Embedded V2, Factivity and Main Point of Utterance

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Since the seminal work of Hooper & Thompson 1973, many researchers have pursued the insight that V2, as a classic Main Clause Phenomenon [MCP] is licensed in formally subordinate clauses to the extent that such clauses are "**asserted**." H&T categorised embedding predicates into 5 classes largely according to whether their complement clauses could be interpreted as asserted, a status which they took to be the converse of **presupposed**. The class of verbs of communication such as *say* occupied one pole—allowing MCP freely in their complements—while **factives** such as *be happy that* occupied the other. In an important update of this tradition, Simons 2007 has considerably sharpened H&T's concept of assertion, proposing that the crucial distinction is whether the subordinate clause contributes a proposition that makes the utterance relevant; as a diagnostic, in a question/response sequence, "whatever proposition communicated by the response constitutes an answer (complete or partial) to the question is the main point of the response." Simons demonstrates that given this definition/diagnostic, even factive clauses may constitute the Main Point of Utterance [**MPU**]; hence, in such contexts, they should also allow V2.

In this talk we present the results of three experiments (one on Swedish and two on English) that aimed to test empirically the claim that the possibility of V2 in an embedded clause (EV2) follows from whether or not the embedded clause constitutes the MPU (cf. Julien 2007, Jensen & Christensen 2013). In the first experiment, 104 L1 speakers of Swedish were asked to judge the acceptability of question-response pairs where, following Simons 2007, the question was manipulated to vary the location of the MPU in the response: in the main or the embedded clause. There were two other independent variables: the classification of the embedding verb in the response, and whether or not the embedded clause in the response exhibited V2.

We show that, on the one hand, the results support the claim that Swedish EV2 is possible under semi-factive (*discover/realize*) and non-factive (*think/claim*) clause-embedding predicates, but not under purely factive ones (*be happy/be surprised*) (Wiklund et al. 2007). Strikingly, the judgments also mirror the frequency difference between EV2 in the complements to epistemic vs. communicative non-factives (e.g. *suppose* vs. *say*) reported for Danish corpus data in Jensen & Christensen 2013. However, the results show **no** interaction between the effect of embedded V2 and embedded **MPU**: that is, our data suggest, contra Julien 2007, Jensen & Christensen 2013, that the low acceptability/frequency of V2 under factives cannot be explained by the twin hypotheses that MPU licenses EV2 and that factives cannot embed MPU.

An alternative interpretation, preserving the idea that MPU licenses EV2, would be that participants may have essentially ignored the MPU-licensing questions when evaluating the acceptability of the responses. Under such an account the low acceptability of EV2 under factives would have to follow from the inability of speakers to interpret clauses in this immediate environment as the MPU. In order to investigate this possibility, two follow-up experiments were conducted, this time with English speakers, where participants were presented with question-response pairs where the MPU of the response was either in the main or the embedded clause, or the response did not address the question. The second variable was whether the embedding predicate was factive or non-factive. In this experiment the participants were asked to judge whether the response was a direct or indirect answer to the question, or did not answer it at all. In the conditions where the response did not address the question, informants reliably scored the responses low for directness, showing that at least here the participants paid attention to the question, and that the question-response paradigm effectively manipulated MPU. Nevertheless, we found no effect of predicate type (factive/non-factive) on judgments of how well the response answered the question.

These follow-up experiments thus support Simons' contention that speakers can interpret the complements to factives as the MPU. They therefore also support our conclusion that the low rating for EV2 in factive contexts in Swedish cannot be accounted for in purely pragmatic terms, but motivates instead a more narrowly semantico-syntactic explanation, such as Haegeman's 2013 intervention account.

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