

The background is a dark blue field filled with various colorful geometric shapes, including circles, ovals, and elongated rectangles in shades of orange, red, green, yellow, and light blue. These shapes are arranged in a dynamic, overlapping pattern.

“WH-MOVEMENT IN ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE”



Signe Slaug Gregersen

CoSy: English Linguistics Beyond the Basics

What was the paper about ____?

Exactly – *what* (and all the other *wh*-elements/phrases)

Comparative analysis of *wh*-movement in two languages

- Namely English and American Sign Language

A (as far as I could research) unique discussion/debate found among linguists focused on ASL

- How does *wh*-elements move – leftward or rightward?

A bit about ASL...

The same multitude of linguistic fields and discussion points as spoken languages

Generally, comparable to these as well – basic word order *SVO*, *morphological complexity* and observable grammar

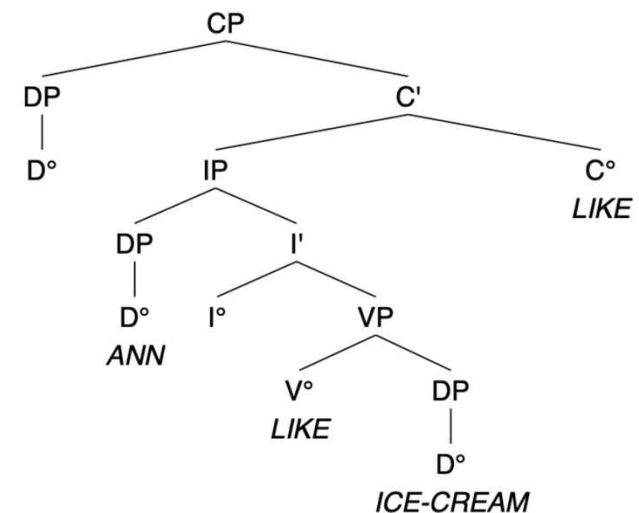
Aspects of the sign MOTHER		
Location	Handshape	Movements ²
Chin	B	To and fro, touch



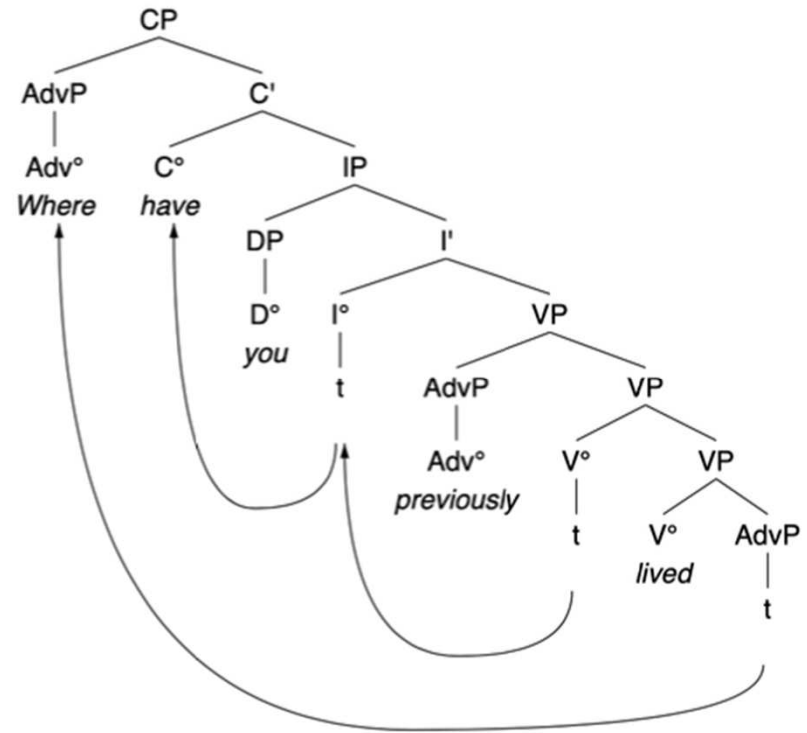
Figure 1 *Sign for MOTHER* (Liddell 2003, 9)

Non-manual marking and the use of the signing space for grammaticality

Double constructions



SHOWING *WH*- MOVEMENT IN ENGLISH AND ASL



Showing *wh*-movement in English

The existence of *in situ* in ASL, but not in English

One piece of evidence provided for the existence of *wh*-movement in English:

_____ wh
JOHN BUY WHAT
'What did John buy?'

_____ wh
WHO LOVE JOHN
'Who loves John?'

- a. [Which team_ do you think [_____ is going be to in the finale]]?
- b. *[Which team_ do you think [_____ are going be to in the finale]]?
- c. *[Which teams_ do you think [_____ is going be to in the finale]]?
- d. [Which teams_ do you think [_____ are going be to in the finale]]?



*[Do you think [which team is going to be in the season finale]]?

_____ wh_q
WHO LOVE JOHN
'Who loves John?'

_____ wh_q
t BUY CAR WHO
'Who bought the car?'

Showing *wh*- movement in ASL



So how do we end up disagreeing over the
directionality in ASL?

Trace suggesting right-ward movement of
the *wh*-element "WHAT"

- And therefore a sentence-final CP-spec

Showing *wh*-movement in ASL

Those in favor of the left-ward analysis:

“Why complicate it?”

“Twin null” (marked by *ec*)

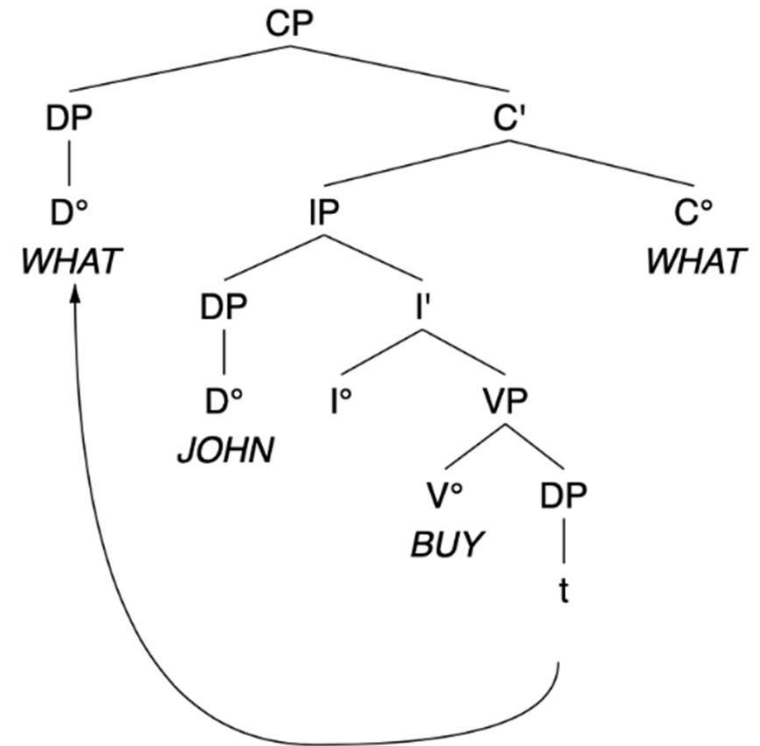
_____ whq
ec BUY CAR WHO
‘Who bought the car?’

SHOWING *WH*- MOVEMENT IN ASL

So, what does this leftward analysis look like
on an ASL sentence?



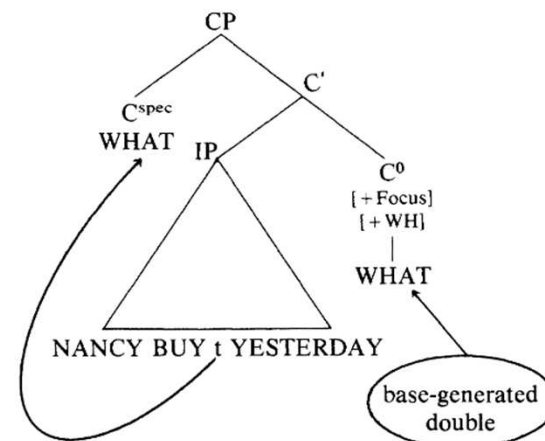
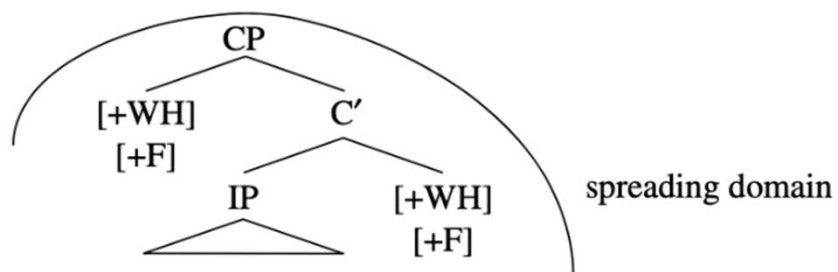
Here with a doubled wh-element



Showing *wh*-movement in ASL

Non-manual signs/markings as evidence for leftward *wh*-movement

The movement allows for spreading across the entire question – spec-head agreement



Showing *wh*-movement in English

Assigning of accusative case – transitive verbs (V^o) to complements (DP)

Whom will she meet **t**____ today?



Not possible for the interrogative pronoun *whom* to be base generated in the left periphery of the sentence!

Coming to conclusions – what did I even find?

“We thus see both English and ASL structures supporting the general claim that *wh*-movement is leftward, as the moved *wh*-element lands in a leftward CP-spec, despite clear differences in the possibilities otherwise present for the syntax of the languages.”

Different pieces of evidence for ASL and English though – as just shown

- And the discussion surrounding ASL focused more on specifically the *directionality*

The background is a solid purple color. It is decorated with various colorful geometric shapes, including circles, ovals, and elongated rectangles, in shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. These shapes are scattered across the field, some overlapping each other. The text 'ANY QUESTIONS?' is centered in a white, serif font. Below the text is a small white decorative element consisting of a horizontal line with a diamond shape in the middle.

ANY QUESTIONS?



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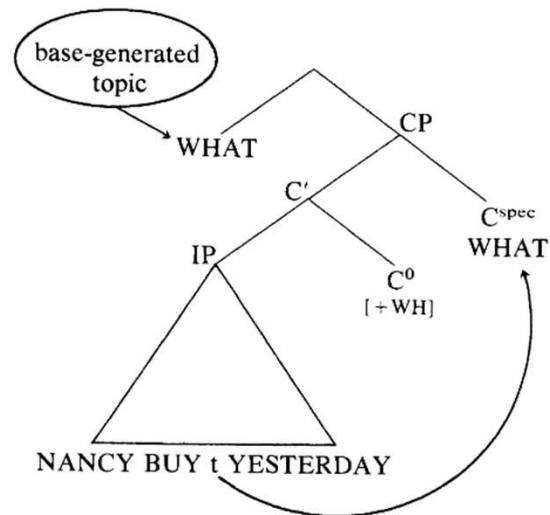
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Extra – if anyone asks ;)



⁹ The node above the CP is not labeled in ABKN's articles.

WHICH COMPUTER JOHN BUY WHICH COMPUTER ^{whq}

WHICH COMPUTER JOHN BUY WHICH ^{whq}
'Which computer did John buy?'