

the other way around (in fact, only a small subset of nouns can take NCCs). So, frequency of the construction might seem to explain the initial preference for RCs and the garden path effect with NCCs. However, this cannot be the end of the story. First, the explanation based on the frequency bias of a *grammatical construction* runs the risk of being circular (why is something difficult to parse? Because it is not frequent. Why is it not frequent? Because it is difficult to parse). Frequency can have a magnifying effect, but ultimately the asymmetry between the two constructions must be due to something else. Furthermore, RCs are supposed to be more difficult, due to the presence of a gap, so it is puzzling that they are chosen over an (alleged) simpler alternative. In the second part of the talk, we will show that this pattern makes sense at the light of Donati and Cecchetto's (2011) view of relativization and noun complementation.

3. First of all, under the raising analysis (Kayne, 1994, Bianchi 1999 a.o.), RCs are not adjuncts in the sense of phrase structure theory. According to Donati and Cecchetto's (2011) version of the raising analysis, RCs are really akin to head-complement configuration at the right level of abstraction. Under their account, the head in (5) is a lexical item which relabels the structure, hence nominalizing it, by virtue of its word status.

(5) [D The [N book that I saw [D ~~book~~]]

The fact that the head provides the label when it is internally merged with the RC makes relativization very similar to the configuration where a head provides a label when it is externally merged with its complement.

4 Donati and Cecchetto also argue extensively that nouns do not take complements, and that NCCs in general are not indeed complements despite their name, but late inserted adjuncts. Among the arguments they offer:

a. *Theta criterion exemption*. So-called complements of nouns are never required for the structure to be acceptable, unlike the complements of transitive verbs.

b. *Constituency Tests* Standard constituent tests indicate that, while verb plus internal argument always form a constituent, noun plus alleged complement is not: a pronoun can replace the determiner+noun unit without replacing the alleged complement of the noun (6);

(6) a. Ho visto [il padre di Gianni]

I have seen the father of Gianni

b. Ho visto quello di Gianni

I have seen that of Gianni

c. *Islands* The distribution of island effects supports the hypothesis that nouns do not take real complements. While in the verbal domain there is an argument-adjunct asymmetry for extraction (roughly, only adjunct clauses are islands), in the nominal domain no asymmetry arises. Both RCs and NCCs are islands (cf. the Complex NP Constraint).

So Donati and Cecchetto reverse standard wisdom: they see complementation where other approaches see adjunction (RCs) and they see adjunction where other approaches see complementation (NCCs). Adopting this reversed perspective, the results of experiments 1 and 2 make sense, if the parser chooses the basic head-complement configuration over an adjunction configuration in case the incoming string is temporarily ambiguous between these two analyses. RCs are structurally similar to the very basic head-complement configuration, while the NCCs are more similar to the less central adjunction configuration.

5. We will conclude by discussing Chomsky/Lebeaux sentences (which are a problem for any version of the raising analysis), namely the fact that Principle C effects are supposed to be stronger in NCCs like (8) than in RCs like (9). Chomsky/Lebeaux's account relies on late insertion of RCs as opposed to NCCs, but this is incompatible with the view defended in this talk.

(8) ?? Which report that John_i is incompetent did he_i submit?

(9) ? Which report that John_i revised did he_i submit?

We will claim instead that both sentences display a weak Principle C effect under reconstruction, but (9) sounds more degraded because it involves a garden path effect on the top of the Principle C effect.

This parsing explanation is more compatible with the fact observed by Lasnik 1998 that with other pair of sentences the Chomsky/Lebeaux contrast exemplified in (8) and (9) effaces.

References:

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