On the Diachrony of Adverbial Clauses in Germanic and Beyond
A Typological Perspective

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In this talk, we will examine the diachrony of adverbial clauses in typologically (un)related languages and illustrate that the so called obligatory prefield occupation in verb second languages cannot be taken as an integration property between the matrix and the adverbial clause. We argue that the structural merge position of an adverbial clause with respect to the matrix verb plays no role in whether or not it is integrated into the matrix clause.

Our point of departure are Germanic languages: (i) OV-languages (German, Dutch) (ii) VO-languages (English), and (iii) languages with both OV- and VO-properties (Yiddish, Middle English, Old/Middle High German). In [1], a Modern German example, the temporal clause headed by the conjunction *als* 'when' merges in the front of the matrix predicate *finden* 'find':

[1] $[_{CP}$ $[_{CP}$ $[_{C}^{0}$ *Als]* *er* *1998* *nach* *Nürnberg* *kam]*,
         when he 1998 to Nuremberg come.3SG.PST

   $[_{C}^{0}$ *fand]* *er* *in* *diesem* *Job* *jedoch* *nichts]*.
   find.3SG.PST he in this job though NEG

'When he came to Nürnberg in 1998, there was nothing to begin with.'
(DeReKo, *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, 5/1/2012)

As Modern German is a verb second language, no material between the temporal clause and the matrix verb may intervene:

[1'] *$[_{CP}$ $[_{CP}$ $[_{C}^{0}$ *Als]* *er nach Nürnberg kam,* $[_{XP}$ *er]* $[_{C}^{0}$ *fand]* *in diesem Job jedoch nichts]*.

However, the structures resembling the pattern given in [1'] can be attested in Old/Middle High German, cf. [2]:

[2] $[_{CP}$ $[_{CP}$ $[_{C}^{0}$ *dô]* *her* *in* *die* *cappellin* *quam]*,
         when he in the chapel come.3SG.PST

   $[_{XP}$ *he]* $[_{C}^{0}$ *ted]* *rechte* *als* *ein* *wîser* *man]*
   he do.3SG.PST quite like a wise man

   die *tore* *her* *innen* *beslôz*   (T_{MHG} 27, 4127)
   the doors he inside shut.3SG.PST

'When he came into the chapel, he acted like a wise man shutting the doors from the inside.'

Interestingly enough, as [3] - an Early New High German paraphrase of [2] - indicates, such structures fell into disuse in the 16th/17th century. We attribute this change to the increasing stabilization of an OV grammar in the history of German:

[3] [$_{CP}$ [$_{CP}$ [$_{C}^{0}$ *Als*]   *her   Tristant   in   die   cappellen   kam*]
              when   he   Tristant   in   the   chapel   come.3SG.PST

   [$_{C}^{0}$ *schloß*]   *er   die   thür   gar   wol   zu:o*]   (T$_{ENHG}$ 8, 2212)
    shut.3SG.PST   he   the   door   very   well   off

   'When he, Tristan, came into the chapel, he shut the door properly.'

Accordingly, we claim that the temporal clauses occupying the prefield position in [1], [2] and [3] are integrated into the matrix clause at the same level and that the intervening pronoun *he* 'he' in [2] has no impact on the relationship between the adverbial clause and the matrix clause.

Mainly, we will focus on episodic temporal clauses (cf. Hinterwimmer 2008) and canonical conditional clauses (cf. Bhatt & Pancheva 2006), demonstrating that although the core grammars of all three language-types differ, adverbial clauses can be divided into two main groups. Following Haegeman (2003, 2006, 2010), we argue that episodic temporal clauses are central adverbial clauses that are always integrated into the matrix clause, while canonical conditional clauses should be analyzed as peripheral adverbials merging as non-integrated clauses. Main arguments for our analysis come from (i) the history of English and Icelandic that turned into VO-languages (cf. Trips 2001, Hróarsdóttir 2000), (ii) Yiddish having both OV- and VO-properties, and (iii) typologically unrelated languages exhibiting no verb second in root clauses.

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