Ill-mannered adverbs of manner? The case of Jakaltek and Mam.

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Among the hierarchy of adverbs/adverbials, adverbs of manner are usually considered to be rather low-ranked, being base-generated in projections close to the verb they modify and in the scope of high-level adverbs such as sentence adverbs (e.g. Jackendoff 1972, Cinque 1999). Moreover, adverbs are generally optional; therefore, one expects them to surface in adjoined positions, not instantiating syntactic structures of complementation with respect to the modified predicate.

In at least some Mayan languages, adverbs of manner show a striking behavior: They seem to function as main predicates, embedding the modified predicate and the latter's arguments. That semantic notions that are usually expressed by adverbs of manner may be realized by verbal predicates has been reported for some Formosan languages (see Starosta 1988, Chang 2006, Holmer 2006). Whereas the relevant items in Formosan languages show a clear verbal behavior – according to the admissible verbal markings (voice marking, tense, mood, agreement) – the relevant items in Mayan languages do not take verbal markings; they seem to be adjectival or nominal predicates. Moreover, whereas some Mayan adverbs are restricted to the structure I will discuss below, other adverbs can surface in different structures, showing more adverb-like behavior; the respective Formosan verbs do not seem to have alternative options. This is a crucial aspect to be kept in mind in the discussion of the interaction of low-level and high-level adverbs.

For the sake of brevity I will discuss only two Mayan languages: Jakaltek and Mam. The cross-Mayan spectrum of the structure under discussion is definitely not exhausted by these two languages (see Yasugi 2005 for a different morphological strategy in Classical Yucatec). Let me begin with Jakaltek, a member of the Western Q'anjob'alan branch of Mayan. Being a verb-initial language, Jakaltek adverbs of time and location (as well as other obliques) usually appear in sentence-final position, following the arguments of the verb:

(1) Jakaltek: sentence-final adverbs (Grinevald Craig 1977:328)

  x-'apni   naj   pel   (yet)   **ewi**
  COMPL-arrived NCL   Peter when   yesterday
  'Peter arrived there yesterday'

Adverbs of manner, however, generally surface in sentence-initial position, which, being in this case also the closest preverbal position, could be equated with the focus position.[1] In addition, the main predicate and its arguments are realized in a complementizerless embedded clause: the embedded predicate obligatorily lacks aspectual marking and shows the deviant ergative agreement (E-linker) pattern for the single argument of an intransitive verb, as shown in (2a).

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1 Some but not all manner adverbs may surface in sentence-final position; in this case, there is no auxiliary and the adverb is marked by a derivational suffix or an oblique marker (i.e. a relational noun). Compare the following sentence, in which the adjective receives an oblique marker, with (3):

  (i) xc-in   caŋalwi **y-iŋ**   **c'ul**
       COMPL-1SG.N   dance   3SG.E-in   good
       'I danced well' [Grinevald Craig 1977:340]

  Grinevald Craig argues that the simpler form (without embedding) is derived from the more complex form involving embedding. The adverbs must appear in sentence-final position if the main verb is embedded under another predicate (e.g. a control verb); stacking of these embedded structures seems to be avoided. Adverbs that are confined to the preverbal position require other structures if the predicate they modify is embedded under a control verb.

(2) Jakaltek (Grinevald Craig 1977:329)

    a. **beh** x-u [cu to j-atut]

        direct COMPL-AUX 1PL.E go 1PL.E-home

        'we went home directly'

    b. **c'ul** x-u [s-tz'isni ix kap camiše]

        good COMPL-AUX 3SG.E-sew NCL NCL shirt

        'she sewed the shirt well'

Like the other Mayan languages, Jakaltek's argument linking is based on an ergative-based agreement system; there is no structural morphological case. The E-linker indexes the highest argument of a polyadic verb, whereas the N-linker (absolutive/nominative) – usually non-overt for 3SG - indexes the lower argument of polyadic verbs and the single argument of an intransitive verb. The E-linker is also used as a possessor linker in nouns. The linking pattern in the dependent clause is one of the puzzles of the construction.[2]

    In Jakaltek, the adverb does not exhibit a distinct adverbial form. According to Grinevald Craig, it is 'adverbialized' by means of the auxiliary –*u*, which can be considered a verbal predicate due to its aspectual marking.[3] Since in the Jakaltenango dialect described by Grinevald Craig no linker surfaces on the auxiliary because of morphophonological constraints, the agreement pattern is not obvious. However, data from the Concepción variety reveal that the auxiliary invariantly takes a third person singular E-linker, thus being an impersonal verb form. Due to the lack of an overt exponent for 3SG.N the verb form could be transitive. The linker-argument assignments cannot be determined. In any case, it is not clear why ergative agreement is triggered on the auxiliary since it is not embedded itself.

(3) Jakaltek (Concepción): E-linker on the auxiliary (Grinevald Craig 1977:334)

    c'ul ma-**y**-u [ha-caŋalwi]

    good COMPL-3SG.E-do 2SG.E-dance

    'you danced well'

Unlike the manner adverb, an adjective that predicates of a proposition does not need an auxiliary, as shown in (4a); like in the case of manner adverbs, the proposition is realized within an embedded clause:

(4) Jakaltek: adjectival vs. adverbial predicates (Grinevald Craig 1977:335f.)

    a. c'ul [cu cuyni abxubal]

        good 1PL.E learn Jakaltek

        'it is good that we learn Jakaltek'

    b. c'ul [ch-u cu cuyni abxubal]

        good INCOMPL-AUX 1PL.E learn Jakaltek

        'we are learning Jakaltek well'

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2   For the sake of brevity I don't want to discuss the linking patterns more thoroughly. Note that the linking patterns in Mam and Jakaltek differ in the dependent forms: In Mam, quite unexpectedly, the E-linker is doubled:

(i)   Linking patterns in Mam and Jakaltek

		intransitive		transitive		
		λx	$V(x)$	λy	λx	$V(x,y)$
a.	regular	N		N	E	
b.	dependent					
	Mam	E		E	E	
	Jakaltek	E		N	E	

3   This auxiliary shows a particular behavior: It appears in second position and obligatorily bears an aspectual marker. Usually, only verb-initial predicates show an aspectual marker. The auxiliary may be dropped sometimes, especially in the incompletive aspect.

In Mam, a language of the Eastern Mamean branch, the class of adverbs that embed modified predicates is somewhat more heterogeneous; it encompasses various classes of focused adverbials. Here, the sentence-initial position more obviously corresponds to the preverbal focus position. One class that triggers the dependent verb form is the class of 'affect words', most of which are related to positional or transitive verb roots. These words (e.g. *niʔm* 'umph', *jaq* 'bang') 'describe the sound or movement characteristic of an action at its moment of inception' (England 1983:233).

(5)   Mam: focused 'affect words' (England 1983:269)
        txaʔq'   [t-eel   tanaq   squk'   t-uj   t-k'uʔj]
        crunch!   3SG.E-go.out   DEM   louse   3SG.E-RN   3SG.E-stomach
        'crunch! went the louse in its stomach'

Whereas 'affect words' are restricted to the preverbal position, thus lacking an overt focus-non-focus contrast, affect verbs/adjectives, i.e. derived verbs of motion and derived adjectival positionals, may occur in focus position as well as in non-focus positions. These verbs/adjectives are derived by various affixes (e.g. *qit-* 'untied' → *qit-an* 'the action of coming loose', *tzutz'-l* 'seated'). Note that the derivational suffix *–l* in (6b), deriving positional adjectives, puts focus on the positional information provided by the base; these forms are thus inherently focused.

(6)   Mam: focused affect verbs (England 1983:269)
        a.   pal-alaan   [t-iky'   nimaal   ich']
              lying.down-AFFV   3SG.E-pass.by   DEM   rat
              'floating, the big rat went by'
        b.   chik'-l   [t-kub'   waaʔj   t-uj   qeʔn]
              uncovered.face.up-POS.ADJ   3SG.E-go.down   tortilla 3SG.E-RN   tortilla.holder
              'uncovered, the tortillas are in the holder'

Further instances for this type of embedded construction are found with clauses introduced by particles such as *aj* 'when (non-potential)', *ok* 'when (potential)', *ela* 'when' and *kwanto* 'when', adverbials like *b'aaka* 'little by little', *naʔx* 'still not', *qit* 'at times', purpose and result clauses, and focused generic qualifiers. The latter select a very specific structure: the embedded verb must be passivized; its external argument cannot be realized:[4]

(7)   Mam: focused generic qualifier (England 1983:272)
        nach   [t-k'aa-njtz   aʔ]
        bad   3SG.E-drink-PASS   water
        'it's bad to drink water'

It is far from clear whether all these particular instances of embedded clauses should be related to one trigger. Furthermore, it is not clear so far whether the auxiliary strategy of Jakaltek is an innovation, or whether Mam has lost the auxiliary.

These 'adverbial focus structures' pose two major challenges: Why does the focusing of these adverbs (or their inherent preference for the preverbal position) require embedding of the modified predicate and its arguments? Why does the structure instantiate a linking split, i.e. an ergative pattern with intransitive predicates?

Regarding the first question one has to consider that the focusing of most adverbials and some arguments (including the questioning of the respective arguments/adjuncts) requires additional verbal morphology in Mayan languages. In many Mayan languages, only argument focus with intransitive subjects and direct

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4   Note that agent arguments bound by passive are still accessible as controllees, as evidenced by clear control
    structures.

objects is unmarked. In these languages the focusing of transitive subjects requires the use of the 'agent focus' marker (see Stiebels in press for an overview). Likewise, focusing of instrumentals and other obliques requires the presence of a verbal marker, which in some languages functions as an instrumental applicative and in some languages as a mere extraction marker, which in addition ousts the former object or subject without acquiring all object or subject properties, respectively (Jakaltek: ousting of the former subject; Craig 1978). However, in these cases the main predicate is not subordinated by the focused instrumental. The generation of a clausal complement structure is thus the particular feature of certain adverbials that are focused or are restricted to the preverbal position. If there is/was a ban of direct focusing of adverbials in Mayan, why then do adverbs of manner not instantiate the applicative or extraction marker strategy of instrumentals and other obliques? Is this due to referential differences between instrumentals (denoting entities) and adverbs (denoting properties)?

Structurally one may ask whether all preverbal adverbials have the categorial potential to select a clausal complement. In Jakaltek the auxiliary –*u* seems to mediate that function. In Mam, however, the class of adverbials that trigger subordination is far more heterogeneous; their categorial origin seems to be verbal/positional in many cases, but not in all. However, these adverbials do not show any verbal TMA-marking. Besides that, there is no mediating auxiliary. I think it is plausible that the Jakaltek auxiliary, as the most verb-like element, is the subordinator that turned the main predicate into an embedded predicate; maybe Mam used an auxiliary, which was lost at some stage.

Why is it these adverbials that project semantic modification of verbs as syntactic complementation? In the Formosan language Kavalan, manner adverbs and some adverbs of frequency and duration surface as verbs; epistemic adverbs, being sentence adverbs, scope over 'manner verbs' due to their structural position. Chang (2006) analyzes these constructions as serial verb constructions. Manner adverbs show the strongest interaction with the verbal meaning; in some languages, their semantic contribution may be conflated with the verbal meaning into a single lexical item. Therefore, these adverbs may be the first to enter a serial verb construction or a structure of clausal embedding.

The main issue of this construction concerns the fact that low-level adverbials turn into 'high predicators', thus possibly enforcing further compensation strategies by high-level adverbs (e.g. sentence adverbs), which usually scope over low-level adverbs. Unfortunately, the linguistic descriptions of Mam and Jakaltek do not reveal anything about the complex interaction of adverbs/ adverbials. Note that the respective Formosan 'adverbs' invariantly surface as verbs; high-level adverbials thus can modify these verbs, they don't have to compensate for the 'promotion' of a low-level adverb. With the Mayan adverbs that may show up in preverbal as well as postverbal position, the preverbal use, embedding the main predicate and it's arguments, preservation of scopal relations may enforce some 'repair strategy' for high-level adverbs. However, the hierarchical order of Mayan adverbs and the interaction of these focused adverbials with other adverbials definitely needs further elaboration. A further point to be clarified is the distribution of adverbs concerning those that are bound to the preverbal position (e.g. *beh* 'direct' in Jakaltek, Grinevald Craig 1977:354), those that are excluded from the preverbal position (e.g. *nan c'ulal* 'slow' in Jakaltek), and those that may occur in preverbal as well as postverbal/sentence-final position.

Abbreviations

AFFV	affect verb	INCOMPL	incompletive aspect
AUX	auxiliary	NCL	nominal classifier
COMPL	completive aspect	PASS	passive
DEM	demonstrative	PL	plural
DIR	directional	POS.ADJ	positional adjective
E	ergative agreement	RN	relational noun

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