

# Tough-constructions in minimalism

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TIN-dag, Utrecht, February 4 2012

- (1) John is easy to please
- (2) Dit tentamen is makkelijk te mak-en  
this test is easy to make-INF  
'This test is easy to make.'
- (3) John is eager to please
- (4) easy [ OP<sub>i</sub> to please t<sub>i</sub> ] (Chomsky 1977)
- (5) a. This violin is easy [ OP<sub>i</sub> to play sonatas on t<sub>i</sub> ]  
b. \* [What sonatas]<sub>j</sub> is this violin easy [ OP<sub>i</sub> to play t<sub>j</sub> on t<sub>i</sub> ]
- (6) *reanalysis* (Chomsky 1981:312)  
[<sub>AP</sub> easy [ OP<sub>i</sub> to please t<sub>i</sub> ] ] > [<sub>AP</sub> [<sub>A</sub> easy-to-please ] t<sub>i</sub> ]

## 2. Reanalysing reanalysis (Zwart 2006)

- (7) een makkelijk te mak-en tentamen  
INDEF.SG easy to make-INF test  
'a test that is easy to make'
- (8) een eenvoudig tentamen  
INDEF.SG simple test  
'a simple test'
- (9) a. Dat tentamen is makkelijk om te mak-en  
that test is easy C to make-INF  
'That test is easy to make.'  
b. \* een makkelijk om te mak-en tentamen  
INDEF.SG easy C to make-INF test  
(intended: same as (7))  
c. een makkelijk tentamen om te mak-en  
INDEF.SG easy test C to make-INF  
'an easy test to make'
- (10) [That the Matterhorn is tough to climb] is easy to see

- (11) a [far from simple] matter
- (12) He left for [I think (it was) Budapest]
- (13) Tasman discovered [what he took to be part of New Holland]
- (14) *interface effects* (Zwart 2009)
- conventional meaning (e.g. idiomaticity)
  - categorization (e.g. transition into a different word class)
  - morphological realization (e.g. inflection or the insertion of linking morphemes)
  - opacity (e.g. creating islands for subextraction)
  - linearization (e.g. creating special word order effects)
  - special interpretation (e.g. having to do with information structure)
- (5) a. This violin is easy [  $OP_i$  to play sonatas on  $t_i$  ]  
 b. \* [What sonatas]<sub>j</sub> is this violin easy [  $OP_i$  to play  $t_j$  on  $t_i$  ]
- (15) a. Die opdracht is goed te doe-n  
 that assignment is good to do-INF  
 'That assignment is doable.'
- b. Die opdracht is goed om te doe-n  
 that assignment is good C to do-INF  
 'That assignment is (a) good (assignment) to do.'

### 3. Arguments against reanalysis (Levine 1984a,b; Hicks 2009)

#### *Right Node Raising breaks up the construction*

- (16) John is difficult, and Marjorie (is) impossible, to please
- (17) a. Tasman heeft het Noord- en Cook (heeft) het Zuid-  
 tasman has the north and Cook has the south  
 eiland verkend  
 island explore:PART  
 'Tasman explored the North Island and Cook explored the South Island.'
- b. Dat heeft Tasman be- en Cook ont-kend  
 that has Tasman BE and Cook ONT-know:PART  
 'Tasman confessed and Cook denied that.'  
 (*bekennen* 'confess', *ontkennen* 'deny')

#### *Internal structure still relevant*

- (18) My car was hard for the people John<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> used in such cases to fix

- (19) een makkelijk (\* voor de studenten) te mak-en tentamen  
 a easy for the students to make-INF test
- (20) een voor de studenten makkelijk te maken tentamen  
 een makkelijk te maken tentamen voor de studenten
- (21) Dat tentamen is makkelijk (om) te mak-en voor de studenten  
 that test is easy C to make-INF for the students  
 'That test is easy to make for the students.'

### Extraposition

(22) Mary would be hard for *someone* to deal with *who was unprepared for her eccentricities*

(23) een makkelijk aan kinderen te gev-en koekje  
 INDEF.SG easy to children to give-INF cookie  
 'a cookie that is easy to give to children'

(24) koekjes aan kinderen gev-en die van Donald Duck houd-en  
 cookies to children give-INF REL of Donald Duck hold-INF  
 'give cookies to children who like Donald Duck'  
 (*houden van* 'love')

(25) \* een makkelijk aan kinderen te gev-en koekje  
 INDEF.SG easy to children to give-INF cookie  
  
 die van Donald Duck houd-en  
 REL of Donald Duck hold-INF

(intended: 'a cookie that is easy to give to children who like Donald Duck')

### Reconstruction

(26) [ Pictures of his<sub>i</sub> friends ]<sub>i</sub> are hard for [every photographer]<sub>j</sub> to sell <sub>t<sub>j</sub></sub>

### Idiom split

(27) *kick the bucket* 'die' (no idiom split)

- a. passive: \*The bucket was kicked  
 b. *tough*: \*The bucket was easy to kick

(28) *make headway* 'move forward' (idiom split allowed)

- a. passive: ?Headway was made  
 b. *tough*: ?Headway was difficult to make

## 4. The passive character of the construction

- (1) John is easy to please                      (29) It is easy to please John

- (30) John is easily pleased
- (31) Het is makkelijk (om) dit tentamen te mak-en  
 it is easy C this test to make-INF  
 'It is easy to make this test.'
- (32) Het tentamen is makkelijk ge-maak-t  
 the test is easy GE-make-D  
 'The test is easily made.'  
 (*ge--d* is the participial morphology)  
 (the pitch accent in this example is on the participle; there is an alternative, irrelevant reading with the pitch accent on *makkelijk*, 'the exam is made easy')
- (33) Het tentamen is { snel / zo } ge-maak-t  
 the test is fast so GE-make-D  
 'The test is made in no time.'
- (34) a. Het tentamen is zo ge-maak-t door de studenten  
 the test is so GE-make-D through the students  
 'The test is made by students in no time.'
- b. Het tentamen is al ge-maak-t  
 the test PASS.AUX:3SG already GE-make-D  
 'The test has already been made.'
- (35) Het tentamen is (nog) te mak-en  
 the test is still to make-INF  
 'The test still needs to be made.'
- (36) het (nog) te mak-en tentamen  
 the still to make-INF test  
 'the test that still needs to be made'

*Verbs that don't passivize cannot be used in 'easy-to-please' (Postal 1990)*

- (37) a. \* John is easy to be pleased  
 b. \* Het tentamen is makkelijk ge-maak-t te word-en  
 the test is easy GE-make-D to pass.aux-INF
- (38) a. \* John is easy to arrive  
 b. \* Het tentamen is makkelijk te ontstaa-n  
 the test is easy to come.into.being-INF
- (39) a. \* John is easy to hear sing a song  
 b. \* Studenten zijn makkelijk een tentamen te zie-n mak-en  
 students are easy a test to see-INF make-INF
- (40) a. It is easy to hear John sing a song

- b. Het is makkelijk (om) studenten een tentamen  
 it is easy c students a test
- te zie-n mak-en  
 to see-INF make-INF

'It is easy to see students make test.'

- (41) \* Studenten zijn zo een tentamen ge-zie-n mak-en  
 students are so a test GE-see-N make-INF

- (42) a. Dit boek lees-t lek-ker  
 this book read-3SG tasty  
 'This book reads well.'

- b. \* Dit boek is lekker te lez-en  
 this book is tasty to read-INF

*Problems* (Postal 1990)

- (43) a. Prince Fielder was signed without committing {himself/\*ourselves} to a nine-year deal  
 b. Prince Fielder will be hard to sign without committing {ourselves/\*himself} to a nine-year deal
- (44) a. \* Eddie was mailed the coke to  
 b. Eddie is easy to mail coke to
- (45) a. \* Gordon was gotten to know (by Mary)  
 b. Gordon is easy to get to know  
 c. \* Eddie was taken pictures of  
 d. Eddie is easy to take pictures of

## 5. Evidence for wh-movement ?

(46) *Evidence for empty operator movement*

- a. island sensitivity  
 b. licensing of parasitic gaps

- (47) a. ? [Which sonatas]<sub>i</sub> do you wonder [ how<sub>j</sub> to play <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> <sub>t<sub>j</sub></sub> ]  
 b. \* How<sub>j</sub> do you wonder [ [which sonatas]<sub>i</sub> to play <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> <sub>t<sub>j</sub></sub> ]

- (48) a. \* [Which sonatas]<sub>i</sub> did you take a shower [ after you recorded <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ]  
 b. \* How<sub>i</sub> did you take a shower [ after you recorded the sonata <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ]

- (49) a. \* [What sonatas]<sub>i</sub> is this violin easy [ to play <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> on ]  
 b. \* How<sub>i</sub> is this violin easy [ OP<sub>i</sub> to play sonatas <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> on ]

- (50) The book is hard to buy without reading [e]<sub>PG</sub>
- (51) [Which book]<sub>i</sub> did you buy t<sub>i</sub> without reading [e]<sub>PG</sub>
- (52) een makkelijk zonder [e]<sub>PG</sub> uit te lez-en weg te leg-gen boek  
 a easy without out to read-INF away to put-INF book  
 'a book that is easy to put down without finishing'
- (53) een zonder [e]<sub>PG</sub> uit te lez-en makkelijk weg te leg-gen boek  
 a without out to read-INF easy away to put-INF book  
 'a book that is easy to put down without finishing'
- (54) een zonder [e]<sub>PG</sub> uit te lez-en zo weg ge-leg-d boek  
 a without out to read-INF so away GE-put-D book  
 'a book that is put down without finishing in no time'

## 6. Solving Chomsky's paradox

- (55) Consider the reanalysis approach to [(50)] discussed in Chomsky [(1981:312)]. If that analysis is correct, then [t<sub>i</sub>] is in effect an NP-trace in [(51)]. However, [(50)] indicates that it still retains its status as an A'-bound trace at S-structure. The reanalysis approach requires that reanalysis occur in the syntax, prior to S-structure; otherwise, there will be a  $\theta$ -criterion violation at S-structure. Thus, we cannot account for these facts by assuming reanalysis to be a rule of the LF component [i.e. the interfaces]. We are led, then, to an interpretation of reanalysis that assumes both the reanalyzed and the nonreanalyzed structures to be available at S-structure. This is entirely feasible, if we regard phrase markers as sets of strings rather than tree-like structures. (Chomsky 1982:57)

## 7. Conclusion

- Reanalysis yields a single adjective which can be used as such in the next derivation layer in an attributive or predicative adjective construction.
- No movement, no gaps.
- Expanded *easy-to-please* constructions are in a different category

## References

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