

Idioms & Phases

"The syntax of idioms" workshop, Utrecht University, 20 January 2017

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Overview

- ★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases
 - ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - Some further issues: Possessive idioms
 - Summary
- ★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs
 - Data: English
 - Data: Dutch and its dialects
 - Theoretical implications
 - Supporting evidence
 - Summary

Overview

★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)

★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases

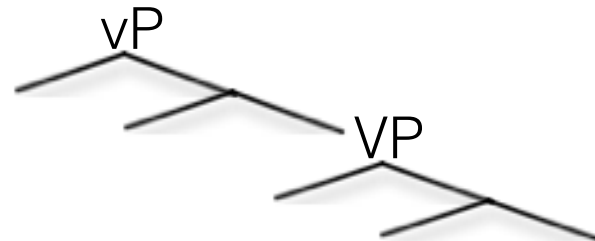
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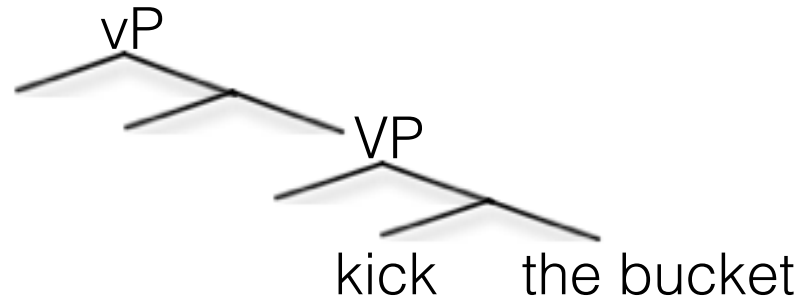
Idioms & Phases

- Chomsky (1980, 1981); Marantz (1984, 1997):
verbal idioms - verbal predicate and its arguments



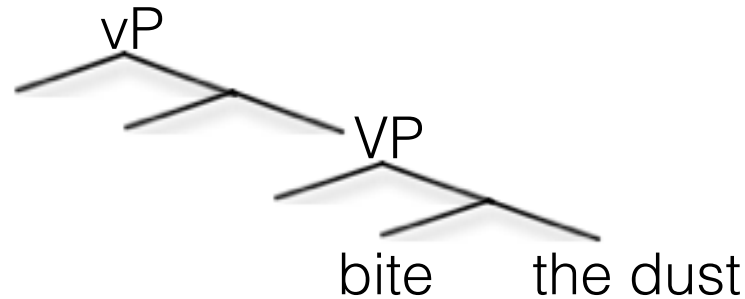
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- Verb + direct object



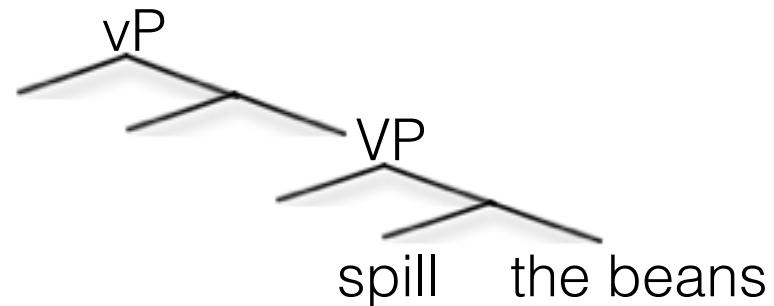
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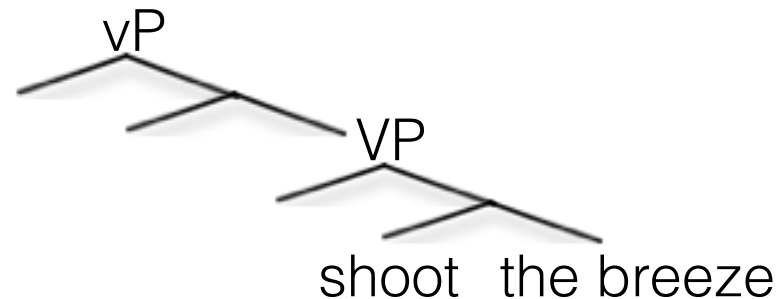
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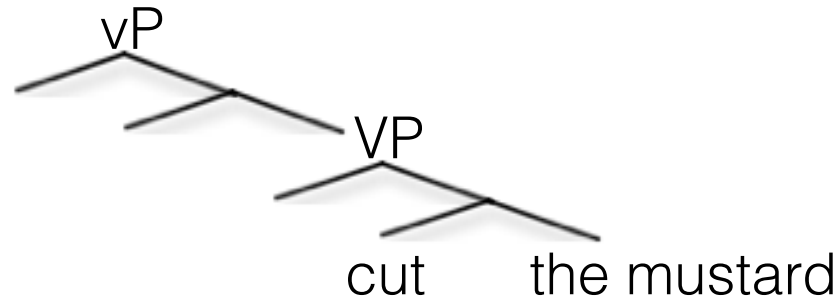
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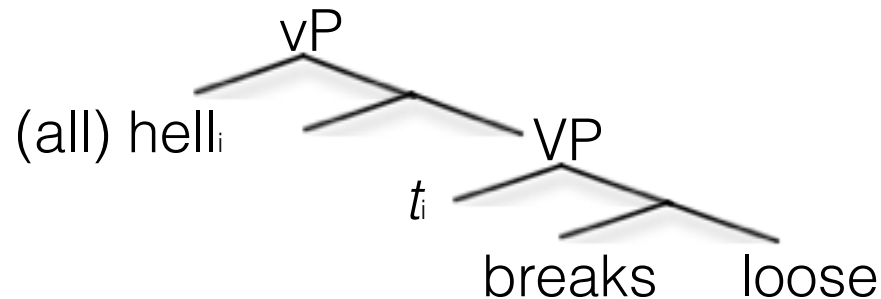
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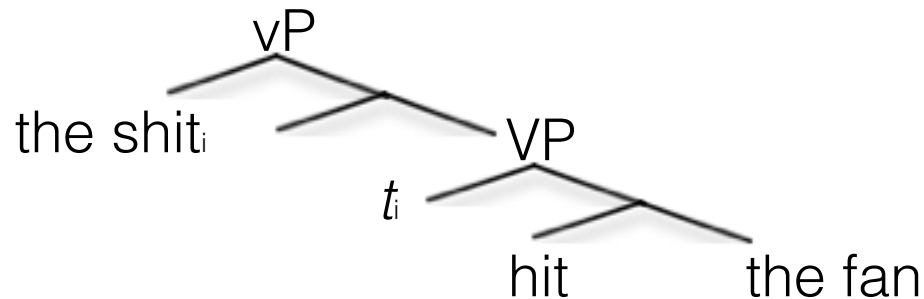
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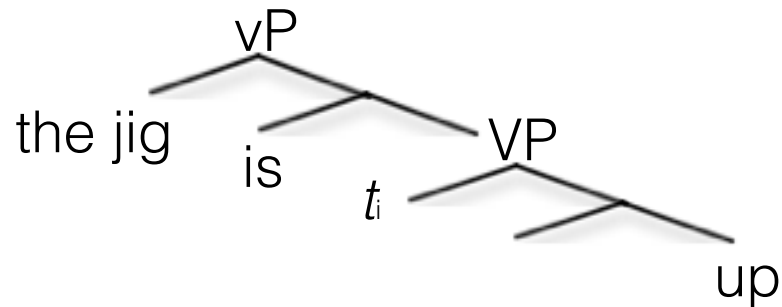
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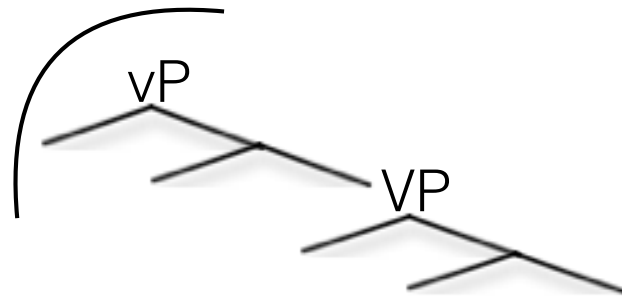
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Idioms & Phases

- none of these expressions are dependent on anything outside of vP for their idiomatic meaning



Idioms & Phases

- Kitagawa (1986); Ifill (2002); Svenonius (2005):
whilst material beyond vP - i.e. tense, modality, aspect - is obviously compatible with idioms, idiomatic interpretations are never dependent upon the presence of such material

(1) He spilt the beans. [Tense]

(2) He often spills the beans.

(3) He might kick the bucket. [Modality]

(4) He kicked the bucket.

(5) He is bringing down the house.
[Progressive Aspect]

(6) He brings down the house every evening.

(7) The shit has already hit the fan.
[Perfect Aspect]

(8) The shit hit the fan.

Idioms & Phases

- Svenonius (2005), i.a.: there is a size limitation to verbal idioms
 - ▶ Idioms are exclusively comprised of material from vP.
 - ▶ Idioms cannot be comprised of material from the TP domain.
- Svenonius (2005), cf. also Marantz (2001); Harley & Stone (2013), Harwood (2013, 2015); Kim (2015): verbal idioms are restricted to vP, the clause-internal phase
 - ▶ The vP-phase boundary sets a limit on the maximal size of verbal idioms.
 - ▶ Idioms can be equal to, but also smaller than, the vP-phase boundary.
 - ▶ Idioms cannot be larger than/extend beyond the vP-phase boundary.

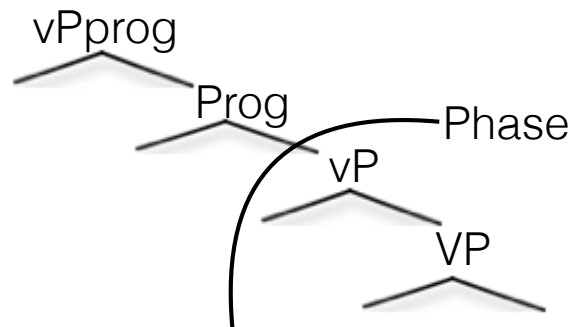
Idioms & Phases

Intuitive idea:

- Phases shipped off independently to the interfaces for pronunciation and interpretation (Chomsky 2000, 2001)
- ➔ an expression can only be interpreted idiomatically if it is shipped of 'wholesale' to SEM (= as one single phase)
- ➔ syntactic chunk cannot be idiomatically interpreted if part of idiomatic material is external to the vP-phase and so is left stranded in the syntax

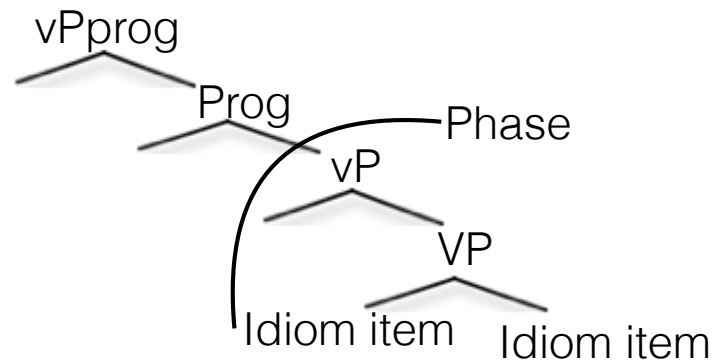
Idioms & Phases

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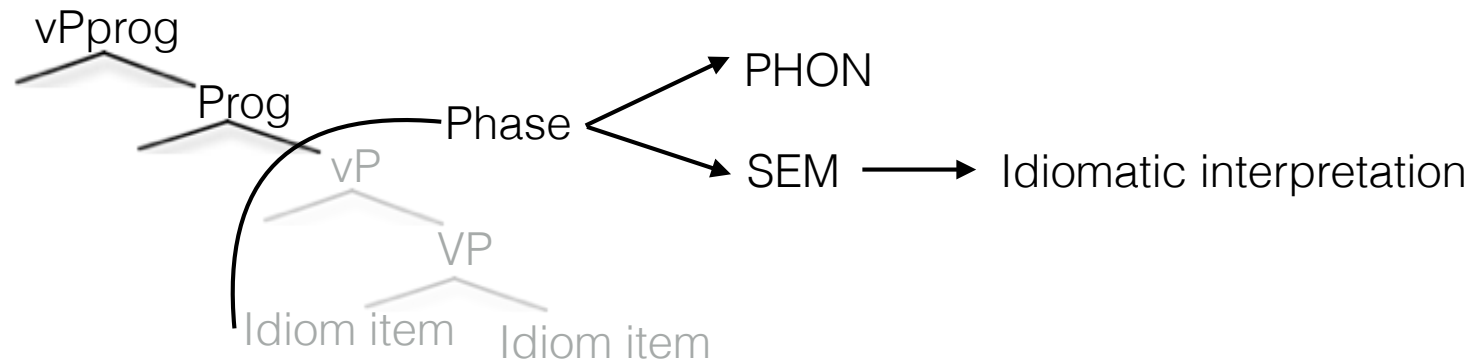
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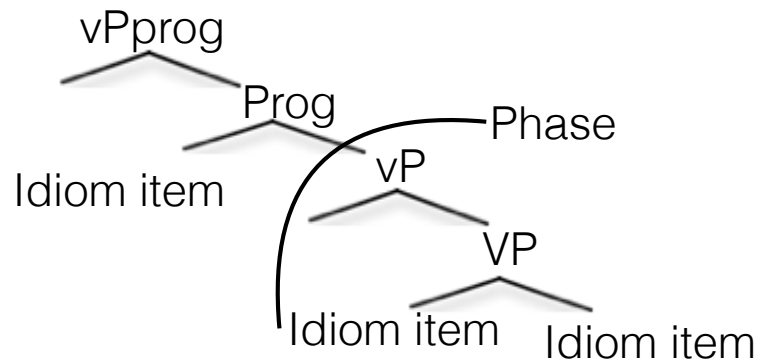
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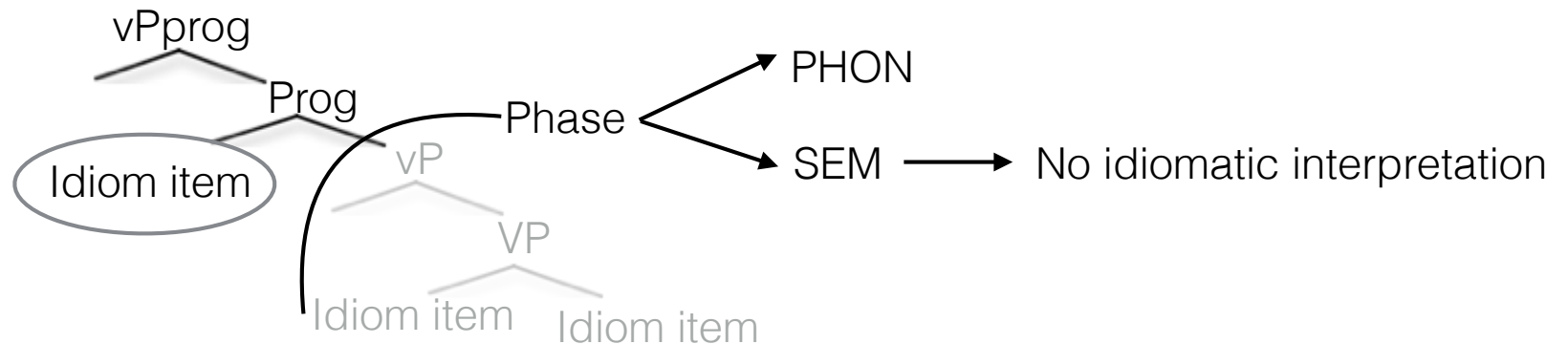
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Idioms & Phases

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Idioms & Phases

- The phase represents an isolated domain of meaning that is independently interpreted at SEM (Chomsky 2000, 2001)
- Idioms form a single semantic unit
- ➔ so, it is logical for verbal idioms and the vP-phase to be aligned (Svenonius 2005, cf. also Marantz 1997, 2001, i.a.)

- **Summarizing:**
verbal idioms are constrained by the clause-internal phase boundary
- ➔ **the Idioms As Phases hypothesis**
(widely adopted, e.g. Svenonius 2005; Harley & Stone 2013; Harwood 2013, 2015; Kim 2015)

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★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)

★ **Part 1: The problem of DP phases**

- ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
- IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
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★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs

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Part 1

The problem of DP phases

The problem of DP phases

- the Idioms As Phases hypothesis faces **a rather crucial problem**
- ➔ verbal idioms most typically involve a DP-object (in addition to the lexical verb), e.g. *kick the bucket*
- ➔ it has been argued that, in addition to CPs and vPs, **DPs also act as phases** (see Heck & Zimmerman 2004; Svenonius 2004, Bošković 2005; Chomsky 2005:17; Hinzen 2012)
- ➔ if this is the case, then most verbal idioms seem to actually comprise (at least) 2 phases:
 - the vP-phase and a DP-phase

The problem of DP phases

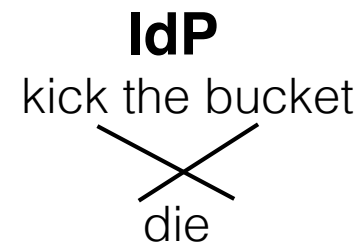
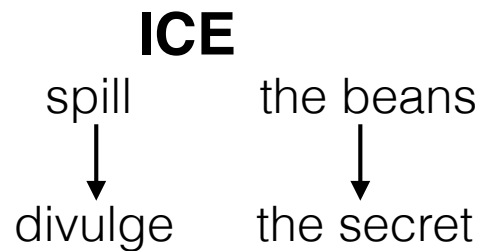
- **question**

- ➔ how is it possible that verbal idioms, which are supposed to be restricted to a single phase (the vP-phase), can straddle the DP-phase boundary?

The problem of DP phases

- ▶ To address this question:

recall the distinction between *idiomatic phrases* (IdPs) and *idiomatically combining expressions* (ICEs) [cf. our previous talk]



The problem of DP phases

- **Recall:**

- ▶ IdPs (*kick the bucket*) form a single semantic unit, with the entire expression being mapped to a single meaning
 - ➔ IdPs need to be shipped to SEM wholesale
- ▶ ICEs (*spill the beans*) do not form a semantic unit: individual parts of the expression are mapped to separate elements of the figurative reading
(their interpretation is more fragmented, more compositional)
 - ➔ ICEs need not be shipped to SEM wholesale

The problem of DP phases

- **Our claim:**
only IdPs are confined to a single phase (vP)
- ▶ an IdP needs to be shipped off wholesale to SEM:
the entire expression needs to be contained within a single phase
- ▶ an ICE needs not be shipped off wholesale to SEM:
 - it is not necessary that the entire expression be contained within a single phase
 - ICEs are able to span multiple phase boundaries (though it is not necessarily required)

The problem of DP phases

- **Our claim:**
only IdPs are confined to a single phase (vP)
- ▶ only IdPs are limited to material found in the clause-internal phase
(= conforming with the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ▶ ICEs can be expected to be less restricted: they can straddle the vP-phase boundary and be comprised of syntactic material beyond it (i.e. aspect, modality, tense)

Overview

★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)

★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases

- ▶ **ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis**

- ▶ IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- ▶ Some further issues: Possessive idioms

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ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- Our claim:
ICEs are able to span multiple phase boundaries
- there exist several idioms in English that actually depend on material external to the vP-phase, namely perfect aspect and modality
(cf. also Horvath & Sioni 2014, 2015, 2016)
(*contra* Kitagawa 1986; Ifill 2002; Svenonius 2005)

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- verbal idioms dependent on perfect aspect:
(cf. also Horvath & Siloni 2014, 2015, 2016)

(9) *have seen better days* = be old and/or in poor condition

(10) *have had enough* = have reached the end of one's tolerance or
patience

(11) *have had a bellyful* = have had more than you can deal with of
someone or something bad or annoying

(12) *have had one's chips* = have completely failed at something

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- without perfect aspect, the idiomatic meaning is lost:

(13) # That old ramshackle place certainly saw better days.

(14) # I will soon have enough of all your whining.

(15) # Don't tell me she's run off. I had a bellyful of cops yesterday saying she'd run off with some older fellow.

(16) # We tried to keep the business going, but we had our chips already.

➔ shows genuine dependence of these idioms on perfect aspect

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- verbal idioms dependent on modality:
(cf. also Horvath & Sioni 2014, 2015, 2016)

(17) *can't make head nor tails of X*
= not understand X at all

(18) *could murder a drink/cigarette*
= really want a drink/cigarette

(19) *could cut the atmosphere with a knife*
= the atmosphere in a place is extremely tense or unfriendly

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- without the modal, the idiomatic meaning is lost:

(20) # I don't make head nor tails of this map.

(21) # I murdered a drink.

(22) # I cut the atmosphere with a knife.

➔ shows genuine dependence of these idioms on modality

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- however:

all such idioms satisfy the diagnostics for ICEs

➔ they are syntactically flexible

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

(23) [*Passivisation*]

Better days have certainly be seen here.

(24) [*Topicalisation*]

If you ask me, I think that enough, the people have had of sleazy politicians.

(25) [*Passivisation*]

A bellyful has been had of all your whining and bitching.

(26) [*Modification*]

You've had your lucky chips, but your little charade is over now.

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

(27) [*Passivisation*]

Neither head nor tails could be made of the doctor's handwriting.

(28) [*Modification*]

You could cut the atmosphere with a blunt carving knife.

(29) [*Topicalisation*]

I don't need much right now, but a drink I could definitely murder.

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- all verbal idioms featured in this section
 - are dependent upon perfect aspect and modality, i.e. material external to the vP-phase
 - satisfy the tests for ICEs (syntactic flexibility)
- ➔ this confirms our hypothesis that ICEs are not restricted to a single phase

ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- the fact that ICEs include an additional DP-phase is immaterial
 - ➔ such expressions can freely straddle phase boundaries anyway

Overview

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IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- despite extensive searching:
no IdPs have been found in English with a dependence upon perfect aspect or modality
 - ▶ IdPs cannot straddle phase boundaries and are indeed restricted to the clause-internal phase
 - ▶ IdPs are genuinely subject to the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - ➔ **the DP-phase problem remains intact for IdPs:**
if IdPs cannot straddle the vP-phase boundary,
why can they apparently straddle the DP-phase boundary?

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- **the question:**
why can IdPs apparently straddle the DP-phase boundary?
- **our answer:**
lies in the nature of the definite determiner and the referentiality of the object DP in IdPs

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- consider IdPs such as:

(30) *kick the bucket* = die

(31) *bite the dust* = die

(32) *shoot the breeze* = chat

(33) *chew the fat* = chat

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

(Fellbaum 1993; Grégoire 2009)

- the nouns in these idioms (*bucket, dust, breeze, fat*) do not have generic, unique, specific, known, or inferable referents
- the definite determiner does not pick out a unique referent in the discourse (as it would in a non-idiomatic expression):
 - ▶ no discourse referent is available for the DP
 - ▶ the direct object cannot be mapped to an individual component of the figurative reading
 - ▶ the object DP in an IdP is non-referential

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- consequence:

only object DPs occurring in ICEs, but not in IdPs, permit a **coreferential pronoun**

(that this is possible only in some idioms is in fact an old observation, cf. Dickinson 1969; Gorbet 1973; Chomsky 1981; i.a.)

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- ICEs: coreferential pronouns

(34) We worried that Pat might *spill the beans*, but it was Chris who finally spilled them.

(35) I *have seen better days*. I long for them ...

(36) You *could cut the atmosphere with a knife*. It was so tense and cold.

➔ parts of ICEs are referential

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- IdPs: no coreferential pronouns

(37) # After John *kicked the bucket*, his wife got rid of it.

(38) # I'm sure he'll *bite the dust* if he keeps on eating it.

(39) # They really like to *shoot the breeze* while sitting in it.

(40) # Let's first *chew the fat* and then eat it.

➔ parts of IdPs are not referential

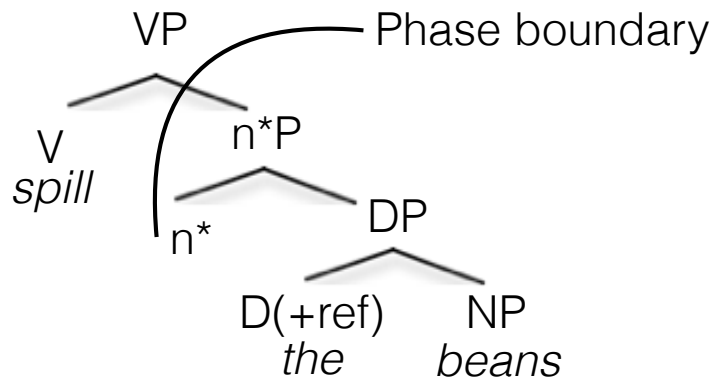
IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- observation in the literature:
referentiality and definiteness are linked
to the phasehood status of DPs
 - Adger (2003), Radford (2004), Chomsky (2007):
indefinite DPs are not phases
 - Arsenijević (2007), Hinzen (2012):
only complete referential expressions are phases
- the particular implementation by Chomsky (2007) suggests non-referential expressions share a structural property with indefinites:

they lack the phase head n*

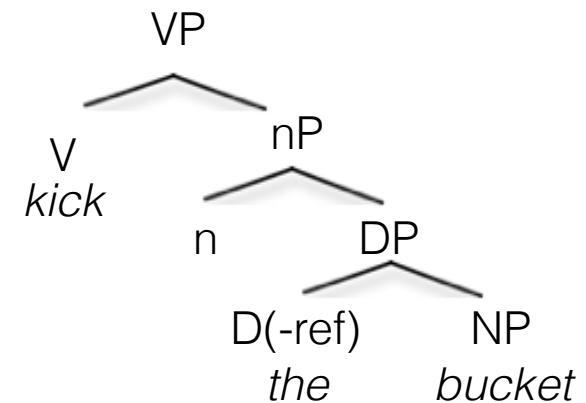
IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

(41) ICE



> non-idiomatic referential VPs and ICE idioms

(42) IdP



> non-idiomatic indefinite/non-referential VPs and IdP idioms

IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis

- the non-referential DP object in IdPs thus lacks the head responsible for the phasal status
 - it is not sent off the interfaces independently
- ➔ this explains why IdPs seem to be able to straddle the DP-phase boundary:

there simply is no DP-phase (n*P-phase in Chomsky's terms) boundary to begin with
(as in (42) above)

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Some further issues: Possessive idioms

- verbal idioms containing a possessive relation in their DP-object:
mixed behaviour
- **possessive idioms with ICE behaviour**

(43) cramp x's style (make x look uncool)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. My style was being cramped. | [<i>Passivisation</i>] |
| b. His style, you are cramping. | [<i>Topicalisation</i>] |
| c. Don't cramp my reputable style! | [<i>Modification</i>] |

(44) drown x's sorrows (drink to relieve depression)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| a. Gradually, our sorrows were drowned. | [<i>Passivisation</i>] |
| b. In the bright lights of Vegas, her sorrows she drowned. | [<i>Topicalisation</i>] |
| c. He drowned his brokenhearted sorrows in whiskey. | [<i>Modification</i>] |

Some further issues: Possessive idioms

- verbal idioms containing a possessive relation in their DP-object:
mixed behaviour
- **possessive idioms with IdP behaviour**

(45) bend x's ear (talk excessively to x)

a. # My ear was bent.

[No passivisation]

b. # His ear, I'm going to bend.

[No topicalisation]

c. # I need to bend your big ear.

[No modification]

(46) break x's balls (give x a hard time)

a. # My balls were being broken.

[No passivisation]

b. # His balls, you are breaking.

[No topicalisation]

c. # Don't break my reputable balls.

[No modification]

Some further issues: Possessive idioms

- another striking difference found in these data:
 - ▶ the ICE possessive idioms:
all involve cases of alienable possession (*style, sorrows, ...*)
 - ▶ the IdP possessive idioms:
all contain an inalienably possessed noun (*ear, balls, ...*)

Some further issues: Possessive idioms

- proposals in the literature:
alienable and inalienable possession have different underlying syntactic structures
(e.g. Español-Echevarria 1997; Castillo 2001; Alexiadou 2003; Lin 2007; Scholten forthcoming)
- these analyses have in common:

alienable possession requires more functional structure than inalienable possession

Some further issues: Possessive idioms

- **Alienable possession** (e.g. Alexiadou 2003, Lin 2007)

the possessor relation between a possessor and an alienable noun is constructed by means of a **higher functional head** introducing the possessor

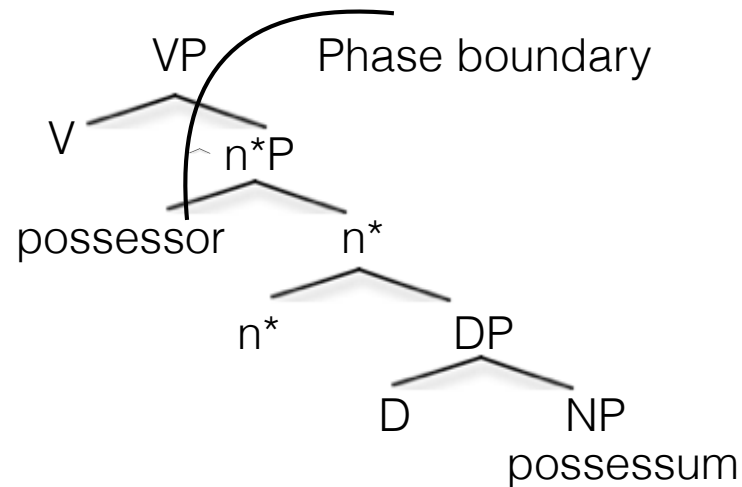
- Alexiadou (2003): alienable possession reflects a subject/agent relation between the possessor and the possessed noun
 - ➔ this would justify the presence of **n*** (or equivalent) in alienable possession structures (compare: v* from the verbal domain)

Some further issues: Possessive idioms

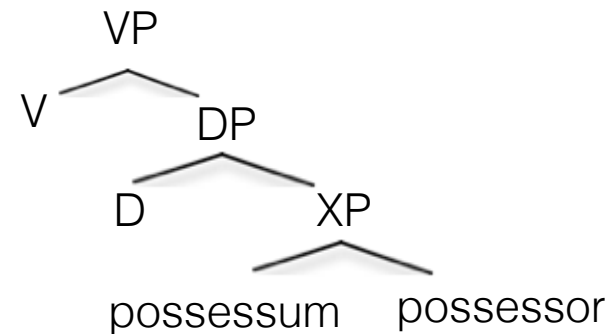
- **Inalienable possession** (e.g. Alexiadou 2003, Lin 2007)
 - ▶ the higher functional head is not present in inalienable possession structures
 - ▶ the relation between possessor and possessum is more direct: the inalienable nouns subcategorises for a possessor argument
 - ▶ the possessor and the inalienable noun together compose an XP that is like a small clause (cf. complex predicate formation)

Some further issues: Possessive idioms

(47)
alienable possession
(in ICE idioms,
cf. *cramp x's style*)



(48)
inalienable possession
(in IdP idioms,
cf. *bend x's ear*)



Some further issues: Possessive idioms

- **inalienably possessed nominals**
 - ▶ do not project n*P: do not constitute phases
 - ▶ are perfectly able to be part of an IdP

- **alienably possessed nominals**
 - ▶ project n*P: constitute phases
 - ▶ can be part of ICEs (not sensitive to phase boundaries)
 - ▶ cannot be part of IdPs
 - ➔ indeed: we encountered no IdPs with alienable possession

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Summary

- **The Idioms As Phases hypothesis:**
the clause-internal phase imposes an upper bound on verbal idioms
- **Main question:** how is it possible that verbal idioms can straddle the DP-phase boundary, but not the vP-phase boundary?
- **Our answer:** not *all* verbal idioms are confined to a single phase
 - **ICEs** are actually not restricted to the clause-internal phase boundary (cf. they can depend on material beyond it)
 - ✓ ICEs are free to straddle phase boundaries (n*P, vP, ...)
 - **IdPs** are indeed limited to a single phase, the clause-internal phase
 - however: DP-objects in IdPs are non-referential
they do not project n*P and do not constitute a phase
 - ✓ there simply is no DP-phase boundary to straddle in IdPs

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★ **Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs**

- Data: English
- Data: Dutch and its dialects
- Theoretical implications
- Supporting evidence
- Summary

Part 2

Macro-variation in the size of IdPs

Macro-variation in the size of IdPs

the Idioms As Phases hypothesis:

verbal IdP idioms are constrained by the clause-internal phase

▶ next sections:

IdPs exist in Dutch and its dialects, and also in English, that are actually dependent upon material outside of vP

➔ the clause-internal phase is larger than traditionally believed

▶ also in the next sections:

there is cross-linguistic variation with regard to the size of the clause-internal phase

Macro-variation in the size of IdPs

Findings:

there is cross-linguistic variation with regard to which functional material from the TP domain can contribute to idiomatic interpretation

- English – IdPs can include passive voice and progressive aspect (but not perfect aspect and modality, as mentioned in Part 1)
- Dutch – IdPs can include passive voice and progressive aspect, and *also* perfect aspect and modality
 - ➔ Clause-internal phase in English = progressive aspectual layer
 - ➔ Clause-internal phase in Dutch = root modal layer

Overview

- ★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases
 - ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - Some further issues: Possessive idioms
 - Summary
- ★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs
 - **Data: English**
 - Data: Dutch and its dialects
 - Theoretical implications
 - Supporting evidence
 - Summary

Data: English

- IdPs exist in English which are dependent on passive voice and progressive aspect.
- IdPs dependent on perfect aspect, modality or tense seem not to exist in English.
- Data gathered from English idiom dictionaries, corpus studies (BNC and COCA) and informal judgment tasks.

Data: English

- **Some examples of IdPs dependent on passive voice**

(cf. also Nunberg et al. 1994; Bowers 2010; Sailor & Ahn 2010; Horvath & Siloni 2014, 2015, 2016)

(49) *be saved by the bell*

= to be saved from a difficult situation at the last possible moment

(50) *be touched by an angel*

= to be moved to sympathy or emotion

(51) *be bowled over by X*

= to be taken by surprise or be elated by something

(52) *be born yesterday*

= to be naive or be ignorant

Data: English

- If passive voice is absent, the idiomatic interpretation is lost — only the literal interpretation can be accessed:

(53) # The bell saved me from what could have been a rather embarrassing speech.

(54) # An angel really touched me when I was watching that film.

(55) # The sheer beauty of the landscape bowled him over.

(56) # His mother bore him yesterday.

➔ shows the genuine dependence of these idioms on passive voice

Data: English

- these passive idioms are IdPs — they are syntactically inflexible
some examples:

(57) a. # By the bell, I don't think that Nixon was saved. [*No topicalisation*]
 b. # Nixon was saved by the timely bell. [*No modification*]

(58) a. # By an angel, I don't think Ramsay Bolton has ever been touched. [*No topicalisation*]
 b. # Ramsay has certainly never been touched by a sympathetic angel. [*No modification*]

Data: English

- **Some examples of IdPs dependent on progressive aspect:**

(cf. also Harwood 2013, 2015; Sailor 2014; Horvath & Siloni 2014, 2015, 2016)

(59) *be spitting feathers* = to be really angry

(60) *be sucking mud* = to be broken or crashed (of a machine)

(61) *be pushing at an open door* = to achieve what you want easily because a lot of people agree with you or help you

(62) *be flying blind* = to be in a situation with nothing to help or guide you

(63) *be running on empty* = to no longer be as exciting or successful as before / to be feeling tired and confused

Data: English

- If progressive aspect is absent, the idiomatic interpretation is lost — only the literal interpretation remains:

(64) # The evil emperor spat feathers after he heard about the destruction of the death star.

(65) # This stupid Windows machine has sucked mud for the last time.

(66) # My proposals to switch to a green renewable energy source were met with unanimous approval. It turns out I had pushed at an open door the entire time.

(67) # Since there is no precedence for countries leaving the EU, the UK has flown blind in the wake of the Brexit vote.

(68) # *Happy Days* has run on empty ever since that episode in which Fonzie jumped the shark.

➔ shows the genuine dependence of these idioms on progressive aspect

Data: English

- these progressive idioms are IdPs — they are syntactically inflexible
some examples:

- (69) a. # Feathers were being spat by the emperor when he heard about the destruction
of the death star. [No passivisation]
b. # If you ask me, I think feathers, the emperor was spitting. [No topicalisation]
c. # The emperor began spitting hot feathers when he heard about it. [No modification]
- (70) a. # Mud was being sucked by the central server again. [No passivisation]
b. # If you ask me, I think mud this machine is sucking again. [No topicalisation]
c. # The central server is sucking sloppy mud again. [No modification]
- (71) a. # If you ask me, I think an open door was being pushed at by Bob and all of his
colleagues. [No passivisation]
b. # If you ask me, at an open door Bob has been pushing for the entire time. [No topicalisation]
c. # Bob has been pushing at a half-open door the entire time. [No modification]

Data: English

- are there any IdPs dependent on perfect aspect, modality or tense?
 - cf. our previous discussion of idioms dependent on perfect aspect or modality
 - ➔ these all turned out to be ICEs
 - ➔ despite extensive searching, we found no IdPs dependent on perfect aspect or modality
 - some candidates with tense (cf. also Horvath & Siloni's work):

(72) *Fell off the back of a lorry/truck* = acquired through illegal means

(73) *Heads will roll* = people will get fired

(74) *Rome wasn't built in a day* = good work takes time

Data: English

- Dependencies on tense are only superficial — such idioms commonly occur in a certain tense, but figurative meaning does not depend on it:

(75) And how do we know that everything in this dump hasn't fallen off the back of a lorry? [No past tense]

(76) Heads roll daily over at the Daily Mail HQ. [No future tense]

- Only possible exception? = *Rome wasn't built in a day*, but this is an ICE:

(77) a. They didn't build Rome in a day. [Activisation]
b. If you ask me, in a day, Rome was never built. [Topicalisation]
c. Rome wasn't built in a single day. [Modification]

Data: English

- In general:
 - ▶ IdPs found in English dependent on passive voice and progressive aspect
 - ▶ No IdPs dependent on perfect aspect, modality or tense
- The Idioms As Phases hypothesis: verbal idioms (IdPs) are constrained by the clause-internal phase boundary
 - ▶ Progressive aspect layer
= clause-internal phase boundary in English

Overview

- ★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases
 - ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - Some further issues: Possessive idioms
 - Summary
- ★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs
 - Data: English
 - **Data: Dutch and its dialects**
 - Theoretical implications
 - Supporting evidence
 - Summary

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs exist in Dutch which are dependent not only on passive voice and progressive aspect, but also on perfect aspect and root modality.
- Generally, IdPs dependent on epistemic modality or tense do not seem to exist in Dutch.
- Data gathered from dialect dictionaries and formal field work (cf. our first talk).

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on passive voice:

(78) *door de neuze geboord zijn/worden* [Brugge]
through the nose drilled be/become
'to be(come) drunk'
(Lit.: 'to be(come) drilled through the nose')

(79) *mit 'n helm geboren zijn/worden* [Utrecht]
with a caul born be/become
'to have predictive abilities or to be bald'
(Lit.: 'to be(come) born with a caul')

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on passive voice:

(80) *van nen hoos gepoept zen/%werren* [Aalst]
of a hare shagged be/become
'to act hastily, be fast, want to do everything rapidly'
(Lit.: 'to be(come) shagged by a hare')

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- If passive voice is absent, the idiomatic meaning is lost
— only the literal meaning remains:

(81) # *Ik heb / Den drank heeft hem door de neuze geboord.*
I have the booze has him through the nose drilled
≠ 'He is drunk.' / ≠ 'I/The booze got him drunk.'

(82) # *Zij baarde hem mit 'n helm.*
she bore him with a caul
≠ 'He has predictive abilities or he is bald.'

(83) # *Nen hoos eid hem gepoept.*
a hare has him shagged
≠ 'He acts hastily, he is fast.'

➔ shows genuine dependence of these idioms on passive voice

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- these passive idioms are IdPs — they are syntactically inflexible

(84) # *Ja, door de neuze is hij zeker geboord!*
yes through the nose is he certainly drilled
≠ 'He is drunk, without a doubt.' [No topicalisation]

(85) # *Ja, mit 'n helm is hij duidelijk geboren!*
yes with a caul is he clearly born
≠ 'He clearly has predictive abilities or he is clearly bald.'
[No topicalisation]

(86) # *Ja, van nen hoos est'n zeiker gepoept!*
yes of a hare is-he certainly shagged
≠ 'He acts hastily, he is fast, without a doubt.'
[No topicalisation]

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on progressive aspect:

(87) *Dat kind is en deuntje aon't maoke.* [Groesbeek]

that child is a song.DIM on-it make.INF

'That child is crying, is having a crying fit.'

(Lit.: 'That child is making a song.')

(88) *A nen hieten on't weiremen zen.* [Aalst]

yourself a hot-one on-it warm.INF be

'To be very agitated/angry.'

(Lit.: 'to warm a hot one for yourself')

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on progressive aspect:

(89) *Jes an't poepgaon (op 't werk).* [Brugge]
he-is on-it *poepgaon** on the work
'He's loitering, idling, sitting around (foolishly) doing
nothing (at work).'

(* *poepgaon* = *poep-gaai/gat-en* = poo-jay/hole-INF)

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- If progressive aspect is absent, the idiomatic meaning is lost:

(90) # *Dat kind maakt en deuntje.*
that child makes a song.DIM
%'He's cheating.' (≠ 'He's crying.')

(91) # *G'etj a weiral nen hieten geweiremd.*
you-have yourself again a hot-one warmed
≠ 'You are/have been/were agitated/angry again.'

(92) # *Je poepgaot altied (op 't werk).*
he poo-jays always on the work
≠ 'He always loiters, idles, sits around (foolishly) doing nothing.'

➔ shows genuine dependence of these idioms on progressive aspect

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- these progressive idioms are IdPs — they are syntactically inflexible

- (93) # *Ja, en deuntje was-ie altijd aon't maoke!*
yes a song.DIM was-he always on-it make.INF
≠ 'He was always crying.' [No topicalisation]
- (94) # *Ja, nen hieten est'n em zeiker on't weiremen!*
yes a hot-one is-he himself certainly on-it warm.INF
≠ 'He certainly is very agitated/angry.' [No topicalisation]
- (95) # *Op 't werk is/werd er (weer) gepoepgaot.*
on the work is/became there again poo-jay.PTCP
≠ 'At work, they were (again) loitering, idling, sitting around
doing nothing.' [No passivisation]

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on perfect aspect:

(96) *Hij is uut de tied kommen.*

[Drente]

he is out the time come.PTCP

'He passed away.'

(Lit.: 'He has come out of time.')

(97) *Het is van het camion gevallen.*

[Tessengerlo]

it is off the truck fallen

'It's stolen goods, it was taken without permission.'

(Lit.: 'It has fallen from the truck.')

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on perfect aspect:

(98) *A eit den heif opgeiten.*
he has the sourdough up-eaten
'He gets the blame, he's the scapegoat.'
(Lit.: 'He has eaten the sourdough.')

[Aalst]

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- If perfect aspect is absent, the idiomatic meaning is lost:

(99) # *Hij kwam uit de tied.*
he came out the time
≠ 'He passed away.'

(100) # *Het viel van het camion.*
it fell off the lorry
≠ 'It was stolen.'

(101) # *A at den heit op.*
he ate the sourdough up
≠ 'He got the blame, he was the scapegoat.'

➔ shows genuine dependence of these idioms on perfect aspect

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- these perfect idioms are IdPs — they are syntactically inflexible

(102) # *Er wur door hem uut de tied kommen.*
there became by him out the time come.PTCP
≠ 'He passed away.' [No passivisation]

(103) # *Ja, van het camion is het zeker gevallen!*
yes off the lorry is it certainly fallen
≠ 'It was stolen, for sure.' [No topicalisation]

(104) # *Den heif is opgeiten geweest deer menne collega .*
the sourdough is up-eaten been by my colleague
≠ 'My colleague got the blame, was the scapegoat.'
[No passivisation]

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on dynamic modality:

(105) *nait tot vijf tellen **kennen*** [Hogeland]

not until five count can

'to be or appear stupid, dumb'

(Lit.: 'not be able to count to five')

(106) *'t gien woord hebben **willen*** [Drente]

the ?none word have want

'to be unwilling to openly admit something'

(Lit.: 'to want to have the ?none word')

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- IdPs dependent on deontic modality:

(107) *veul uwt **motte** drinke (vaen iemaend)* [Groesbeek]

much ?out must drink from someone

'to have to put up with a lot (from someone)'

(Lit.: 'to have to drink a lot (from someone)')

(108) *de streng ni te rap **moeten** aftrekken* [Aalst]

the string not too fast must off-pull

'to not (have to) rush things'

(Lit.: 'to not have to pull off the string too fast')

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- If the root (=dynamic/deontic) modal is absent, the idiomatic meaning is lost:

(109) # *Hij telt nait tot vijf.*
he counts not until five
≠ 'He is or appears stupid, dumb.'

(110) # *Hij zal 't gien woord hebben.*
he will the ?none word have
≠ 'He will be unwilling to openly admit something.'

(111) # *Ze dronk veul uwt vaen hem.*
she drank much ?out from him
≠ 'She put with a lot from him.'

(112) # *A zal de streng ni te rap aftrekken.*
he will the string not too fast off-pull
≠ 'He will not rush things.'

- ➔ shows the genuine dependence of these idioms on root modality

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- These root modal idioms are IdPs — they are syntactically inflexible

(113) # *Er ken nait tot vijf teld worden (deur hom).*
there can not until five counted become by him
≠ 'He is or appears stupid, dumb.' [No passivisation]

(114) # *Jazeker, het gien woord wil hij altied hebben!*
yes-certainly, the ?none word wants he always have
≠ 'He is always unwilling to openly admit something.' [No topicalisation]

(115) # *Er mot door haar veel uwt gedronken worden/zijn vaen hem .*
there must by her much ?out drunk become/be from him
≠ 'She has to put up with a lot from him.' [No passivisation]

(116) # *De streng moet'n zeiker ni te rap aftrekken!*
the string must-he certainly not too fast off-pull
≠ 'He doesn't have to rush things, that's for sure!' [No topicalisation]

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- Despite extensive searching, we have found no IdPs in Dutch (dialects) that are dependent on epistemic modality or particular tense forms:
 - ▶ either dependencies on these elements turn out to be only superficial (the idioms commonly occur with these elements, but the figurative meaning does not depend on them)
 - ▶ or the idioms turn out to be ICEs (syntactically flexible).

Data: Dutch and its dialects

- In general:
 - ▶ IdPs found in Dutch (dialects) dependent on passive voice, progressive aspect, perfect aspect, and root modality
 - ▶ No IdPs dependent on epistemic modality or tense
- The Idioms As Phases hypothesis: verbal idioms (IdPs) are constrained by the clause-internal phase boundary
 - ▶ Root modal layer
= clause-internal phase boundary in Dutch (dialects)

Overview

- ★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases
 - ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - Some further issues: Possessive idioms
 - Summary
- ★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs
 - Data: English
 - Data: Dutch and its dialects
 - **Theoretical implications**
 - Supporting evidence
 - Summary

Theoretical implications

- Tenny (1987), Cinque (1999): there is a universal functional hierarchy of the form:
 - Tense > Modality > Perfect Aspect > Progressive Aspect > Voice > Verb

e.g. *He must have been being paid to keep quiet.*

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
T/Mod Perf Prog Voice Verb

Theoretical implications

- More detailed (Cinque 1999, 2001; Nauze 2008):

Epistemic Mod > Tense > Deontic Mod > Dynamic Mod >
Perfect Aspect > Progressive Aspect > Voice > Verb

e.g. *Hij **zou** dat **moeten willen** doen.*

T/Epist Deont Dyn

* *Hij moet dat zouden willen doen.*

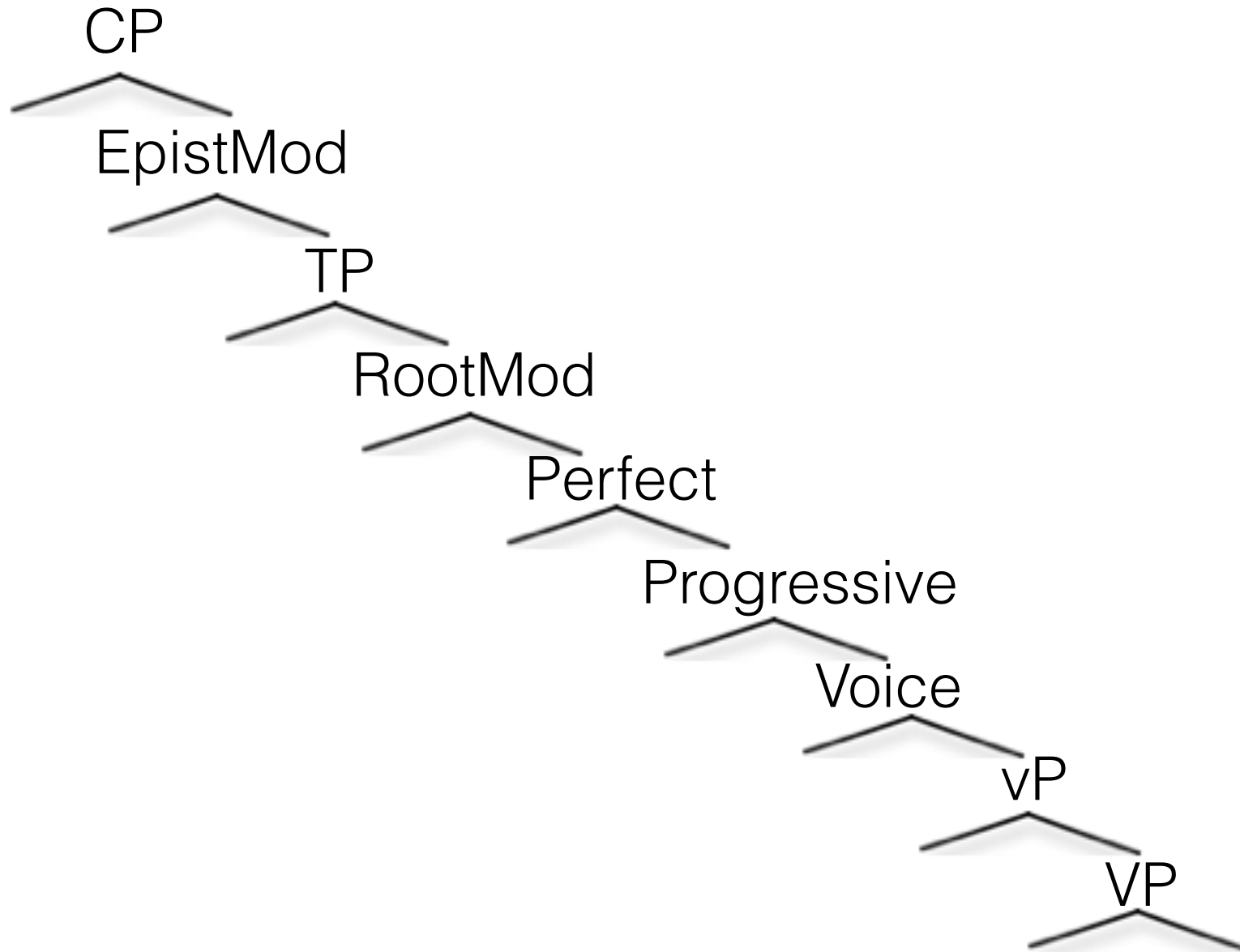
* *Hij wil dat zouden moeten doen.*

e.g. *Hij **moet** dat **willen** doen.*

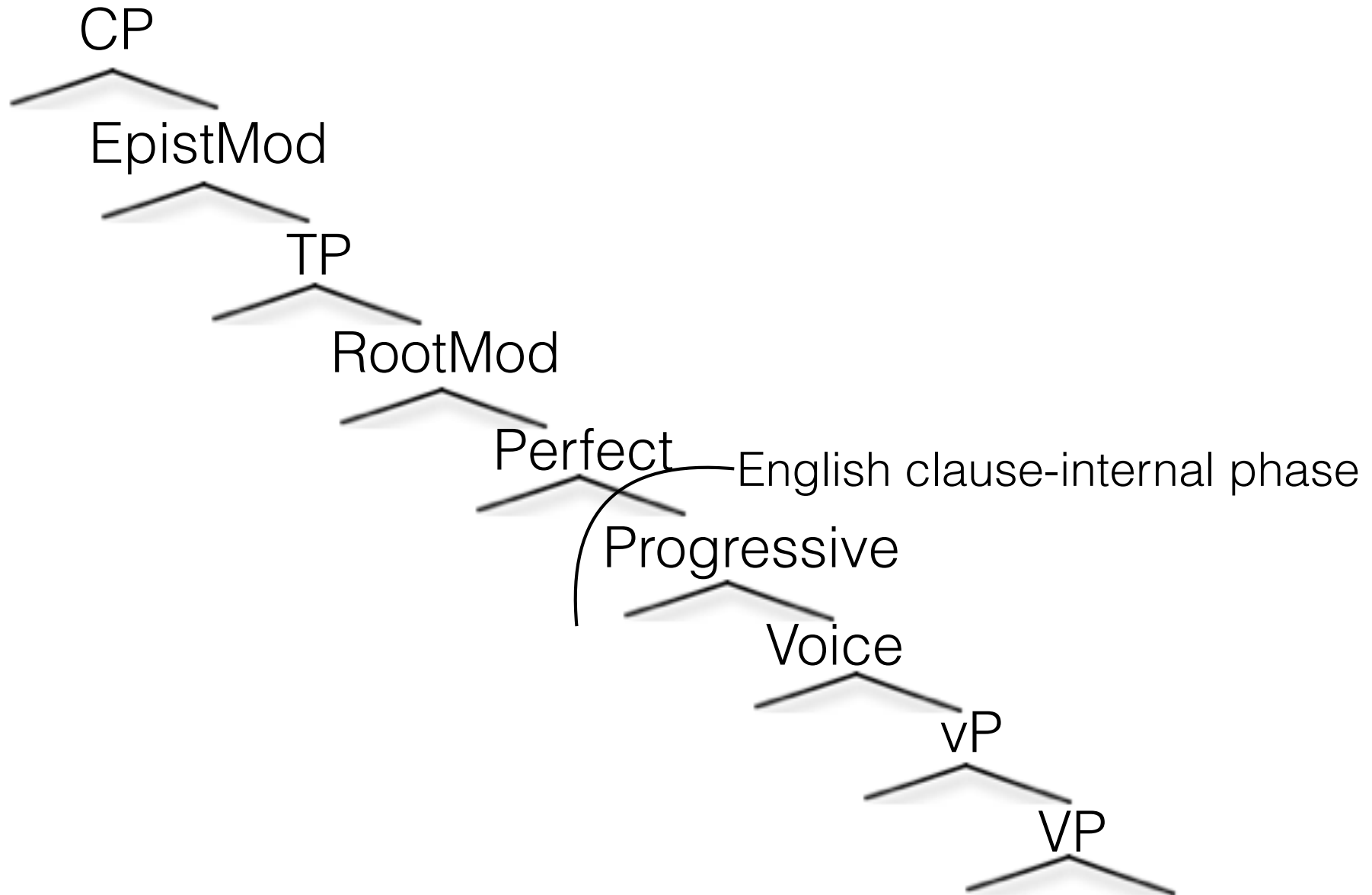
T/Deont Dyn

* *Hij wil dat moeten doen.*

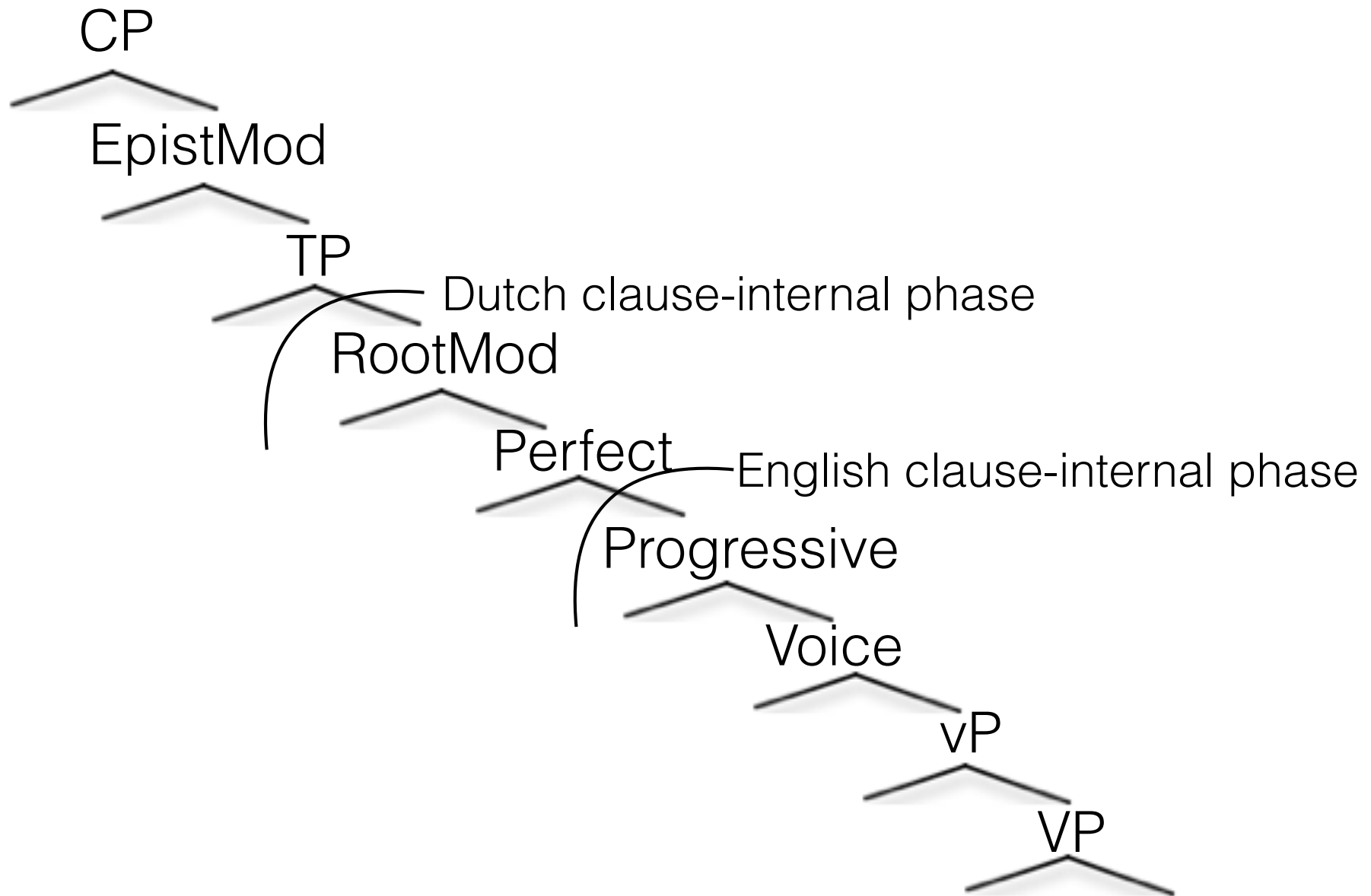
Theoretical implications



Theoretical implications



Theoretical implications



Theoretical implications

- So: phases are not rigid and absolute (as claimed by Chomsky 2000, 2001).
Rather they are flexible, and dynamic.
- This supports the dynamic phase approach (Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2005; Wurmbrand 2013; Harwood 2013, 2015; Bošković 2014).
- ➔ The size of the clause-internal phase can differ cross-linguistically.

Theoretical implications

- **Question:**

Is there a restriction on the size of the clause-internal phase?

- There appear to be no languages that exhibit idiomatic phrases that are dependent upon a particular form of Tense (though this needs confirming with extensive research).
- Languages appear to universally exhibit idiomatic phrases that are dependent on the verb and its arguments.
- ➔ Clause-internal phase can be as small as the vP layer, and can extend as far as the (root) modal layer.
- ➔ TP and CP can never be included within the clause-internal phase, and the clause-internal phase can never be smaller than vP.

Theoretical implications

Clausal Phase	Clause-internal Phase
C T Mod Perf Prog Voice	v V
C T Mod Perf Prog	Voice v V
C T Mod Perf	Prog Voice v V (<i>English</i>)
C T Mod	Perf Prog Voice v V
C T	Mod Perf Prog Voice v V (<i>Dutch</i>)

Theoretical implications

Clausal Phase	Clause-internal Phase
C T Mod Perf Prog Voice	v V (<i>Brazilian Portuguese</i>)
C T Mod Perf Prog	Voice v V (?)
C T Mod Perf	Prog Voice v V (<i>Irish, Taiwanese, European Portuguese</i>)
C T Mod	Perf Prog Voice v V (<i>Welsh</i>)
C T	Mod Perf Prog Voice v V (<i>Icelandic</i>)

Overview

- ★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases
 - ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - Some further issues: Possessive idioms
 - Summary
- ★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of IdPs
 - Data: English
 - Data: Dutch and its dialects
 - Theoretical implications
 - **Supporting evidence**
 - Summary

Supporting evidence: VP ellipsis

- VP ellipsis (VPE) in English, and its Dutch equivalent, Modal Complement Ellipsis (MCE) provide further evidence for our conclusion.
- Homberg (2001); Fox & Pesetsky (2003); Gengel (2007, 2008); Gallego (2010); Rouveret (2012), Harwood (2013, 2015); Bošković (2014):

ellipsis targets phases

Supporting evidence: VPE in English

- VPE = ellipsis of the clause-internal phase
- Harwood (2013, 2015); Aelbrecht & Harwood (2015): VPE targets the progressive aspectual layer
- **Evidence:**
 - auxiliaries inflected for progressive morphology, i.e. *being*, are obligatorily elided under VPE
 - auxiliaries inflected for higher morphological forms can escape VPE

Supporting evidence: VPE in English

(117) Neo will be freed from the Matrix,
and I will be freed from the Matrix, too.

(118) Neo has been freed from the Matrix,
and I have been freed from the Matrix, too.

(119) Neo is being freed from the Matrix,
and I am being freed from the Matrix, too.

Supporting evidence: VPE in English

(117) Neo will be freed from the Matrix,
and I will be ~~freed from the Matrix~~, too.

(118) Neo has been freed from the Matrix,
and I have been ~~freed from the Matrix~~, too.

(119) Neo is being freed from the Matrix,
* and I am being ~~freed from the Matrix~~, too.

Supporting evidence: VPE in English

(117) Neo will be freed from the Matrix,
and I will be ~~freed from the Matrix~~, too.

(118) Neo has been freed from the Matrix,
and I have been ~~freed from the Matrix~~, too.

(119) Neo is being freed from the Matrix,
and I am **being** ~~freed from the Matrix~~, too.

Supporting evidence: VPE in English

- Assumption: auxiliaries raise into the relevant inflectional domain to realise their inflectional forms (cf. Harwood 2015)
 - ➔ *being* does not raise high enough to escape ellipsis
- VPE targets the progressive aspectual layer in English
 - ➔ the progressive aspectual layer = the clause-internal phase

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- Dutch lacks VPE, but has MCE (Aelbrecht 2010):
everything in the complement of the modal is
elided

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- In MCE, the non-finite perfect auxiliary is elided (Aelbrecht 2010):

(120)Q: *Zal Charlotte tegen morgen haar kamer opgeruimd hebben?*
will Charlotte by tomorrow her room cleaned have
'Will Charlotte have cleaned her room by tomorrow?'

A: *Ze zal wel moeten haar kamer opgeruimd hebben.*
she will PRT must her room cleaned have
'She'll have to have cleaned her room.'

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- In MCE, the non-finite perfect auxiliary is elided (Aelbrecht 2010):

(120)Q: *Zal Charlotte tegen morgen haar kamer opgeruimd hebben?*
will Charlotte by tomorrow her room cleaned have
'Will Charlotte have cleaned her room by tomorrow?'

A: *Ze zal wel moeten ~~haar kamer opgeruimd~~ hebben.*
she will PRT must
'She'll have to have.'

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- In MCE, non-finite dynamic modals are elided:

(121)A: *Ik kan goed koken.*

I can good cook

'I'm very good at cooking.'

B: *Ja, om deel te nemen aan dat programma moet je wel ...*

yes to part to take at that program must you PRT

... goed kunnen koken, he!

good can cook PRT

'Well, to participate in that show, you have to be good at cooking!'

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- In MCE, non-finite dynamic modals are elided:

(121)A: *Ik kan goed koken.*

I can good cook

'I'm very good at cooking.'

B: *Ja, om deel te nemen aan dat programma moet je wel ...*

yes to part to take at that program must you PRT

... *goed kunnen koken, he!*

'Well, to participate in that show, you have to be!'

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- In MCE, non-finite deontic modals are elided:

(122)A: *Mag Marie eindelijk meespelen met de andere kinderen?*
may Mary finally with-play with the other children
'Can Mary finally play with the other children?'

B: *Ze moet haast wel mogen meespelen! Kijk hoe blij ze is!*
she must almost PRT may with-play look how happy she is
'I think she actually can play! Look how happy she is!'

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- In MCE, non-finite deontic modals are elided:

(122)A: *Mag Marie eindelijk meespelen met de andere kinderen?*
may Mary finally with-play with the other children
'Can Mary finally play with the other children?'

B: *Ze moet haast wel ~~mogen meespelen~~! Kijk hoe blij ze is!*
she must almost PRT look how happy she is
'I think she actually can! Look how happy she is!'

Supporting evidence: MCE in Dutch

- If ellipsis is constrained by phases
i.e. if MCE = ellipsis of the clause-internal phase
 - ➔ then these data also suggest that perfect aspect and root modality are also included in the clause-internal phase in Dutch

Overview

- ★ Idioms & Phases (the Idioms As Phases hypothesis)
- ★ Part 1: The problem of DP phases
 - ICEs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - IdPs and the Idioms As Phases hypothesis
 - Some further issues: Possessive idioms
 - Summary
- ★ Part 2: Macro-variation in the size of verbal idioms
 - Data: English
 - Data: Dutch and its dialects
 - Theoretical implications
 - Supporting evidence
 - **Summary**

Summary

- **The Idioms As Phases hypothesis:**
verbal idioms (IdPs) are constrained by the clause-internal phase boundary
- **Observation:**
 - English – IdPs can include passive voice and progressive aspect
 - Dutch – IdPs can also include perfect aspect and root modality
- **Theoretical implications:**
 - Clause-internal phase in English = progressive aspectual layer
 - Clause-internal phase in Dutch = root modal layer
 - ➔ Phases are not rigid and absolute but dynamic and variable
 - ➔ Phase size is subject to cross-linguistic variation
 - ✓ Conclusion supported by data from ellipsis

Thank You! Questions?



Selected references

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