ARE (ALL) ADVERBIAL CLAUSES ADJUNCTS?

Adverbial clauses come in two varieties: those that are inserted in the extended IP area and those that are peripheral in the sense of Haegeman (2012). The aim of this talk is to argue that the first type must be analyzed as free relatives for principled reasons, while the second type results from unprobed Merge. Their islandhood, we argue, is not a unitary phenomenon. Other properties, including Principle C facts, follow from this difference.

1. When adverbial clauses are not adjuncts

Temporal, locative, manner and conditional clauses have been argued to be free relatives (Bhatt & Pancheva 2006 a.o.), as suggested by the fact that crosslinguistically they are typically introduced by wh-words (*when*, *where*; *how* and the counterpart of *if*). The status of reason clauses is less clear since they appear not to involve a wh-word or a variable, but we will try to reduce them to temporal clauses.
In Cecchetto and Donati (2015) adverbial free relatives are derived through a relabeling movement of the wh-word, much like what happens with the argument free relative in (1): in a nutshell, words retain their projection power both in External Merge and in Internal Merge (movement). Thus a wh-word can project its categorical feature D or P after reaching in its landing site. This is why when-clauses, where-clauses, how-clauses, are ambiguous (2-5), depending on whether the wh-element or the C probe projects. This parallels what happens with 'what he cooked' in (1) which can either be an embedded wh-question (label CP) or a free relative (label DP).

(1) a. I wonder [$_{CP}$ what he cooked]
    b. I eat [$_{DP}$ what he cooked]
(2) a. I wonder how she feels
    b. I feel how she feels
(3) a. I wonder where he will tell me to go
    b. I will go where you will tell me to go
(4) a. I wonder when you will leave
    b. I will leave when you will leave
(5) a. I wonder if he will leave
    b. I will leave if you will leave

But why should adverbial clauses be free relatives? Suppose Cinque (1999) is right and there is a fixed cartography of specifier positions hosting adverbial phrases that match specialized heads. CPs are not adverbial *per se*, namely they do not have the proper categorial feature to fit into specialized adverbial positions. We propose that relativization is the mechanism by which a CP can change its label, due to the relabeling movement just described. In argument free relatives, such as (1b), a clause becomes a DP argument satisfying a selector such as, say, a higher verb. In adverbial free relatives, such as (2b 3b, 4b and 5b), the clause gets the same label as the corresponding adverbs. This analysis does not treat adverbial clauses as adjuncts, as they are tied to specific positions. Why are they islands, then?

2. Islandhood due to relabeling

The islandhood of free relatives depends on labeling: the same wh-construction behaves as a weak island when it is a question but as a strong island when it is a relative (cf. (Rizzi 1982). This holds both for argument free relatives (6) and for adverbial ones (7).

(6)   ? To which address did you wonder what John sent ~~to which address~~?
        *To which address did you destroy what John sent ~~to which address~~?
(7)   ? Who do you wonder when she meets ~~who~~?
        *Who do you sweat when she meets ~~who~~?

We will argue that whatever explains the strong islandhood of argument (free) relatives explains the strong islandhood of adverbial relative clauses. We will detail a specific proposal by which relabeling is incompatible with successive cyclicity (see Cecchetto and Donati 2015). To reiterate: islandhood is not due to adverbial clauses being adjuncts, since they are not.

3. When adverbial clauses are adjuncts

However there are adverbial clauses that cannot be analyzed as free relatives. These are peripheral adverbial clauses (Haegeman 2012). We will claim that these are genuine adjuncts. Adjunction can be defined as unprobed Merge, given that by definition no selection is involved. When no probing is involved, Merge is a pure symmetric operation and no label can be determined for the resulting syntactic object (see Cecchetto and Donati 2015 for a detailed discussion of probing and labeling). Therefore adjuncts adverbial clauses are unlabeled objects. We will argue that unlabeled objects are invisible to the syntax, and can thus only appear at the root, when no further derivation is needed. This simple assumption explains both the internal properties of peripheral adverbial clauses and a neglected binding fact.

As for their internal structure, since they are attached to the matrix clause via unprobed Merge, they can be CP (their label does not need to be changed by the relabeling movement of the wh-word). Thus we predict that they will not contain any A'-dependency. This has been shown independently by Haegeman 2010, based on the availability of argument fronting.

The root attachment of peripheral adverbials explains the following contrast concerning Principle C.

(8) a. He$_i$ stayed at home, if John$_i$'s car is in the backyard
     b. *He$_i$ stayed at home if John$_i$'s car needed to be fixed

In (8a) the if-clause must be read with the typical intonation of a peripheral adverbial clause which sets the background for the matrix clause. Under this reading, the pronoun *he* can be coreferential with *John*. We can explain this surprising violation of Principle C: the if-clause, being unprobed, must be attached at the root, thus higher than the matrix subject. (8b), where the if-clause expresses the condition under which the matrix clause is true or false, involves a Condition C violation since the if-clause is attached in a dedicated position in the IP layer, hence lower than the matrix subject.

4. Islandhood due to unprobed Merge

If peripheral adverbial clauses must be merged as high as the root because they are unlabeled, also their islandhood is easily explained: any instance of movement from them, such as (9b), would be an instance of lowering movement.

(9) a. He hates his situation, if you want to know the truth.
    b. *What does he hates his situation, if you want to know ~~what~~?

References
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