**Salience and (not-)at-issue status of subordinate clauses**

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**Not-at-issue content**

Simons et al. (2011):

\( P \) is at issue iff it contributes to the current QUD

properties of not-at-issue content

projection, non-rejectability, ...

assent/dissent test

A: Juan lives in Maria’s house.
B: No, that’s not true. / Yes, that’s true.

\( \sim \) Juan does (not) live in Maria’s house.
\( \land \) Maria does (not) have a house.

e.g. Tonhauser (2012)

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**At-issueness as salience**

Question 1

Isn’t this just recency?

Where does recency belong?

Recency is a salience factor in discourse processing: Material from the last processed sentence/clause is most salient and is most accessible for certain kinds of anaphoric reference.

Question 2

If this is just recency, what kind of consequences does this have for our understanding of (not)-at-issue status?

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**Appositive relative clauses (ARC)**

Anderbois et al. (2011), Syrett & Koev (2015):

sentence-medial ARC

A: Chloe, who decided to dress in a classical ballet style, has been chosen to audition for the ‘All Stars’ Dance Company.
B: ??No, she didn’t.

sentence-final ARC

A: ‘All Stars’ chose to audition Chloe, who decided to dress in a classical ballet style.
B: No, she didn’t.
Recency vs. subordination in discourse

Right Frontier Constraint
Polanyi (1988)

Only the last processed discourse node and the nodes that it is subordinated to are open for attachment of new discourse material.

Subordinating coherence relations:
Elaboration, Explanation, Background: lead to hierarchical structures and discourse embedding, and do not “push the discourse forward”

Coordinating coherence relations:
Contrast, Parallel, Narration: the discourse units are on a par and the discourse progresses in a normal left-to-right fashion

The Ms bought a country house.
What happened at \( t_1 \)?

The prices started to rise.
Why?
Narration

They rented it out.

Why?
Explanation

ARCs in discourse structure

appositive relative clauses...

- constitute independent discourse units  
  Koev 2013
- participate in discourse relations  
  Schlenker 2013
- address their own QUDs  
  Mann & Thompson 1988
- (normally, but not always) are connected to the main clause by a subordinating coherence relation  
  Loock 2007

Jasinskaja (2015, in revision) *Not at issue any more.*

http://dslc.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/20864.html


ARC as *Elaboration*  
sentence-final

'All Stars' has chosen to audition Chloe, who you met in the gym yesterday.

ARC as *Elaboration*  
sentence-medial

Chloe, who you met in the gym yesterday, has been chosen to audition for 'All Stars'.

At-issueness as a dynamic notion

Simons et al. (2011):

P is at issue iff it contributes to the current question under discussion (the QUD on top of the stack)

Sentence-medial ARC:

What happened?  
Who is Chloe?  
Who has been chosen to audition for 'All Stars'.

Chloe  
who you met in the gym yesterday  
not at issue any more
At-issueness as a dynamic notion

Simons et al. (2011):

\[ P \text{ is at issue iff it contributes to the current question under discussion (the QUD on top of the stack) } \]

Sentence-final ARC:

- Who is Chloe?
- What happened?

- 'All Stars' has chosen to audition Chloe
- who you met in the gym yesterday
- not at issue any more

Some consequences

1. at-issue status of one and the same piece of content can change in time
2. the coherence relation between the main clause and the ARC (subordinating vs. coordinating) affects the at-issue status/relative salience of the ARC vs. the main clause


3. direct rejections are just like other strongly anaphoric devices
4. ARCs are just like other subordinate clauses

Salience and anaphoricity

The assent/dissent test only works with forms of so called direct acceptance/rejection Farkas & Bruce 2010

- yes
- no
- maybe
- also
- she did
- she didn’t
- that’s (not) true

Salience and anaphoricity

pronomes pick out the most salient antecedent, definite DPs need not

a. The Millers bought a house in the country.

b. The prices for country houses started to rise again.

c. They rented it out.  

Then #they / the prices rose even more.

light, less explicit forms ∼ require salient antecedents

heavy, more explicit forms ∼ less dependent on salience

Gundel, Hedberg & Zacharski 1993
Salience and anaphoricity

direct rejections require a salient antecedent, “indirect” rejections do not

A. Chloe, who decided to dress in a classical ballet style, has been chosen to audition for the ‘All Stars’ Dance Company.
B. a. ??No, she didn’t.
   b. (HWAM) Chloe didn’t dress in a classical ballet style!

direct rejections are composed of light, less explicit anaphoric forms:
- response particle no Krifka 2013
- VP ellipsis in she didn’t Frazier & Clifton 2005
- demonstrative pronoun that in that’s not true

Salience and anaphoricity

Main clause preference

Frazier & Clifton 2005 VP ellipsis
Mary laughed after she made a joke about the supervisor.
Then Tina did too.
~~ Tina laughed
~~ Tina made a joke

Cooreman & Sanford 1996 pronoun resolution
The conductor sneezed three times after the tenor opened his music score.
He... the conductor ~ 92.9%
Main clause preference

Rejection of main vs. adverbial clause

A: Mary laughed after she made a joke about the supervisor.
B: No, she didn’t.

⇝ Mary didn’t laugh ✓
⇝ Mary didn’t make a joke ??

Clause order

The same pattern as with ARCs:

sentence-initial because-clause

A: Because Chloe danced perfectly, she won the competition.
B: No, she didn’t. ~ ∼ Chloe didn’t win.

sentence-final because-clause

A: Chloe won the competition, because she danced perfectly.
B: No, she didn’t. ~ ∼ C didn’t win / didn’t dance perfectly.

The same pattern with although-clauses.

Clause order effect with adverbial clauses

Frazier & Clifton 2005: after-clauses no
Cooreman & Sanford 1996: various temporal clauses no because-clauses yes!

sentence-initial temporal clause

A: After Mary laughed, she made a joke about the supervisor.
B: No, she didn’t. ~ ∼ Mary didn’t make a joke.

Adverbial clauses as independent speech acts

ARCs admit speech act adverbials

‘All Stars’ chose to audition Chloe, who frankly danced like an amateur.

although/because-clauses admit speech act adverbials

• ‘All Stars’ chose to audition Chloe, although frankly she danced like an amateur.
• ‘All Stars’ did not choose to audition Chloe, because frankly she danced like an amateur.

temporal clauses don’t

Chloe cried after (#frankly) she danced like an amateur.
Adverbial clauses as independent speech acts

other indications towards speech act status
- distinct speech act types in the main and the subordinate clause Koev 2013, Sweetser 1990
- prosodic separation

root clause phenomena in causal and concessive clauses, not in temporal clauses
- V2 in German Günthner 1996, Antomo 2013

(why) are ARCs less salient?

- whether ARCs are salient or not depends on their place in discourse structure and the dynamics of discourse update, in the same way as it does for other subordinate clauses that function as independent speech acts and for independent sentences
- to the extent that ARCs are inherently less salient than main clauses, they share this property with other subordinate clauses (adverbial clauses)

ARCs are less salient, and therefore difficult to reject, not because they contribute a special kind of content, but because they are subordinate clauses

Conclusion

- Syrett & Koev’s (2015) idea that the variable at-issue status of ARCs depending on the position in the sentence is a matter of recency and salience is not a harmless move
- combined with off-the-shelf theories of recency and salience it explains various aspects of the behaviour of ARCs and other kinds of clauses with respect to rejection
- applying what we know about salience in discourse to phenomena traditionally carrying the label of not-at-issue content gives rise to non-trivial hypotheses for empirical investigation

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