

Adverb order with *still*

Aviv Schoenfeld,

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Moshe E. Bar-Lev & Roni Katzir

Tel Aviv University

The 54th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistics Society (NELS 54)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), January 26th, 2024

Introduction

- What does adverb order teach us about the faculty of language?

1. Cinque (1999)

- a. Adverb order is uniform across all languages and linear.
- b. This is informative about the universal structure of the clause.

2. Present research

- a. Adverb order is not linear.
- b. This is informative about the interaction between the meanings of adverbs.

Introduction

- We follow the lead of previous work,
which aims to reduce adverb order to semantics.
 - (Ernst 2001, Nilsen 2004, Ramchand & Svenonius 2014)
- We make a small contribution to this effort
by examining the aspectual properties of adverbs.
 - a. *Still* has an aspectual restriction. (Michaelis 1993)
 - b. Certain other adverbs violate the restriction, e.g. *finally* and *suddenly*.
 - c. These adverbs are unacceptable under *still*.

Advantages over Cinque (1999)

1. Conceptual advantage

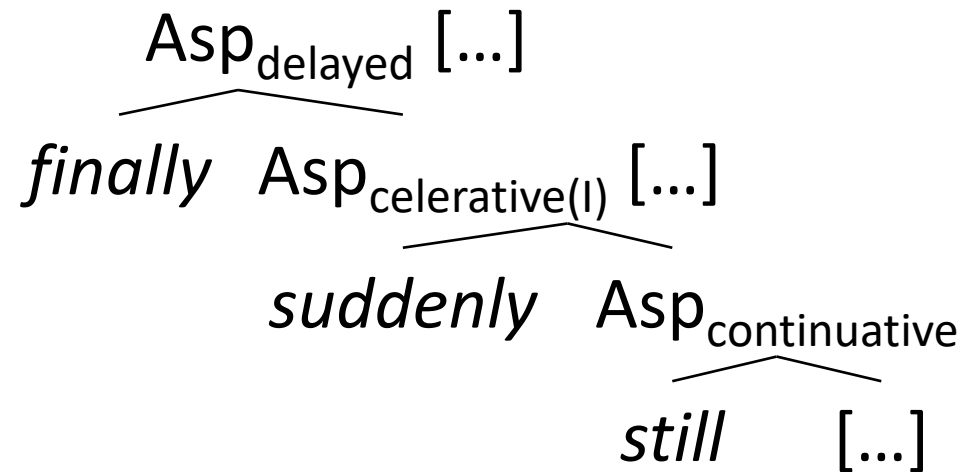
- No need for stipulations about the universal structure of the clause.

2. Empirical advantages

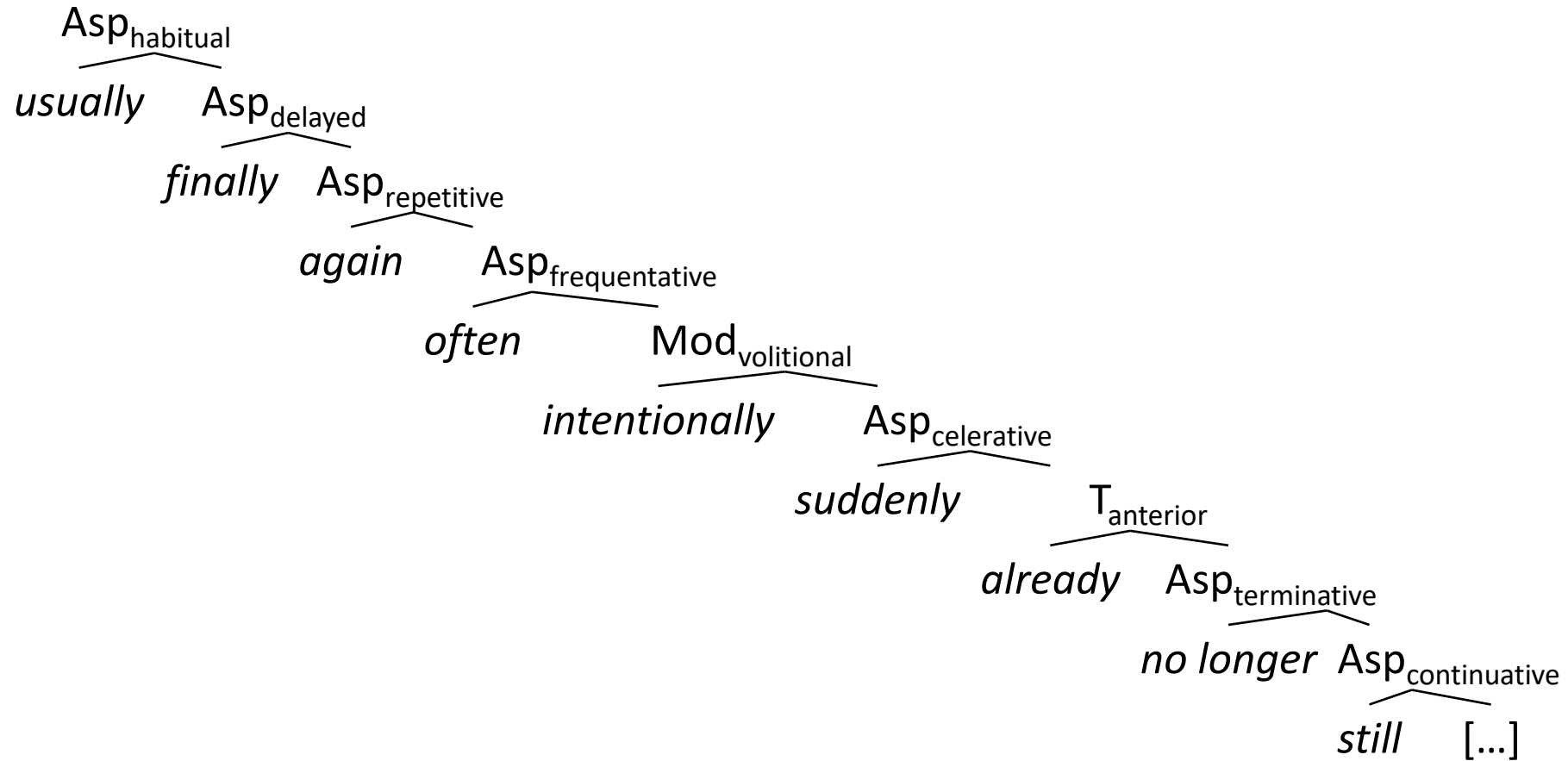
- a. *Finally* and *suddenly* remain unacceptable under *still* as long as they **violate** the aspectual restriction, even when the Cinquean structure is **irrelevant**.
- b. These adverbs become acceptable under *still* when they **satisfy** the aspectual restriction, even when the Cinquean structure **predicts unacceptability**.

Cinque (1999)

- Cinque: The order between 30+ adverbs is (1) uniform across all languages, (2) linear, and (3) not completely reducible to semantics.
- Conclusion: The universal structure of the clause has 30+ rigidly-ordered positions for adverbs.



Cinque (1999)



Cinque (1999): Criticism

- Cinque: The order between 30+ adverbs is (1) uniform across all languages, (2) linear, and (3) not completely reducible to semantics.
- Conclusion: The universal structure of the clause has 30+ rigidly-ordered positions for adverbs.
- But this structure is problematic.
 - “Cartographic sequences of positions are problems, not solutions.”
(Chomsky et al. 2019)
- It would be better to derive adverb order from something other than a stipulated structure, e.g. meaning.
 - (Ernst 2001, Nilsen 2004, Ramchand & Svenonius 2014)

Still with *finally* and *suddenly*

1. (With DST,) it's finally still light out after 5:00 p.m.
 2. It's still (#finally) light out after 5:00 p.m. (temporal *still*)
 3. (When DST starts,) it's suddenly still light out after 5:00 p.m.
 4. It's still (#suddenly) light out after 5:00 p.m. (temporal *still*)
- Cinquean conclusion:
The positions of *finally* and *suddenly* are above that of *still*.
 - Our alternative: (2, 4) are ruled out by an aspectual restriction.

Present research: Aspect

- Reminder: *For*-adverbials are restricted to certain events.
(Vendler 1967, Dowty 1979, Krifka 1998, Champollion 2013)
 1. John climbed the mountain **for an hour**. *Vendler accomplishment*
 2. John reached the summit (**#for an hour**). *Vendler achievement*
- *Still* has a parallel restriction. (cf. Michaelis 1993)
 3. John climbed the mountain in the morning,
and he {**still** climbed, was **still** climbing} the mountain at noon.
 4. John reached the summit in the morning,
#and he {**still** reached, was **still** reaching} the summit at noon.

Present research: Aspect

- Reminder: *For*-adverbials are restricted to certain events.
(Vendler 1967, Dowty 1979, Krifka 1998, Champollion 2013)
 1. John climbed the mountain **for an hour**. *Vendler accomplishment*
 2. John reached the summit (**#for an hour**). *Vendler achievement*
- *Still* has a parallel restriction. (cf. Michaelis 1993)
- Prediction: If an adverb fails the *for* test,
it should be unacceptable under *still*.
 - a. sl.[11](#): Conceptual advantage
 - b. sl.[12](#)–[14](#): Empirical advantages

Present research: Conceptual advantage

- *Finally* and *suddenly* fail the *for* test,
and they are unacceptable under *still*.
 1. For a decade, the flowers (**#finally**) bloomed.
 2. The flowers are still (**#finally**) blooming.
 3. For a decade, the flowers (**#suddenly**) bloomed.
 4. The flowers are still (**#suddenly**) blooming.
- (2, 4) are ruled out by the aspectual restriction of *still*.
- Conceptual advantage:
No need for stipulations about the universal structure of the clause.

Present research: Empirical advantage 1

- Cinquean prediction: *Finally* and *suddenly* should be impossible under *still* within the same clause.
- This prediction is limited to the adverbs as clause-mates.
- However, the generalization extends to the bi-clausal construction.
 1. It's still the case that it's (**#finally**) light out after 5 p.m.
 2. It's still the case that it's (**#suddenly**) light out after 5 p.m.
- Empirical advantage: The aspectual restriction has wider empirical coverage, which extends to the bi-clausal construction.

Present research: Empirical advantage 2

- Cinquean prediction: *Finally* and *suddenly* should be impossible under *still* within the same clause.
- This prediction is inflexible.
- The aspectual restriction makes a more flexible prediction.
- Indeed, *finally* and *suddenly* become acceptable under *still* when they respect the aspectual restriction.

Present research: Empirical advantage 2

- Iterated *finally* and *suddenly* pass the *for* test, and they are acceptable under *still*.
 1. For a decade, the flowers **finally** bloomed every year.
 2. The flowers still **finally** bloom every year.
 3. For a decade, the flowers **suddenly** bloomed every year.
 4. The flowers still **suddenly** bloom every year.
- The Cinquean structural restriction rules out (2, 4).
- Empirical advantage: The aspectual restriction allows (2, 4).
The aspectual restriction is flexible enough
to allow for exceptions to adverbs being linearly-ordered.

Present research: Additional adverbs

- *Again* fails the *for* test, and it is unacceptable under *still*.
 1. For a decade, the flowers bloomed (**#again**).
The flowers are still blooming (**#again**).
- Three manipulations make *again* satisfy the aspectual restriction
 2. For a decade, the flowers bloomed **again** every year. *iteration*
The flowers still bloom **again** every year.
 3. For a decade, the flowers haven't bloomed **again**. *negation*
The flowers still haven't bloomed **again**.
 4. For a decade, the flowers bloomed **again** and again. *conjunction*
The flowers still bloom **again** and again.

Present research: Additional adverbs

- At least five adverbs pass the *for* test and are acceptable under *still* without manipulations.
 - *Usually, often, intentionally, already, no longer*
 1. For a decade, the garden was **usually** a mess.
 2. The garden is still **usually** a mess.
- All five adverbs are also acceptable above *still*.
 3. John is **usually** still at the garden after 5 p.m.
- They form counter-examples to adverb being linearly-ordered, which join those from *finally* and *suddenly*.

Conclusion

- We have provided conceptual and empirical arguments for:
Adverb order is restricted by meaning,
and the syntactic component imposes no further restrictions.
- Conceptual:
No need for stipulations about the universal structure of the clause.
- Empirical:
 1. Meaning has implications beyond the single clause.
 2. Meaning restrictions are correctly more flexible.
- Thank you!

References

- Champollion, Lucas. 2013. The scope and processing of *for*-adverbials: A reply to Deo and Piñango. In *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 23*, 432–452.
- Chomsky, Noam, Ángel J. Gallego & Dennis Ott. 2019. Generative grammar and the faculty of language: Insight, questions, and challenges. *Catalan journal of linguistics special issue*, 229–261.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 1999. *Adverbs and functional heads: A cross-linguistic perspective*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dowty, David. 1979. *Word meaning and Montague grammar*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Ernst, Thomas. 2001. *The syntax of adjuncts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greenberg, Yael. 2009. Presupposition accommodation and informativity considerations with aspectual *still*. *Journal of semantics* 26. 49–86.

References

- Krifka, Manfred. 1998. The origins of telicity. In Susan Rothstein (ed.), *Events and grammar*, 197–236. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Landman, Fred & Susan D. Rothstein. 2010. Incremental homogeneity in the semantics of aspectual for-phrases. In Malka Rappaport Hovav, Ivy Sichel & Edit Doron (eds.), *Syntax, lexical semantics and event structure*, 229–251. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Michaelis, Laura A. 1993. ‘Continuity’ within three scalar models: The polysemy of adverbial *still*. *Journal of semantics* 10. 193–237.
- Nilsen, Øystein. 2004. Domains for adverbs. *Lingua* 114. 809–847.
- Rackowski, Andrea. 1998. Malagasy adverbs. In Ileana Paul (ed.), *The structure of Malagasy: Volume II*, 11–33. UCLA: Department of Linguistics.
- Ramchand, Gillian & Peter Svenonius. 2014. Deriving the functional hierarchy. *Language sciences* 46. 152–174.
- Vendler, Zeno. 1967. *Linguistics in philosophy*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Differences between *for* and *still*

- *Still* is more restricted.

- a. Bill jogged for an hour.

- Bill (*still) jogged.

(Michaelis 1993, cf. Greenberg 2009)

- b. Harry has fed the cat for an hour.

- Harry has (*still) fed the cat.

(Michaelis 1993)

Present research: Empirical advantages 1+2

1. Bi-clausal: It's still the case that it's (**#finally**) light out after 5 p.m.
 - a. The Cinquean structural restriction is trivially satisfied.
 - b. The aspectual restriction of *still* is violated.
Only the latter rules out *finally* in (1).
2. Iteration: The flowers still **finally** bloom every year.
 - a. The Cinquean structural restriction is violated.
 - b. The aspectual restriction of *still* is satisfied.
Only the latter allows *finally* in (2).

Present research: *Usually*

- (1–2) are a counter-example to linearity with *usually-still*.
 1. They all knew she'd usually still be at the mills around one. (COCA)
 2. Theresa had always been a light sleeper, and when Dr. Jones entered her room, she awoke and blinked. " Daddy, " she yawned. She was still usually happy to see him. (COCA)
- (3) shows that (2) is admitted by the aspectual restriction.
 3. For many years the 'Free Box' was usually a mess. [[link](#)]

Present research: *Often*

- (1–2) are a counter-example to linearity with *often-still*.
 1. He [...] was often still at work for hours after Hardy decamped for the golf course. (COCA)
 2. Friedlander routinely put in 60 hours a week or more, [then he changed his job]. These days he still often puts in long hours, but instead of the bottom line, he's focused on [other things]. (COCA)
- (3) shows that (2) is admitted by the aspectual restriction.
 3. For nine years, she often sewed for her nieces. [[link](#)]

Present research: *Intentionally*

- (1–2) are a counter-example to linearity with *intentionally-still*.
 1. Thomson stated she intentionally still has a huge say over the hiring process. (iWeb)
 2. The ex-con that “turned over a new leaf” is STILL intentionally deceiving people. (iWeb)
- (3) shows that (2) is admitted by the aspectual restriction.
 3. For 26 years, Chevron-Texaco has intentionally polluted the Amazon through its drilling operations. [[link](#)]

Present research: *Already*

- (1–2) are a counter-example to linearity with *already-still*.
 1. Late last week, a nor'easter dumped several inches of snow and flooded parts of New York and New Jersey that were already still recovering from Hurricane Sandy. (iWeb)
 2. It literally took three visits to Safron's to get a meal, and on the third – in the middle of the afternoon – they were STILL already sold out of half of what I wanted, including their homemade patties. [[link](#)]
- (3) shows that (2) is admitted by the aspectual restriction.
 3. And for a decade he had already been following his own form of existentialist philosophy and newfound spiritualism. [[link](#)]

Present research: *No longer*

- (1–2) are a counter-example to linearity with *no longer-still*.
 1. Someone who has been previously vaccinated may no longer still be protected against the disease. (iWeb)
 2. Should her bestie Brandi Maxiell even bother joining her or are her services still no longer needed? (iWeb)
- (3) shows that (2) is admitted by the aspectual restriction.
 3. Things seemed perfect, for two years they no longer lived in poverty and could have nice things. [[link](#)]