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Workshop on

Discourse coherence and clausal complementation: Diachronic pathways and diagnostic problems

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Until now, research on the pragmatics-syntax interface of discourse, on the one hand, and on clausal complementation, on the other, have been developing rather independently. This workshop aims at bringing these two strands together, with a focus on delimitation problems between asyndetic complementation, quotation and parenthetical comment clauses as well as their diachronic relations.

Clausal complementation consists in “biclausal syntactic constructions in which the predicate of one clause ‘entails reference to another proposition or state of affairs’ (Cristofaro 2003: 95), expressed in a second clause” (Schmidtke-Bode 2014: 7). In turn, discourse coherence arises from continuing parts of meaning across clauses. This implies that meaning components overlap, or are compatible (cf. Das/Taboada 2018, Haselow/Hancil 2021), regardless of how clauses connect: by mere juxtaposition (1a), by a connective explicitly naming the relation (*because* in 1b) or by one marking a subsequent clause as complement (*that* in 1c).

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|------|-------------------------|--|
| (1a) | | <i>They forgot his coffee.</i> |
| (1b) | <i>Peter was upset.</i> | <i>because they forgot his coffee.</i> |
| (1c) | | <i>that they forgot his coffee.</i> |

Consequently, clausal complementation represents just a specific case of coherence between adjacent clauses: the complement clause supplies ‘content’ which complies, or is compatible, with the semantic potential of a complement-taking predicate (CTP). The latter may be represented by verbs, nouns, adjectives or other parts of speech, while the content may represent states of affairs or propositions.

It seems natural to posit diachronic links between looser types of discourse-coherence and clausal complementation, and a synchronic gradient between them. A wealth of publications has addressed the “loose end” of discourse coherence, e.g. the emergence of parenthetical predicates (e.g., Thompson/Mulac 1991, Vazquez Rozas 2006, Brinton 2008, Heine 2013, Heine et al. 2021), but also the development of complementation from ‘complementation strategies’ (Dixon 2006; e.g., Arsenijević 2009, Schmidtke-Bode 2009: 157-165, Sonnenhauser 2015, Meyer 2017, Grković-Major 2021) and the relation between parentheticals and complementation (e.g., Schneider 2007: 177–184, Boye/Harder 2021, Mazzola 2022: 61-65). Yet, the diachronic conditions and processes leading from discourse coherence strategies to complementation (or *vice versa*) are still poorly understood. Moreover, proposed diagnostics

often do not lead to clear decisions. For instance, the criterion of relative discourse prominence (Boye/Harder 2021) often cannot discriminate cases like (1a) or (2): if the first clause is discourse secondary, it may be a parenthetical comment or a matrix clause plus asyndetic complement.

(2) [I think]_{clause1} [you are wrong]_{clause2}.

Furthermore, we encounter competing views concerning the pathways along which clausal complementation may arise. Consider, in particular, the expansion and integration pathways in Heine/Kuteva (2007: 216–251):

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|-----|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| (3) | a. Clause [NP] | → Clause 1 [Clause 2] | Expansion |
| | b. Clause 1 + Clause 2 | → Clause 1 [Clause 2] | Integration |

Expansion corresponds to analogy and integration to reanalysis in Harris/Campbell (1995). The integration pathway has dominated analyses of complementation between balanced clauses (in Stassen’s 1985 sense) in European languages (e.g., Jespersen 1914, Rissanen 1991), yet evidence beyond Europe is weak, whether framed as hypotaxis-to-embedding (Hopper & Traugott 2003) or as complementation pathway (Long & Deng 2023). Apart from Heine/Kuteva (2007: 216–224) and Givón (2009: 8f.), the expansion pathway is rarely treated. Moreover, the complementation relation between a CTP and an adjacent clause may target only the latter’s illocution (cf. Long/Deng 2023 on Chinese), so that delimitation from quotation becomes difficult.

As for diagnostics, serious problems arise with potential complementizers. As flags of clausal arguments, complementizers are, again, compatible, or overlap, with a meaning component entailed by a CTP. This insight has, in practice, been acknowledged since Frajzyngier/Jasperson (1991), Frajzyngier (1995) and Boye/Kehayov (2016), Long et al. (2021). Yet, debates remain as for the “expression format” of complementizers (word, clitic, affix; clause-initial vs clause-final, etc.; cf. Wiemer 2021; 2023a), and methodological desiderata become particularly apparent with clause-initial units, as in (4-5).

Clause 2 in (4) opens with a unit marking directive or optative illocutionary force (glossed DIR), and clause-initial position typifies complementizers in European languages. This allows for three alternative structural interpretations: (i) *niech* serves as complementizer to flag Clause 2 as an argument of the CTP (underlined) in Clause 1; (ii) since *niech* can appear in self-standing utterances (as directive-optative auxiliary or ‘particle’) we could treat (4) as juxtaposition or (iii) as asyndetic complementation (compare with (1b) and (2)). None of these analyses affects the function of these units as markers of directive-optative illocutions (associated with states of affairs); under any interpretation, the clause pair creates a coherent piece of discourse, with the illocution of Clause 2 fulfilling the semantic requirement of Clause 1 (Mendoza et al. 2024). Analogous issues arise with clause-initial markers of interrogative or apprehensional illocutions and with clause-initial modifiers related to epistemic support and/or reportive evidentiality (see 5), which imply propositions (Wiemer 2023a; 2023b).

	Clause 1	Clause 2
Polish (4)	<i>Powiedz mu,</i> say[PFV]-(IMP.SG) 3SG.M.DAT 'Tell him, may he come to the cantor tomorrow.' (PNC)	<i>niech jutro przyjdzie</i> DIR tomorrow come[PFV]-NPST.3SG <i>do kantor-u.</i> to cantor-GEN (PNC)
Ukrainian (5)	<i>sportsmen-y zajavlja-jut'</i> athlete-NOM.PL claim[IPFV]- PRS.3PL 'the athletes <u>claim</u> that it became known only yesterday.' (UkTenTen; Teptiuk & Wiemer, forthcoming)	<i>niby til'ky včora pro c-e</i> REP only yesterday about this-ACC.SG <i>sta-l-o vidom-o.</i> become[PFV]-PST-N.SG known-N.SG (UkTenTen; Teptiuk & Wiemer, forthcoming)

After all, other cues lacking, structures as in (2) or (4-5) are systematically indeterminate, as they oscillate between two or more interpretations (cf. Mendoza & Sonnenhauser 2023).

Therefore, how can entailment relations between clauses be established empirically, especially for earlier diachronic stages and spoken data? Such problems extend to numerous discourse patterns that create grey zones between asyndetic complementation (Mazzola 2022), parenthetical comments (Schneider 2007, 2018) and quotation (Miglio 2010). Criteria of distinguishing these three phenomena have been formulated, e.g., by Serdobol'skaja (2016; 2018), Letučij (2021: 225-227), Long et al. (2022), Long & Deng (2023). However, the criteria only apply to relatively few contexts, so that problems of dealing with pervasive indeterminacy persist.

Research questions

Talks are to focus on at least one of the aforementioned topics by concentrating on the relation between parameters of discourse coherence and the establishment of clausal complementation in contrast to parenthetical comment clauses and/or quotation. The following questions are of special interest:

- What are the diachronic relations between complementation, parenthetical comment clauses and quotation? Are criteria of tightness, or subordination (whatever they are), indicative of the diachronic relations between these structures?
- Which mechanisms and pathways adequately capture the rise of clausal complementation? Which particular steps do they consist of?

A second focus addresses methodological issues:

- Which criteria can be employed as reliable diagnostics of clausal complementation vis-à-vis parenthetical comment clauses and/or quotation?
- How can we distinguish complementizers and other clausal connectives from "free" illocution markers?
- How do we deal with cases in which no decision on the morphosyntactic status of an illocution marker in a possible complementation relation can be established?
- Correspondingly, how do we deal with discourse tokens that do not allow for a distinction between complementation, parenthetical comments and/or quotation? That is, in which way does our theory and analysis account for indeterminate structures in the empirical analysis of data?

After all,

- do all these issues depend on the grammatical architecture of particular languages (at least partially)?

Especially welcome are case studies based on diachronic corpora, spoken language and/or material from understudied and/or non-European language varieties, but also crosslinguistic comparisons with a clear spell-out of the analytical and theoretical underpinnings.

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