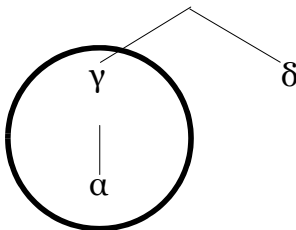# Precede-and-command revisited revisited

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1. The issue

(1)   What are the configurational constraints on dependency?

(2)   *Dependency*
      binding (antecedent–dependent)
      movement (operator–variable)
      agreement (controller–dependent)
      etc.

(3)   *c-command*
      α c-commands δ iff α is merged with (a constituent dominating) δ

(4)   Epstein 1999: this is a function of Merge

(5)   Bruening (2014) 'Precede-and-command revisited' (B14)
      a. it's basically precedence
      b. constrained by 'phase command'

(6)   *phase-command*
      α phase-commands δ iff there is no phasal node γ such that γ dominates α but not δ

(7)   *phasal nodes* (Chomsky 2001)
      clause (CP), verb phrase (vP), noun phrase (DP)

(8)   *no dependency*

      a. c-command theory: ever
      b. phase-command theory: unless γ is not a phasal node

2.   Evidence for phase command: Principle C

(9)   Interpretation of R-expressions: dependency is obviation

(10) *Condition C (Chomsky 1981)*
    a. An R-expression is free
    b. x is free if there is no y such that y c-commands x and x and y are co-indexed

(11) *Condition C (B14)*
    a. An R-expression is free
    b. x is free if there is no y such that y precedes and phase-commands x and x and y are co-indexed

(12) a.   *He$_i$ loves John$_i$
     b.   *I met him$_i$ in Ben$_i$'s office
     c.   *He$_i$ said that John$_i$ is an idiot

(13) [$_{DP}$ His$_i$ mother] loves John$_i$
    ✓c-command theory
    ✓precede-and-command theory (if **DP** = phasal node)

(14) a. *I [$_{vP}$ met him$_i$ in Ben$_i$'s office]   (=[12b])
     b. People [$_{vP}$ worship him$_i$] in Kissinger$_i$'s native country
     ✗ c-command theory (*him* not a c-commander in either case)
     ✓ precede-and-command theory (*him* inside a **vP**-phase in b. only)

(15) a. *[$_{IP}$ He$_i$ has a lot of talent] and [$_{IP}$ Peter$_i$ should go far]
     b. Mary said [$_{CP}$ that he$_i$ has a lot of talent] and [$_{CP}$ that Peter$_i$ should go far]
     ✗ c-command theory (*he* not a c-commander in either case)
     ✓ precede-and-command theory (*him* inside a **CP**-phase in b. only)

3.   Some doubt

(16) a. *VP-adjunct, object outside vP*   (Dutch)

*Ik	heb	hem$_i$	in Ben$_i$-s	kantoor	gesproken
1SG.NOM	AUX.1SG	3SG.M:ACC	in Ben-POSS	office	speak:PART

     'I saw him in Ben's office.'
     ✓ c-command theory (*hem* object shifted = A-movement)

    b. *IP-adjunct, object outside vP*

… dat	ze	hem$_i$	[$_{vP}$ op	handen	dragen]	in Kissinger$_i$-s
that	3PL	3SG.M:ACC	on	hand:PL	carry:INF	in Kissinger-POSS

     geboorteland
     native.country

     '…that they adore him in Kissinger's home country.'
     (*op handen dragen* 'adore')
     ✗ precede-and-command theory (no phasal node shielding off *hem*)

4. Relevance of discourse

(17) *B14: left-to-right reference tracking*
   a. **active** vs. **background** discourse referents
   b. Principle C is about **active** discourse referents
   c. move discourse referents from **active** to **background** at the <u>right edge of a phase</u>

(15b)   Mary said [$_{CP}$ that he$_i$ has a lot of talent] and [$_{CP}$ that Peter$_i$ should go far]

         active   *he* > background   active

(18) The intuition about active vs. background discourse referents is probably right, but are phases really relevant?

5. Bolinger on 'repeated nouns'

(19) *Bolinger 1977 'Pronouns and repeated nouns'*
   a. default: use a pronoun instead of a repeated noun
   b. use a repeated noun to reintroduce the referent as a topic
   c. there can be 'distractors' increasing the need to be clear about the identity of a discourse referent
   d. this mechanism is not sensitive to phrasal status

(20) a. i)   *He$_i$ flunked when John$_i$ cheated
   ii)   He$_i$ usually flunks when John$_i$ tries to cheat
   b. i)   *He$_i$ was just a little boy when I saw John$_i$
   ii)   He$_i$ was just a little boy when I first saw John$_i$
   c. i)   *I bought him$_i$ the house that John$_i$ wanted
   ii)   I bought him$_i$ the house that John$_i$ always wanted
   d. i)   *He$_i$ looks at the wall and John$_i$ throws the ball at it
   ii)   He$_i$ looks at me and John$_i$ goes out of his mind
   e. i)   *Either he$_i$ eats or John$_i$ sleeps
   ii)   Either he$_i$ does what I say or John$_i$ loses his job
   f. i)   *He$_i$ lost the money and John$_i$ found it again
   ii)   He$_i$ lost the money and then John$_i$ found it again
   g. i)   *He$_i$ is not to be believed when John$_i$ tells a story
   ii)   He$_i$ is not to be believed when John$_i$ tells a crazy story like that
   h. i)   *He$_i$ didn't mind, when I blamed John$_i$ for it
   ii)   He$_i$ didn't seem to mind, when I blamed John$_i$ for it
   i. i)   *He$_i$'s going to be flunked, if John$_i$ cheats
   ii)   He$_i$'s going to get flunked, if John$_i$ cheats
   j. i)   *It surprises him$_i$ that John$_i$ is so well liked
   ii)   It surprised him$_i$ that John$_i$ was so well liked

(21) The contrasts in (20) are subtle [like in (15)], but phases are **not relevant**.

(22) Bolinger's observation applies to the earlier cases also.
    (14b)   People [$_{vP}$ worship him$_i$] in Kissinger$_i$'s native country
           Kissinger can be usefully reintroduced as the discourse topic because his identity is crucial to the reference of *native country*.
    (15b)   Mary said [$_{CP}$ that he$_i$ has a lot of talent] and [$_{CP}$ that Peter$_i$ should go far]
           Distractor = the circumstance that the quote is ascribed to Mary, so we need to keep track of who the speaker has in mind, as well as of who the speaker thinks Mary has in mind (and the speaker has to anticipate that)

(23) In fact, the Principle C-effects can be lifted under relevant conditions as well:
    (14a)   [Ben is such a private person that he won't let anyone in his office] So it was quite a thrill to actually meet him$_i$ in Ben$_i$'s OFFICE.
    (15a)   [We spent all afternoon discussing draft picks, and noone generated more heated discussion than the shortstop from Kansas, Peter. But in the end we reached a consensus.] He$_i$ has a lot of talent and Peter$_i$ should go far. [But who needs another shortstop?]

(24) *Conclusion for Principle C*
    a. not an absolute principle (use a pronoun for a known discourse referent)
    b. phases irrelevant

(25) Principle C not the best case for probing dependency relations

6.   The argument from conceptual necessity

(26) (Something like) Merge is inevitable in the approach to syntactic structure of current generative grammar (including B14)

(27) C-command is a function of Merge (Epstein 1999), hence it, too, is inevitable.

(28) The status of *phases* is much less clear:
    a. they are *useful*, but not conceptually necessary;
    b. that CP/vP should be phasal nodes is essentially a stipulation;
    c. layered derivations (Zwart 2009) cover much the same ground, and are needed anyway.

References

Bruening 2014 Precede-and-command revisited *Language* ● Bolinger 1977 Pronouns and repeated nouns *IULC* ● Chomsky 1981 *Lectures on Government and Binding* ○ 2001 Derivation by phase in Kenstowicz, ed., *Ken Hale: a life in language* ● Epstein 1999 Un-principled syntax: the derivation of syntactic relations in Epstein & Hornstein, eds., *Working minimalism* ● Langacker 1969 On pronominalization and the chain of command in Reibel & Schane, eds., *Modern Studies in English* ● Reinhart 1976 *The semantic domain of anaphora* ● Vanden Wyngaerd 1989 Object shift as an A-movement rule *MITWPL* ● Zwart 2009 Prospects for top-down derivation *Catalan Journal of Linguistics*.

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