Control in illocutionary adjuncts as a diagnostic for discourse arguments

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Overview This paper presents data on a previously undiscussed illocutionary modifier that features a PRO argument, (1), and argues that control of PRO in this construction provides evidence for the presence of covert discourse participant arguments in the left periphery.

(1)   As $PRO_{speaker}$ a doctor, the only cure for a cold is rest.

Background That some modifiers operate on the speech act level (*illocutionary* modifiers), rather than modifying the content of a proposition (*propositional* modifiers), has been noted at least as early as Rutherford 1970, as well as in Jackendoff 1972, Tenny & Speas 2003, Haegeman 2003, Sauerland & Yatsushiro 2014, Charnavel 2018, a.o.

(2)   a.   What is your name, *again*?   [Sauerland&Yatsushiro 2014]
       b.   Did Liz leave, *since you know everything*?   [Charnavel 2018]

In (2), the italicized constituents contribute information about discourse conditions; in (2a), *again* conveys that the information requested is already in the common ground, and in (2b), *since you know everything* explains the speaker's motivation for asking the question (2b). The interpretation of these modifiers provides information about their scope relative to the rest of the proposition, and has been used as the basis for analyses of the internal structure of the speech act layer of the extended left periphery.

At the same time, a line of research into phenomena like logophoricity, perspectival binding, evidentiality, and switch reference (Tenny & Speas 2003, Miyagawa 2012, Zu 2015, Zu 2018, Bhadra 2017, a.o.) have benefitted from intricate proposals for the argument structure of discourse participants in the speech act layer. These arguments, however, can be difficult to detect in languages, like English, that lack these phenomena. By appealing to illocutionary adjuncts with a locally controlled PRO argument, as in (1), these arguments become detectable.

Control in illocutionary adjuncts I argue that illocutionary adjuncts like (1) involve a locally controlled PRO argument. The structure of illocutionary *as a NP* modifiers is based on the structure of propositional uses of *as a NP* modifiers lower in the clause, which I argue also require local binding of their PRO argument. Whether PRO can be bound by the speaker, the addressee, or both, varies with the force of the utterance (declarative vs. interrogative), and whether it occurs in a matrix or an embedded context. This variation is explained by making reference to the argument structure of the speech act layer.

Propositional *as a NP* adjuncts Unlike illocutionary *as a NP* adjuncts, propositional *as a NP* adjuncts modify one of the eventive arguments of the proposition. They have been analyzed by Zobel 2016, Zobel 2017, who considers them to be adjuncts containing PRO and a small clause with modal semantics that indicates the role or function of the antecedent of PRO. Zobel 2017 proposes that PRO in these structures are a case of discourse control, and are bound via pragmatics rather than syntax, as they can be bound by non c-commanding arguments and, she suggests, can be PRO_{arb}.

(3)   a.   As PRO_i a child, the presence of a stranger scared her$_i$
       b.   As PRO_{arb} a child, life is easy.

I argue that *as a NP* is not discourse control, but rather it is locally bound by the argument it modifies, and subsequent movement obscures this requirement. Evidence for this comes from pronominal binding effects, which reveal that the *as a NP* adjunct must originate in a position below the argument that binds PRO.

(4)   a.   [PRO_i as his$_j$ friend] John$_j$ expects Mary$_i$ _ to come to the party
       b.   *[PRO_i as John$_j$'s friend] he$_j$ expects Mary$_i$ _ to come to the party

Example (4b) requires that the adjunct be base-generated in a position where *he* binds *John*, violating Condition C. If this were discourse binding, there would be no motivation for the as a phrase to originate lower than Mary. Island effects also point to sentence-initial *as a NP* phrases in non-speech act uses being the result of movement.

If (3b) involves a covert experiencer argument, then it is not an instance of PRO_{arb} but of binding by an implicit argument receiving a generic interpretation (Landau 2013), and both examples in (3) are reducible to a more general property of unexpected binding with experiencer verbs (Postal 1970), addressed via a number of different approaches (Pesetsky 1987, Belletti & Rizi 1988, Landau 2009, a.o.).

Illocutionary *as a NP* adjuncts Illocutionary uses of *as a NP*, however, do not have an overt c-commanding antecedent for their PRO arguments (5), but the binding possibilities of PRO are very constrained nonetheless. In matrix declarative sentences (5a), the only possible interpretation is one where the speaker binds PRO. In matrix interrogatives, either a speaker or an addressee oriented reading of PRO is possible (5b):

(5) a. As $\text{PRO}_{spkr/*addrs}$ a film critic, this movie deserves an Oscar.
     b. As $\text{PRO}_{spkr/addrs}$ a film critic, does this movie deserve an Oscar?

The data in (5b) can either mean that the speaker is a film critic, and as such, is interested in the addressee's opinion, or that the addressee is a film critic, and can give an evaluation informed by that role. The asymmetry between matrix interrogatives and declaratives (interrogatives allow speaker and addressee oriented readings, declaratives only allow speaker-oriented reading) persists regardless of how contextually plausible the addressee-oriented meaning is in interrogatives, making a pragmatic story implausible:

(6) As $\text{PRO}_{spkr/*addrs}$ a vegetarian, the entree contains pork.

Illocutionary *as a NP* phrases are possible in embedded declaratives under verbs of saying. Parallel to the matrix declaratives, the only possible interpretation is one where PRO is bound by Mary. (If the *as a NP* phrase occurs in the matrix clause, rather than the embedded clause, either argument can bind PRO, but crucially in these configurations this is no longer an illocutionary use, but a proposition one.)

(7) a. Mary_m told John_j that, as $\text{PRO}_{m/*j}$ a film critic, this movie deserves an Oscar.
     b. Mary_m asked John_j if, as $\text{PRO}_{j/*m}$ as a film critic, this movie deserves an Oscar.

Embedded questions allow only a matrix object oriented reading, as in (7b), and are therefore not parallel to matrix questions, which allow either an addressee or a speaker oriented reading (5b).

Analysis Given the proposal that PRO in *as a NP* adjuncts must be locally bound, the pattern of data described above can be used to evaluate the structure of the speech act layer of the left periphery. In matrix declaratives, recall that the addressee is not a possible binder for PRO. However, the speaker and addressee are both available binders for PRO in matrix questions. This suggests that there is no addressee argument to serve as a possible antecedent in matrix declaratives, but that the addressee argument is present in matrix questions. One way to model this is by having the question head, or some sub-part of it (here schematized as $\text{SA}_2{}^0$ in (8b)) introduce the addressee; similar approaches are taken in Woods 2014 and Sauerland & Yatsushiro 2014. The proposed structure is illustrated in (8a) for declaratives and (8b) for interrogatives, where the boxed numbers indicate possible adjunction sites for *as a NP*.

(8) a. $[_{SAP} \text{ speaker}_i \boxed{1} \text{SA}^0 [... [_{TP} ...]]]$
     b. $[_{SAP_1} \text{ speaker} \boxed{1} \text{SA}_1{}^0 [_{SAP_2} \text{ addressee}_i \boxed{2} \text{SA}_2{}^0 [... [_{TP} ...]]]]$

In (8a), for adjunction site $\boxed{1}$, the only binder for PRO is the speaker argument. In the interrogative structure in (8b) the adjunct attaches below either the speaker ($\boxed{1}$) or the addressee ($\boxed{2}$) argument to be bound.

Illocutionary *as a NP* is possible in embedded contexts to a limited extent based on the embedding verb; *ask*, *tell*, *say* and other verbs of speech allow it, whereas other types of predicate do not. In embedded declaratives, recall that *as a NP* is bound by the matrix subject (7a). This suggests that the SAP is embedded, along with the speaker argument.

(9) $[\text{speaker SA}^0 [_{CP} [_{TP} \text{Mary}_i \text{ told John } [\text{ that } [_{SAP} \text{ speaker}_i \boxed{1} \text{SA}^0 [... [_{TP} ...]]]]]]]$

The embedded adjunction site for *as a NP* in $\boxed{1}$ only permits PRO to be bound by the embedded speaker argument. Unlike embedded declaratives, embedded interrogatives cannot contain the entire SAP of a matrix clause, as their PRO argument can only be bound by the matrix goal argument (7b).

(10) $[\text{speaker SA}^0 [_{CP} [_{TP} \text{Mary asked John}_i [\text{ whether } [_{SAP_2} \text{ addressee}_i \boxed{1} \text{SA}_2{}^0 [... [_{TP} ...]]]]]]]$

In (10), the embedded *as a NP* modifier is bound by the embedded addressee argument; because the higher projection associated with the speaker in matrix questions (8b) is absent, there is no speaker argument to bind PRO, and only the addressee-oriented interpretation is possible.

Conclusions Control in the illocutionary modifiers like *as a NP* can be used to determine the presence of covert argument in languages, like English, that otherwise lack morphosyntactic phenomena directly sensitive to speech act structure.