

A CATEGORIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN STATIVE AND EVENTIVE VERBS

This paper argues that verbs like *believe*, *know*, *expect*, and other stative verbs that subcategorize for CP are base generated as little-*v*'s, unlike eventive verbs, which are generated as big-*V*'s, as evidenced by the peculiar distribution of *so*.

Big-*V* raises to little-*v*, a transformation that provides phonological content to little-*v* (Chomsky 1995). *So* is a pro-big-*VP*, which replaces big-*V* and its complements, depriving little-*v* of phonological content and triggering insertion of 'dummy main verb *do*', as illustrated in (1) (Hallman 2004). That is, in *do so* constructions, *so* is a pro-big-*VP* and *do* is a pleonastic little-*v*.

It is of some interest then that certain propositional complement verbs are incompatible with *do so* replacement (2a), but take *so* as a complement themselves (2b). *So* here does not replace a CP, since its occurrence is limited to complement-of-V position—the CPs in the *a*-examples in (3)-(5) cannot be replaced by *so*, as the *b*-examples demonstrate. Even a CP complement of V cannot be replaced by *so* when coordinated with another CP (5b).

The ungrammaticality of (3)-(5) support the proposal that *so* is a pro-big-*VP*, not a pro-CP. But (2b) shows that, if this is the case, the replacement of big-*VP* by *so* in the context of the *believe*-type verbs does not have the effect of depriving little-*v* of phonological material, as it does in the context of *read*-type verbs (1). This in turn suggests that the verbs involved, *believe*, *know*, *expect* and others are different from verbs like *read* and others in that they are base generated outside the constituent replaced by *so*, i.e. in little-*v*, so that *so*-replacement does not subsume them, as diagrammed in (6) (what heads big-*VP* in these cases is unclear and not notated).

Note that certain verbs, such as *say* and *tell*, take *so* as a complement (7a) but also admit *do so* replacement (7b), i.e., they have properties of both the *believe*-type verbs and the *read*-type verbs. These verbs also differ from the *believe*-type verbs in licensing an additional nominal argument, obligatorily in the case of *tell*, and optionally (in a *to*-phrase) in the case of *say*. The fact that the *tell*-type verbs are susceptible to *do so* replacement indicates that, like the *read*-type verbs, they are generated in big-*V*. The fact that *so*-replacement need not subsume the main verb suggests that this big-*VP* contains an additional big-*VP* that licenses the propositional complement and is also susceptible to *so*-replacement, a conclusion that correlates the expanded argument structure of the *tell*-type verbs with an expanded VP. The dual behavior of the *tell*-type verbs then falls out from the fact that *so* is a pro-big-*VP*. If *so* replaces the lower VP2 in (8a), the main verb in VP1 remains overt and raises to little-*v* (8b). But if *so* replaces the higher VP1, it subsumes the main verb and strands little-*v*, necessitating pleonastic *do* insertion (8c).

It has commonly been observed that only eventive verbs are susceptible to *do so* replacement (Vendler 1957, Ross 1972 and many since). In light of this correlation, then at least among the verbs that take propositional complements, though perhaps generally, the present analysis indicates that the event/state distinction has a syntactic reflex: eventive verbs are generated in big-*V*, while stative verbs are generated in little-*v*.

Examples:

- (1) Alistair [_{VP} read_i [_{VP} t_i a newspaper]] and Ingrid [_{VP} did [_{VP} so]] too.
- (2) a. *Alistair believes/knows/expects that Darlene has a car, and Ingrid does so, too.
b. Alistair believes/knows/expects that Darlene has a car, and Ingrid knows/believes/expects so, too.
- (3) a. That Darlene has a car surprised Alistair.
b. *So surprised Alistair .
- (4) a. Alistair denied the claim that Darlene has a car.
b. *Alistair denied the claim so.
- (5) a. Alistair believes that Darlene has a car and that Ingrid has a bicycle.
b. *Alistair believes that Darlene has a car and so.
- (6) Alistair [_{VP} believes [_{VP} that Darlene has a car]] and Ingrid [_{VP} believes [_{VP} so]] too.
- (7) a. Alistair told me/said that Darlene has a car and Ingrid told me/said so, too.
b. Alistair told me/said that Darlene has a car and Ingrid did so, too.
- (8) a. Alistair [_{VP} told_i [_{VP1} me t_i [_{VP2} that Darlene has a car]]]
b. Alistair [_{VP} told_i [_{VP1} me t_i [_{VP2} so]]]
c. Alistair [_{VP} did [_{VP1} so]]

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