

# Supplemental relative clauses and syntactic generality

(or: A niche of left-adjunction productivity:  
rethinking parenthetical *as*)

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# Outline

- 1 Goals of the talk
- 2 Supplemental *as*
  - Introductions
  - Motivating a relativization analysis
- 3 Left-adjoined relative clauses
  - Supplemental *which*
  - Supplemental *what*
  - Name-*as*
- 4 Finding your niche
- 5 Final thoughts

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# Goals of the talk

We will:

- 1 Understand why two very similar constructions—supplemental *as* and *which*—have rather different distributions

To do this we will have to:

- 1 Have a syntactic analysis of *as*
- 2 Explore the possibility for left-adjunction of relative clauses and other parenthetical material in English.

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# Introducing *as*

What do we call them?

- The use of *as* illustrated in (1-3) has been called by Potts (2002a,b) *parenthetical-as*, and by the CGEL the *adjunct of comparison*.
- Because they are also *supplemental* (CGEL, ch.15) I will call them supplemental *as*-clauses.

# Introducing *as*, II

What do they look like?

## Example

(1a) Secondly [as most reviewers say \_\_ ], at the end of the book we still don't fully understand where Bush is coming from.

There we saw a clausal (CP) gap. There are also predicate gaps

## Example

(2a) The next day, although I sprayed the pests, [as I knew I must \_\_ ], I stood at arm's length from the compost heap and wore jeans and high-rise trainers.

(See (3) for predicate gaps along with subj-aux inversion)

# Some basic properties

*As*-clauses are characterized syntactically and semantically by:

- A clause with a clausal or predicative gap, semantically identified with some part of the main clause.
- Flexible position within the main clause.

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A relativization analysis is proposed and evaluated with respect to a preposition analysis.

# Long-distance dependency

In their internal syntax, *as*-clauses are nearly indistinguishable from canonical relative clauses (Potts, 2002a,b).

- A “function” word appears initially.
- The clause has a gap.
- The gap in the *as*-clause cannot appear within syntactic islands (relative clauses, complex noun phrases, adjuncts, etc).

This is compatible with a relativizer analysis (5a), but also with a prepositional analysis (5b).

## Competing analyses

(5a) This is BLS 34, [*as*<sub>*i*</sub> she said \_\_ *i*].

(5b) This is BLS 34, [*as* OP she said <OP>].

# Objections?

- ① *As* never appears post-verbally (\*... *she said as*), even though *so*, another predicate/sentential anaphor, can (*so she said/she said so*).
  - ↔ If *as* is a relativizer (while *so* is not), it should never appear post-verbally, regardless its semantic properties: \**My friend, I met in high school who, . . . .*
- ② The analogous word in Thai is apparently a *wh*-word ‘how’. But if it is a relativizer, this would mean overt *wh*-movement in an otherwise *wh*-in-situ language.
  - ↔ Even a prepositional analysis requires positing overt movement—of a phonologically null element.

# Partial anaphora

- The sentences in (6-7) show partial anaphora: the antecedent is a syntactic non-constituent, but semantically a unit.

## Example

- Or perhaps *she got the name of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance close but not quite right*, [as she had with the Arizona Historical Society's library]?
- VP → *get the name of . . . close but not quite right*
- Yet, [just as Bruno claimed for an infinite universe], this finite model has “no center nor edge”.
- “S” → *has no center nor edge*

# Partial anaphora II

- If *as* is explicitly anaphoric, and picks up its meaning from semantic, not syntactic, structures, we get a handle on how it finds its antecedent.
- In fact, this exact sort of partial anaphora is seen in *one*-replacement, *the same thing*, etc.
- This also motivates a single “verbal-*as*” to cover both clausal and predicative cases, as opposed to Potts’ separate CP-*as* and Predicate-*as*.

# A troubling mystery

## The mystery

The distribution of supplemental *as*-clauses is unexpected, given that their internal syntax (not to mention semantics) indicates that they are relative clauses.

## Example

- Article 118/3 of the social chapter opens the way, [as the Prime Minister said], to European-wide collective bargaining.
- To suggest, [as I do], that he is the greatest living painter is to remind a contemporary audience that, after all, permanence, grandeur, deliberation, lucidity and calm are paramount virtues of the art of painting. . . .

# A troubling mystery II

- English relative clauses appear (almost) exclusively after the material they modify.
- Supplemental *as*-clauses exhibit syntactic niching (Ross, 1984), i.e., they have the distribution of parenthetical sentential adverbials: *Our project turned out to be, {unfortunately, to my disappointment, if I may say so, not to be too harsh}, a complete failure.*
- There seem to be conflicting motivations: can modification structure determine external syntax? Or is the relativization analysis misguided?

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# Introducing *which*

- *Which* can relativize on predicates and propositions.
- But it can normally only appear after the modified sentence. For a relative clause, this is expected—but for a sentential modifier, it is unusual.

## Example

(9a) He wondered whether I would give a dinner, [which I said I would].

(9b) These timings will hold so long as wait times exceed processing times, [which is often true].

- In fact, the free distribution of supplemental *as*-clauses is not what is to be explained.
- The rather narrow distribution of supplemental *which* is what requires specification.

## Left-adjoined *which*

- The CGEL notes that “[a] supplementary relative with a coordinated clause as antecedent can precede it, following the coordinator” (p. 1066).

### Example

(10c) Their apparently similar, sharply segmented body plan either arose more than once **or**—[which is also more than possible]—it is very primitive.

(10d) Nevertheless, it is now clear, as I hope to show, that the two opposite types of symptom do in fact appear in connection with the coming of agriculture **and**, [which is more to the point for our present concerns], that this is a phenomenon not without relevance to the understanding of the modern world.

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# Left-adjoined *what*

- The idiomatic phrase *what's more* has the appearance of a relative clause.
- It is in fact the central/prototypical variety of a family of *what be AP* constructions.

## Example

(11b) In other words, at these two points the crystal is pretty well broken away. [What is even more important], the dislocation turns out to be movable.

(11d) How had that fancily-named high-hab brat come to be here at the garrison block? [Mingling, [what's more], with Dorcas gang members, or so it seemed?

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# But wait...

- Taking stock: in some rather limited contexts, with certain (*wh*) relativizers, non-final position is possible.
- But couldn't this just be about *as*? Maybe it's just not a relativizer.
- Perhaps the distributional difference between *as* and *which* is “attributable to the fact that the *as* here is itself the comparative governor, rather than being selected by some superordinate governor that it must follow” (p.1147).

# Name-*as*

- If freedom of distribution is due to the self-governance of *as*, we should expect a separate supplemental use, “name-*as*” to be equally free in distribution.

## Example

The kha-nyou, [as it is known \_\_ locally], was trapped by an expedition in May.

- But name-*as* is essentially adnominal modification, and it must appear adjacent to the name it modifies.

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# Patterns

	canon. sent mod			cxn-al constraint
	canon. adnom			
<b>cxn</b>	<b>post</b>	<b>pre</b>	<b>niching</b>	<b>follows conj.</b>
verbal-as	✓	✓	✓	flexible
which	✓	△	✗	always
what	✓	✓	△	flexible
name-as	✓	△	✗	flexible
adnominal	✓	✗	✗	never

For relative clauses, possible positions within the sentence are mediated by details of the properties of the modified head, and not entirely determined by syntactic type of the modifier.

# Patterns II

What sense are we to make of this?

- Earlier work assumed that all (non-correlative) relative clauses should act like adnominal ones, and so *as*-clauses were somehow internally different.
- But separate constraints on sentential modifiers explains the niching properties of *as*.
- Then it is *which* that must be explained. It is a sentential modifier—but it is also historically *adnominal*.
- It can escape the distributional clutches of its adnominal-relative past in a very particular, construction-specific environment. That environment provides what we might call a “doorway to productivity.”
- Supplemental-*what*, far more idiomatic (and with a very limited adnominal use in standard varieties), is more like *as* than like *which*.

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The main points covered:

- Supplemental verbal-*as* is best analyzed as a relativizer.
- The distribution of relative clauses is not determined so much by the syntactic category of the relativizer, but that of the modified head.
- There is a variety of levels of generalization and productivity with respect to a single principle, i.e., syntactic placement of adverbials.

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