

Clause Embedding versus Clause Combining: A Hallidayan Distinction Revised

1. Introduction

The successful study of clause combining in discourse presupposes i) a conceptually clear differentiation between the level of syntax and the level of discourse and ii) a conceptually clear distinction between the various syntactic functions of clauses with respect to their role in the expression of propositions. Syntax is the level of linguistic manifestation of a proposition and its internal linguistic organisation, the independent, finite clause being the syntactic unit which frames this internal organisation. Discourse, on the other hand, is the level of linguistic manifestation of a sequence of two or more related speech acts. Syntax and discourse are related in that a proposition is one of the constituent elements of a speech act. A clause is the manifestation of a proposition, and a finite, unembedded clause carrying illocutionary force is the 'normal' and typical expression used to perform a speech act.¹

As Halliday (e.g. 1994) has made clear, clause embedding – although there is more than one clause involved – is an intra-clause level operation, i.e. a syntactic one. With respect to propositions this means that in clause embedding one proposition is embedded in another one. In contrast, clause combining (i.e. para- and hypotaxis in Halliday's sense) is an inter-clausal operation. Does this mean that clause combining is a discourse level operation? I have the impression that an explicit answer to this question is avoided in the systemic-functional literature. Consider the following quotation from Eggins (1994: 129):

We will therefore remove *text* from our grammatical constituent scale. It is a unit of linguistic description, but at the discourse-semantic stratum, not at the grammatical stratum. [...]

The label *clause complex* is not, however, placed "above" the clause on the rank scale, but next to it. This is because the relationship between two clauses in a clause complex is not considered to be a constituency relationship, but one which Halliday [1985, 1994, 216] describes as a "logical" structure. It is a relationship of (inter)dependency, more like the relationship between cohesively related items than the constituency relationship between stages of a text.

1 Non-finite clauses and embedded clauses do not usually have (or: cannot usually be assigned) illocutionary force. Potential exceptions are non-finite conjunct (in terms of Quirk et al. 1985) adverbial clauses such as *to sum up*, ..., or *to conclude*,

I see no problem in the first part: Text or discourse on the one hand and grammar on the other hand are two different strata of linguistic organisation, potentially and probably subject to different organising principles. But where does the clause complex belong in this account? According to Eggins, it does not form a proper rank in the grammatical or syntactic stratification; at the same time it is placed 'next to' the clause, suggesting that it nevertheless belongs to the grammar stratum. But it is also characterised as manifesting a cohesion relation – 'cohesion' being a prominent concept in text-linguistics. This passage does not seem to give a clear answer to my question.

I am assuming that asking this question does, in fact, make sense, that it is a crucial question, and that it has an affirmative answer: clause combining is a discourse level operation. In fact I think that this answers the question and that this constitutes an important theoretical insight. But it has to be supplemented by a careful analysis of which clauses may enter into which relation (embedding or combining). In this respect there seem to be some inconsistencies in Halliday's theory which carry over to other authors working in the systemic-functional framework (e.g. Matthiessen and Thompson 1988; Martin 1992; Eggins 1994; Bloor and Bloor 1995).

2. Clause combining vs. clause embedding in systemic-functional grammar

For Halliday (1994), the distinction between clause embedding and clause combining is straightforward in principle, i.e. in theory:²

It is important to distinguish between embedding on the one hand and the 'tactic' relations of parataxis and hypotaxis on the other. Whereas parataxis and hypotaxis are relations BETWEEN clauses [...], embedding is not. Embedding is a mechanism whereby a clause or phrase comes to function as a constituent WITHIN the structure of a group, which itself is a constituent of a clause. Hence there is no direct relationship between an embedded clause and the clause within which it is embedded; the relationship of an embedded clause to the 'outer' clause is an indirect one, with a group as intermediary. The embedded clause functions in the structure of the group, and the group functions in the structure of the clause. (242)

A 'group' in Halliday's system is a unit next above the 'word' (and next below the 'clause') in the analysis of grammatical constituency. A group (= 'a group of words') "is an expansion of a word" (180). The following groups are distinguished: 'nominal group' (equivalent to 'nominal phrase' in the sense of e.g. Quirk et al. 1985 = *CGEL*), 'verbal group' (*CGEL*: 'verb phrase'), 'adverbial group' (*CGEL*: 'adverb phrase'), 'conjunction group' (modified conjunctions, e.g. *even if*), and preposition group (modified prepositions, e.g. *right behind*). A 'phrase' in Halliday's framework is similar to and on the same level of constituency as a group. But a phrase differs from a group in that it is not an "expansion of a word" but "a contraction of a clause" (ib.). In fact there is only one type of phrase, the 'prepositional phrase', characterised as "a clause-like structure in

2 His reservations are only of a practical or empirical nature: "As always, the fact that the two categories are clearly distinct in principle does not mean that every instance can be definitely assigned to one or the other on some fixed easily identifiable criterion. The vast majority of instances are clear; but there are anomalous and borderline cases which are bound to cause difficulty" (243).

which the Process/Predicator function is performed by a preposition and not by a verb" (212). Apart from this characterisation, prepositional phrases as conceived by Halliday are equivalent to prepositional phrases in other grammars.

According to Halliday (1994: 242), there are exactly three types of clause embedding: 1) "Postmodifier in a nominal group" (e.g. *who came to dinner in the man who came to dinner*), 2) "Head of a nominal group (i.e. as a nominalization)" (e.g. *that you're sorry in that you're sorry isn't enough*), 3) "Postmodifier in an adverbial group" (e.g. *as you can in as quickly as you can*).³ Halliday says (ib.) that "[a]ll embedding falls into one or other of these major categories; there are no further types." This means that all other types of – in some sense – 'dependent' clauses fall into the clause complex category. This conception, developed by Halliday and taken over by other authors, seems to be untenable in certain respects. In the following I will try to show what the problems are.

3. Against the systemic-functional criteria for a distinction of clause embedding vs. clause combining

The Hallidayan system forces us to recognise all subordinate clauses, finite and non-finite, in what is traditionally known as adverbial function as instantiating hypotactic clause combining. Apart from special cases such as *The time to leave is when people yawn* or sentences beginning with *The reason is because ...*, which are cases of adverbial clauses embedded as nominalisations in the systemic-functional framework, adverbial clauses in genuinely adverbial function are all assumed to be instances of hypotactic clause combining. I do not agree with this view. I think that the dividing line between clause embedding and hypotaxis is not adequately drawn here.

In order to explain why I do not agree I wish to present three reviews of sentence analyses found in the systemic-functional literature. First, consider the following passage from Bloor and Bloor (1995: 191). Sometimes, as in example (1), we find clause complexes within rank-shifted clauses.

- (1) His thesis is that the actual outbreak of war is almost inevitable, provided certain sociopolitical, economic and technical patterns are present.

This sentence realizes a Relational Process in the form *X is Y*. So one stratum is simple *S, F, C* [Subject, Finite, Complement] structure. However, the Complement is realized by an embedding in the form of a hypotactic clause complex. Thus, the expression

- (2) (that) the actual outbreak of war is almost inevitable, provided certain sociopolitical, economic and technical patterns are present

3 Referring to his second category of clause embedding, Halliday (ib.) adds in a footnote: "Where the embedded element functions as Head, we may leave out the intermediate (nominal group) step in the analysis and represent the embedded clause or phrase as functioning directly in the structure of the outer clause, as Subject or whatever. This is a notational simplification; it does not affect the status of the embedded element as a nominalization. Note that this still does not make it resemble hypotaxis; in hypotaxis one clause is dependent on another, but in no sense is it a constituent part of it."

is analysed as a hypotactic clause complex embedded in a clause (as a 'nominalisation', I presume). Indeed, the *provided*-clause does not enter one of the three structural types for clause embedding, hence it ought to be hypotactically related in the systemic-functional framework.

My second example is from Halliday (1992). He provides an analysis in which a clause complex is said to be embedded in a clause. The sentence is:⁴

- (3) With your contribution, ZPG can arm our growing network of local activists with the materials they need to warn community leaders about emerging population-linked stresses before they reach crisis stage.

The expression

- (4) (which) they need to warn community leaders about emerging population-linked stresses before they reach crisis stage

is analysed as a clause complex consisting of three clauses: the non-finite purpose clause (*to warn community leaders about emerging population-linked stresses*) and the temporal clause (*before they reach crisis stage*) are said to be hypotactically related with each other. These two clauses form a nested (or 'internally bracketed'; see e.g. Halliday 1994: 217) structure hypotactically related with a third one, the relative clause (*which*) they need. The whole expression is said to be embedded as a clause complex postmodifying the nominal head *materials*.

My third example is from Eggins (1994: 337; see also *ib.*, 137 f.):

- (5) [The baby] might still be adapting to the pattern of sucking until his tummy is full and feeling satisfied until it empties again.

This sentence is analysed as exhibiting clause combining between *sucking* and *until his tummy is full*, between *feeling satisfied* and *until it empties again* (hypotaxis) and between *sucking until his tummy is full* and *feeling satisfied until it empties again* (parataxis). The multiple clause combination as a whole (introduced by *of*) is considered to be embedded (as postmodification of a nominal head, I assume).

The idea that a clause complex may be embedded in a clause strikes me as rather dubious. On the assumption that clause combining is a discourse operation (cf. the beginning of this paper) this idea seems to contradict the very essence of what is meant by the concepts of 'clause' and 'discourse' as well as how they are distinguished. It would mean that a stretch of discourse may constitute a syntactic unit of a clause.

I think there are three basic possible reactions to this conclusion. Either it is accepted and my suspicion that there is something wrong with the idea that a clause complex may be embedded in a clause is shared. Or it is agreed that the idea cannot be maintained, but the assumptions underlying my conclusion are considered fallacious. Or my conclusion is accepted, but the idea that a stretch of discourse may be embedded in a clause is not judged to be objectionable. As to this third reaction, I do not think that this position can be reasonably held by taking recourse to the principle of rank-shift. A stretch of discourse does not belong to the ranks of syntax; it is not the highest rank

4 See Mann and Thompson, eds. (1992: x) for the sentence and Halliday (1992: 344 f.) for its analysis.

within syntax; it belongs to a different level of organisation with different principles of organisation (see the first part of my quotation from Eggins 1994 above). The relation between syntax and discourse may be compared to that between cells and organisms. And the idea of a rank-shift between the levels of discourse and syntax is comparable to the idea of an organism being a constituent part of a cell. Of course such an idea is thinkable, but it contradicts what has been found to be the defining characteristics of cells and their components (clauses and syntactic units) on the one hand and organisms and their components (texts and discourse units) on the other hand.

The second possible reaction to my conclusion in more concrete terms is this: it is indeed impossible for a stretch of discourse to be embedded within a clause; but the argument is based on inappropriate assumptions about the relation between discourse and clause complexes (and perhaps clauses and speech acts) so that the conclusion is invalidly derived. It may be that clause combining and discourse have to be strictly kept apart, and that to say 'clause combining is a discourse level operation' is wrong. Indeed, Matthiessen and Thompson (1988) start off from the assumption that clause combining and discourse belong to different perspectives on text production and that their relation has yet to be established.⁵ Accordingly, the authors speak of "rhetorical units" as the building blocks of texts or discourse. And they seem to imply that the relations between these rhetorical units can be studied independently from grammar in principle. They present their 'rhetorical units'

roughly coded as what most grammarians would call 'clauses', except that clausal subjects and complement [...] and restrictive relative clauses represent units that are part of their matrix unit rather than separate units (Matthiessen and Thompson 1988: 287).

This means rhetorical units are 'coded'⁶ as clauses in the Hallidayan conception, but not as clause combinations. Thus their hypothesis is "that there is a fundamental analogy between a clause combination and the rhetorical organization of a text," and that "[c]lause combining in grammar has evolved as a grammaticalization of the rhetorical units in discourse defined by rhetorical relations." (p. 301) This hypothesis is found to be borne out.

Perhaps there is some circularity involved in Matthiessen and Thompson's (1988) argumentation (see fn. 6). However, I do not want to discuss this aspect. I simply want to make the point that, even if one starts off from the assumption that clause complexes and discourse are essentially different, one ends up by acknowledging that clause combining cannot be but characterised in terms of discourse. Matthiessen and Thompson (1988), who concentrate on hypotaxis,⁷ conclude:

5 "[W]e made a distinction between the rhetorical organization of discourse (text) and the grammatical organization of clauses into clause combinations. In other words, having made the distinction, we can now ask whether there is an analogy between clause combining and the rhetorical organization of discourse. We think there is a fundamental analogy between the two" (Matthiessen and Thompson 1988: 300).

6 I cannot imagine what the authors mean by 'coded' apart from 'taken to be'. If, however, 'coded' in fact means nothing but 'taken to be', we may detect some circularity in Matthiessen and Thompson's argumentation.

7 The discourse character of parataxis seems to be hardly controversial.

the independently motivated textual notion of nuclearity can be seen to underlie the grammatical notion of hypotaxis. In attempting to answer the question of what discourse function motivates this aspect of grammar, then, we are able to offer a more satisfying account of the phenomenon than have previous approaches, including traditional ones, which have attempted to characterize hypotaxis in sentence-level semantic terms. (317)

My own conclusion from their discussion is this: there is no point in maintaining that stretches of discourse may not be said to figure as constituent units in the syntax of clauses, while also maintaining that there is nothing wrong with the idea that clause complexes may do so. Thus I think that I have shown that there *is* something wrong with the idea of a clause complex being embedded in the syntax of a clause.

What in the Hallidayan distinction between clause embedding and clause combining is it that causes the problems uncovered above? Answer: There are cases subsumed under clause combining in the systemic-functional framework which are in fact to be classified as clause embedding. To exemplify, I briefly indicate what I think should be altered in the analyses of the sentences presented above. In

- (1) His thesis is that the actual outbreak of war is almost inevitable, provided certain sociopolitical, economic and technical patterns are present.

we need to acknowledge that the *provided*-clause (an adverbial clause) is embedded within the clause *the actual outbreak of war is almost inevitable, provided certain sociopolitical, economic and technical patterns are present*. In

- (3) With your contribution, ZPG can arm our growing network of local activists with the materials they need to warn community leaders about emerging population-linked stresses before they reach crisis stage.

we need to acknowledge that the non-finite *to warn ...*-clause as well as the *before*-clause are embedded: the latter within the former and the former within the postmodifying clause (*which*) *they need to warn community leaders about emerging population-linked stresses before they reach crisis stage*. In

- (5) [The baby] might still be adapting to the pattern of sucking until his tummy is full and feeling satisfied until it empties again.

we need to acknowledge that the *until*-clauses are embedded within the non-finite clauses *sucking until his tummy is full* and *feeling satisfied until it empties again* respectively; and that the co-ordinating structure linking these two non-finite clauses does not form a clause complex (i.e. does not form a discourse unit), but is simply a co-ordinated structure linking two non-finite clauses with the co-ordinated structure as a whole embedded within the noun phrase *the pattern of ...*. Thus a revision of systemic-functional theory is called forth in which these results are accommodated. In the following suggestion for such a revision I concentrate on the case of finite adverbial clauses and their structural status.

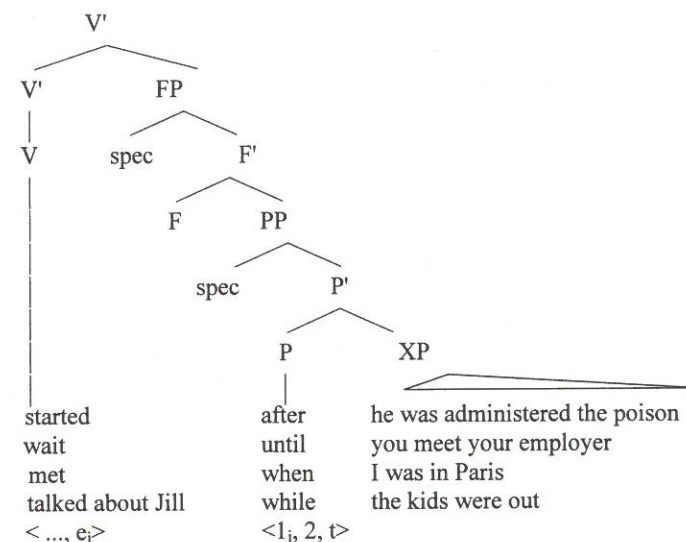
4. Revision of the distinction between clause embedding and clause combining

It has to be recognised that what is traditionally known as the clause predicate (as opposed to the subject in a binary division of a clause) is a unit in the constituent analysis

of clauses. Actually, there is no constituent unit in the Hallidayan framework which systematically corresponds to the predicate.⁸ This situation is also reflected in Halliday's (1994: 20 ff.) rejection of 'maximal (binary) bracketing'. By this notion he refers to constituent analyses (as in some versions of IC-analysis and older versions of generative grammar) in which the predicate appears as the sister to the subject in the immediate analysis of the S-node.⁹ Systemic-functional grammar favours 'minimal bracketing' according to the principle 'put a bracket only where you have to' (Halliday 1994: 20), and obviously, the functional necessity to consider the predicate as a grammatical constituent has not yet been seen. My claim is that the problems for systemic-functional grammar pointed out above are solved by the recognition of the predicate as a functionally relevant constituent in the structure of the clause in combination with a

Fig. 1 (from Haumann 1997: 198)

- (6) You will have to wait until you meet your employer.
 (7) The dizzy turns started after he was administered the poison.
 (8) We met when I was in Paris.
 (9) We talked about Jill while the kids were out.



- 8 We have to keep in mind that the 'verbal group' comprises neither the (internal) arguments nor the predicative nouns or predicative adjectives of verbs nor any adverbials. – The authors of the *CGEL* also "find little need to refer to the predicate as a separate structural unit in the description of English grammar" (ib. 79). However, this view likewise leads to problems at a theoretical level (see Breul 1997a: ch. 3, and Breul in print).
- 9 Apart from its long tradition in logic and grammar (see e.g. Sandmann 1954: 1979), the subject-predicate structure is also in accordance with speech act theory (see Searle 1969: 118 f.).

revision of the syntactic status as 'combined' of certain kinds of adverbial clauses. More specifically, I suggest that all those adverbial clauses, finite and non-finite, that would be described as adjuncts rather than as disjuncts, conjuncts or subjuncts in the *CGEL* (p. 1068 ff.) be analysed as parts of the predicate of their superordinate clause.

My suggestion that the existence of predicate-internal adverbial clauses should be acknowledged accords well with a position within the generative grammar framework to which I was directed by D. Haumann's work on subordination (1997; cf. her paper in this volume). Haumann discusses an analysis by J. Zwarts (1992). She concludes that according to Zwarts' theory, the partial structure of the following sentences is as shown in fig. 1 above.

In this analysis, the temporal adverbial clauses are considered to be part of the matrix VP, i.e. part of the matrix clause predicate. Categorially, they are interpreted as PPs with what is commonly called their introducing 'conjunction' being a preposition that takes a clausal complement.¹⁰ The relation between the matrix verb and the adverbial clause is one of 'modification' in the sense of Zwarts (1992: 63):

Modification

A lexical head L is *modified* by a phrase XP if:

- a. L governs XP, and
- b. the prominent argument of XP is coindexed with the referential argument of L.

The lexical head L in this definition is instantiated by the respective matrix verb in fig. 1, which governs – 'government' being defined as mutual m-command by Zwarts (1992: 63, fn. 17) – the PP, i.e. the adverbial clause introduced by its conjunction. The referential argument of verbs in general and thus in particular of the verbs in (6)–(9) and in fig. 1 is said to be 'Eventuality' (comprising events, processes, activities, states; indicated by 'e_i' in fig. 1).¹¹ This referential argument is coindexed with the external thematic argument (indicated by 't_i' in fig. 1) of the preposition (P) heading the PP. It is the "most prominent argument of XP" which Zwarts refers to in his definition just quoted, identical with the "external argument of the semantic head of FP" as used by Haumann (1997: 80, 198). The 't' in the argument structure of the prepositions in fig. 1 refers to their own referential argument, 'Time'. In this framework, the licensing of the PP (i.e. the adverbial clause) is achieved by theta-identification, i.e. by unification (here indicated by coindexation) of the referential argument of the verb and the external argument of the PP.¹²

I suggest that the notion of theta-identification between the two types of arguments should be interpreted as that between a variable and its specific value. In more

10 As to the role of and the motivation for the functional phrase FP, which need not be considered for my argument, see Haumann (1997: 201 ff.). In Zwarts (1992), by whom the above figure is inspired, such an FP does not appear.

11 See Zwarts (1992: 59) drawing on works by E. Williams and J. Higginbotham. For other references to works dealing with the notion of 'referential argument' see Haumann (1997: 76, fn. 26).

12 It must be mentioned that Haumann (1997), although drawing on the ideas presented in Zwarts (1992), rejects the analysis represented by fig. 1. Her reason for rejecting it is theory-internally well motivated ("generalizing the internal subject hypothesis"; ib. 198), but (*pace* Haumann) does not seem compelling to me.

concrete terms: verbs refer to eventualities (and thus have 'Eventuality' as their referential argument), and eventualities are located somewhere in the dimension of time. This 'somewhere in the dimension of time' is a kind of variable which may be specified by a temporal expression such as an adverbial clause as its value. Semantically and syntactically, it is obviously not obligatory to specify these variables by a value; specification is optional. In other words: referential arguments license specification (or 'modification' in Zwarts' (1992) and Haumann's (1997) terms), but do not require it.

As regards the referential arguments of the PPs in fig. 1, Zwarts and Haumann take into account only 'Time' and 'Space'. Zwarts (1992: 79 ff.) has a list of 'sorts' by which the universe (of discourse) is constituted and which are identified with the types of referential arguments. The list comprises 'Objects', associated with nouns, 'Eventualities', associated with verbs, 'Qualities', associated with adjectives, 'Space' and 'Time', associated with PPs. Here the restriction to 'Space' and 'Time' as possible referential arguments for PPs seems to be following from the semantic theory that underlies Zwarts' approach (77 ff.). Haumann (1997), when developing her own theory of clause structure on the basis of Zwarts (1992),¹³ explicitly concentrates on temporal adverbial clauses (192), but seems to imply that an analogous treatment of spatial adverbial clauses is possible (190). I suggest that 'Cause' should also be included into the list of 'sorts' and referential arguments so as to be able to accommodate predicate-internal *because*-clauses into the analysis suggested by fig. 1. This does not seem to be philosophically/epistemologically or semantically impossible or even implausible. It is perfectly reasonable to imagine the dimension of 'Causes', just like that of 'Time' and 'Space', as one in which an eventuality may be located – and hence according to which it may be specified.

A brief comment on the line of my argumentation is now appropriate: It will have been realised that the sentence examples (1), (3), and (5) differ from simple cases such as those in (6)–(9) in that in (1), (3), and (5) we have a clause embedded in a clause embedded in a clause. Such examples allow me to make my point of criticism concerning the systemic-functional criteria of differentiation between clause embedding and clause combining quite clear. I could not have done so by discussing only sentences like (6)–(9), where the problem is, although present, much less palpable. Why this is so will be explained below.

13 Haumann (1997: 236 ff.; in conference discussion; see also this volume) rejects an analysis of (predicate-internal) *because*-clauses analogous to the adverbial clauses in fig. 1 for syntactic reasons, one of them being that *because*-clauses, in contrast to temporal and spatial adverbial clauses, do not allow for modification by e.g. degree adverbs; only focusing adverbs (*simply*, *only*, *especially* etc.) are said to be possible. C. Mair (in conference discussion), however, points to modification by *partly*, which is no obvious focusing adverb but, arguably, rather a degree adverb (e.g.: *He climbed the stairs very slowly though, partly because he was tired and partly because [...]*, BNC: A04). Apart from this objection, it seems to be semantics (of time vs. space vs. cause) rather than syntax which plays a role here. – For a distinction between *because*-clauses expressing a cause versus *since/as*-clauses expressing a reason, see Breul (1997a; 1997b); the latter are *not* predicate-internal.

As pointed out above, not all adverbial clauses are of the predicate-internal type. There are also those (the subjunct, conjunct and disjunct ones in terms of the *CGEL*) which form clause combinations, i.e. which have a speech act relating or, as we might say, discourse operational function.

In the last section of my paper, I propose that there is a pragmatic principle which obscures the syntactically rather clear distinction between predicate-internal and discourse operational adverbial clauses and which may be held responsible for adverbial clauses being indiscriminately thrown into the clause combination bag.

5. The concept of 'accommodated presupposition' and its relation to the distinction between predicate-internal and discourse operational adverbial clauses

The pragmatic principle I have just alluded to is connected with the distinction between pragmatic presuppositions and assertions. With respect to adverbial clauses, I would maintain that being predicate-internal is the syntactic correlate of being pragmatically presupposed, and being combined is the syntactic correlate of being asserted. Consider the following example, which we are to construe as the first sentence of a narrative:

(10) Before I moved to Switzerland I had never seen a Rolls Royce.

This sentence is discussed by Lambrecht (1994: 68) in order to defend his claim that "the propositional content of *before*-clauses is regularly interpreted as being pragmatically presupposed, independently of the discourse context." Lambrecht explains:

the reader cannot be expected to know that the protagonist moved to Switzerland at one point of time in his life. [...] The important fact here is that this does NOT invalidate my claim concerning the presuppositional structure of *before*-clauses. [...] The appropriateness of [(10)] is provided by Lewis' rule of accommodation for presupposition. By the act of using the clause which required the presupposition, the writer CREATED the presupposition in the reader's mind and made it available as a background for the assertion in the following main clause.

David Lewis' formulation of his "rule of accommodation for presupposition" is this:

If at time *t* something is said that requires presupposition *P* to be acceptable, and if *P* is not presupposed just before *t*, then – *ceteris paribus* and within certain limits – presupposition *P* comes into existence at *t*. (Lewis 1979: 172)

To be sure, a presupposition which comes into existence at the time of making an assertion is not very different from an assertion – informationally speaking. They both are informative. The reason for distinguishing such *ad hoc* (or 'accommodated') presuppositions from assertions in these cases is precisely their equivalence in syntactic status to 'properly' presupposed adverbial clauses, i.e. their being predicate-internal.

Adverbial clauses such as in (10) display a kind of tension between syntactic structure on the one hand and information structure and discourse function on the other hand. This tension is the effect of the existence of the principle of 'accommodation for presupposition' which allows clauses that are marked presupposed syntactically (by virtue of being predicate-internal, i.e. embedded) to be used informationally just like

assertions. Discourse operational adverbial clauses are pragmatically asserted,¹⁴ and they are, as is well known, syntactically quite distinct from predicate-internal ones. We might hypothesise that – diachronically – the 'rule of accommodation for presupposition' plays a role in the development of discourse operational adverbial clauses out of predicate-internal ones.¹⁵ Accommodated presuppositions may provide a kind of mediating step between 'properly' presupposed and asserted propositions.

The differentiation between assertion and accommodated presupposition is subtle in view of the fact that they are informationally equivalent. Actually, this informational equivalence is responsible for the fact that it is difficult to make a case for sentences like (6)–(9) showing embedded adverbial clauses. If presented 'out of the blue', they are interpreted as containing an accommodated presupposition in the adverbial clause. This *ad hoc* presupposition then may not be distinguished from an assertion precisely because of their informational equivalence.

6. Summary: The main points of the paper again

- (a) Embedded clause combinations/complexes do not exist.
- (b) Embedded adverbial clauses do exist (besides those of the type *The time to leave is when people yawn* and *The reason is because ...*).
- (c) Embedded adverbial clauses are embedded by virtue of being part of the predicate of the superordinate clause.
- (d) Embedding the clause corresponds to pragmatically presupposing the proposition contained in embedded clause.
- (e) An embedded clause may express an accommodated (*ad hoc*) presupposition.
- (f) Although *ad hoc* presuppositions and assertions are both informative, they are to be distinguished.
- (g) The 'rule of accommodation for presupposition' mediates between predicate-internal (embedded) and discourse operational (combined) adverbial clauses.

14 A narrative *when*-clause such as in *I was quietly sitting in the drawing-room when suddenly the telephone rang* (from Declerck 1997: 218) expresses an assertion rather than an accommodated presupposition. Thanks to E. Couper-Kuhlen for pointing this out (in conference discussion).

15 See Brinton (1998: 27) for references to works which postulate a diachronic cline "clause-internal adverbial > sentence adverbial > discourse marker", which implies a similar course of development.

Appendix

Conference discussions¹⁶ made me rethink and reformulate an argument I had built on the sentence¹⁷

(11) Did you yawn because you disliked the paper?

This sentence is to be construed in a context where it is known to speaker and hearer (hence presupposed) that the addressee did yawn, but where it has not been established within the discourse whether the addressee disliked the paper or not. The proposition of the *because*-clause is certainly not an assertion (*You disliked the paper*), nor is (11) as a whole necessarily a question targeting the polarity of such an assertion (*Did you dislike the paper?*). It may be a question targeting the causal relation between the addressee's disliking the paper and his/her yawning, with the proposition of the *because*-clause being an *ad hoc* (accommodated) presupposition. Accordingly, an addressee who actually disliked the paper may very well give a negative answer to this question by saying e.g.

(12a) Nö.

(12b) It is NOT the case that I yawned because I disliked the paper.

(12c) I did NOT yawn because I disliked the paper.

thus denying that there is such a causal relation and implicitly confirming that he/she disliked the paper, i.e. the accommodated presupposition. In contrast, for an addressee who did in fact not dislike the paper, (11) contains a false presupposition. He/She may be well advised to react e.g. by saying

(13) The question does not arise. For actually I did not dislike the paper.

instead of using utterances like (12), in order not to be mistaken for someone who disliked the paper.¹⁸ There is much more to be said about the problem raised by (11). The points I wish to make here are these: first, this account is crucially based on the notion of 'accommodated presupposition' and thus supports its importance indirectly. Second, also a proposition contained in a *because*-clause may be presupposed without having been established in the prior discourse – just like those of *before*-clauses (and probably other adverbial clauses of time and place).

16 My thanks to H.-J. Diller, G. Lorenz, and P. Wenzel, who bear no responsibility for any errors I may make in the following account.

17 In (11) and (12) below, prosody is roughly indicated by marking the sentence accent (small capitals) and its tone (').

18 Certainly there are ways of prosodically marking the verbal part of (11) or (12) which somehow indicate (or perhaps 'implicate' in terms of Grice 1975) a rejection of the false presupposition. And among these there are ways which are much more common and 'natural' than using (13).

References

- Bloor, Thomas and Merial Bloor (1995): *The Functional Analysis of English: A Hallidayan Approach*, London etc.: Arnold.
- Breul, Carsten (1997a): *Grammatik und Bedeutung der kausalen Satzverbände: Because, as, since und for im schriftsprachlichen Englisch*, Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Breul, Carsten (1997b): "Explanation versus Argument, Cause versus Reason, and their Linguistic Correlates," in Paul Weingartner, Gerhard Schurz and Georg Dorn Georg, eds., *The Role of Pragmatics in Contemporary Philosophy: Papers of the 20th International Wittgenstein Symposium, August 10-16, 1997, Kirchberg am Wechsel*, vol. 1, Kirchberg am Wechsel: The Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society, 135-40.
- Breul, Carsten (in print): "On adverbial clauses and their status within concepts of hypotaxis, subordination and clause embedding," *Studia Neophilologica*.
- Brinton, Laurel J. (1998): "'The flowers are lovely; only, they have no scent': The Evolution of a Pragmatic Marker," in Raimund Borgmeier, Herbert Grabes and Andreas H. Jucker, eds., *Anglistentag 1997 Giessen: Proceedings*, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 9-33.
- Declerck, Renaat (1997): *When-clauses and Temporal Structure*, London/New York: Routledge.
- Eggins, Suzanne (1994): *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*, London: Pinter.
- Grice, H.P., (1975): "Logic and Conversation," in Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, eds., *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3: *Speech Acts*, New York etc.: Academic Press, 41-58.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994): *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2nd edn., London etc.: Arnold [1985].
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1992): "Some Lexicogrammatical Features of the Zero Population Growth Text," in William C. Mann and Sandra A. Thompson, eds., *Discourse Description: Diverse Linguistic Analyses of a Fund-Raising Text*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 327-58.
- Haumann, Dagmar (1997): *The Syntax of Subordination*, Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Haumann, Dagmar (1999): "Adverbial Subordination: Main Clauses as Specifiers," in Fritz-Wilhelm Neumann and Sabine Schülting, eds., *Anglistentag Erfurt 1998: Proceedings*, Trier: WVT, 81-102.
- Lambrecht, Knud (1994): *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representation of Discourse Referents*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, David (1979): "Scorekeeping in a Language Game," in R. Bäuerle, U. Egli and A. von Stechow, eds., *Semantics from Different Points of View*, Berlin etc.: Springer, 172-87.
- Martin, J. R. (1992): *English Text: System and Structure*, Philadelphia/Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Matthiessen, Christian and Sandra A. Thompson (1988): "The Structure of Discourse and 'Subordination'," in John Haiman and Sandra A. Thompson, eds., *Clause Combining in Grammar and Discourse*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 275-329.
- Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, Jan Svartvik (1985): *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, London: Longman (= CGEL).

- Sandmann, Manfred (1979): *Subject and Predicate: A Contribution to the Theory of Syntax*, 2nd ed., Heidelberg: Winter [1954].
- Searle, John R. (1969): *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zwarts, Joost (1992): *X'-Syntax – X'-Semantics*, Diss. Utrecht: LED.