Reanalyzing the "Reanalysis" Operation[*]
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1. Introduction

In this paper, I will argue that what has been called reanalysis is based on the assumptions that are untenable any longer under the general guidelines of the Minimalist Program (cf. Chomsky (1993, 1995, 2001) among others), and thus are not only conceptually groundless, but also empirically inadequate. Before proceeding, let us overview the general properties of the reanalysis operation in question. Restricting our attention to the cases with an intransitive verb followed by PP, reanalysis has been regarded as such an operation that reanalyzes the V plus P sequence into a "complex" verb, which behaves as if it were a single transitive verb. This process is considered to be prerequisite in applying passivization to the sequence,[1] and hence deriving in a parallel way passive and pseudo-passive sentences, as exemplified in (1a) and (1b), respectively:

(1) a.   Mary was kissed *t* by John.

     b.   Mary was depended on *t* by John.

In Government and Binding theoretic terms, NP-movement is induced by the absorption by the passive morpheme *-en* of the Case that V should have assigned to NP in situ. In (1a), the object of V would be blocked from receiving Case in the position designed by "*t*", and hence have moved to the subject position of the sentence, so as to avoid a Case filter violation. In the same vein, if something would have to have made the object of P in (1b) Case-less, the job would be done by making P part of a larger constituent that *-en* could make inert, and thus by reanalyzing the sequence "*-en* V [$_{PP}$ P NP]" as "*-en* [$_V$ V-P] NP". For detailed discussions, see van Riemsdijk (1978), Chomsky (1981), Chomsky and Lasnik (1993), Hornstein and Weinberg (1981) and references cited therein.

Under the Minimalists' conception of Case (cf. Chomsky (1995, 2001)), however, things have changed drastically: after all, accusative Case is not assigned in the object position of verbs, but rather, *v*, a light verb, checks off the relevant features that the object has, namely Case and ϕ-features. For illustration, consider the following schematic forms:

(2) a. v_{comp} [$_{VP}$ V   NP]

     b. T_{comp} v_{def} [$_{VP}$ V   NP]

In active sentences, involving (2a), *v* is actually v_{comp},[2] which, being complete

(with full argument structure), is responsible for the assignment of the external theta-role and checking off the relevant features of NP, and attracts NP to its spec position. In passive sentences, on the other hand, a defective light verb, v_{def}, takes the place of v_{comp}, as shown in (2b). Light verbs of this kind cannot check these features off, and hence give way to T_{comp}, which checks them off instead and attracts NP to its spec position, namely, the subject position of the sentence.

Notice that so long as the relationship between V and NP is concerned, there is hardly any difference between (2a) and (2b). The same seems to be true of pseudo-passive sentences, since it is not reasonable to assume that the replacement of v_{comp} with v_{def}, as shown in (3b), would affect the relationship between P and NP in a more significant way than the one between V and NP in (2b):

(3) a. v_{comp} [$_{VP}$ V [$_{PP}$ P NP]]

b. T_{comp} v_{def} [$_{VP}$ V [$_{PP}$ P NP]]

This means that the reanalysis as we conceived it has lost its original motivation. To be sure, in order for the object of P to undergo preposing, some operation must be called for that makes the NP unable to have its Case and ϕ-features checked off. But if that operation can apply to (3b), nothing seems to prevent it from applying to (3a) as well. In other words, keeping the term *reanalysis* for the operation in question, reanalysis should be involved in active and pseudo-passive sentences alike. If so, then we cannot say that NP-movement is a motivation for reanalysis.

In the next section, I will examine examples that show this is indeed the case, in the hope that the examination will help to make the new operation clearer. In addition I will argue that the alleged ordering in that reanalysis precedes passivization is wrong, and that they are independent of each other.

2. Independence of Reanalysis

I explored in Morita (1997) the observation made in Safir (1985) about a parallelism between pseudo-passive and extraposition constructions. Compare the following pairs of examples, which are given in Safir (1985:88):

(4) a. John's presence was counted (*merely/*crucially) on.

a'. We counted (merely/crucially) on John's nerve.

b. John's guilt was thought (*merely) about.

b'. We had thought (merely) about John's guilt.

(5) a. We counted (*merely/*crucially) on it that John would leave early.

   b. We had thought (*merely) about it that John might be guilty.

As shown in (4a,b), the sentences in the passive cannot have an adverb intervening between V and P, whereas their active counterparts do allow such intervention. That active/passive contrast has often been cited as the evidence for reanalysis of V and P as a single verb. Similarly, the fact that an adverb cannot appear between V and P in (5) suggests involvement of such a reanalysis operation. Morita (1997) examined some versions of reanalysis operations, and defended the one proposed in Branigan (1992) on the grounds that it can offer a plausible explanation of the relevance of reanalysis to the extraposition construction.

Branigan (1992:68-69) points out that reanalysis is also involved in active sentences, by observing several examples including the following:[3]

(6) a. I refer to very few authors with any enthusiasm.

   b. He spoke to very few people about anything important.

   c. We prepare for few finals with any enthusiasm.

Abstracting away the discussion about the structure of the NP that has a negative item in its spec position, which is irrelevant to the present discussion (cf. Jackendoff (1977)), the point is that the object NP of P cannot c-command in situ the negative polarity item that emerges afterwards, and hence should yield ungrammaticality, contrary to the fact. Branigan (1992:70), extending Baker's (1988) idea, proposes a certain version of reanalysis operation that would cover both these sentences and the ones which involve pseudo-passivization. Mutatis mutandis, by this operation, P is incorporated into V in Covert Syntax (i.e. after Spell-Out), and then NP, or the object of these prepositions, becomes able to be licensed by v_{comp}, or alternatively, when passivized, by T_{comp}, as shown in (7):

(7) a. NP v_{comp} [$_{VP}$ P-V [$_{PP}$ t t]]

   b. NP T_{comp} v_{def} [$_{VP}$ P-V [$_{PP}$ t t]]

Of course, there are some details to be worked out with this kind of P incorporation. Most important is its optionality, which plays the crucial role in capturing the presence/absence of the intervening elements, as shown in (5a', 5b'). For the lack of empirical evidence to decide one way or another, however, I assume just for concreteness the convention that the Case checking ability of prepositions are optional. This would not be a particularly unnatural assumption, in view of the fact that most if not all mono-morphemic

prepositions can be used without their object, or as particles. Indeed, even in the case of the verbs that allow the transitive/ergative alternation (i.e. the verbs that can be used both with or without the object, as in *John didn't eat (anything) yesterday*), the light verb v_{comp} is assumed to be invariant (cf. Chomsky (1995)). At any rate, in the way just sketched, NP becomes able to move to a position from which it can c-command the negative polarity item that follows.

In this connection, it cannot be overemphasized that under Branigan's conception of reanalysis, reanalysis should be an operation that applies after Spell-Out, though Branigan himself does not make little mention of this fact.[4] This should be so, since the effect of reanalysis is not reflected on the surface order of constituents. Yet unless otherwise mentioned, he should keep assuming that NP-preposing applies before Spell-Out (its effect being manifested in the surface order). To sum up, his analysis leads to the conclusion that NP-preposing precedes reanalysis but not vice versa.

Moreover, some of the arguments that Baltin and Postal (1996) give in an attempt to show the implausibility of reanalysis hypotheses can be cited as empirical support for this sort of reanalysis, contrary to their intention. Note first that their augments are of two types, one of which, however, seems to be of a nature that is quite difficult to understand. Perhaps, it would give rise to difficulties with any grammatical theory equally (except some which would be satisfied with (explaining away by) attributing that nature to the construction as a whole). In this respect, arguments of this kind do not weaken the present discussion in particular, and I do not (and indeed cannot) go in detail about this issue. The other kind of arguments, by contrast, is quite relevant, and thus is worth overviewing here. What is important is the fact that these arguments concern ellipsis of some sort: verbal phrase ellipsis and subdeletion. For the illustration of the former case,[5] consider the following pair of examples:

(8) a. Frank called Sandra and Arthur __ Louise.

b. Frank talked to Sandra and Arthur __ *(to) Louise.

Examining some versions of reanalysis operation, Baltin and Postal (1996:129) raise a question as to why that elliptic operation, which can apply to transitive verbs, as shown in (6a), does not yield the same effect on complex verbs like those involved in (6b): for the V plus P sequence should have been reanalyzed as a complex verb and hence behave like a transitive verb. If it were the case, then the preposition should have been part of

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reanalysis "applies in the base" (cf. note 1). That assumption also has lost its grounds, however, under the Minimalists' assumptions. In retrospect, the assumption was made to establish basic semantic relations (including θ-roles) at D-structure. Now, D-structure no longer exists, and indeed, no single level of representation is defined for semantic interpretations before the Conceptual-Intentional Interface (Chomsky (1993, 2001)). As we have just seen, they are actually ordered in reverse. But this ordering is contingent in the sense that so long as their relative order is concerned, nothing inherent in these mechanisms forces them to be organized in that way. Now, the conclusion is that conceptually or empirically, reanalysis cannot be prerequisite to NP-preposing, and indeed they are independent of each other.

3.   Concluding Remarks

What I have argued in this paper is that reanalysis as we have known it is based on the assumptions that were valid at the time of its conception, but are no longer so under the Minimalists' assumptions. Generally speaking, it is often the case that some of the notions that were just derivative from interactions of more primitive ones of the framework that they presupposed at the time of their conception (and thus should have been *theorems*) have lost their original motivations, but give us an illusion that they are still valid. What is worse, such notions at times feel to be *axioms*, perhaps because of their apparent "self-obviousness" that would stem from the illusion just mentioned.   I suspect that reanalysis was one of such cases.[8]

NOTES

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[1] Hornstein and Weinberg (1981:60) also point out that Case-marking crucially follows reanalysis.

[2] In Chomsky (2001a), v_{comp} is denoted by $v*$, and v_{def} simply by v. I do not adopt these notations in order to avoid confusion, saving v for the general term covering both cases.

[3] For lack of space, I cannot reproduce here all of the arguments that Branigan (1992:68-69) makes for reanalysis in full. His arguments include: binding of the reciprocal expression *each other* or a reflexive pronoun, variable binding of bound pronouns, and licensing of binominal *each*. He also makes use of principle C effects for

support.

⁴ This fact has much to do with Baker's (1988:260) reference to the pseudo-passive construction as having "the properties of Preposition Incorporation without actual incorporation". Although he admits on the page immediately preceding the possibility of "Abstract Incorporation" applicable at LF, it seems uncertain how that conception would be accommodated to others under the Government and Binding framework, on which his theory of incorporation is based.

⁵ Baltin and Postal (1996) also point out that a parallel pattern is observed in a certain type of ellipsis associated with comparative constructions, as shown in (i):

    (i) a.   Frank called Sandra more often than Arthur did __ Louise.

        b.   Frank talked to Sandra more often than Arthur did __ *(to) Louise.

⁶ Chomsky and Lasnik (1993:126) also remark that "an approach to ellipsis that has considerable initial plausibility involves PF component properties in ways that may have large-scale effects when pursued."

⁷ Though one might assume the correspondence of an idiom (the V plus P complex verb being an instance of idioms) to a single semantic word in the lexicon of language faculty, it seems very unlikely unless in a few happy cases that a single word should correspond to a single semantic primitive. To be a bit more concrete, consider the idiom *kick the bucket*. One might assume, quite naturally, that it corresponds to the word *die* in that lexicon on the grounds that they are synonymous. Yet the question is whether the discussion can stop here, assuming that the word *die* simply corresponds to the putative semantic primitive 'DIE.' Isn't it really the case that the native speaker's intuitions about their synonymity are due to them having such a semantic primitive in common? Is there any need to posit a *single* semantic word? The point would be made clearer if it should turn out that the putative primitive 'DIE' is further decomposed into a sequence of semantic primitives, such as, say, 'LET ONE'S VITAL ESSECE GO'. The fact that *die* is a process verb might be attributed to the involvement of 'GO'. I am not joking here, nor making fool of medieval *science*. (Recall Bloomfield's (1933:139) statement: "In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of a language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speakers' world.") It would merely the case that that sequence has *die* in one case, and *kick the bucket* in another, as its morpho-syntactic realization. There seems to be no necessity to posit the intermediate level of representation in which the sequence 'LET ONE'S VITAL ESSECE GO' should correspond to a certain single semantic term which would further realize as *die* and *kick the bucket*. What I would like to say is that there is no firm basis for the often made assumption that an idiom (which is composed of sequence of words) is a single semantic word; all one can say is that *die* and *kick the bucket* have semantic primitives of a certain

word length in common. In other words, that assumption is appealing so long as no serious attempt is made to give it content.

⁸ Another aspect of that self-obviousness is, needless to say, the assumption of "single semantic word," which I have just discussed in note 7.

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