Copy-raising and Phase Theory: Finite complementizers look like they're defective, too

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I. Introduction

- **Copy-raising (CR)**, as in (1), relates the subject of a **raising verb** to a **pronominal copy** in its complement, headed by *like*, *as if*, or *as though* (*as if*-Cs)

    (1) John seems like he loves Mary.

- Because of its similarity to **subject-to-subject raising**, as in (2), prominent approaches have also involved **movement** (Asudeh, 2004; Ura, 1998)

    (2) John seems to love Mary.

- Yet, others have pursued **base-generation strategies** (Potsdam & Runner, 2001)

- **Movement approaches are empirically preferred**, due to the **binding facts** in (3) (see Baltin, 2013)

    (3) a. Her$_i$ children seemed to every mother$_i$ like they were having fun on the playground.

    b. It seemed to every mother$_i$ like her$_i$ children were having fun on the playground.

- **Phase Theory** (Chomsky, 2001) poses a challenge to movement approaches, à la the **Phase Impenetrability Condition**

- I argue that *as if*-Cs are phrasal complementizers (following Fujii, 2005, 2007) that introduce **defective phases**, thereby allowing extraction from within

- I then sketch an **alternative movement analysis to CR**

II. Motivation

- **Miscategorization of *as if*-Cs** in previous work has largely hinged on the conflation of their two distinct uses:

    (i) As **modifier adjuncts**   (ii) As **complementizers**

- Because the complementizer status of *as if*-Cs is limited only to CR, their use as modifier adjuncts is by far the most prevalent and readily recognizable

- Yet, phrases headed by *as if*-Cs can be shown to be **verbal complements** in CR, rather than modifier adjuncts, on the basis of several **syntactic tests** (Bender & Flickinger, 1999)

	ARGUMENT	ADJUNCT
(4) ***Do so*-substitution**	a. John [sounded (as if he wanted fries)], and Bill [did so (*as if he wanted pizza)], too.	b. John [spoke] (as if he was well informed), and Bill [did so] (as if hadn't a clue).
(5) **Extraction**	a. The president that he looked as if he was imitating was Ford. (B&F, 1999)	b. The president that he *fell as if he was imitating was Ford. (B&F, 1999)
(6) **Topicalization**	a. #As though the ice age ended in the 1700s, she talks. (B&F, 1999)	b. As though she expected to get a cookie, she behaved. (B&F, 1999)

- Moreover, *as if*-Cs are **sometimes interchangeable with *that* and zero**, as in (6) (López-Couso & Méndez-Naya, 2001)

    (7) It seems like/as if/as though/(that) Sam's party was a hit.

- Finally, it is **even possible to coordinate them**, as in (7) (López-Couso & Méndez-Naya, 2001)

    (8) ...he felt as if every bone was topped by burning oil and that every muscle...

- We can conclude from these facts that *as if*-Cs in CR constructions are complementizers, as distinct from their use as adjunct modifiers elsewhere

III. Proposal

- Having established the facts above, **subject extraction** in CR constructions can be motivated in two possible ways:

    (i) There exist **additional features** driving this movement   (ii) *As if*-Cs introduce **defective phases**

- It would be difficult to conceptualize what additional features might be needed to motivate movement from a **Case position** in an **embedded tensed clause**, and such movement would also require use of Spec,CP as an intermediary landing site

- Yet, movement from an Ā-**position** (i.e., Spec,CP) back to an **A-position** (i.e., Spec,TP of the matrix clause) would constitute **improper movement**, ruling this option out as a viable alternative

(9) John seems like he loves Mary.
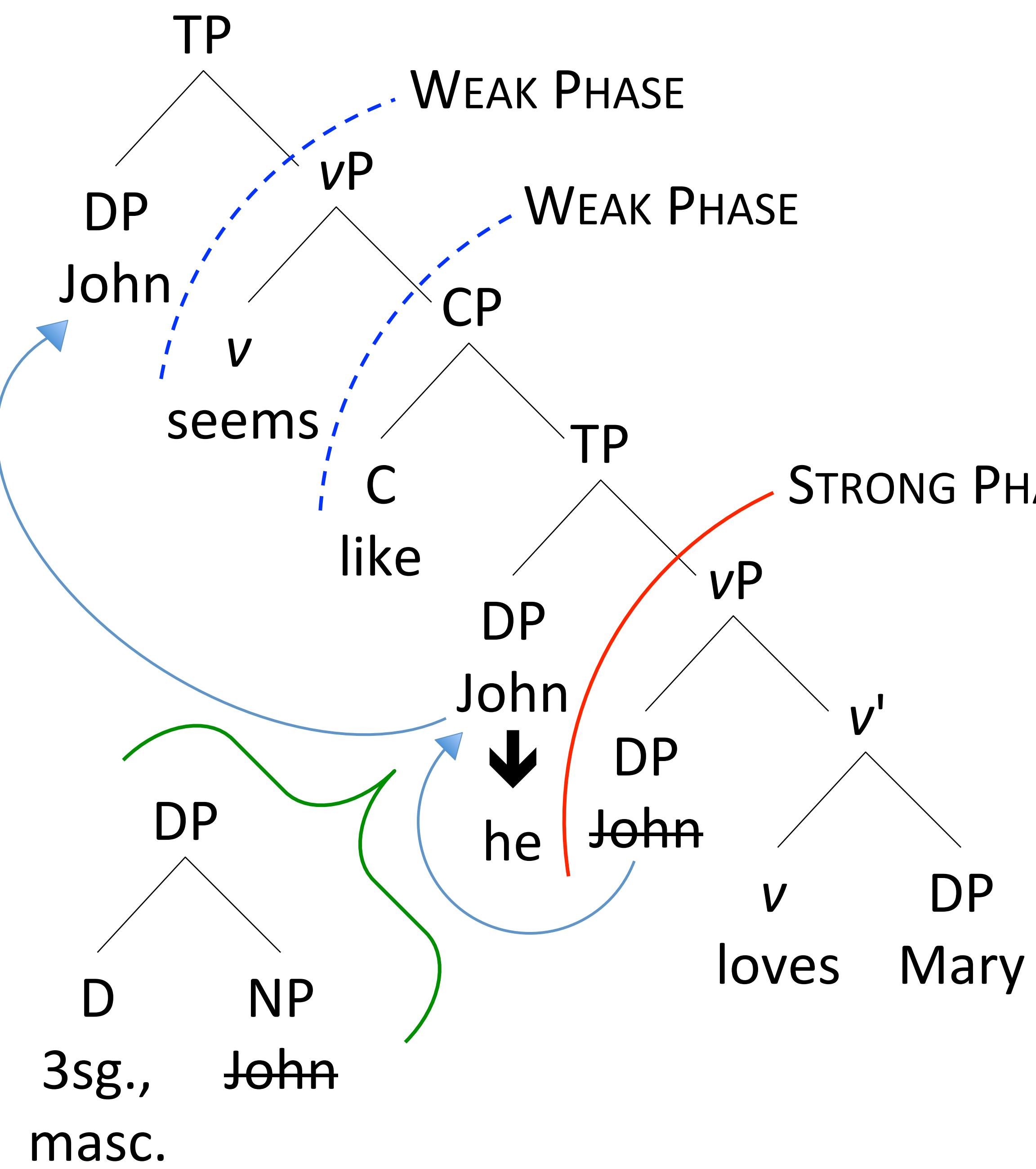
- With *as if*-Cs introducing **defective phases** in CR, the embedded subject remains available to operations in the matrix clause throughout the entire derivation (see example derivation in (9))

- Objects of transitive verbs within the embedded clause are NOT available for extraction, since transitive *v* is a **strong phase head**, ruling out possibilities like those in (10)

    (10) *John seems like Mary loves him.

- I adopt Bejar and Massam's (1999) proposal that **DPs can agree with multiple T heads**; thus, despite being checked in embedded Spec,TP, *John* is also extractable by the matrix T head

- At the phonetic interface, following Nunes (1999), among others, I propose that both copies in their respective Spec,TPs get phonetically realized because **their features are fully checked in both environments**, thereby making the DP fully interpretable in either position

- Not so for the copy in Spec,*v*P, rendering it **silent**

- **Obviation of Condition C effects** is motivated by deletion of certain syntactic elements of the embedded copy, thereby reducing it to a **pronoun** (following Baltin & van Craenenbroeck, 2008)

IV. Implications

- True CR ends up being distinguished from similar constructions on the basis of **thematic differences**, thereby limiting it to only a **certain subclass of raising verbs** and to **subject position within the embedded clause**

- **Like unaccusative or passive *v*, C can be defective**, which leaves the phase open for operations in the matrix clause

- Since the **phasehood** of *v* is independent of **finiteness** (i.e., *v* introduces both *finite* and *nonfinite* phases), it remains a puzzle as to why finiteness should instead be the defining characteristic of phasehood at the complementizer level (i.e., only finite C constitutes a phase, whereas nonfinite C does not)

- If extended to simple raising constructions, the present proposal provides **evidence that complementizers are phase heads whether or not they introduce a finite clause**

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