson, Richard S. Kayne, William A. Ladusaw, Robert D. Levine, David Pesetsky, Warren Plath, Yael Ravin, Peter Sells, and Thomas Wasow for helpful conversations, correspondence, and suggestions about earlier drafts, which have significantly improved this version. Our acknowledgment of their help does not imply that they can be assumed to agree with the claims we make below.

[Editor’s note: The authors’ names are given in alphabetical order.]

tives. We take the defining features of expletives to include the following: they are (i) morphologically identical to pro-forms (in English, two relevant forms are *it*, identical to the third person neuter pronoun, and *there*, identical to the nonproximate locative pro-adverb), (ii) nonreferential (neither anaphoric/cataphoric nor exophoric), and (iii) devoid of any but a vacuous semantic role (where *vacuous* needs explication in terms of a specific semantic theory but has generally been assumed obvious enough in traditional accounts).

Supplementing the preceding rough characterization of expletives, we offer four syntactic tests that appear to separate expletive NPs from ordinary NPs, including unstressed anaphoric pronouns of the same shape.¹ We will briefly illustrate each, concentrating for the most part on expletive *it*, with which the major part of this article is concerned.

1.1. Expletive NPs Do Not Support Emphatic Reflexives

Although unstressed pronouns in general can antecede emphatic reflexive pronouns, expletive NPs cannot. This is illustrated in (1), where the emphatic reflexive forms are italicized for identification.

- (1) a. For him to smoke is *itself* illegal.
- b. *It is *itself* illegal for him to smoke.
- (2) a. Rain can *itself* fall upward if the wind is right.
- b. *It can *itself* rain upward if the wind is right.

1.2. Expletive NPs Do Not Coordinate

It is impossible to exhibit well-formed coordinate structures in which expletive NPs are conjuncts. Again this is not a characteristic of pronouns, even those that are unstressed and phonologically identical to expletives. We illustrate in (3) through (5).

- (3) a. He and it were respectively proved to be a person and claimed to be a robot.
- b. He and she were respectively proved to be a communist and claimed to be an anarchist.
- c. *It and there were/was respectively proved to be raining and claimed to be floods in the valley.
- (4) a. Neither he nor it were either difficult to find or easy to lose.
- b. *It and there were difficult to claim to be raining and to prove to be floods in the valley, respectively.

¹ These tests thus undermine the thesis of Bennis (1986), which denies the expletive status of a range of elements typically taken as expletive NPs, including those in extraposition structures. We will not attempt here to consider Bennis's arguments, which are based on complex data from Dutch, nor to analyze his motivations for denying expletive status to some (not all) of the relevant NPs. As we have made clear, we believe there is syntactic evidence that Bennis's position is not correct.

- (5) a. There will be a judgment day and it will be no use weeping and wailing.
 b. *There and it will be respectively a judgment day and no use weeping and wailing.

1.3. Expletive NPs Do Not Appear in Nominalization Of-Phrases

When a nominalization *N* corresponding to some clause containing NP_x is such that NP_x 's correspondent in *N* is a prepositional object, then NP_x cannot be an expletive. Again, this is a characteristic not of pronouns but only of expletive NPs; (6) illustrates.

- (6) a. my estimate of it (to be impossible (*to fly))
 b. my observation/description of it falling/*raining
 c. her resentment of it (*that he won)
 d. your demonstration of it to him (*that she was sick)
 e. your recognition of it as illegal (*the things they are doing in Bolivia)

1.4. Expletive NPs Do Not Appear as Tough Movement Subjects

Failure to occur in "Tough Movement" subject position is also a diagnostic for expletives. Example (7a) exhibits expletive *it* following the verb *prevent*; (7b) shows that this sentence does not alternate with one that has the expletive in subject position with a predicate of the *tough* class (*t* marks the nonsubject-position extraction gap associated with this construction); and (7c) shows that the same is not true of the anaphoric pronoun *it*.

- (7) a. We prevented it from becoming obvious that things were out of control.
 b. *It was tough to prevent *t* from becoming obvious that things were out of control.
 c. The animal_{*i*} was now quite large, and it_{*i*} was tough to prevent *t* from escaping.

The analysis of gerundive complements of verbs of prevention is not at issue here (though it becomes relevant in section 3.1.2). What is important is that expletive *it* has a more restrictive distribution than anaphoric *it*.

There is now an informal syntactic diagnostic for expletive NPs: expletive NPs are third person pro-forms that do not (i) support emphatic reflexives, or (ii) coordinate, or (iii) appear in nominalization *of*-phrases, or (iv) appear in *Tough Movement* subject positions. All instances of *it* represented as expletives in the remainder of this article are diagnosed as expletives by these four criteria.

2. Movement and the Distribution of Expletive NPs

We now discuss the logic of the relation that obtains between (a) θ -marking, (b) the distribution of expletive NPs, and (c) constraints on NP Movement. Consider principle (8), quoted from Chomsky (1981, 37).

- (8) If α subcategorizes the position β , then α θ -marks β .

For Chomsky, this is part of the Projection Principle. It asserts that a phrase structure position associated with a lexically stipulated constraint on some accompanying lexical head α is also associated with a “thematic role” (θ -role) by virtue of some property of the lexical entry of α .

A significant implication arises when (8) is combined with the independent claim (9), made in Chomsky (1981, 46; 1982, 9; 1986a, 4), Van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986, 253), and elsewhere: (8) and (9) together immediately entail (10).

- (9) Nothing can be moved into a θ -marked position.
 (10) Nothing can be moved into a strictly subcategorized position.

Principle (10) renders illegitimate a number of familiar classical transformational analyses, including at least these:

- (I) subject raising to direct object position (see Rosenbaum (1967, 58–70), Postal (1974));
 (II) dative movement (see Fillmore (1965), Emonds (1973; 1976));
 (III) raising into prepositional object positions (see Joseph (1979) on Greek, McCloskey (1984) and Postal (1986b) on Irish, and Emonds (1976, 76–77) on certain English constructions dealt with briefly in section 3.1.4); and
 (IV) movement of transitive subjects into *by*-phrases in the formation of passives (proposed by Chomsky (1965, 104), shown to be compatible with the structure-preservation view of transformational grammar in Emonds (1976, 69–70), but now not permitted (see Chomsky (1982, 16))).

Consider now claim (11) about the distribution of expletives.

- (11) Expletive NPs do not occur in θ -marked positions.

From some perspectives, principle (11) seems a truism. Although no precise definition of “expletive” is generally given, it is often taken as definitional that expletives are not arguments. For example, Chomsky (1981, 35) specifies:

Let us call such expressions “arguments,” as distinct from idiom chunks . . . , non-argument *it* (as in *it is certain that John will win*), or existential *there* (as in *there are believed to be unicorns in the garden*), terms which assume no θ -role.

If expletives inherently assume no θ -roles, they clearly cannot occur in θ -positions since the latter are, by definition (see Chomsky (1981, 35)), positions whose fillers are assigned θ -roles. Consider also the discussion in Chomsky (1986b), which introduces the notion “CHAIN,” as a generalization of the concept “chain.” A CHAIN is either a chain (a sequence containing a moved element and the traces that it binds) or “an expletive-argument pair” (Chomsky (1986b, 132)) (an expletive element and an argument to which it is linked by coindexation). Chomsky (1986b, 137) proposes condition (12) on CHAINS.

- (12) If $C = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$ is a maximal CHAIN, then α_n occupies its unique θ -position and α_1 its unique Case-marked position.

Since Chomsky (1986b, 133) also maintains that “an expletive (or its trace) must be linked to an argument,” constraint (12) has the effect of narrowly limiting the distribution of expletives, and in particular precludes expletives in θ -positions.² To see this, observe that, to be linked to an argument, an expletive E must be a nonfinal member of some CHAIN C with more than one element, where $C = (\dots, E, \dots, \alpha_n)$. Since (12) requires that α_n be in a θ -marked position, if E occurs in a θ -marked position, both E and α_n are in θ -marked positions. This violates the θ -Criterion, which states that “a CHAIN has at most one θ -position”; see Chomsky (1986b, 135).

Certain problems arise for (11) quite independently of the concerns of this article. In examples like (13b) the expletive *it* seems to occur in exactly the position where a nominal gerund phrase occurs in (13a), and the two are fully synonymous and obviously relatable in terms of extraposition.

- (13) a. Complaining about it now is no use.
 b. It's no use complaining about it now.

If *complaining about it now* is assigned a θ -role by the VP *is no use* in (13a), it is hard to see how the expletive *it* could fail to be assigned the same θ -role in (13b), if θ -marking is defined with any generality. If (11) is itself not tenable, the force of the arguments in this article is not affected. However, the position we criticize adopts the view that (11) can be defended, so despite the difficulty posed by (13), we will assume (11) for the purpose of discussion.

² This principle appears to be false independently of the facts discussed in section 3.1.6 of this article, which also have that consequence. This follows from the well-documented existence of so-called impersonal passives with intransitive verbs, such as (i).

- (i) Il sera procédé à la révision de ce procès.
 it will be proceeded to the revision of this trial
 'One will proceed to the revision of these proceedings.'
 Pollock (1981, 220)

It would be entirely arbitrary to claim that (for example) *il* in (i) was in a CHAIN with the prepositional phrase, a theoretically otiose move in any case given the well-known existence of impersonal passives in many languages in pure intransitive clauses, where there is no analogue of the prepositional phrase in (i). A Dutch example is found in (ii) and an Icelandic one in (iii).

- (ii) Door deze mensen wordt er altijd gevochten.
 by these people is there always fought
 'These people are always fighting.'
 Perlmutter (1978, 168)
 (iii) Það var dansað í gær.
 there was danced yesterday
 Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson (1985, 445, ex. (9a))

About the latter, the authors state, “Icelandic has an impersonal passive construction, illustrated in (9) [= (iii)]. When no topicalization takes place, in impersonal passives, a dummy *það* occurs in sentence-initial position, as shown in (9a).”

If (11) is accepted, then from principles (8) and (11) we can immediately derive the conclusion in (14), the evaluation of which will be a central concern of this article.

(14) Expletive NPs do not occur in strictly subcategorized positions.

The issue of whether expletive NPs occur in strictly subcategorized positions is of considerable potential importance, because it relates to the admissibility under current theories of (analogues of) the classical transformational analyses mentioned above. The relationship is indirect, and we will clarify it.

Principle (10), forbidding movement into subcategorized positions, suffices to exclude traditional transformational analyses under which the italicized NPs in (15) would be moved to their surface positions.

- (15) a. They awarded *her* the prize.
 b. They believe *him* to be innocent.
 c. He was identified by *the police*.

The sentence type illustrated in (15b), the accusative and infinitive construction, is particularly controversial; it was the focus of an extensive debate during the 1970s (see Chomsky (1973), Postal (1974), Lightfoot (1976), Bresnan (1976), Postal (1977), and Bach (1977)). The pivotal question was whether the italicized NP in (15b) is a matrix clause direct object that has been moved from the subordinate clause that follows.

Most of the arguments used against movement analyses of this construction in the literature of the 1970s are invalid under current assumptions. It cannot, for example, be argued today, as it was in Chomsky (1973, 254), that such movement is excluded by a ban on vacuous movement rules. Given present assumptions about traces, current analyses of the complementizer position, and the nonindividuation of movement rules implied by the ‘‘Move α ’’ schema, an analysis deriving (16b) from (16a) by movement is no more excluded than a derivation of (17b) from (17a), explicitly allowed by Chomsky (1986a, 48ff.), who rejects the former movement analysis.

- (16) a. [They believe [_{NP} *e*] [Comp [him to be innocent]]]
 b. [They believe *him_i* [Comp [*t_i* to be innocent]]]
 (17) a. [Comp [who made this coffee]]
 b. [Who_{*i*} [*t_i* made this coffee]]

This does not mean that nothing else could be postulated to block movement in the former case, but the string-vacuous character of the movement alone cannot be an objection (especially if such positive arguments for string-vacuous movement as those of Clements et al. (1983) are correct).

Nor can it be argued that a movement analysis of the accusative and infinitive construction complicates English grammar by requiring an extra rule. Quite the reverse: provided that the necessary D-Structure representations are permitted, Raising-to-Object analyses will, given the generality of the ‘‘Move α ’’ schema, be available for certain sentences without special stipulations or rules. And independent motivation for [_{VP} V

NP S] structures is (we assume, relatively uncontroversially) provided by sentences like (18).

- (18) a. Mark persuaded Bob to sing.
 b. Sue convinced Ted that the government was lying.

Since current transformationalist assumptions would actually provide for movement into object position without stipulation if (10) were not adopted, in order to deny that such accounts are (at the very least) candidate analyses for some constructions one would need to show that Universal Grammar contains a *motivated* principle (not just some arbitrary and theory-complicating specific exclusion) that forbids them.

As far as we have been able to determine, the only independent support so far offered for adopting (8), the claim that subcategorization implies θ -marking, is the conclusion in (14) that expletive NPs do not occur in strictly subcategorized positions.³ This conclusion is claimed to be a supportive consequence (but of course, even this is not the case if expletives can occur in θ -marked positions, a matter that we do not pursue here). Thus, the putative nonoccurrence of expletives in subcategorized positions seems to be the chief, and possibly the only, substantive ground for the current rejection of movement analyses of the accusative and infinitive construction, and, more generally, of all movement to nonsubject argument positions.

This article develops some evidence and arguments for the view that some constructions in English are properly analyzed as involving expletives in subcategorized positions. One consequence of this conclusion is a lessening of support for the notion that movement to subcategorized positions is excluded.

3. Expletives in Subcategorized Positions

3.1. *Classifying the Evidence*

In this section we present a variety of English syntactic constructions for which the only reasonable analyses involve expletives in subcategorized positions. Many of these constructions seem very natural and typical of current spoken English, and not strange or marginal in the slightest degree. It may perhaps be true that expletive NPs in direct object positions are less frequent across languages than subject expletives, or perhaps less frequent within individual languages across construction types or in running text; such empirical claims have not been substantiated, but they might be. However, we believe it is out of the question to claim that object expletives simply do not “normally” occur, or that linguistic theory can simply characterize them as isolated “idioms” and leave them with no systematic account. The situation is the same as with verb agreement: verb agreement with subjects is more frequently found than verb agreement with objects.

³ See for example Jaeggli (1986, 589), who points out that examples like *John has eaten it* and *John has eaten there* do not have the reading ‘John has eaten’ and immediately concludes, “Hence the need for the requirement that all subcategorized elements be assigned θ -roles. If all subcategorized positions must be θ -marked, these facts are immediately accounted for.”

Without knowing why this is the case, linguists recognize that linguistic theory has to allow for agreement with objects to be described.

3.1.1. *Clausal Extraposition from Direct Object Position.* The clause type in (19) has been known since the work of Otto Jespersen as the *extraposition* construction.

(19) It annoys him that he has yet to be awarded a McArthur Prize.

The subject pronoun is the paradigm case of an expletive; it seems to have been the element for which Jespersen first coined the term *dummy*. It has long been documented in the syntactic literature that English extraposition expletives can appear in positions governed by verbs. Jespersen (1937, 63) gave the examples in (20).

- (20) a. I take it that you will pay.
 b. He never gave it a thought that Bolshies are human beings.

Nida (1960, 118, n. 15) also cites the construction; so does Long (1961, 344), who notes that expletive *it* sometimes “precedes declarative-clause appositives directly, and acts as a kind of buffer for them after predicators . . . that do not accept them as completers,” citing an example with *resent it that S*.

Numerous citations occur in transformational works.⁴ By the early 1970s the existence of English extraposition expletives in direct object position had become a commonplace of the generative literature. The examples in (21) followed by page numbers are all from Rosenbaum (1967). Though not everyone accepts all of Rosenbaum’s examples, each sentence in (21) is widely accepted, and many are accepted by virtually all speakers as far as we know.

- (21) a. Everyone would prefer it (for you) to come early. (p. 53)
 b. I dislike it that he is so cruel. (p. 51)
 c. I dislike it for him to be so cruel. (p. 51)
 d. I dislike it very much that he is always late. (p. 42)
 e. I didn’t suspect it for a moment that you would fail. (p. 42)
 f. They doubt it (very much) that you will go. (p. 34)
 g. I regret it very much that we could not hire Mosconi.
 h. I resent it greatly that you didn’t call me.
 i. I don’t mind it very much that he did that.
 j. John would hate it for him to win. (Chomsky (1981, 190))

There are also cases of (what we would regard as) extraposition from object position where a prepositional phrase (or particle) modifier or complement to the matrix verb is present.

⁴ Examples and/or discussion can be found in Ross (1967, 198, exs. (5-159a-d)), Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968, 175), Langendoen (1969, 54), Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970, 165), Hudson (1971, 173), Emonds (1972, 31, 49; 1976, 124), Higgins (1973, 158), Ross (1973, 146, n. 13), Stockwell, Schachter, and Partee (1973, 538), Akmajian and Heny (1975, 284-286).

- (22) a. They never mentioned it to the candidate that the job was poorly paid.
 b. We can take it for granted that there will be an appeal.
 c. I have it on good authority that the CIA was never informed.
 d. We demand it of our employees that they wear a tie.
 e. Nobody expected it of John that he could be so cruel. (p. 39)
 f. Don't bruit it about that their marriage is on the rocks.
 g. Don't spread it around that I'm giving you this assignment.
 h. I blame it on you that we can't go.
 i. They brought it to his attention that his daughter was sick.
 j. They expect it of you that you cooperate. (Emonds (1972, 31))

Also found are many cases like Jespersen's (20b) above, containing a verb in *-ing*, an NP, or an adjective phrase with *as*.

- (23) a. We can't have it seeming that we will give in without a fight.
 b. They hold it against me that I am an extraterrestrial.
 c. We kept it a secret that Jerome was insane.
 d. I make it my business to know what is going on.
 e. Elmer regards it as suspicious that no primitives are defined.
 f. Most experts see it as inevitable that everyone will die.

Given both that such examples are widely known to exist and that at least some writers suggest maintaining a prohibition against expletives in direct object position, an alternative analysis must be widely regarded as plausible. The only such alternative we are aware of is the "small clause" analysis, under which the structure of (24a) would be not (24b) but rather (24c).

- (24) a. I believe it to be obvious that he has lost.
 b. I believe it [_S *t* to be obvious that he has lost].
 c. I believe [_S it to be obvious that he has lost].

But the small clause approach analyzes an example like (22a) as shown in (25).

- (25) They never mentioned [_S it to the candidate that the job was poorly paid].

This belies the relationship of subcategorization between the ditransitive verb *mention* and its indirect object *to the candidate*. Other examples we have cited are similarly intractable to small clause analyses. Strings like *it of our employees that they wear a tie* in (22d) or *it my business to know what is going on* in (23d), for example, are highly implausible constituents to begin with. But in addition, the analysis in (25) falsely implies that a verb like *mention* does not select a prepositional phrase with *to*, wrongly claims that the (semantic) relationship between *that the job was poorly paid* and *to the candidate* is one of subject and predicate, and so on.

In addition, the possibility of an adverb that clearly modifies *mentioned* appearing after *it* seems an insuperable obstacle to the small clause analysis. This is especially so

when combined with the fact that such insertion is then inexplicably *impossible* between the matrix verb and the putative small clause, exactly as predicted if the *it* is a main clause object, given the constraint independently required for, say, (26c).

- (26) a. They mentioned it immediately to the candidate that the job was poorly paid.
 b. *They mentioned immediately it to the candidate that the job was poorly paid.
 c. They mentioned (*immediately) that.

The reader can verify that parallel facts of adverb positioning hold for many of our other examples.⁵

⁵ It might be suggested that ungrammaticalities like that of (26b,c) do not support direct objecthood for the expletive in the former, since this could be claimed to follow from the principle of adjacency for Case marking, due to Stowell (1981). This would be consistent with the standard view (see section 5) that Case marking can hold between a main verb and the subject of a (surface) nonfinite clause. As Van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986, 320) put it:

In order to account for the most salient problem raised by (10), the fact that the NP must immediately follow the verb (in English), Stowell proposes an Adjacency Condition on case-assignment, which says that a case-assigner must be adjacent to the NP to which it assigns case.

It could be claimed that even though the relevant expletive is a surface subject of a nonfinite surface clause, the Adjacency Principle blocks (26b). However, it is difficult to see how the Adjacency Principle could have factual content and yet be compatible with data like (i)–(iv).

- (i) I sent to my friend the long manuscript I had just completed.
 (ii) Gertrude gave back the diskettes to Anthony.
 (iii) William looked up the information.
 (iv) John gave Bill a book.

In these cases the relevant NPs that need to be Case-marked—*the long manuscript I had just completed*, *the diskettes*, *the information*, and *a book*—are not adjacent to the verb. About case (iv), Chomsky (1986b, 159) says revealingly:

We might assume that *App* has the effect of causing the Verb to which it is added to assign its objective Case to the underlying benefactive, so that the underlying object now becomes a “second object” receiving Case by some other mechanism, as in “John gave Bill a book.”

Though rather obscure, these remarks make completely clear that the last NP in (iv) can be assigned a specific Case by the verb despite the lack of adjacency. That it is the verb that is relevant is shown by the impossibility of a preposition on this NP in (iv), its necessity in the otherwise parallel examples in (v).

- (v) a. John provided/furnished/supplied a book to Bill.
 b. John provided/furnished/supplied Bill with a book.

If it is claimed that there are traces of the Case-needing NPs in (i)–(iv) next to the verb and that Case marking somehow works via agreement with those traces, the Adjacency Principle is rendered almost vacuous. Further, in other languages such as French, interpolation of adverbial and parenthetical material between verb and direct object is standard.

- (vi) Je ne mange que rarement la viande.
 ‘I only rarely eat meat.’
 (vii) Mathilde critique souvent son frère.
 ‘Mathilde often criticizes her brother.’

French is by no means an isolated case. Van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986, 320) themselves remark:

This proposal faces various problems (for example, the Germanic languages seem to keep the direct object distant from the verb). . . .

We thus can find no basis for believing an Adjacency Principle for Case marking could account for (26b,c) or many other parallel cases relevant to our discussion, some cited in what follows.

Whatever the problems with small clause analyses of the examples in (22) and (23), things are even worse for such analyses of (20) and (21). For the latter, a small clause analysis seems not just unmotivated but impossible, there being no constituents to put into the putative small clause save the expletive whose object position is theoretically embarrassing, plus the (extraposed) clause to which it is linked. Thus, in (20a), *I take it that you will pay*, a postulated small clause would have a clausal subject, or an expletive subject and an extraposed clause, but it would have no predicate.⁶ Even such vague sketches of small clause structure as have been given in the literature make it clear that this is not a serious possibility. Moreover, adverb positioning again clearly suggests that the expletive is in the main clause, not in some sparsely populated subordinate constituent:

- (27) a. I take it then that you won't be joining us.
 b. *I take then it that you won't be joining us.

The list of object extraposition cases we have presented is by no means exhaustive, but it suffices to show the untenability of the claim that expletive NPs do not occur in direct object position in English, and there appears to be no way this conclusion can be evaded via postulation of small clause structures.

3.1.2. Prevention Complements with From + Gerund. The next class of examples are sentences whose superficial object pronoun is, informally, related as subject (in a familiar sense) to a following gerund complement preceded by the preposition *from*. In informal classical transformational terms, the subject of the gerund complement at the end of the cycle on its clause is the last direct object of the matrix clause. These cases, previously discussed in Postal (1974; 1977) and Bresnan (1976), are found with verbs such as *prevent*.

- (28) a. The Lord stopped it from raining.
 b. They kept it from becoming too obvious that she was pregnant.
 c. The mayor prevented there from being a riot.

Such examples, taken as *prima facie* instances of (raised) expletive NPs in object position by Postal (1974; 1977), are commented on by Chomsky (1981, 147–148); we return to his remarks below. Here it suffices to observe that the only real alternative to recognizing object position expletives in such sentences is to posit clauses containing an internal

⁶ Another problem with taking *it that you will pay* as a constituent derives from the Slifting construction studied in Ross (1973). Alongside cases like (i) and (ii), we find (iii) with *take*.

- (i) a. It seems he is a respected member of the community.
 b. He is, it seems, a respected member of the community.
 (ii) a. I gather he is a respected member of the community.
 b. He is, I gather, a respected member of the community.
 (iii) a. I take it he is a respected member of the community.
 b. He is, I take it, a respected member of the community.

It is hard to imagine an analysis of the Slifting construction that would be compatible with the claim that *it* is a member of a subordinate clausal constituent rather than the direct object of *take*, in (iiib). (It is also hard to see how the *it* in such examples can be a member of a nontrivial CHAIN in compliance with (12).)

from in the position of the auxiliary verb, a structure entirely without independent motivation. Moreover, recognition of such clauses would immediately raise the problem of controlling their distribution—for example, to preclude examples like the ungrammatical versions of (29).

- (29) a. He dislikes you (*from) chewing tobacco.
 b. I resent you (*from) earning more money than I do.
 c. Him (*from) getting a Nobel Prize is a joke.
 d. We talked about him (*from) getting a raise.

Under the view we would take, word sequences like *you from chewing tobacco* are never clauses, but rather are NP–PP sequences. They therefore will only appear where NP–PP sequences are syntactically permitted.

The distribution of parentheticals and similar modifiers (such as *you know* or *I assure you*) also counts strongly against clausehood for the disputed potential constituents, given the fact that such expressions are never found in uncontroversial complements (see (30c,d,f)).

- (30) a. We can prevent it, I assure you, from becoming known that we are here.
 b. *We can prevent, I assure you, it from becoming known that we are here.
 c. *We can prove that, I assure you, we are here.
 d. *We will insist that, I assure you, all candidates for the professorship be able to read and write.
 e. It would, you recognize, be pleasant for him for us to be fired.
 f. It would be pleasant for him for us (*you recognize) to be fired.

3.1.3. Extraposition of Infinitival VP across Matrix Clause Dependents. Next, we discuss a class of structures in which a superficial direct object pronoun lacking a θ -role cooccurs with a following infinitive but is separated from it by an additional dependent of the main clause verb. The first examples of this type, (31a,b), are cited in Postal (1974, 413) as an argument for a Raising-to-Object analysis. Other verbs than *figure* allow the same construction, as shown in (31c,d).

- (31) a. I figured it out to be more than 300 miles from here to Tulsa.
 b. I figured it out to be impossible for us to get there by noon.
 c. She made it out to be only 49% probable that we would get there on time.
 d. He reasoned it out to be incorrect to make that assumption.

There is a major difference between the examples in (31) and more familiar accusative and infinitive examples like *I believe it to be more than 300 miles from here to Tulsa*. Since Chomsky's (1973) proposals, it has been argued that the sequence *it to be more than 300 miles from here to Tulsa* following *believe* and similar verbs (*find, prove, show, hold*) is a surface clause and thus that the *it* is not in main clause object position. Word order often fails to decide between this structure and one where the postverbal NP is a main clause surface constituent (but see, for example, (35a)). However, although we

disagree with Chomsky's analytical decision, we can ignore this issue when considering the type exemplified by (31); for, as observed in Postal (1974), no approach like that of Chomsky (1973) can seriously be adopted for these. The sentences in (31) involve the normal positioning of particle and object NP independently existing for *figure*, *make*, and *reason*, as motivated by (32).

- (32) a. I figured/made/reasoned out the answer.
 b. *I figured/made/reasoned out it.
 c. I figured/made/reasoned the answer out.
 d. I figured/made/reasoned it out.

The fact that the particle, although positioned after the object in (31), goes with the main verb is shown by the contrast between (31a) and (33), where *figure* is replaced by verbs that do not independently take particles.

- (33) I believed/proved/took/wanted it (*out) to be more than 300 miles from here to Tulsa.

This shows the untenability of taking *it out to be more than 300 miles from here to Tulsa* in (31a) to be a clause. Further, cases like (31) permit post-particle (but not pre-expletive) occurrence of main clause modifiers.

- (34) a. I figured it out in about five minutes to be impossible to solve the problem.
 b. *I figured in about five minutes it out to be impossible to solve the problem.

We conclude that sequences of the form *V it out (modifier) to VP* are clear examples of expletives in subcategorized positions.⁷

Figure is not by any means the only verb to participate in the construction discussed in this section. Further examples with *prove*, *owe*, *report*, *call*, *leave*, and *take* are given in (35). In all cases adverbs or parentheticals have been placed in such a way as to render impossible an analysis in which the expletive and following material form a surface constituent; the expletive must be analyzed as the direct object of the matrix clause.

- (35) a. I can prove it to your satisfaction, I can assure you, to be impossible to construct all the parse trees in polynomial time.
 b. You owe it to yourself, in my opinion, to get an annual checkup.

⁷ The relevant infinitival complement sentences with *figure out* are subject to narrow and somewhat mysterious restrictions. Only *it*, *that*, and possibly *this* seem acceptable in object position, and only *be* seems possible as the complement verb.

- (i) a. I figured that out to be impossible.
 b. ?I figured this out to be impossible.
 (ii) ?I figured him out to be an informer.
 (iii) *I figured there out to be selenium in the reservoir.
 (iv) *I figured it out to have annoyed Harry that you were invited.

But these restrictions have no bearing on our discussion, which concerns the implications of the clearly grammatical examples cited in the text.

- c. They reported it to the chief, I recall, to be impossible to obtain useful concessions.
- d. You called it to my attention, I believe, that this was not true.
- e. I will leave it up to you, I emphasize, to choose the dessert.
- f. I took it upon myself, you recall, to fix the lamp. (see Emonds (1972, 31; 1976, 128))

Note in passing that examples like (35b) raise a particular problem for any small clause analysis. In our terms, (35b) is simply a case of extraposition of an infinitive, determining an expletive in the direct object position the extraposed clause would otherwise occupy. The reflexive anaphor *yourself* is simply the indirect object of the main clause, bound by the subject NP. But under a small clause analysis, the putative small clause not only would be interrupted by a parenthetical but also would improperly contain an internally unbound reflexive anaphor.

3.1.4. Expletive NPs as Prepositional Objects. We now consider cases where English expletives arguably occur as objects of prepositions. First, as noted in Long (1961, 344), Emonds (1972, 60, n. 17; 1976, 117), Thráinsson (1979, 262, n. 71), Higgins (1973, 158), Williams (1980, 222), Postal (1986a, 227), and doubtless other works, there are at least some English verbs that allow the extraposition construction to associate a clause with an expletive NP in a prepositional complement position:

- (36) a. We may depend upon it that their paper will expose crooked politicians. (Emonds (1976, 76))
- b. John will see to it that you have a reservation. (Emonds (1976, 117))
- c. You may depend upon it that we won't abandon him. (Higgins (1973, 158))

Such examples again reveal an expletive NP in a strictly subcategorized position, contravening (14). They represent a construction that is historically stable and well-attested in English, and not in the least "marginal" or "marked." The *Oxford English Dictionary*, citing (37) from an 1865 work by John Ruskin, confirms that it has been a part of English syntax since the end of the Early Modern English period during which *see to that* S was possible with the same meaning.

- (37) See to it that your train is of vassals whom you serve and feed, not merely of slaves who serve and feed *you*. (John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies, Two Lectures, II: Of Queens' Gardens*, §89)

A small clause treatment that would analyze the *it* of such examples as being in the (nonsubcategorized) "subject" position of a small clause seems completely excluded given the possibility of positioning main clause adverbs after the *it* in the examples in (38).

- (38) a. We may depend upon it with full confidence that their paper will expose crooked politicians.

- b. John will see to it immediately that you have a reservation.
- c. You may depend upon it absolutely that we won't abandon him.

There also seems to be no reason to doubt that (*up*)*on it* is a prepositional phrase. (True, it cannot be extracted (we do not find **Upon it, you may depend that we won't abandon him*); but of course, expletive phrases can never be topicalized, so this is not surprising.)

Many other verbs allow expletives in their PP complements. Selected examples are supplied in (39). As before, adverbs or parentheticals are added to establish that the material following the expletive does not constitute a surface constituent with *it*.

- (39) a. What do you make of it, then, that his mother is so evasive?
- b. I was counting heavily on it, you recall, to be possible to prove this lemma.
- c. I was looking for it, you know, to be possible for us to leave at 10.
- d. He has long looked upon it, I remind you, as fairly obvious that you are a Soviet spy.
- e. He made a point of honor of it, I recall, to respect agreements he had negotiated.

Incidentally, it has been suggested (for instance, by Emonds (1976), who provides supporting argument), that the instances of *for* in *for-to* clauses are subject preposition markers. If correct, this would yield a violation of principle (14) when the subject NP of a *for-to* clause was an expletive, as in (40).

- (40) For it to be easy to get into the building would be even better.

3.1.5. Extraposed Irrealis Clauses. Pullum (in press) examines another class of expletives in nonsubject positions. Examples of the sort shown in (41) are there argued to be extraposed finite declarative clauses in the irrealis mood with the complementizer *if*.

- (41) a. I would prefer it if Kim were not informed.
- b. Wendy would really appreciate it if she were left alone from now on.
- c. I would really dig it if you tickled my toes.

Pullum also cites examples in which the expletive *it* is in a prepositional object position.

- (42) a. I'd complain about it if our coffee break were shortened.
- b. Kim would be cut up over it if we didn't tell what we know.
- c. I hope you wouldn't have any problem with it if Dana were invited.

He gives arguments that the pronouns in such sentences are nonreferential and non-anaphoric—in fact, extraposition expletives. We refer the reader to Pullum's paper for further details concerning this class of examples.

3.1.6. Nonsubject Expletives Not Belonging to Chains. A substantial class of largely overlooked English sentences contain occurrences of the pronoun *it* that would traditionally be described as semantically vacuous direct objects of verbs in simplex clauses. In these sentences the pronoun *it* is apparently governed by a verb but has no θ -role,

thus meeting the usual definition of an expletive NP. It also complies with our somewhat stricter criteria (see section 1). However, it is clearly not a member of any chain. We will refer to such cases as exhibiting *unlinked expletives*. (The same phrase might be applied to expletives with meteorological predicates. We discuss below the possibility that these are “quasi arguments” rather than expletives.)

Some clauses with unlinked expletives are interpreted as having unspecified direct objects (exactly the situation claimed by Jaeggli (1986, 589) never to arise; see footnote 3). Others have somewhat idiomatic meanings. Still others show no sign of the expletive *it* having any semantic effect at all: the sentence is grammatical without the *it* (differentiating these cases from sentences with meteorological predicates) and has the same interpretation with it as without it.

One example in which the expletive seems to cooccur with an unspecified object interpretation of the verb is (43).

(43) You two are going to have to battle it out when things go wrong between you.

Here, *battle it out* means ‘settle unspecified differences by battling’. Other examples with comparable properties can be constructed using the verb-object or verb-object-particle collocations listed in (44).

(44) dish it out; does it (*That does it*); fight it out; give it to NP (*She really gave it to him*); have it out with NP; had it (up to here); keep it up; live it up; overdo it; pour it on; push it (*Don't push it*—don't press unspecified matters beyond a tolerable level); rush it (rush things); take it (*The wimp couldn't take it*—couldn't endure unspecified stresses); tough it out

This is by no means an exhaustive list of such cases. And we are hardly the first to notice their existence. Jespersen (1949, 4.610, 150) notes the construction in question, as does Nida (1960, 49n.). Long (1961, 345) also discusses it, noting that sometimes expletive *it* “has no clear semantic content and yet is an integral part of the phrasing”—in other words, that the expletive is syntactically and phonologically but not semantically present. Long offers such examples as those in (45).

(45) have it in for NP, catch it (face troublesome consequences or scolding), lord it over NP, go it alone, rough it, whoop it up

Going into slightly more detail, Allerton (1982, 131–132) makes the following comments:

The impersonal kind of semantically empty elaborator can be illustrated with:

(173) (a) Oliver bought it. [*buy it* = “be deceived”]
 (b) Oliver gave it to me straight. [*give it* = “warn, reprimand”]
 me it

The *it* in these and similar examples (*get it into X's head*, *have it out/off with X*, etc.) is of course part of a verbal idiom, semantically speaking. But from the syntactic point of view, it seems to fill one particular elaboration function, that of the object, thus permitting the use

of a divalent verb in place of a monovalent one, or a trivalent verb in place of a monovalent [*sic*; apparently an error for *divalent*/PMP, GKP] one. The *it* used in such patterns is unlike the “meteorological” *it* of zero-valent verbs: whereas the *it* of *It rained* (etc.) does not correspond to any valency function but merely fills an obligatory surface structure slot, the *it* of (173) is used rather to fit a particular class of verb into a structure that is alien to it but normal for other verbs; thus *buy* and *give* (also: *get* and *have*) are object-requiring verbs, but the use of empty *it* allows them to occur without a substantive object, giving them the freedom of intransitive verbs.

We find Allerton’s characterization appropriate: the *it* of these examples is not anaphoric, and does not in any sense have a semantic role, but fills a subcategorized slot in order to provide the syntactic skeleton on which an idiomatic semantics can be defined. These occurrences of *it* are S-Structure NPs, and receive Case, but bear no θ -role.

Cases of the sort Nida and Allerton point to are quite common. Not all are exactly of the type Allerton cites; some involve verbs that either are normally intransitive or else do not occur except with expletive *it*. Jespersen (1949, 150) notices this, remarking that “Unspecified *it* is very often used as the object of an otherwise intransitive [verb].” We list a selection of the cases we have collected in which the unspecified object interpretation does not seem to be present, the *it* making no semantic contribution at all.

- (46) beat it; blow it; bought it (died [British]); can it; cheese it; come it (be presumptuous [British]); cool it; cut it out; get it together; give it a rest; go it alone; ham it up; hit it off; hop it [British]; knock it off; let him have it; lose it (become flustered and agitated); make it (succeed, or complete the journey); make it with NP (have sex with NP); make it snappy; pig it up; rough it; sweat it (worry); take it easy (loaf; cf. French *se la couler douce*); wing it (improvise)

Consider, for example, the phrase *wing it*. Even in a sentence like (47a), it is not plausible to suggest that the pronoun *it* refers back to *my lecture*, first because (47c) does not exhibit any clash of number agreement, and second, even more tellingly, because (47b) and (47d) are ungrammatical (except on the irrelevant and nonsensical reading where *wing* means ‘wound nonfatally with a bullet in a peripheral part of the body’).

- (47) a. I haven’t prepared my lecture for tonight, so I’m going to have to wing it.
 b. *I haven’t prepared for tonight, so I’m going to have to wing my lecture.
 c. I haven’t prepared any of my lectures for next week, so I’m going to have to wing it.
 d. *I haven’t prepared any of my lectures for next week, so I’m going to have to wing them.

The hypothesis that makes sense for (47a,c) is that the *it* of *wing it* does not refer to anything, because it is an expletive.

In the following cases it is particularly clear that omitting the expletive causes no change in meaning or grammaticality, emphasizing strongly the expletive’s lack of semantic role.

- (48) Hurry it up, will you?
(*hurry it up* = hurry (up) = do what one is doing more rapidly)
- (49) Get those things out of there; c'mon—move it!
(*move it* = move, make haste)
- (50) Keep it up with the sarcasm and I'll belt you.
(*keep it up with* = keep up = continue)
- (51) When I look at the things he does, I get a strong feeling that he's just faking it most of the time.
(*faking it* = faking = pretending, being insincere)

Jespersen (1949, 151) notices exactly this point and cites the following examples from literary works.

- (52) a. . . . thou wilt fight it to the last
(from Christopher Marlowe's *Edward the Second*; *fight it* = fight)
- b. . . . we can walk it perfectly well . . . if we walk to church in this trim
(from Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*; *walk it* = walk)
- c. I battle it against him, as I battled in highest Heaven
(from Byron's *Poetical Works*; *battle it* = battle)
- d. . . . you can jump out to dress yourself and hop it from here
(from Shaw's *Too True to Be Good*; *hop it* = hop)

It is also fairly easy to find examples of unlinked expletives in prepositional object positions.

- (53) a. They were really going at it.
(*go at it* = engage in intense verbal or physical dispute)
- b. Go to it, my friend.
(*go to it* = engage oneself in some activity)
- c. The president seems completely out of it.
(*out of it* = not in touch with reality)
- d. She isn't particularly with it.
(*with it* = in step with current style/fashion)
- e. Get with it.
(*get with it* = conform to rules/regulations/customs/style/orders)
- f. If you are serious about your goals, I think you should go for it.
(*go for it* = make a serious effort to succeed at unspecified things)
- g. The food here isn't in it with that at the Commons.
(Long (1961, 345); *in it* = comparable)
- h. We'll have to run for it.
(Long (1961, 345); *run for it* = run in order to escape)
- i. I'm afraid I'm up against it.
(Long (1961, 345); *up against it* = in difficult circumstances)

- j. I think we have made an excellent day's work of it.
(quoted from Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) by Jespersen (1949, 4.611, 151); *made . . . of it* = done)
- k. There is nothing else for it but to submit.
(quoted from Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) by Jespersen (1949, 4.611, 152); *for it* = available, existent, remaining)

We supply this extensive (but far from exhaustive) sampling of unlinked expletives in order to show that there is a domain of such data to be seriously considered. Unlinked expletives provide *prima facie* counterevidence to any claim that direct object pronouns necessarily have "thematic roles" (as well as to the claim that all expletives belong to chains). The direct object pronouns in these examples are expletive in both the traditional sense and that specified at the outset of this article: the sentences could plainly have the same cognitive import without such pronouns; no information would be lost if they were omitted. They also fail, as the reader can verify, to support emphatics, to coordinate with other NPs, to occur in nominalization *of*-phrases, or to occur in *Tough* Movement subject positions.

4. Analysis and Counteranalyses

Our view of the six classes of data discussed in the previous section is that in every case an NP with the form *it* must be postulated that, in the terms of the kinds of grammatical theory under discussion in this article, (a) is not assigned any θ -role, (b) meets all of our syntactic criteria for expletives, and (c) is in a subcategorized position. Thus, to take an arbitrary example from the substantial corpus we have considered, we suggest that in the case of the sentence (22h), *I blame it on you that we can't go*, current theories are required to adopt an analysis something like the following. The S-Structure representation of the sentence is (54).

(54) [s[_{NP} I][_{VP}[_v blame][_{NP} it]_i [_{PP} on you][_{S'} that we can't go]_i]]

The verb *blame* is subcategorized for an NP and a PP with *on* (Jackendoff (1974)), but in the type of sentence shown it assigns a θ -role to the *S'* and the PP. The NP is an expletive, linked to the *S'* by the mechanism postulated for other extraposition constructions.

To take a different kind of example, with an unlinked dummy, we would argue that *Lee rushed it* has the S-Structure representation shown in (55).

(55) [s[_{NP} Lee][_{VP}[_v rushed][_{NP} it]]]

Rushed subcategorizes an NP, but it does not θ -mark that NP; it θ -marks only the NP in the subject position. The *it* is not assigned any indication of linking to another constituent, but it also has no index of coreference or anaphoric linkage. It may be presumed to be absent (or invisible) at the level of Logical Form.

Within the terms of the theories we are considering, the foregoing suggestions seem straightforward, and unremarkable in all respects but for the fact that they involve expletives in subcategorized positions, which is the point at issue. Our conclusion is that, given the data assembled in this article, analyses involving expletives in subcategorized positions are unavoidable. However, we will now discuss briefly certain objections and rebuttals that might be offered against the present line of argument. Some of what follows is based on discussion that has already appeared in the literature in connection with facts such as those we discuss above.

4.1. “Sporadicity” and “Idiosyncrasy”

Williams (1980, 222) makes a claim rather similar to (14). This is worth considering, since he advances a type of defense of his ideas that others might try to utilize for (14). He observes both (i) that he has formulated a theory that predicts that the expletive associated with extraposition should only occur in subject positions, never in nonsubject (subcategorized) positions, and (ii) that the expletive in the extraposition construction does in fact occur in nonsubject positions. He then deals with the issue of whether his theory is thereby disconfirmed as follows:

Our theory is incapable of describing these cases; only subject *its* are predicted to occur under the predication theory, because it is only when an S is interpreted as a subject that an NP is in need of being made inert by *it*. I do not see this as a deficit in the predication theory, because it is only in subject position that the *it* can occur with any generality, and there it occurs completely generally. In other positions, it occurs only sporadically. . . . I offer no general solution, nor, in my opinion, should one be sought.

The key fault in this reasoning is that the “sporadic” character of object position expletive occurrences amounts to nothing more than (intuitively sensed but unmeasured) statistical infrequency. Just as, say, agreement of verbs with direct objects is more “sporadic” than their agreement with subjects, appearance of expletive NPs in positions governed by verbs seems to be less frequent (in terms of some rather obscure notion of frequency of construction types or triggering predicates in a language) than appearance of expletive NPs in subject positions.⁸ But this has no bearing at all on whether these

⁸ Some subject position expletives are also “sporadic,” that is, limited to a fixed class of verbs and with further restrictions. Hence, the construction in (i) requires that the postposed NP be of a special type, is impossible with most verbal forms, etc.

- (i) It frightens me/*Bob the things they are doing in Nicaragua.
- (ii) It is disgusting the things they are doing in Nicaragua.
- (iii) *It kissed me Bob.
- (iv) *It entails Zorn’s Lemma the Axiom of Choice.
- (v) *It is secret the things they are doing in Nicaragua.

This does not mean that expletive *it* in subject position can justifiably be regarded as marginal, of no import for grammatical theory, etc. Incidentally, this construction has an alternate that appears to provide a further type of counterexample to (14):

less-frequent constructions disconfirm theories that entail (14) or the subcase of it involving extraposition expletives. Hence, no variant of Williams's proposal could serve to defend (14).

A similar point is applicable to Chomsky's (1981, 147–148) remarks about examples with prevention verbs and gerund VPs. Specifically, Chomsky notes the possibility of weather-verb expletive NPs in the object position of verbs like *prevent*, as in (56).

(56) They prevented it from raining.

Chomsky observes that such examples “should also be ungrammatical if *prevent* assigns a θ -role to its object.” His resolution is to suggest that an example like (56) might be “only derivatively generated (in the sense of Chomsky (1965, p. 227; 1972, pp. 27f).” The references cited suggest that, as a purely terminological matter, the term *derivatively generated* should be applied to strings not generated by the grammar but analogically relatable to them (in a sense that has never been spelled out). But if all that is necessary to save (14) from disconfirmation is the reclassification of the data in terms of an unexplained notion of “derivative generation,” the rescue takes place at the cost of removing (14) from the domain of factual claims. As Ruwet (1983, 33, n. 38) remarks, “Chomsky has never been very explicit about [the notion ‘derivative generation’], which he only invokes in general to get rid of problems which appear at first glance to be embarrassing” [our translation].

A further suggestion of Chomsky's (1981, 148) about example (56) is that “quite apart from its dubious status, it is difficult to see how any argument can be based on it, since the rules for generating it would appear to be idiosyncratic.” Two comments are relevant. First, nothing about (56) is dubious. It is perfectly grammatical for everyone we know of, and belongs to an example category that has long been noted in the grammatical literature, a category of which Bresnan (1976, 497) says, “A Raising analysis is quite plausible for these constructions.” Second, and more important, as remarked about Williams's invocation of “sporadicity,” the allegedly “idiosyncratic” character of the rules defining structures with verbs like *prevent* is, as a matter of logic, irrelevant to the key issue, which is the existence of (even a single example of) a sentence type for which the optimal account is a Raising-to-Object analysis.

Concepts like “sporadicity” and “idiosyncrasy” would appear to be inherently statistical: they imply some numerical preponderance or quantitatively verifiable greater stability of the nonsporadic, nonidiosyncratic construction types. But we know of no analysis in such terms, nor of any theory having among its consequences any claim about

-
- (vi) a. I myself regard it as evil, the things they are doing in Nicaragua.
 b. I regard it myself as evil, the things they are doing in Nicaragua.
 c. *I regard myself it as evil, the things they are doing in Nicaragua.

The position of the emphatic reflexive in (vib), its impossibility in (vic), and the fact that the one in (vib) is interpreted just like the main clause one in (via) all argue against any small clause analysis for (vib) and thus support the view that (vib) manifests an expletive of the same type as those in (i) and (ii).

syntax couched in terms of these concepts. Moreover, even a theory that made such statistical claims would not suffice to allow a claim like (14) to be deduced. That claim entails nonexistence of a certain type of syntactic structure, not just sporadicity of occurrence, idiosyncrasy of rule systems, or alleged “dubious” status.

4.2. Failure of Passivization

The same passage puts forward a different argument against a Raising-to-Object analysis for cases like (56), and supposedly in favor of the “derivative generation” claim. This is based on the observation (see Postal (1974, 159, fn. 55)) that they have no passive correspondents, a property that also holds systematically of some other sets of data presented in this article (though not by any means all).⁹

We find no merit in this argument. Even granting some precise sense to the notion “derivatively generated” (none has actually been given to our knowledge), it is surely not justifiable to infer that a construction is “derivatively generated” simply from the observation that it is a superficially transitive-like structure yet has no passive correspondent. No linguist would accept, surely, either that all of the transitive structures of languages lacking passives are “derivatively generated” or that all unpassivizable examples in English are “derivatively generated.” It is easy to list examples of very different types in which passivization fails on superficial V-NP sequences in the verb phrase.

- (57) a. *A lot of money was cost by this.
 b. *Three pounds is weighed by this.
 c. *Three days were traveled by John.
 d. *His punishment was gotten by him.
 e. *An accident was had by him.
 f. *Home was come by John.
 g. *John is resembled by Bill.
 h. *Bill was promised to leave.
 i. *Yesterday was lectured.
 j. *I was struck (by John) as pompous.
 k. *The books were sold without having finished them.
 l. *The book can be filed e_i [without reading e_i].
 m. *The room was left angry.
 n. *John_i is believed that [_α he_i likes e_j].

⁹ With *that*-clauses extraposed from direct object position, one finds, for example, sentences like (ia–c).

- (i) a. It is very much disliked that he is so cruel.
 b. It was suspected that he would fail.
 c. It was resented that he was not promoted.

Likewise for our examples with extraposed infinitives (ii) and for cases with extraposition expletives in prepositional object positions (iii).

- (ii) It can easily be figured out to be impossible to prove the Continuum Hypothesis.
 (iii) It must be seen to immediately that the affair is covered up.

All these examples have been discussed by Chomsky, not as support for “derivative generation,” but rather as evidence for specific hypotheses about English grammar or about linguistic theory.¹⁰ Clearly this is the right approach when faced with such data. We support the same methodology and conclude that failures of passivization with instances of the *prevent NP from V + ing* construction call for a grammatical account of some kind, not a dismissal of the data under the “derivative generation” heading.

It is in any case not true that *prevent NP from V + ing* constructions uniformly fail to passivize when the NP is an expletive. We find rather sharp contrasts between (58a) and (58b,c).

- (58) a. *If there can be prevented from being a riot, . . .
 b. If it can be prevented from raining, . . .
 c. If it cannot be prevented from being obvious that he is lying, . . .

We do not have any account for this contrast between *there* and *it*, although we note that it seems to correlate with a difference in the dialect distribution of the corresponding actives: (28c), *The mayor prevented there from being a riot*, is ungrammatical for some speakers, but similar sentences with expletive *it*, such as (59), are grammatical for all speakers we know of.

- (59) The mayor prevented it from becoming obvious that extra police were on duty.

But this difference between expletives regarding their compatibility with particular constructions is not relevant to the claim that they are expletives. The failure of some active structures to have passive alternants does not cast doubt on their grammatical status or support the notion of “derivative generation,” and would not even if we were unable to find closely similar structures that do passivize.

4.3. Idiomaticity

Some of the putative counterexamples to (14), particularly those with unlinked expletives, have idiomatic senses. Could this somehow be used to argue against their relevance to the truth of (14)?

First, note that this line of criticism fails completely to touch data involving extra-position constructions, where talk of idiomaticity seems not to be relevant at all.

Second, Fraser (1965, 78–79) has pointed out that there is a highly productive con-

¹⁰ These include: selectional incompatibility with manner adverbials (**John is resembled by Bill*: Chomsky (1965, 103)); the notion “ungrammatical, but by virtue of a violation of a principle of semantic interpretation” (**Yesterday was lectured*: Chomsky (1977, 177–178)); “the well-known resistance of verbs of subject control to passivization” (**I was struck by John as pompous*: Chomsky (1980, 35, fn. 40); **Bill was promised to leave*: Chomsky (1977, 14)); the notion of a PRO subject that “cannot be arbitrary in interpretation for some reason, but must be controlled” (**The books were sold without having finished them*: Chomsky (1982, 46)); the hypothesis that “Only variables, not other empty categories, license . . . parasitic gaps” (**The book can be filed without reading*: Chomsky (1986b, 111)); the idea that in **The room was left angry*, “The adjective phrase *angry* is predicated of PRO, not *they*, and only a syntactically present element can be its subject” (Chomsky (1986b, 121)); or the principle of Chomsky’s that we have stated as (14), which accounts for the ungrammaticality of **John is believed that he likes* (Chomsky (1986b, 182)).

struction involving *V it up* that certainly is not idiomatic in the sense of being lexically frozen, since new examples can be constructed at will. He cites (in his (5–1)) common cases like *live it up*, *whoop it up*, and *drink it up*, and points out (p. 79, (5–4)) that *study it up*, *ride it up*, *dance it up*, and so on, are “understandable and acceptable.” We agree, and we note that this appears to be productive verb phrase syntax, not idiomaticity.

In any case, even granting that some cases of expletive *it* in nonsubject positions involve idiomatic meanings, since principle (14) itself makes no mention of idioms, idiomaticity cannot be a *directly* relevant factor. Idiomaticity in some example of a direct object expletive could only be significant if it challenged the crucial claim that the structure has the form [_{VP} V NP]. One possible proposal would be that the correct analysis of such cases involves a complex verb [_V V *it* . . .], of which *it* is just a phonetic or morphological subpart. But, at least under the assumptions of Chomsky (1981), there is a syntactic argument against this. Consider the passives mentioned in footnote 9, repeated in (60).

- (60) a. It is very much disliked that he is so cruel.
 b. It was suspected that he would fail.
 c. It was resented that he was not promoted.
 d. It can easily be figured out to be impossible to prove the Continuum Hypothesis.
 e. It must be seen to immediately that the affair is covered up.

Such examples raise extreme problems for any attempt to claim that direct object or object of preposition extraposition expletives are parts of verbs. In such terms, (61a) would have an analysis essentially parallel to (61b).

- (61) a. I [_V resented it] that he was not promoted.
 b. I [_V believed] that he was not promoted.

However, without ad hoc restrictions, this proposal predicts that rather than (60c), (61a) should have a passive correspondent of the form (62a), just as (62b) is the passive corresponding to (61b).

- (62) a. *It was resented it that he was not promoted.
 b. It was believed that he was not promoted.

A parallel analysis would predict passives like (63) instead of the actual (60a–e).

- (63) *It must be seen to it immediately that the affair is covered up.

These conclusions follow from the view of such passives as (62b) sketched in Chomsky (1981, 122) in which they involve not NP Movement but simply a base-generated post-verbal clause with an empty subject position. If *resent it* or *see to it* were verbs, they would yield the ungrammatical passives (62a) and (63). The ungrammaticality of the latter shows that the relevant past participle (+ preposition) + *it* sequences are *not* verbs.

But the ungrammaticalities in question follow directly from otherwise necessary principles of English grammar on the view that the instances of apparent object position extraposition *it* are objects. For of course, English grammar must, independently of object position expletives, yield the characterizations in (64).

- (64) a. It was believed (*it) by Joanne.
 b. Joanne was tickled (*her) by Malcolm.
 c. The tigers were eaten (*them) by the hunters.

For the extraposition cases, therefore, not only are there no grounds for appealing to “idiomaticity” of the sequences involved, but positive syntactic evidence can be found that to postulate complex verbs of the form [_v V + *it*] would be incorrect.

This leaves the unlinked expletives, which in many (not all) cases have idiomatic senses. It is worth reflecting on what implications such idiomaticity might have for our central thesis that nonsubject expletives occur in English.

As already indicated, we take the view stated by Allerton (1982, 131–132) as correct for idiomatic unlinked expletives. We claim that the *it* in an example like *Lucy really pigged it up at the party* is a pronominal direct object rather than just a morphological subsequence of a complex verb *pig it up*; it has syntactic reality despite its lack of a semantic contribution. There is some syntactic evidence for this, deriving from the “presentational” construction discussed in Postal (1977), which seems to require intransitive predicates.

- (65) a. Near the fountain (there) was resting a young lion.
 b. *Near the fountain (there) was having a rest a young lion.

Note the following contrasts between synonymous idiomatic phrases, one intransitive and the other transitive.

- (66) a. In the back room (there) were pigging out two pale-faced and heavily-built teenagers.
 b. *In the back room (there) were pigging it up two pale-faced and heavily-built teenagers.
 (67) a. Through the narrow street (there) rushed some morose-looking villagers.
 b. *Through the narrow street (there) rushed it some morose-looking villagers.

Expletive objects appear to count like any other object NPs for the purpose of blocking the presentational construction.

If correct, these judgments provide positive evidence against the idea that some instances of *it* are nonsyntactic. And even for other dialects, there is no demonstrated merit to a position appealing to idiomaticity that would (on unknown grounds) deny the surface NP-hood of all unlinked expletives (except those with meteorological predicates).

A different line of defense relating to the idiomatic meanings associated with some of our examples might accept the syntactic status of the expletive pronouns but claim that they are actually referential. It could be claimed that English has an element *IT*,

pronounced *it*, which is neither anaphoric nor expletive, but which is lexically determined to have specific types of reference. So, the lexical item underlying *pig it up* might (implausibly) specify that *IT* refers to some contextually designated large quantity of food, etc.

Clearly this proposal is suspicious on grounds of artificiality alone, and has nothing to say about the cases that involve intransitive verbs. Even where it can be invoked with some faint plausibility, recognition of the supposedly referential object in fact contributes nothing to the description of the meaning of such a form; *IT* would have to have a different meaning in nearly every case. Further, the proposal creates a major problem: the alleged nonexpletive *IT* would have to be excluded from direct object position with the overwhelming mass of verbs, and largely excluded from other than direct object positions altogether. Moreover, obviously, postulation of *IT* would do nothing to impugn the status of any of the extraposition examples. Hence, although it is logically possible that the various instances of *it* in our examples might be occurrences of some hitherto unrecognized nonexpletive, referential element, such a view hardly seems worth pursuing as a defense of (14).

4.4. Rosenbaum's Analysis: Extraposition It Structures as Complex NPs

We should comment at this point on the analysis provided in Rosenbaum (1967), in which the characteristic *it* of the extraposition construction is the head of a complex NP that also contains the (ultimately externalized) complement. This sort of analysis is considered in detail in Thráinsson (1979), since it seems to have an instantiation in Icelandic. However, as Thráinsson shows, there is a contrasting structure where the complement does not have this basis. Were such a complex NP analysis viable, it could well be concluded that the relevant instances of *it* were not expletives and hence irrelevant to any falsification of (14) and hence (8).

But it seems clearly wrong to associate English extraposition cases with a complex NP structure since the latter are very strict islands, even when the complement has been externalized and appears noncontiguously. Compare (68) and (69).

- (68) a. I believed the claim to have been made by Armand that Tim stole your money.
 b. *It was your money that I believed the claim to have been made by Armand that Tim stole.
- (69) a. I believed it to be obvious that Tim stole your money.
 b. It was your money that I believed it to be obvious that Tim stole.

Example (68b) is just as ungrammatical as the corresponding sentence in which the clause *that Tim stole* is adjacent to *the claim*, whereas (69b) is fine. Thus, an analysis that represents *it . . . S* cases as underlyingly [_{NP} *it* S], parallel to an analysis of *the claim . . . S* cases as [_{NP} *the claim* S], is misguided.

Nonsubject extraposition cases should likewise also not be analyzed in a way that

unifies them with complex NPs, despite a slight island-like resistance to extraction, at least for some speakers, with nonsubject extraposition, as in (70b).

- (70) a. I didn't like it at all that he cooked and ate my pet hamster.
 b. ?It was my pet hamster which I didn't like it at all that he cooked and ate.

The contrast between this oddness and the complete ungrammaticality of (68b) is quite clear. And cases like (71b) seem perfect.

- (71) a. He saw to it that the bishop was introduced to the actress.
 b. It was the actress that he saw to it that the bishop was introduced to.

Moreover, obviously, an analysis like Rosenbaum's requires an ad hoc stipulation *obligatorily* separating the two putative immediate constituent components (or deleting *it*, which is what Rosenbaum proposed), since the rule relevant for (68) always leaves the option of surface constituency for *the claim* and its complement, but [_{NP} *it* S] constructions are in probably all cases illicit in S-Structure. We conclude that appeal to a complex NP analysis cannot insulate principle (14) from cases like those of section 3.1.1.

4.5. Kayne's Treatment of Extraposed Infinitives

Kayne (1985, 114–115) sketches an approach to the cases of infinitival VPs extraposed across matrix constituents that avoids both appeal to Raising-to-Object and the need to analyze, say, (35f) as involving a surface clause of the form [_S *it upon myself to fix the lamp*]. Kayne's analysis appeals to a hitherto unknown rightward movement of (infinitival) VPs, and an entirely unprecedented structure-building rule that adds new empty subjects for moved VPs. This account is relevant to cases like (72) (= Kayne's (70)).

- (72) I've believed John for a long time now to be a liar.

Kayne proposes:

Our solution runs as follows: Chomsky's (1981, 41; 1982, 10) Extended Projection Principle holds at all syntactic levels of representation. Movement of *to*-VP yields an instance of *to*-VP with no syntactic subject. Therefore movement of *to*-VP must give rise to the appearance of a new adjoined subject NP:

- (74) . . . believed [John]_i [e]_i for a long time [[_{NP}_i e] [_{to} VP]_i]

Although a kind of structure building, this process seems compatible with the letter and spirit of the Projection Principle.

There are several telling objections to this proposal. First, appeal to structure building for the inserted "new adjoined subject NP" is surely a repugnantly theory-expansive move viewed either from within or from outside Kayne's framework. Second, it is independently clear that English infinitives are highly resistant to what in transformational terms is analyzed as movement. There is independent motivation for a constraint blocking "movement" of infinitives:

- (73) a. They said he liked harassing women, and harassing women he liked.
 b. *They said he liked to harass women, and to harass women he liked.
- (74) a. Harassing women, he likes very much.
 b. *To harass women, he likes very much.
- (75) a. I would consider very impolite simply grabbing him and pulling him out of the room.
 b. *I would consider very impolite simply to grab him and (to) pull him out of the room.
- (76) a. It is hard to get students to like studying.
 b. Studying is hard to get students to like.
 c. It is hard to get students to like to study.
 d. *To study is hard to get students to like.

(Note that (76) supports a traditional “object-raising” view of the (76b) construction (*Tough* Movement) rather than the analysis suggested by Chomsky (1977; 1982, 45), where the only moved element is an invisible *wh*-form or “empty operator”; under Chomsky’s analysis, (76d) is irrelevant to the constraint against infinitive movement but represents a distinct and apparently unnoticed problem for his view, since its ill-formedness does not follow from an account of the ungrammaticality of moved infinitives.)

Extraposition cases like (77) are, of course, grammatical.

- (77) It is important, you know, (for me) to be free to speak out.

In traditional transformational terms, such sentences involve extraposition of the entire complement sentence, not of just an infinitival VP. And in no current transformationalist theory do these involve movement of a VP (or of an S, since extraposed clauses are generated in situ). Therefore, Kayne’s proposal seems inevitably to involve an ad hoc violation of an otherwise fully general ban excluding the movement of English infinitival VPs. The correlation of this ad hoc exceptionality with the need for an ad hoc postulation of empty subject NP creation further weakens the plausibility of his analysis.

Moreover, in many obvious cases, structures resulting from what would be movement of an infinitival VP to the right are clearly ungrammatical:

- (78) a. I arranged for Bob to come before shaving myself.
 b. *I arranged for Bob, before shaving myself, to come.
- (79) a. He loves that sort of activity as much as you do.
 b. He loves to sing as much as you do.
 c. He loves as much as anyone does the sort of activity that involves music and dance.
 d. *He loves as much as anyone does to sing and (to) dance.

We conclude that appeal to rightward VP movement as an alternative to a Raising-to-Object analysis is theoretically undesirable and not factually supportable; hence, Kayne’s alternative analysis of the sentence structures involved in these cases cannot be accepted.

5. Conclusion: Viability of Movement to Subcategorized Positions

If principle (8) were true, there could not be correct analyses involving movement to strictly subcategorized positions like direct object or object of preposition—for instance, for sentences like (15a–c). It is notable that (8) is introduced in Chomsky (1981, 37–38) with essentially no factual justification. No attempt is made there to display an argument that there are facts about natural language sentences that could be explained or even described via appeal to (8) that could not be as well explained or described without this condition. This situation vis-à-vis (8) appears to have remained unchanged until Jaeggli (1986) (see footnote 3). The latter work suggests explicitly that one motivation for (8) is its key role in deriving (14). This would be a real virtue of (8) were (14) true.

But it has been shown in section 2 that (14) is false. Hence, it not only fails to serve as an independent justification *for* (8), whose inclusion in Universal Grammar is a complication, but in fact offers a sufficient condition for the elimination of (8) from any theory that is to have a hope of remaining consistent with the facts (of English, in this case).

Of course, our claim that (8) is false depends on an interpretation of it under which it has some factual content. This requires minimally that one be able to determine whether or not an element has a θ -role. The only sense independent of (8) that can be and ever is given to this notion is that an element x has a θ -role if and only if x corresponds to a nonpredicate element of the logical (semantic) predicate-argument structure of the sentence containing x . The vagueness of this characterization does not preclude it from determining that the forms we have taken to be expletives do not bear θ -roles, whereas full lexical noun phrases generally do. But suppose θ -roles could be posited with no regard at all to their relevance to real semantic structure.¹¹ Then clearly there could be no counterexamples to (8), because in the face of any potential counterexample like those in section 3, one need only invent a new θ -role and claim that the relevant verbs assign this to the relevant (expletive) NPs.

Unfortunately, there is considerable ground for the view that Chomsky (1981) interprets (8) in a way that does exclude it from any possibility of disconfirmation. Thus, Chomsky states (1981, 37):

We can bring subcategorization and θ -marking together more closely by inventing a new θ -role, call it #, for non-arguments that are subcategorized by heads, e.g., *advantage* in ‘‘take advantage of.’’ Then even in idioms, each subcategorized position is a θ -position. We may now regard, e.g., *advantage* as a kind of argument, call it a *quasi-argument*. We will see in chapter 6 that there is some independent justification for this move, which for the present is simply an artifice.

It is unclear what ‘‘independent justification’’ this unreferenced final remark designates, but one does find in chapter 6 the following discussion of weather forms (1981, 325):

¹¹ Ravin (1987) argues at length that θ -roles can in fact play no role in genuine semantic description and thus that they have no semantic motivation. In these terms, principle (8) has no known factual content. Although this conclusion seems correct to us, it is in no way assumed by the argument of this study.

It seems, then, that weather-*it* is similar to arguments in that it can control PRO but unlike them in that it denotes no member of D, as a matter of grammatical principle. Let us then distinguish two classes of arguments: *true arguments* with potentially referential function—apart from conceptual constraints . . . and *quasi-arguments* that lack any such function as a matter of grammatical principle. Let us assume, correspondingly, that one of the possible θ -roles is that of quasi-argument.

If then one adopts the same device Chomsky appeals to for *advantage* and weather *it* for nonsubject expletives—for example, if one invents a new θ -role for them, say, “pleonastic-argument”—then (8) is obviously protected against falsehood. But this hardly yields a genuine defense of (8). As Ruwet (1983, 39, n. 39) says, the move is empty: “a purely terminological way of putting aside a serious question” [our translation]. Since it has never been shown that such artificial θ -roles have any independent justification or motivation, their postulation is an unnecessary and pointless complication. Principle (8) must then be eliminated not because it is false but because it is itself excrescent and requires the recognition of otherwise excrescent theoretical entities such as the θ -role “pleonastic-argument.”

The excision of (8), regardless of whether on grounds of falsehood or of simplicity, eliminates the basic substantive objection to movements to subcategorized positions. No other grounds for rejecting such analyses as Raising-to-Object seem to have any cogency, as we will show by briefly surveying the few attempts in this direction with which we are familiar. First, consider some remarks of Chomsky (1986b, 90–91). Here he follows Pesetsky (1982) in distinguishing between what he calls semantic selection (abbreviated as s-selection) and category selection (abbreviated as c-selection) and contemplates eliminating the latter:

If we succeed in eliminating recourse to c-selection as well as phrase structure rules, . . . it will follow that the complement of any head in a syntactic representation must be s-selected by it, because there is no other way for the position to exist. For example, there cannot be such sentences as (68), where V is a verb that does not s-select an object and *there* is a pleonastic element (an “expletive,” in traditional terminology) lacking any semantic role, as in (69):

John [_{VP} V there] (68)

there is a man in the room (69)

Example (68) would not be semantically anomalous, since no semantic role is assigned to the object, and the expletive object, not being an argument, requires no such role; but the structure cannot exist as a projection of the lexicon, hence, cannot exist at all if other modes of forming syntactic structures have been eliminated.

We find the idea of “eliminating recourse to c-selection” implausible. Reasons for rejecting it are given by Gazdar et al. (1985, 32) and Ravin (1987, chap. 2). But, setting this aside, the key point is that, according to Chomsky, the principle that does this precludes the existence of examples like his (68), containing in effect an expletive direct object with a verb that does not s-select a (semantic) object. But a variety of such

examples have been presented in this article (constructions like *Cool it* or *Don't sweat it* being particularly clear examples). Hence, Chomsky's claim is false, and so is the principle he takes to entail it. But Chomsky draws the following conclusion from the principle with respect to Raising-to-Object analyses:

Similarly, we cannot have "raising to object" to yield (70ii) (with *e* the trace of *Bill*) from the D-structure (70i):

- (i) John [_{VP} believes *e* [_S Bill to be intelligent]] (70)
- (ii) John [_{VP} believes Bill [_S *e* to be intelligent]]

The verb *believe* s-selects only a proposition. Therefore, in (70i) the position occupied by *e* cannot exist at D-structure, because it is not s-selected by *believe*.

Given that the relevant principle is false, Chomsky's inference here has no force.¹²

Next, consider the remark made by Chomsky (1981, 146, n. 91) that

raising to object in essentially the sense of Postal (1974), with base-generated [_{NP} *e*] as object of the verb . . . is ruled out by the requirement that trace be governed . . . unless we require S'-deletion in addition to raising, in which case raising is superfluous.

As Chomsky himself notes, if Raising-to-Object analyses are associated with S' Deletion, no violation of the trace government condition ensues. Hence, there is no logical incompatibility between such analyses and current transformational assumptions. Raising-to-Subject analyses, for instance for sentences like *John seems to have left*, which are uniformly adopted in transformationalist work, would also violate the trace government condition if it were not for "S' Deletion" (which is really pruning, rather than deletion, of an S' node under certain conditions). But no general principle seems to determine the operation of S' Deletion, despite some imprecise remarks of Chomsky (1982, 19–20, 96–97, n. 15) about "the process of S'-Deletion (or some equivalent)" being "generally available." This is made explicit in, for instance, Van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986, 293), apropos of (80).

- (80) John_i seems [[*e*_i to have left]]. (Van Riemsdijk and Williams's (24a))

Van Riemsdijk and Williams comment:

¹² Chomsky's claim that verbs like *believe* s-select only propositions seems quite incorrect, as (i)–(v) show:

- (i) (What) I believe of/about Jerome (is) that he is an extraterrestrial.
- (ii) Nobody expected of John that he could be so cruel. (Rosenbaum (1967, 36))
- (iii) Nobody believes the president.
- (iv) Nobody believes it/that/the claim that he was uninformed.
- (v) Everybody believes in God.

Suppose it is claimed that (i)–(v) contain (homonymous) verbs distinct from those referred to in the specification that *believe* and similar verbs s-select only propositions. Then it becomes doubtful that the claims about s-selection determining syntactic form have any factual content. Any counterexample could be handled in a parallel way by the (so far unconstrained) postulation of homonyms.

But now a problem arises in view of the ECP. The sentences in (24) are perfectly well-formed despite the fact that in each of them the NP-trace is *not* properly governed. We must therefore revise our previous assumptions about these examples by assuming that they too have a transparent S' (S'^t) and by attributing the failure of case-assignment to lexical properties of the governor. . . . For raising verbs like *seem* in (24a) we will just stipulate this property.

Their notion of "transparent S'," notated S'^t, is simply a recoding of Chomsky's notion "S' Deletion."

Given the need for "transparency" in (80), the natural suggestion is to specify in Universal Grammar some function that entails "transparency" (complement S' deletion) when there is transclausal movement to, for instance, a *potential* argument position (that is, to subject, direct object, or prepositional object). Since such a principle is independently motivated by the need for "transparency" in cases like (80), it can be appealed to for those like (81) without cost.

(81) They believe George to be innocent.

Thus, Chomsky's claim about "superfluity" has no force.

Finally, one might wonder whether current transformational theories are fundamentally incompatible with Raising-to-Object analyses for clauses like (81) because of Case-marking mechanisms. Relevant here is the issue of whether Case marking operates across clausal boundaries to mark the NP *George* or whether that NP moves into the superordinate clause to receive Case. Even if one assumes that neither view is especially more plausible a priori than the other, there is, as far as we know, no existing argument favoring the former. One might, however, question whether there are any other examples of Case marking between nonclausemates, motivated independently of the desire to avoid Raising-to-Object analyses. For example, one might ask whether there is any ground for thinking that a verb or Infl constituent can Case-mark not just its own subject but the subject NP inside any sentential subject it might have. If (as seems likely) no such cases are known, the transclausal boundary Case-marking alternatives to Raising-to-Object analyses violate what would otherwise be a possible restrictive constraint on Case marking.

The theory argued for by Bouchard (1983), which seeks to resolve a number of problems with previous accounts, imposes a different but related constraint on Case marking: a verb cannot normally Case-mark an NP unless it also θ -marks it. English verbs like *believe* are exceptional, Bouchard claims, in that they allow Case marking to occur independently of θ -marking. Since predicates typically θ -mark their D-Structure sisters and Case-mark their superficial (S-Structure) sisters, this is very much the same as saying that *believe* allows something as an S-Structure direct object that it does not have as a D-Structure direct object (namely, the last occupant of the subject position of its complement clause). But this is just the familiar Raising-to-Object analysis.

We conclude that considerations of trace government and of Case marking share with principle (14) an inability to offer any known grounds for rejecting Raising-to-Object

analyses. It follows that the currently systematic repudiation of such analyses is an unfounded dogma. The question of the validity of Raising-to-Object analyses remains undetermined internal to current assumptions in transformational grammar.¹³

More generally, (8) does not provide valid grounds for rejecting other movement to direct object position analyses, such as Dative Movement and movement to object of preposition positions (although for some of these there may be other grounds for rejection—for example, blocking the interchange of subject and object in passives by the θ -Criterion). Those who wish to motivate the view that such analyses are somehow undesirable must either find new theoretical arguments for that view¹⁴ or else develop language-by-language factual or simplicity justifications for analyses that do not involve movement to strictly subcategorized positions.¹⁵ Analyses involving movement into subcategorized positions may be wrong in particular cases, but they are not incompatible with any principles that have so far been independently justified.

References

- Akmajian, A. and F. Heny (1975) *An Introduction to the Principles of Transformational Syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Allerton, D. J. (1982) *Valency and the English Verb*, Academic Press, New York.
- Bach, E. (1977) Review of Paul M. Postal, *On Raising*, *Language* 53, 621–654.
- Bach, E. and G. Horn (1976) ‘Remarks on ‘Conditions on Transformations,’” *Linguistic Inquiry* 7, 265–299.
- Bennis, H. (1986) *Gaps and Dummies*, Foris, Dordrecht.
- Bouchard, D. (1983) ‘ECM Is Exceptional Case Marking,’ in *Proceedings of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics 2*, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
- Brame, M. K. (1979) ‘Quantifiers, Reciprocals, and Raising,’ in *Essays toward Realistic Syntax*, Noit Amrofer, Seattle, Washington.
- Bresnan, J. (1976) ‘Nonarguments for Raising,’ *Linguistic Inquiry* 7, 485–501.

¹³ This conclusion contrasts starkly with the peculiar view of Van Riemsdijk and Williams (1986, 33) that the dispute over Raising-to-Object was a ‘battle, which basically had already been won with the appearance of Chomsky (1973) . . .’ It is unfortunate that this introductory text chooses to represent one possible resolution of a dispute as a result securely established at a time predating the publication of most of the literature relevant to the topic: among others, Postal (1974; 1977), Bach and Horn (1976), Bach (1977), Lightfoot (1976), Bresnan (1976), Brame (1979), Thráinsson (1979). Notice that *all* other contemporary grammatical frameworks (Lexical-Functional Grammar, Relational Grammar, Arc Pair Grammar, Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar, and so on), despite the putative 1973 victory, uniformly adopt analyses sharing one of the two essential features of Raising-to-Object analyses, that is, main clause surface constituency for the postverbal NP that is associated in some way with the complement clause.

¹⁴ For example, it could be claimed that linguistic theory only permits binary branching in constituent structure, as Richard Kayne has suggested in several papers. This proposal seems to us to be a *reductio ad absurdum*, being incompatible with sensible representations for numerous classes of *n*-place verbs (for example, *envy* NP₁ NP₂, *persuade* NP₁ S, *treat* NP Manner-adverb, *bet* NP₁ NP₂ S) and for many other phenomena (such as the pseudo-coordinate reduplicative construction *tried and tried and tried*). Any serious attention to the syntax of such constructions that paid attention to their semantics would rapidly cast doubt on binary branching analyses for them. Nonetheless, logically, Kayne’s conjecture makes the point that other claims could exclude the [_{VP} V NP Infinitive] structure for Raising-to-Object structures on general theoretical grounds.

¹⁵ For example, this is attempted in Massam (1984) for Raising-to-Object in various languages with different constituent orders.

- Chomsky, N. (1955) *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory*, duplicated, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Page references are to the version published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1985.
- Chomsky, N. (1957) *Syntactic Structures*, Mouton, The Hague.
- Chomsky, N. (1965) *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Chomsky, N. (1973) "Conditions on Transformations," in S. R. Anderson and P. Kiparsky, eds., *A Festschrift for Morris Halle*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.
- Chomsky, N. (1977) *Essays on Form and Interpretation*, North-Holland, Amsterdam.
- Chomsky, N. (1980) "On Binding," *Linguistic Inquiry* 11, 1–46.
- Chomsky, N. (1981) *Lectures on Government and Binding*, Foris, Dordrecht.
- Chomsky, N. (1982) *Some Concepts and Consequences of the Theory of Government and Binding*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Chomsky, N. (1986a) *Barriers*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Chomsky, N. (1986b) *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use*, Praeger, New York.
- Clements, G. N., J. McCloskey, J. Maling, and A. Zaenen (1983) "String-vacuous Rule Application," *Linguistic Inquiry* 14, 1–17.
- Emonds, J. (1972) "A Reformulation of Certain Syntactic Transformations," in S. Peters, ed., *Goals of Linguistic Theory*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Emonds, J. (1973) "Evidence That Indirect Object Movement Is a Structure-preserving Rule," *Foundations of Language* 8, 546–561. Reprinted in M. Gross, M. Halle, and M.-P. Schützenberger, eds., *The Formal Analysis of Natural Languages*, Mouton, The Hague, 1973.
- Emonds, J. (1976) *A Transformational Approach to English Syntax*, Academic Press, New York.
- Fillmore, C. (1965) *Indirect Object Constructions in English and the Ordering of Transformations*, Mouton, The Hague.
- Fraser, J. B. (1965) *An Examination of the Verb-Particle Construction in English*, Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Gazdar, G., E. Klein, G. K. Pullum, and I. A. Sag (1985) *Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Higgins, F. R. (1973) "On J. Emonds's Analysis of Extraposition," in J. P. Kimball, ed., *Syntax and Semantics: Volume 2*, Seminar Press, New York.
- Hudson, R. A. (1971) *English Complex Sentences*, North-Holland, Amsterdam.
- Jackendoff, R. S. (1974) "A Deep Structure Projection Rule," *Linguistic Inquiry* 5, 481–506.
- Jacobs, R. A. and P. S. Rosenbaum (1968) *English Transformational Grammar*, Blaisdell, Waltham, Massachusetts.
- Jaeggli, O. A. (1986) "Passive," *Linguistic Inquiry* 17, 587–622.
- Jespersen, O. (1937) *Analytic Syntax*, George Allen and Unwin, London. Page reference is to the reprinting by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1969.
- Jespersen, O. (1949) *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles; Part VII: Syntax*, Munksgaard, Copenhagen.
- Johnson, D. E. and P. M. Postal (1980) *Arc Pair Grammar*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.
- Joseph, B. D. (1979) "Raising to Oblique in Modern Greek," in *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, University of California, Berkeley.
- Kayne, R. S. (1985) "Principles of Particle Constructions," in J. Guéron, H.-G. Obenauer, and J.-Y. Pollock, eds., *Grammatical Representation*, Foris, Dordrecht.
- Kiparsky, P. and C. Kiparsky (1970) "Fact," in M. Bierwisch and K. E. Heidolph, eds., *Progress in Linguistics*, Mouton, The Hague.
- Langendoen, D. T. (1969) *The Study of Syntax*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

- Lees, R. B. and E. S. Klima (1963) "Rules for English Pronominalization," *Language* 39, 17–28.
- Lightfoot, D. (1976) "The Theoretical Implications of Subject Raising," *Foundations of Language* 14, 257–286.
- Long, R. B. (1961) *The Sentence and Its Parts*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.
- McCloskey, J. (1984) "Raising, Subcategorization and Selection in Modern Irish," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 1, 441–486.
- Massam, D. (1984) "Raising an Exceptional Case," in *CLS 20: Papers from the Twentieth Regional Meeting*, Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago, Illinois.
- Nida, E. A. (1960) *A Synopsis of English Syntax*, Summer Institute of Linguistics, Norman, Oklahoma.
- Perlmutter, D. M. (1978) "Impersonal Passives and the Unaccusative Hypothesis," in J. Jaeger et al., eds., *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, University of California, Berkeley.
- Pesetsky, D. (1982) *Paths and Categories*, Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Pollock, J.-Y. (1981) "On Case and Impersonal Constructions," in R. May and J. Koster, eds., *Levels of Syntactic Representation*, Foris, Dordrecht.
- Postal, P. M. (1974) *On Raising: One Rule of English Grammar and Its Theoretical Implications*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Postal, P. M. (1977) "About a 'Nonargument' for Raising," *Linguistic Inquiry* 8, 141–154.
- Postal, P. M. (1986a) *Studies of Passive Clauses*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York.
- Postal, P. M. (1986b) "Why Irish Raising Is Not Anomalous," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 4, 333–356.
- Pullum, G. K. (in press) "Implications of English Extraposed Irrealis Clauses," in *ESCOL 4: Proceedings of the Fourth Eastern States Conference on Linguistics*. Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.
- Ravin, Y. (1987) *A Decompositional Approach to Predicates Denoting Events*, Doctoral dissertation, City University of New York, New York.
- Riemsdijk, H. van and E. Williams (1986) *Introduction to the Theory of Grammar*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Rosenbaum, P. S. (1967) *The Grammar of English Predicate Complement Constructions*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Ross, J. R. (1967) *Constraints on Variables in Syntax*, Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Page reference to published version by Indiana University Linguistics Club, Bloomington, Indiana, 1968. [Now also published as *Infinite Syntax*, Ablex Publishing Company, Norwood, New Jersey, 1986.]
- Ross, J. R. (1973) "Slifting," in M. Gross, M. Halle, and M.-P. Schützenberger, eds., *The Formal Analysis of Natural Languages*, Mouton, The Hague.
- Ruwet, N. (1983) "Montée et contrôle: Une question à revoir?" in M. Herslund, O. Mørdrup, and F. Sørensen, eds., *Analyses grammaticales du français: Etudes publiées à l'occasion du 50^e anniversaire de Carl Vikner*, Etudes romanes de l'université de Copenhague, *Revue Romane* special number 24.
- Stockwell, R. P., P. Schachter, and B. H. Partee (1973) *The Major Syntactic Structures of English*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.
- Stowell, T. (1981) *Origins of Phrase Structure*, Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Thráinsson, H. (1979) *On Complementation in Icelandic*, Garland, New York.

Williams, E. (1980) "Predication," *Linguistic Inquiry* 11, 203–238.

Zaenen, A., J. Maling, and H. Thráinsson (1985) "Case and Grammatical Functions: The Icelandic Passive," *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 3, 441–483.

(Postal)

IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center

Box 218

Yorktown Heights, New York 10598

(Pullum)

Cowell College

University of California, Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz, California 95064