

The OI Stage in English

We've settled on the first set of properties of the OI stage. Let's just show how the analysis is extended to English? In order to show that English has an OI stage, we need an "infinitival ending", right? Not necessarily. In fact, English is interesting just because it isn't "obviously" an OI language, but we can see the effects of the OI stage. So if we can show that English goes through an OI stage, it will be the same type of analysis that shows that processes that are "obvious", or "on the surface" in many languages can be more hidden because of lack of morphology in another language.

12) What about English? Wexler (1992, to appear) suggests that English has a root infinitive stage, and that forms like (13) demonstrate this, since English has zero morphology for the infinitive

(13) a. Mary go b. he play

(14) English is greatly deficient in agreement morphology, so we would expect it have a root infinitive stage. Distributional evidence is harder to come by, given the relative lack of surface movement in basic English clause structure.

(15) a. Mary not go b. he not play

(Aside on the previous and concurrent literature: Forms like (15) were first observed by Bellugi and Klima in the 60's and 70's, and termed "medial neg" forms. They were supposed to represent a second stage of the development of negation in English (the first stage would have negation *first*, even before the subject, e.g *not me go*, but there is extremely little evidence for such a stage (see Pierce and also Deprez and Pierce who suggest that there is such a stage, and Stromswold, who denies it, pointing out that most of the cases cited involve empty subjects.)) Also see a paper soon to appear by Ken Drozd, showing that very young kids know the difference between *no* and *not*).

(16) The most reasonable assumption is that there is no tense in (15), thus *do* is not inserted. Thus there is no tense in the sentence. Thus we do not expect forms like (17):

(17) a. Mary not goes b. he not plays

(18)

Harris and Wexler 1996 searched Childe records for "medial neg" forms like (15, 17) (kids 1;6 to 4;1, but most of the medial neg forms occurred in the younger age range)

Frequency of Tensed and Untensed Verbs

	Affirmative	Medial Neg
-inflection	782	47
+ inflection	594	5

- (19) a. Mary never goes b. he never plays
- (20) *never* doesn't require (or allow) *do* -support, possibly because it doesn't break an adjacency relationship between INFL (TNS) and the verb (unlike *not* .)
- (21) Elicitation Experiment by Harris and Wexler (Table 1 and Table 2) shows that kids just over 2;0 distinguish *not* and *never* (also always) in this way, producing forms like (19) often but rarely forms like (17). Thus both naturalistic and experimental data confirm that kids in the Root Infinitive Stage distinguish "bare" and tensed forms syntactically, e.g. *go/goes, play/plays*.
- (22) Why is *do* deleted?
- (23) Simplest view of Root Infinitive Stage (one of the theories considered in Wexler 1992, to appear): TNS may fail to appear . (Rizzi's (mss.) theory also essentially makes the same analysis for TNS, i.e. the child starts from a projection lower than TNS).
- (24) *do* is required to bind TNS (stray morpheme filter (Lasnik) or adjacency (Bobaljik), pretty much any theory since *Syntactic Structures* . If no TNS, no *do* , by Economy, or by a failure to license *do*.
- (25) a. I want to (*do) not accept the candidate
b. To (*do) not accept the candidate would be wrong
- (26) If the child chooses -TNS (i.e. no TNS) (possible by (23) for a negative sentence, then by (24), *do* is not possible. Thus (15) is good.
- (27) If the child chooses TNS, then by (24) *do* is required, and (17) is bad.
- (28) Thus we have predicted an "Optional *do*" stage.
- (29) In best of all worlds, for this theory *do* is deleted same proportion as -s
- (30) Harris and Wexler seem to show that *do* is deleted less than *s*, but this may be due to an artefact.

(32) Examples from Peter, in CHILDES:

- a. the horse not stand up (2-6-14)
- b. no the chair not go in here

(33) *be* is quite likely also only required to bind TNS (cf. Scholten's dissertation, where *be* is inserted, and see suggestions in Hyams and Jaeggli (unpublished mss.)).

(34) Under same reasoning, we predict that *be* exists in the sentence if and only if it is tensed. Thus we predict, for the child in the Root Infinitive Stage:

- (35) a. she going
- b. she is going
- c. *she be going

(36) We thus understand "deleted *be*" as lack of TNS. Again, if *be* is obligatorily missing, then some other principle (Economy?) must be causing the obligatory non-insertion (unless it's at a period when *-s* is obligatorily missing). But certainly through most of the OI stage, *be* is only optionally missing.

(37) Can aspect be missing? If Rizzi is right, then the child can start anyplace. Assume that progressive aspect heads a projection immediately above the VP (certainly it's to the right of NEG --'she is not going'). This predicts the (38) under Rizzi's assumption that a projection implies the existence of all those lower down. Similarly, in the Optional Tense model of Wexler,(or Schutze and Wexler ATOM, that we'll look at) there is no reason to think that aspect can be missing. So no major model claims that aspect is missing, at least when tense is there. Given the complexity of English present tense/aspect, there is room for a good deal of work.

- (38) a. she go
- b. *she is go

(39) (38) is right, there is good evidence in Rice and Wexler, both in production data and in judgement experiments.

(40) There *is* evidence that progressive aspect is missing early on: Brown (1973) gives a graph which shows that it is missing quite a bit in early speech. Thus some of the root infinitives are missing not only TNS, but also aspect. (Obviously this result depended on a context analysis).