

Finite *wh*-raising patterns in English?

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In this talk we present and examine English subject extraction data which were hitherto generally considered to be unacceptable, but which are well attested in corpora and turn out to be acceptable for at least some native speakers. In English, a contrast can be observed between subject-to-subject raising out of a non-finite clause (1a), which is acceptable, and (1b), which involves A-movement out of a finite clause and is strongly unacceptable:

- (1) a. John_i seems to t_i read a book. b. *John_i seems (that) t_i reads a book.

The deviance of (1b) is usually captured in terms of a ban on ‘Improper Movement’, i.e. the descriptive generalization which rules out movement from an A’ to a A-position. However, instances of what looks like raising out of a finite clause are attested in English. Such examples are also judged as relatively acceptable by some native speakers:

- (2) a. % There were no signs of violence and a postmortem examination is due to take place tomorrow [Tuesday], which is hoped may provide further information. (*Guardian*)
b. %The Department for Constitutional Affairs announced that it intends to simplify the rules for Conditional Fee Arrangements (CFAs) (“No Win No Fee”) which were hoped would promote access to justice. (Minutes - Nottinghamshire County Council)

At first sight such examples might be ‘explained away’ as blends combining the ‘upper layer’ of a raising pattern with a *wh*-subject (3a) with a ‘lower layer’ (3b) of A’ subject extraction:

- (3) a. which is hoped to provide more information
b. which it is hoped may provide more information

We will try to account for the data in (2) without any recourse to extragrammatical devices like ‘blend’. Instead, using a cartographic approach and adopting a criterial approach to subjecthood and subject extraction (Rizzi 2004, Rizzi & Shlonsky 2006, 2007), we examine what the grammar of speakers allowing this form of *wh*-agreement should be like.