Readings for next time:

Review material:


Background/warnings:

Haegeman (1997): Later in the article, she discusses the “split VP” structure. The idea is that instead of a “VP” like in (1), people have proposed that the “VP” is actually made of two “VPs” (the top one sometimes labeled vP or alternatively VoiceP) and the subject starts not in SpecVP, but in the Spec of the higher phrase, as in (2). We will come back to discuss this in more detail in a couple of weeks. The assumption is that V moves up to v and that V+v are pronounced together as the verb.

(1) VP
   subject         V’
      V          object

(2) vP
   subject         V’
      v          VP
         spec     V’
           V     object

Roberts (1997, §1.3.4): Briefly discusses Kayne’s (1994) Linear Correspondence Axiom (a.k.a. “Antisymmetry”). We will return to this around the middle of the semester, so don’t worry if it isn’t completely clear now—we won’t be making use of it for several weeks yet.

Main reading for next time:  McCloskey(1997) “Subjects and Subject Positions”

Background/warnings:

p. 198: Negative Polarity Items include anything in English; an NPI needs to be in the scope of negation at least by LF (some think by S-structure). *John saw anything, John didn’t see anything, *Anything didn’t break.
p. 205: ATB extraction = Across-The-Board extraction. CSC = Coordinate Structure Constraint. Movement cannot occur from out of a single conjunct (*Who did you see Bill and t?) (CSC) but seems to be possible out of both at once (Who did you meet t and invite t?)
§6.3: Includes a few references to recent theory—try to read around those. The idea of the later part is just this: We assume that QR can only move quantifiers upward. We see one player is overtly above always in (11a), yet we can interpret it with always taking scope over one (‘There is always at least one player who loses’). If QR can’t have moved one player down by LF, the only alternative is that one player started below always and can be interpreted there.

§6.4: This section is going to be difficult, but concentrate on the first half (before the problems are discussed).

p. 211: “Movement is driven by the requirements of morphosyntax”. Often in recent syntactic theory, people assume that things can only move for a reason, and that the reason is usually morphological (roughly like “past tense is an affix, and it needs a verb, so the verb moves up to tense”).

p. 219: “Weak featural specification on the highest inflectional head”. This continues the “movement driven by morphology” idea a little further (and is also commonly discussed in these terms in recent syntactic theory): A “weak featural specification” just means that it doesn’t force movement (that you can see, anyway), and a “strong featural specification” means that it will force movement that you can see. This is really just description, not really much of an explanation.

p. 221: What’s going on here is that McCloskey is considering the “Split VP” (like the vP-VP picture drawn above in (2)), and taking it a step further, supposing that in between vP and VP you might have an AgrP. He argues against this possibility by showing cases where the object (which he assumes moves to SpecAgrP) appears before (hence presumably above) the subject in cases where we think the subject is overtly still down in SpecvP.

Overall: This article can be seen as support for the “Split-IP” structure (as McCloskey mentions briefly) since he is providing/reviewing evidence for there being two positions for the subject outside the VP.

Stuff for you to do:

- Do the readings (Roberts & Haegeman should be quick—they’re just to remind you about syntax and to get you “in the mood”—McCloskey is the serious one.)

- Write a short (1–2 page) summary of McCloskey’s article, covering the following:
  — What was his main point?
  — What was his argument for this point?
  — What (type of) evidence did he give to support his argument?
  — If a part of his argument struck you as faulty, indicate what part and why.
  — If any evidence occurs to you that might run counter to his argument, indicate what it is.

Next time:
I’ll present McCloskey’s article in detail in the manner future presentations will go.

The time after that: One of you will present…!