In Swedish and Norwegian, the auxiliary *ha* ‘have’ is sometimes optional. Platzack (1986) stated that *ha* can be deleted if it has not moved to C. It follows that *ha* is obligatory in (1) but optional in (2). Holmberg (1986) and Zwart (1993) take Platzack’s generalisation to be valid for *ha* in main clauses and for finite *ha* in embedded clauses, and they both try to give a more principled explanation for it. Concerning infinitival embedded *ha*, Holmberg (1986) claimed that it is obligatory in control constructions but optional in raising and ECM-constructions. He suggested that in control constructions, *ha* must be spelled out in order to make I visible, whereas in raising and ECM-constructions, the I of the infinitival complement is made visible by virtue of being governed by the matrix verb.

It appears, however, that none of the previous analyses are able to account for the full range of facts. First, *ha* is not optional in (3), which differs from (2) only with respect to the tense of the modal verb. Second, while the judgements concerning (1), (2) and (3) are the same in Swedish and Norwegian, in (4) *ha* is optional in Swedish but obligatory in Norwegian. These facts suggest that there is not one single explanation for optionality of *ha* in main clauses and of finite *ha* in embedded clauses.

The account that I will propose for optional *ha* after modals, which applies to Swedish and Norwegian alike, is based on the idea that constructions with *ha*-participle are biclausal (Kayne 1993) and on the observation that past tense markers can signal either past tense or counterfactuality (Iatridou 2000). Because of the latter, a modal verb in the past tense form is ambiguous: it can be a combination of a modal head and a tense head, or of a modal head and a mood head. If the first option is chosen, the participle, which I take to be tense-marked, must necessarily belong in a lower clause, and the construction must contain a higher verb which will be spelled out as *ha*. If the second option is chosen, however, the participle will belong to the same clause as the modal verb, with the participial tense representing the tense of that clause. There is then no room for *ha*, and accordingly, *ha* is missing. I will show how it follows from this analysis that (2) is ambiguous when *ha* is present but not when *ha* is absent.

For finite embedded *ha*, as in (4), I will show that its presence is determined by the requirement that the [+FIN] feature of the finite clause must be overtly identified. In Swedish, this can be done either by spelling out the finite verb or by spelling out a nominative subject. Crucially, *ha* is optional as long as the subject position is filled, either by the subject itself or by a resumptive pronoun, but it becomes obligatory if there is a trace in subject position. In Norwegian, by contrast, identifying the [+FIN] feature means spelling out the finite verb.

In Norwegian, there is no optional *ha* in raising and ECM-constructions either. Rather, there is a generalisation that *ha* must be spelled out whenever it is generated. Concerning Swedish, a survey of 30 speakers reveals that it is not entirely true that infinitival *ha* is optional in raising and ECM-constructions. The claim put forth in Hedlund (1992) that the infinitival *ha* is not optional in these constructions is also wrong. There is much variation between speakers as to where and to what degree they accept omission of infinitival *ha*. It generally holds, though, that *ha*-omission is not possible when the argument that moves out of the participial clause is the external argument of the participial verb. When the argument that moves out of the participial clause is the internal argument of the participial verb, *ha*-omission is acceptable to varying degrees. This contrast can be seen by comparing (5) to (6) and (7) to (8).

The explanation that I will propose for this is based on Frampton & Gutmann (2000), who replace feature checking/valuation by feature sharing. My proposal is that *ha* is obligatory in (5) and (7) because in these constructions, *ha* has a set of phi- and delta-features which is not present in any other visible element. Hence, the only way to make these features visible is to spell out *ha*. But in (6) and (8), the phi- and delta-features of *ha* are shared by the participle. For many speakers, it is thus OK to leave out *ha* in (6) and (8). For others, *ha*-omission is a marked option here although it is better than in (5) and (7). It appears that for these speakers, there is a requirement that the Tdef of the clause headed by *ha* must be identified. In ECM, the exceptionally case-marked argument can sometimes identify Tdef, which indicates that Tdef has an EPP feature (contra Chomsky 1999).
In addition, I will show how other factors, such as restructuring, in the sense of Cinque (2000), also contribute to the variation we find among speakers of Swedish with respect to omission of infinitival *ha*.

Examples

(1) Han *(har) sett henne.
   he has seen her

(2) Han skulle *(ha) sett henne.
   he should have seen her

(3) Han ska *(ha) sett henne.
   he shall have seen her

(4) … att han *(har) sett henne.
   that he has seen her

(5) Hon verkar *(ha) läst lite lingvistik.
   she seems to have read some linguistics

(6) Dom verkar *(ha) kommit för sent.
    they seem to have come too late

(7) Vi anser honom *(ha) dödat hunden.
    we consider him to have killed the dog

(8) Vi anser honom *(ha) kommit för sent.
    we consider him to have come too late

References


