

Specifiers vs. Non-specifiers:  
Evidence from Adjuncts in Formosan Languages, Chinese and English

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Cinque (1999, 2004) argues that adjuncts are base-generated as specifiers of functional projections or complements of verbs (cf. Alexiadou 1997 and Haumann 2007). Tang (1990, 2001a, 2008), by contrast, claims that non-specifier positions are also accessible for location of adjuncts (cf. Travis 1988, Chomsky 1995 and Ernst 2002). The discussion in this paper is three-fold. First, it is shown that, as pointed out in Tang (1999, 2001b), in Formosan languages like Paiwan, elements with oblique meanings may act as predicates or non-predicates. Predicate constructions are complex sentences with non-finite complements, whereas non-predicate constructions are of mono-clausal structures (cf. Chang 2007).

A further examination of Paiwan against other Formosan languages like Kavalan and Tsou provides evidence not only for a bi-clausal/non-restructuring analysis of oblique predicates in Formosan languages (cf. Wurmbrand 2001), but also for a postulation that Formosan oblique adjuncts may be merged to functional heads to which voice, aspect and pronominal checking may be applicable (cf. Rizzi 1999 and Tsai 2008).

In addition, the variation in the generation site of Formosan oblique elements seems to indicate the existence of a process of grammaticalization of such elements: control verb > raising verb > secondary predicate > adjunct > adverbial clitic (cf. Tsai 2007). Paiwan, Kavalan and Tsou may all be claimed to observe various stages of grammaticalization of oblique elements in Formosan languages, in which (1) oblique predicates co-occurring with complement markers may have been more resistant to the grammaticalization than those without such markers; (2) oblique predicates denoting meanings closely related to the interpretation of tense, aspect and mood may have been more easily grammaticalized than those without such meanings; and (3) oblique predicates with Patient Voice (PV) marking may have been more difficult to get grammaticalized than those with Agent Voice (AV) marking.

Second, unlike most of their Formosan counterparts, in languages like Chinese and English, elements with oblique meanings may act as non-predicates by means of grammaticalization or derivational morphology. Furthermore, it is illustrated that in Mandarin Chinese, only heads, functional or lexical, may undergo the LF operation of X-not-X questions, the latter of which include verbs, co-verbs and adjectives, but not prepositions (cf. Liu 2008). As a result, like Formosan adjuncts, in Chinese only adjuncts base-generated as heads, not as specifiers, of functional projections may undergo covert head movement of X-not-X questions (cf. Ernst 1994). Likewise, in English only functional head elements like modals and negation markers may block checking of tense marking by verbs (cf. Ochi 2004).

Third, it is demonstrated that in Mandarin Chinese, elements that trigger intervention effects for X-not-X questions are mainly quantificational in meaning (cf. Tsai 2008). It does not matter whether they occupy head or specifier positions; it is also irrelevant that they function as arguments or adjuncts. Adjuncts generally with non-quantificational meanings and nominal *wh*-counterparts, however, do not bring out such intervention effects. It is thus suggested that the Spec-head agreement checking between specifier adjuncts and raised Xs, together with a version of Relativized Minimality along the lines of Rizzi (2004) and Tsai (2008), may capture the similarities and differences in scopal intervention among Chinese causal *how*, reason *why* and X-not-X questions. An implication of such an account seems to be that non-quantificational adjuncts may be located in adjunction positions.