

Root Phenomena and Syntax/Semantics Mismatch

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Utterance Modifiers

- One kind of sentence adverbs doesn't seem to modify the proposition expressed by their complement. Instead, they are used to make a comment on the speech act carried out by the utterance of this complement (for German, see e.g., Mittwoch, 1977; Thim-Mabrey, 1988; Pittner, 1999).
- (1) Frankly, you're not the best poker player.

Semantic Unembeddability

- These adverbs are generally unembeddable under other operators, as argued by (Potts, 2005) and demonstrated extensively in (Scheffler, 2008).
- (2) # If John is, frankly, an idiot, then I'm just being honest.
(3) # Bill said that, confidentially, Al's wife is having an affair. Potts (2005, ex. (4.140))

Syntactic Unintegration

- Utterance modifying adverbials cannot be syntactically integrated in the V2 clause in German.
- (4) * Mal ehrlich / * Von Frau zu Frau ist er wirklich nicht so schlau.
Honestly / From woman to woman, is he really not so smart.
'Honestly / From woman to woman, he really isn't that smart.'
- (5) Mal ehrlich / Von Frau zu Frau, er ist wirklich nicht so schlau.
Honestly / From woman to woman, he is really not so smart.
'Honestly / From woman to woman, he really isn't that smart.'
- The two properties show that these modifiers are generally restricted to root contexts.
 - This makes sense, given that they modify the utterance relation between a speaker and an utterance.

Problem: Utterance Modifiers in Embedded Contexts

- Utterance modifiers do however sometimes appear embedded within the sentence.
 - First, they are possible in nonrestrictive relative clauses and other supplemental phrases (see also Potts, 2005, p. 146):
- (6) John, who frankly did not lift a finger to help me, complained about dinner later.
- Second, they can show up under other operators if the attitude verbs is a verb of saying or the embedded subject is the speaker:
- (7) I feel that, quite frankly, Ed is not trustworthy.
(8) I have to go now, because I'm frankly tired of this discussion.
- In these examples, *frankly* is syntactically embedded in a *because*-clause. It is not semantically embedded however, since the honesty is not the reason for why the speaker has to leave. Rather, the fact that the speaker is being frank in giving their reason is contributed as a side comment.

Potts' Analysis

Conventional Implicature

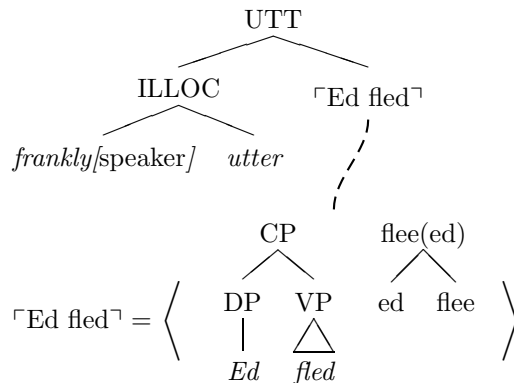
- Grice (1989); Karttunen and Peters (1978); Potts (2005)
- CIs are meanings conventionally associated with words
- CIs are commitments made by the speaker of the utterance
- They are logically independent of the assertions
- Tests for CIs: Bonami and Godard (2005) (for evaluative adverbs in French) – CIs cannot be semantically embedded.

Utterance Modifying Adverbs as CIs

- Potts (2005) argues to take the term “utterance modifying” quite literally in that adverbs like *frankly* are understood to modify the relation between a speaker and an utterance. He introduces trees like the following (adapted from (Potts, 2005, ex. (4.148))):

(9) a. Frankly, Ed fled.

b.



c. $\lceil \text{Ed fled} \rceil = \langle \begin{array}{c} \text{CP} \\ \text{DP} \quad \text{VP} \\ | \quad \triangle \\ \text{Ed} \quad \text{fled} \end{array} \text{flee(ed)} \rangle$

- The adverb *frankly* modifies the relation between the speaker and the utterance, but this is located in the conventional implicature dimension.
- Contributing its meaning in the CI dimension makes the utterance available as an argument for *frankly*. Only a CI predicate can attach higher than the CP-node where the assertion of the sentence is computed and thus modify the utterance relation.

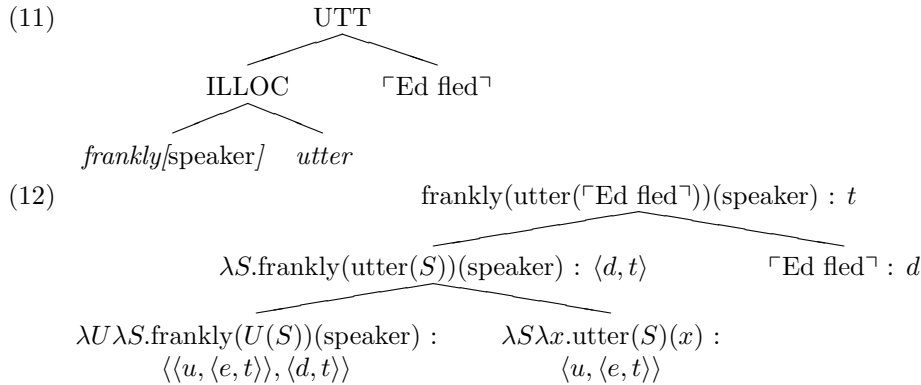
Semantic Unembeddability

- First, CI items are never semantically embeddable, since there are no operators that can take CI type arguments, i.e., there are no operators that target the type σ^c .
- But more importantly, Potts (2005, p. 149) argues that utterance modifiers must be CI types and cannot be semantically embeddable, because they modify the relation between the speaker and an utterance.
- In a sentence such as (10), the speaker is not in an utterance relation with the embedded clause “Al’s wife is having an affair”, so an utterance modifier such as *man to man* cannot modify it.

(10) # Bill said to Al that, man to man, his wife was having an affair. (Potts, 2005, ex. (4.140d))

Syntactic Unintegration

- Unintegrated syntax is not caused by CI-ness, since evaluating adverbs like *leider* (‘unfortunately’) are integrated.
- Targeting the utterance relation as an argument, then, leads to unintegrated syntax.
- According to Potts’ analysis as shown above, an utterance modifier is not part of the sentence it appears in, neither in the syntactic nor semantic sense. Thus, it cannot take part in the V2 word order in German, since the verb-second word order constraint works within the sentence (CP) level.
- The semantic derivation for (9a) proceeds as in (12), with d the type of utterances. (11) shows the relevant syntactic structure again.



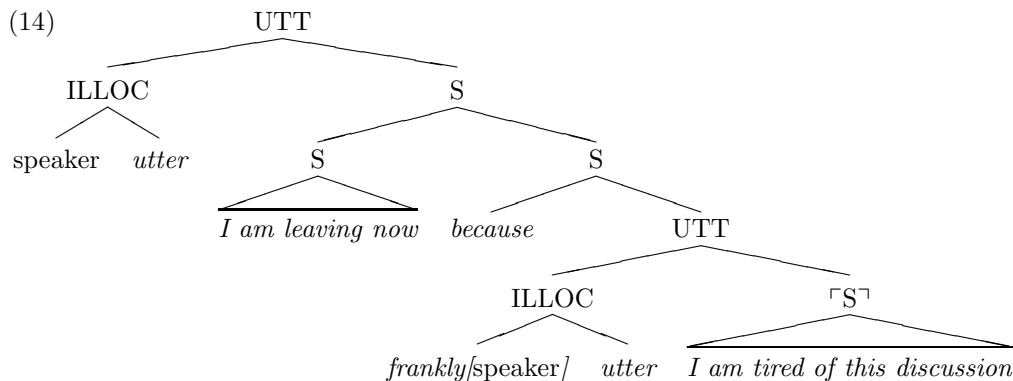
- In this analysis, *frankly* retrieves this utterance from the tree: it is the sister of the illocutionary complex ILOC.

Problem with this Analysis

- There are cases where the utterance modifying adverb modifies not the whole utterance it appears in, but just a smaller chunk.
- (13) I’m leaving now because I’m frankly tired of this discussion.
- In this sentence, *frankly* applies not to the entire utterance, in particular not to the part “I’m leaving now”. The speaker is merely expressing that their admission that they are tired of the discussion is frank.
 - Assuming the syntactic approach from (Potts, 2005), one would have to assume that there is an utterance node that encompasses just the complement clause “I’m tired of this discussion”, since utterance nodes are what is being modified by *frankly*.

Extending Potts (2005) to Embedded UM: Version A

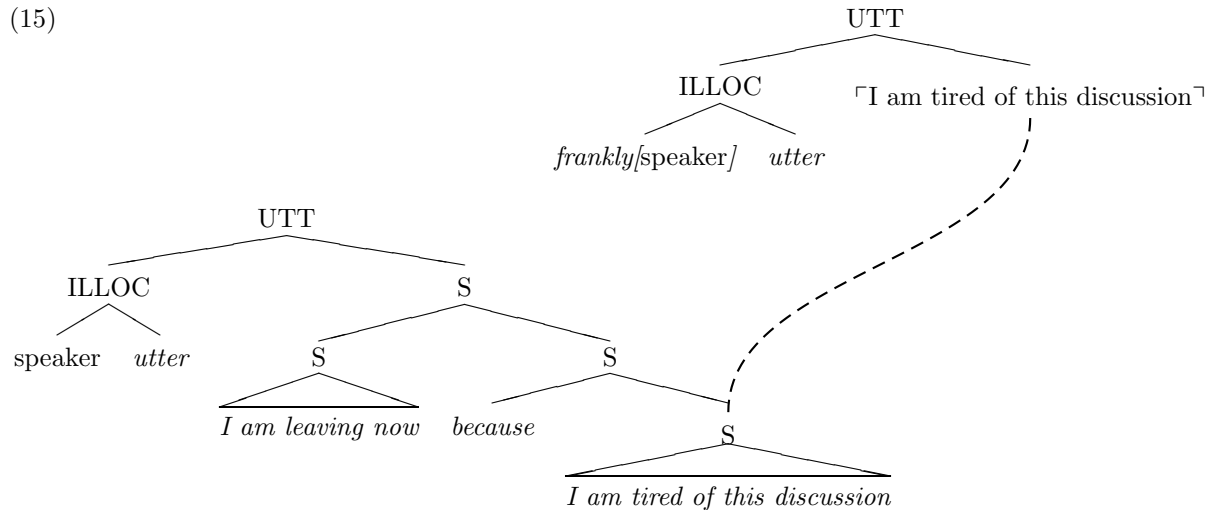
- Straightforward solution: The utterance node that is the argument to *frankly* is introduced in situ.



- This analysis cannot be correct because it suggests that *because* takes an utterance as its argument, not a simple proposition, as seen by the quotation marks $\ulcorner \urcorner$.
- But the sentence (13) simply does not mean that: it is not my (frank) utterance of the fact that I'm tired of the discussion that is causing me to leave.

Extending Potts (2005) to Embedded UM: Version B

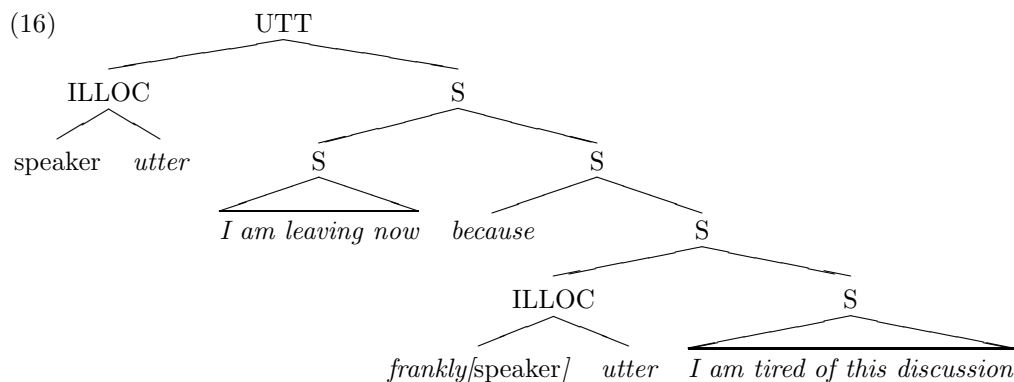
- Faithful solution: The utterance modifier is taken to be entirely outside the syntactic representation of the host sentence.



- In this approach, the structure of (13) is a non-tree graph, where the clause “I am tired of this discussion” is multiply dominated.
- The syntactic unintegration of utterance modifiers falls out easily from this analysis, since they are outside of the syntactic tree of the host sentence.
- But the meaning of the dashed line is not entirely clear, and such graphs are at the least unusual syntactic representations.

Extending Potts (2005) to Embedded UM: Version C

- Syncategorematic solution: This purely syntactic account would be to appeal to a syncategorematic rule which converts a node in the tree into its utterance value.
- Under this variant, a tree such as (14) would be used but without the quotation marks. Instead, the function of the quotation marks (the fact that *frankly* applies to an utterance) would be built into the ILLOC complex by a syncategorematic rule.



- In this version *frankly utter* takes a regular S as its sister, but the ILOC complex contributes not only the predication of *frankly*, but also the conversion of that sister into an utterance (previously done by the quotation marks).
- However, the syntactic facts from German show that this cannot work. As observed in (Scheffler, 2008), it is adverbials such as *ehrlich gesagt* ('frankly speaking') in German which have the double function of predication and type-shifting: *ehrlich gesagt* takes a proposition as its argument and with the 'speaking'-part of its meaning converts this into the utterance of that proposition, which is then modified by 'frankly'.

Aside: *Frankly Speaking*

- There is a group of adverbs in German with similar meaning as *frankly* that all contain an overt participle of a saying verb, such as *ehrlich gesagt* ('honestly speaking') and *offen gestanden* ('openly admitted').
 - These adverbs can optionally appear syntactically integrated into the V2 main clause.
- (17) Ehrlich gesagt habe ich keine Lust auf Eis.
Honestly said have I no mood for icecream.
'Honestly, I'm not in the mood for icecream.'
- (18) Ehrlich gesagt, ich habe keine Lust auf Eis.
Honestly said, I have no mood for icecream.
'Honestly, I'm not in the mood for icecream.'
- The crucial difference between (*mal/ganz*) *ehrlich* ('(once/very) honestly') and *ehrlich gesagt* ('honestly speaking') is the presence of 'speaking' in the second case.
 - Thus, the adverb may be taking a propositional argument just like the evaluative adverbs of the *unfortunately*-type, not an utterance argument.
 - The "utterance" part of the meaning of these adverbs is overtly expressed.
 - An argument for this is the fact that these adverbials can be semantically embedded under *say* even with a third-person subject (19). Recall that true utterance modifying adverbs such as *mal ehrlich* ('frankly') cannot be embedded under attitude verbs like *say* with third-person subjects (20).
- (19) Paul meinte, dass er ehrlich gesagt niemals darüber nachgedacht hat.
Paul said, that he honestly said never about it thought hat.
'Paul said that he honestly never thought about it.'
- (20) *Paul meinte, dass er ganz ehrlich niemals darüber nachgedacht hat.
Paul said, that he honestly never about it thought has.
'Paul said that he honestly never thought about it.'
- Other kinds of embedding are impossible for adverbs like *ehrlich gesagt*, though, showing that they behave like evaluative adverbs such as *fortunately*, and not like simple propositional adverbs such as *probably*.
 - For example, in the following sentence the contribution of honesty is not part of the reason embedded under 'because'.
- (21) Ich gehe nach Hause, weil ich ehrlich gesagt keine Lust mehr habe.
I go to home, because I honestly said no interest anymore have.
'I'm going home, because I'm frankly not interested anymore.'
- We know that the argument of *ehrlich gesagt* is a proposition from the fact that *ehrlich gesagt* is syntactically integrated in V2 in German.
 - Semantic contribution is on the CI dimension (just like *fortunately*).
 - Utterance meaning is part of the meaning of the adverb.

- In contrast, the argument of true utterance modifiers such as *frankly* (or *mal ehrlich* in German) is already an utterance. This is the reason why syntactic integration is impossible – the utterance modifier is not part of the utterance it modifies.
- Therefore, while a syncategorematic rule within the ILOC complex may well be at play for modifiers such as *ehrlich gesagt* (‘frankly speaking’), this cannot be the right solution for true utterance modifiers.

Summary so far:

Proposal	characteristics	problem	
Potts 2005		cannot account for embedded utt mod.	–
Version A	embedded utterance node	wrong semantics	–
Version B	graph syntax	unusual syntactic representation	?
Version C	syncategorematic	accounts for <i>ehrlich gesagt</i>	–

Alternative Anaphoric Proposal

- Potts uses the assumption of the performative hypothesis (Ross, 1970): the idea that speech verbs and the speaker are covertly present in the syntactic representation of each utterance.
- As an alternative to “utterance” nodes in the syntactic representation, I will argue that the semantic argument of the utterance modifying adverb is retrieved anaphorically.

Discourse Anaphora

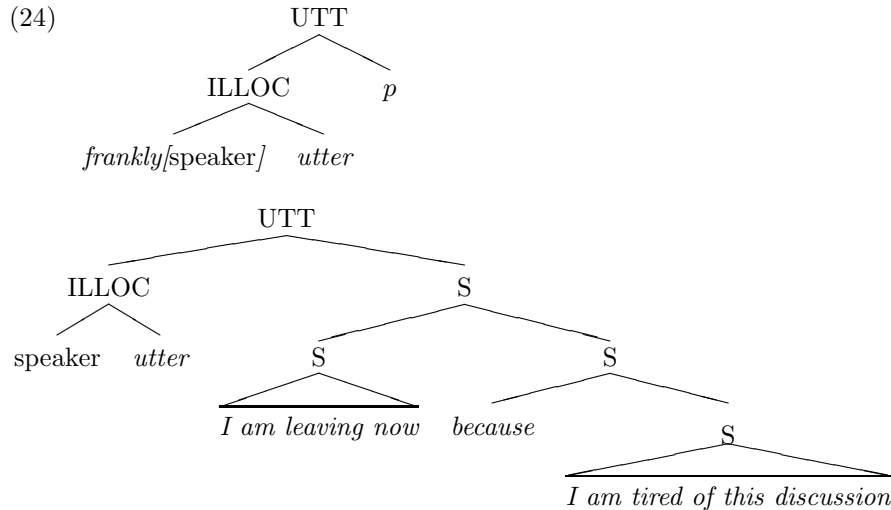
- Anaphoric references to implicit utterances are possible at least for overt anaphors: In (22), the anaphor *that* in B’s exclamation arguably refers back to A’s utterance.
- (22) A: This guy is a lazy bum!
B: That’s not fair! He couldn’t help us because he was sick.
- Bonnie Webber (Mitsakaki et al., 2003, and references therein) has argued extensively that certain discourse connectives, in particular discourse adverbials, retrieve their arguments anaphorically.
- (23) a. Although Sally rarely eats meat, she enjoys an occasional bacon cheeseburger.
b. Otherwise, she would pine away for lack of grease.
- Taking those two facts together, there could be discourse particles which take utterances as their anaphoric arguments.
 - Items with this property, I propose, are the utterance modifying adverbials like *frankly*.
 - If one can assume that an utterance meaning can be derived from a whole or parts of a clause, this meaning can serve as the antecedent of the argument of utterance modifying adverbs such as *frankly*.

Anaphoric Approach Version A

- This proposal is a variant of (14), without the need for the additional utterance node.
- *Frankly* can then be said to take the utterance value of its sister as its argument, wherever it is syntactically located.
- The semantic unembeddability is easily covered here, and this also nicely accounts for the possibility of utterance modifiers to appear syntactically embedded.
- But the syntactic unintegration of these adverbs in languages like German cannot be accounted for without additional stipulations: If *frankly* is just a sentence modifier in the same structural (syntactic) relationship with its sister as *unfortunately*, why doesn’t it appear integrated into the V2 clause just like these other modifiers do?

Anaphoric Approach Version B

- Syntactically more radical, variant of (15).
- We could accept the fact that utterance modifiers are not part of the syntactic representation of their host sentence, as evidenced for example in German by the lack of integration.
- Thus, a sentence like (13) contributes essentially two syntactic trees, one for the host sentence and one for the utterance modifier contribution.



- The utterance modifier *frankly* retrieves (the utterance value of) its argument anaphorically from the host sentence. The anaphor *p* will be resolved to the utterance “I am tired of this discussion”.
- In effect, this proposal spells out the meaning of the dashed line in the previous variant, without resorting to non-tree graphs as syntactic representations.
- The rest of the Potts’ original analysis would carry over unchanged to this alternative approach.
- The utterance modifier stands outside the syntactic and semantic representation of the clause. In German, this is clear from the unintegrated word order. The utterance modifying adverb must be outside of the CP (sentence), since it would take part in the V2 word order otherwise.
- Since the adverb takes a CI meaning, its argument anaphor can be resolved to the utterance of the (semantic complement) clause.
- The clear advantage of this approach is that it accounts for both crucial properties of utterance modifiers (semantic unembeddability and syntactic unintegration) while at the same time allowing easily for the syntactically embedded appearances of these items.
- The crucial assumption is that utterance modifiers are not part of the syntactic structure of the host sentence, which Potts already argues.
- These items become in effect parentheticals.

Summary and Open Questions

- I have discussed the potentially problematic cases of utterance modifying adverbs that appear in non-root clauses.
- The proposal in (Potts, 2005) cannot account for these cases.
- Therefore, I have proposed an alternative whereby these conventional implicature items retrieve their argument anaphorically. This approach can also be extended to other conventional implicature items as shown in (Scheffler, 2008).
- In effect, utterance modifiers resemble parentheticals.

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