

## The syntactic behaviour of event-external adverbial PPs in German

The positional behaviour of adverbials in German is topic of a vivid debate. Mixed approaches like Frey and Pittner (1998), Frey (2003), and Maienborn (2001) assume specific base positions for semantically motivated classes of adverbials in relation to the hierarchically ordered argument slots. This talk focuses event-external adverbials, relating to the event-variable and thus modifying a fully specified event. Typically, temporals (TEMP), locatives (LOC) and causals (CAUS) are classified as external.

Within this class of approaches, a variety of divergencies on class assignment and assumed base positions can be found. While Frey and Pittner (1998) and Maienborn classify temporals and locatives as event-external, Frey (2003) untenably assumes event-internality for these types. This aspect is closely related to the controversy on base positions: While Frey & Pittner (1998) assume a uniform base position for external adverbials above the subject in transitive clauses, Maienborn specifies type-specific base positions (TEMP > SUBJ > LOC). Frey assumes a base position above the subject for types he classifies as external (e.g., CAUS). But as his assumption of internality is questionable, his account implies type-specific base positions above and below the subject – diverging from Maienborn (CAUS > SUBJ > TEMP/LOC).

Furthermore, approaches to adverbial syntax limit their investigations to the most-discussed types, ignoring potentially problematic types. Modal adverbials form a rather heterogeneous class (Kiss et al. <sup>2</sup>2016). They are typically assumed to be located deeper in structure (Frey & Pittner 1998) and are classified as process-related (manners) or as event-internal adverbials (instrumentals). Also, concomitant circumstances (CC) fall into the semantic class of modal adverbials, but their contribution is quite exceptional. They are defined as external circumstances (independent events) accompanying a fully specified event, thus clearly falling into the class of external modifiers.

Picking out TEMP and CC, we present empirical evidence from a Forced Choice study on event-external adverbial PPs (n=80). Drawing on the syntactic rigidity of *wh*-indefinites in existential interpretation (Haider 2010), we have studied the order preferences of the PPs relative to the arguments in transitive clauses. The results indicate that both types seem to prefer a position below the subject, although we find type-specific differences. With respect to the object, we find type-specific preferences. While TEMP prefers a syntactic base position above the object, CC prefers a base position below it, thus contradicting a) the general consensus on a relatively high base position for external modifiers, and b) the assumption of a class-specific base position. Although this effect was not confirmed in an accompanying acceptability judgment study (5 pt. LS, n=35) on the order preferences of our two types in relation to a syntactically fixed object, the distribution of the respective modes are indicative. Test items were consistently rated as acceptable, which is not expected for OBJ>PP in the discussed accounts.

In the Forced Choice study, we additionally investigated the influence of the test surround, in comparing *wh*-indefinites vs. indefinite NPs in argument function. Changing from *wh*-indefinites to indefinite NPs turned out to be significant with respect to subjects, but not to objects.

We discuss the (partly conflicting) results as well as the theoretical implications.

References:

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