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Russian Adverbs, Universal Hierarchy and Relativised Minimality

In the last several decades the syntax of adverbs has drawn the attention of researchers as there is still no comprehensive theory to explain all the possible variations of their behavior. Even the status of the adverbs in a clause - 'accessory appendices' or 'integral part' - creates disputes among linguists, as discussed by Cinque (2004).

Attempts to find a universal pattern explaining the order of adverbials in the clause lead to Cinque's (1999) proposed hierarchy of adverbs. More recently, Li et al. (2012) suggest that it is possible to divide adverbs into four more general classes which still obey Cinque's hierarchy. These classes are evaluative (EV), epistemic (EP), frequency/habitual (F/H) and manner (MA) (Li et al. 2012) and they are arranged from highest to lowest as follows:

(1) EV > EP > F/H > MA

If two adverbs, belonging to different classes, appear in one clause they will conform to the order in (1): for example, *fortunately*, an evaluative adverb, has to appear higher in a clause than *probably*, an epistemic adverb.

Russian adverbs do not appear to conform the hierarchy as they can be moved to various positions in a simple clause without great changes in meaning. That is why the description and analysis of the syntactic behavior of Russian adverbs usually involves scrambling. Scrambling, a term first introduced by Ross (1967), refers to deviations from the basic, default word order of a particular language that are stylistic in nature.

The syntax of Russian adverbs is addressed in several papers, where different kinds of adverbial movement are analyzed through the prism of scrambling (Shields 2005, Li et al 2012). Investigating constraints on such movement Shields (2005) applies the Relativized Minimality (RM) Condition to the Russian language data and suggests that 'RM is not a condition on adverbial movement in general, but only on movement that moves "far enough"' (Shields 2005). She proposes that 'extremely local movements are immune to RM if the landing site is within the c-command domain of the licensor of the chain, because in this case the head of the chain remains visible to its licensor' (Shields 2005). This means that adverbs belonging to the lower classes of the hierarchy can scramble past those from higher classes to land in a higher position within the clause, in contrast to long-distance (non-local) movement where RM is observed.

In this paper I retest Shields's proposal and show that adverbs cannot undergo long-distance scrambling from a subordinate to a matrix clause. I further suggest that there is a key distinction in the adverbial classes that has not yet been noted and which suggest they have a different syntax. Specifically, I show that adverbs belonging to the higher classes of hierarchy, namely evaluative and epistemic, can be inserted in any position within a clause. However, if two adverbs from the different higher classes appear in one clause their order relative to each other appears to be fixed.

(2) Dzhon, k schast'yu, vozmozhno, poslal by svoim detyam den'gi.
John fortunately probably would send self children money
'John fortunately would probably send his children money'.

(2a) *Dzon, vozmozhno, k schast'yu, poslal by svoim detyam den'gi.
John probably fortunately would send self children money
'John probably would fortunately send children money'.

Adverbs from the lower classes (frequency/habituality, manner), on the other hand, can appear in any order with respect to each other. I adopt the suggestion, proposed by Shields (2005), that these adverbs are generated in the VP and undergo scrambling within the c-command domain of their licensor. Higher adverbs, in contrast, do not have licensors and

therefore depend on their order to be organized with respect to each other. This proposal links the level at which adverbs are merged into the sentence with their ability to undergo scrambling, thus showing that scrambling can be restricted to certain syntactic domains.

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