

## Circumventing Islands: The Curious Case of an Apparent Island in Malayalam

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### 1. The Problem: Does the figure include the boundary?

- The language: Malayalam  
(Dravidian, spoken in South India and conventionally described as SOV, Nominative-Accusative, Wh in situ language)
  - The constructions: two types of sentences: Exhaustive Focus construction and a verb-final construction, roughly corresponding in form to Thetic and Categorical distinctions<sup>1</sup> (Sasse 1987).
  - Two ways to form a question
    - C-level phrasal Adjuncts with a Wh in them are islands in the thetic-like construction (e.g. 1)
    - they are well formed matrix questions in the Categorical construction (e.g. 2)
1. \* [a:ru nirbandhiccathu kondu] police avane arrest cheythu?  
who force.Sg.N<sup>2</sup> with police him arrest did  
≈ Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced them to do so?
2. [a:ru nirbandhiccathu kondu] a:nu  
who force.Sg.N with FM  
police avane arrest cheythathu?  
police he-Acc arrest did-Sg.N  
≈ Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced them to do so?
- the phrase containing Wh is not an absolute island for Wh interpretation.
  - the apparent islandhood arises from a failure of the Interrogative feature on the Wh phrase to be c-commanded by the corresponding feature on C.

<sup>1</sup> The terminology Thetic is only loosely used and should not be taken as an absolute description of the sentence type although the exhaustive focus construction is more amenable to be argued as Categorical.

<sup>2</sup> Acc: Accusative Dat: Dative Conj: Conjunction Disj: Disjunction Sg.: Singular N.: Neuter FM: Focus Marker

### 2. Outline:

Section 3: Introducing the constructions

Section 4 and 5: Behaviour of Wh in these two constructions

Section 6: Placing the problem

Section 7: Towards an analysis

7.1 The Verb moves overtly to C in thetic-like sentences

7.2 The verb raises to T, *aanu* carries/lexicalizes Foc and Fin

Section 8: Analysis

### 3. Two Constructions

Thetic: the entire sentence in focus

3. rajan priyaye kandu  
rajan priya-Acc saw  
Rajan saw Priya

Categorical: a predication base marked by *aanu*<sup>3</sup> and a part which talks about the predication base

4. priyaye aanu rajan kand-athu  
priya-Acc FM rajan saw-Sg.N.  
≈ It is Priya Rajan saw

Thetic : the verb always comes at the end.

5. priyaye rajan kandu  
priya-Acc rajan saw  
Rajan saw Priya  
6. \*rajan kandu priyaye

Categorical : more amenable to scrambling; any constituent can be the predication base.

7. rajan priyaye aanu kand-a-thu  
rajan priya-Acc FM saw-a-Sg.N.  
≈ It is Priya Rajan saw  
8. rajan kand-a-thu priyaye aanu  
rajan saw-a-Sg.N. priya-Acc FM  
≈ It is Priya Rajan saw

<sup>3</sup> which also marks the Focus, hence will be glossed in the examples as Focus Marker, FM

9. priyaye rajan kand-a-thu vi:ttil vechu aanu  
priya-Acc rajan saw-a-Sg.N. at home FM  
≈It is at home that Rajan saw Priya

#### 4. Wh in Thetic-like constructions

10. rajan *a:r-e* kandu?  
rajan who-Acc saw?  
Who did Rajan see?
11. \**a:r-e* rajan kandu?
12. avan *engane* rajan-e kandu?  
he how Rajan-Acc saw?  
How did he see Rajan?
13. \**engane* avan rajan-e kandu?
14. avan *eppol* rajan-e kandu?  
he when Rajan-Acc saw?  
When did he see Rajan?
15. \**eppol* avan rajan-e kandu?
16. \**a:ru* rajan-e kandu?  
who rajan-Acc saw?  
Who saw Rajan?
17. rajan-e *a:ru* kandu?  
rajan-Acc who saw?  
Who saw Rajan?

#### 4.1 Left Edge and Wh

A restriction on Wh occupying the left edge of a sentence?  
What about (18):

18. *ethra per* rajan-nu vote ceythu?  
how many people Rajan-Dat vote did?  
How many people voted for Rajan?
19. rajan-nu *ethra per* vote ceythu?  
Rajan-Dat how many people vote did?  
How many people voted for Rajan?

Kiss (1993), Pesetsky (1987), Kroch (1989): How Many NPs as D-Linked/Specific

20. *ethra per* rajan-nu vote ceythu?  
how many people Rajan-Dat vote did?  
How many people voted for Rajan?

Ans: Two: priya and meera

21. rajan-nu *ethra per* vote ceythu?  
Rajan-Dat how many people vote did?  
How many people voted for Rajan?

Ans: Two.

22. a:r-okke rajan-e kandu? (Contrast with 16)

Who-all Rajan-Acc saw?

'What is the set P of people who saw Rajan where P is a subset of the set Q of all the people in the discourse'.

Ans: John, Paul, and Mary.

The left edge of a sentence is for Topics;

A non-Specific nominal cannot act as a Topic (Jayaseelan 2001).

Indefinites at the left edge is interpreted as Specific in Malayalam (23-24). Hence the inability of a non-Specific Wh to appear at the left edge.

23. rajan-e ora:l kandu  
Rajan-Acc a person saw  
Someone saw Rajan

24. ora:l rajan-e kandu  
a person Rajan-Acc saw  
Someone saw Rajan

Meaning: There is a specific person who saw Rajan

25. \**onniladhikam* pusthakam *a:ru* me:dichu?  
more than one book who bought  
Who bought more than one book?

26. \**a:ru* *onniladhikam* pusthakam me:dichu?  
who more than one book bought  
Who bought more than one book?

27. \**onniladhikam* pusthakam *a:r-okke* me:dichu?  
more than one book who-all bought  
Who all bought more than one book?

28. *a:rokke* *onniladhikam* pusthakam me:dichu?

⇒ A non-Specific Wh cannot occupy the Topic position

Does the Wh move to a C-level Specifier at all?

29. rajan-e innale *a:ru* kandu?  
rajan-Acc y'day who saw?  
'Who saw Rajan yesterday?'

30. \*rajan-e *a:ru* innale kandu?  
rajan-Acc who y'day saw?  
'Who saw Rajan yesterday?'

Evidently, the subject Wh appears within the IP domain.

*A bare Wh that is not Specific/D-linked does not move to the C-domain in a thetic-like\* construction*

### 5. Wh in Categorical constructions

Wh phrase appear immediately next to the Focus Marker *aanu*<sup>5</sup>.

31. *a:ru a:nu* rajan-e kand-a-thu?  
who FM rajan-Acc saw-a-Sg.N.  
≈ Who is it that saw rajan?

32. \**rajan* *a:nu a:ru* kandathu?  
rajan-Acc FM who saw-Sg.N.

33. *a:ru aanu* rajan-e kandathu?  
who FM rajan-Acc saw-Sg.N.  
≈ Who is x s.t. x saw Rajan?

34. rajan-e kandathu *a:ru aanu*?  
rajan-Acc saw-Sg.N. who FM  
≈ Who is x s.t. x saw Rajan?

35. rajan-e *a:ru aanu* kandathu?  
rajan-Acc who FM saw-Sg.N.  
≈ Who is x s.t. x saw Rajan?

*The Wh phrase mandatorily occupies the predication base position in a Categorical construction*

<sup>4</sup> thetic-like refers to the form and not really to the information structure

<sup>5</sup> Multiple Wh in categorical constructions are generally dispreferred. However, such sentences not completely absent either. When there are more than one Wh, ALL have to move to the focus position (in the base order), any combination where this rule is violated results in ungrammaticality.

### 6. Islands

- A question reading is impossible for the Wh inside a C-level adjunct in a thetic-like construction
- a Wh in a clausal C-level adjunct makes a good matrix question in a Categorical construction when placed at the Focus position.

36. [*manthri nirbandhiccathu kondu*] police avane arrest ceythu  
minister force.Sg.N with police he-Acc arrest did  
≈ Police arrested him because the minister forced (them to act).

37. \* [*a:ru nirbandhiccathu kondu*] police avane arrest ceythu?  
who force.Sg.N with police him arrest did  
≈ Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced them to do so?

38. \*police [*a:ru nirbandhiccathu kondu*] avane arrest ceythu

The only rescue comes in the guise of a categorical construction<sup>6</sup>:

39. [*a:ru nirbandhiccathu kondu*] a:nu  
who force.Sg.N with FM  
police avane arrest ceythathu?  
police he-Acc arrest did-Sg.N  
≈ Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced them to do so?

### 7. Some lemmas before the Analysis section!

The thetic construction is sometimes described as having an "impoverished C-domain" in the literature.

- Adopts a Split CP account (*a la* Rizzi a.o.)
- a thetic-like C does not contain as many positions as a Categorical C.
- the verb raises to different heights in the two constructions.

<sup>6</sup> The question interpretation is obtained through pied piping and extraction is ungrammatical.

1. ?\**a:ru a:nu* [*t<sub>i</sub> nirbandhiccathu kondu*] police avane arrest cheythathu?  
who FM force.Sg.N with police him arrest did-Sg.N.

However, this may not be directly relevant to the issue at hand; the primary reason being, it is impossible to extract an element within a clausal adjunct like the above to the Focus position regardless of a Wh or not, in a categorical construction.

### 7.1 *The C domain in a thetic-like construction*

- Scrambling possible to some extent
- the verb has to occupy the clause-final position.

40. rajan priyayku a: pu:chaye koduthu  
 rajan priya-Dat that cat-Acc gave  
 'Rajan gave that cat to Priya.'

41. priyayku rajan a: pu:chaye koduthu

42. rajan a: pu:chaye priyayku koduthu

43. a: pu:chaye rajan priyayku koduthu

44. \*rajan a: pu:chaye koduthu priyayku

45. \*rajan koduthu priyayku a: pu:chaye

46. \*koduthu rajan priyayku a: pu:chaye

- the first element in the sentence is interpreted as the Topic
- substantiated by the fact that non-Specific indefinite NPs cannot occur at the left edge of the sentence regardless of the position of the rest of the words in the sentence

47. \*oru pu:chaye rajan priyayku koduthu  
 a cat-Acc rajan priya-Dat gave  
 'Rajan gave a cat to Priya'

#### 7.1.1 *The position of the Topic*

Assuming Cinque's hierarchy of Adverbs:

48. rajan bhaagyatthinu priyaye kandu  
 rajan fortunately priya-Acc saw  
 'Fortunately, Rajan saw Priya'

49. priyaye bhaagyatthinu rajan kandu

The topic can precede the sentential adverb

⇒ a CP level Topic position<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In fact, the leftmost edge of the clause is always interpreted as the Topic position unless it is overtly indicated as Focus. Thus in cases of zero copula sentences, the left nominal is always interpreted as the Topic.

1. Who is Rajan?  
 2. rajan raajaavu  
 rajan king  
 'Rajan is the king'  
 3. #raajaavu rajan

### 7.1.2 *The position of the verb*

50. [rajane priyay-um] [meeraye aniyan-um] kandu  
 rajan-Acc priya-Conj meera-Acc aniyan-Conj saw  
 Lit: Priya Rajan and Meera Aniyan saw  
 'Priya saw Rajan and Aniyan saw Meera'

The 'constituents' that are conjoined = the Agent and the Patient.  
 Impossible to form if the verb stays in its base position.

#### *Co-ordination reduction?*

No, Malayalam finite clauses cannot be conjoined in the language:

51. \*[rajane priya kandum] [meeraye aniyan kandum]  
 rajan-Acc priya saw-Conj meera-Acc aniyan saw-Conj  
 to mean: Priya saw Rajan and Aniyan saw Meera

The alternative way to conjoin clauses : verb<sub>nonfinite</sub> + do-support  
 ⇒ finite clauses cannot be conjoined

52. [priya rajane kan-uka-um]  
 priya rajan-Acc see-nonfinite-Conj  
 [aniyan meeraye kan-uka-um] ceythu  
 aniyan meera-Acc see-nonfinite-Conj did  
 'Priya saw Rajan and Aniyan saw Meera'

Ungrammatical to delete the repeating verb

⇒ conjunction reduction in the case of co-ordinated VPs is not a viable analysis.

66. \*[priya rajane Ø-um] [aniyan meeraye kanuka-um] ceythu  
 priya rajan-Acc Ø-Conj aniyan meera-Acc see-Conj did  
 'Priya saw Rajan and Aniyan saw Meera'

⇒ (50) does not involve the conjunction of two finite clauses followed by the deletion of the redundant verb.

4. Who is the king?  
 5. raajaavu rajan  
 king Rajan  
 'The king is Rajan'  
 6. #rajan raajaavu

⇒ The verb moves out of its base position leaving the arguments, which then act as a constituent to the exclusion of the verb.

*How high does the verb move?*

The topicalised element is above the sentential adverb position.

⇒ above the Mood projection since 'fortunately' is plotted at Mood<sub>evaluative</sub>.

Now consider example (50), reproduced below with topicalised object phrases:

53. [rajane bha:gyathinu priyay-um]  
    rajan-Acc fortunately priya-Conj  
    [meeraye daurbha:gyathinu aniyam-um] kandu  
    meera-Acc unfortunately aniyam-Conj saw  
    Lit:Rajan fortunately Priya and Meera unfortunately Aniyam saw  
    'Fortunately Priya saw Rajan and unfortunately Aniyam saw Meera'

This means that the verb should be above Mood<sub>evaluative</sub> for the constituent to be formed. And if we take Finiteness to be at the C level, then this means that the verb, when in a Finite form, is in the C domain.

Furthermore, note that the do-support option becomes very degenerated with clauses that have a Topicalised object phrase:

54. \*[rajane priya kanuka-um]  
    rajan-Acc priya see-Conj  
    [meeraye aniyam kanuka-um] ceythu  
    meera-Acc aniyam see-Conj did

The ungrammaticality of (54) shows that the topicalised element is above TP disrupting the constituency relations with a non-finite non-tensed verb still below TP, making the sentence ungrammatical.

**The Verb overtly moves to C**  
Topic position at the C level that must be occupied by a Specific phrase.

**7.2 Categorical\***

*aanu* marks the predication base and Focus.

*7.2.1 Exhaustivity*

Co-ordination test from Szabolcsi (1981).

(56) is NOT a felicitous follow up of (55):

55. Paily-um Karambi-um a:nu vann-athu  
    Paily-and Karambi-and fm came-Sg.N  
    'It is Paily and Karambi who came.'

56. Pailya:nu vann-athu  
    Pailyfm came-Sg.N.  
    'It is Paily who came.'

To follow up with the information in (57), then (55) needs to be negated first:

57. alla, Paily a:nu vann-athu  
    no, Pailyfm came-Sg.N.  
    'No, it is Paily who came.'

Gryllia (2008) : collective and distributive interpretations of the co-ordinated phrase in a minimal pair crucial in tests like the one above. Recalling Gamut (1991) she points out that the entailment pattern for co-ordination test is similar to the entailment pattern of test for collectivity.

58. Cheech and Chong are fun at parties

59. Cheech is fun at parties

Collective reading: Fun only when together

Distributive reading: Fun independently

An example with a dominant collective reading:

60. Bread and butter is John's favorite food

61. Bread is John's favorite food

\* I am adopting a monoclausal analysis of the construction, as opposed to a biclausal analysis as in Jayaseelan (xxx). Apart from a slew of empirical observations that such a biclausal analysis fails to capture, the proposal also makes a prediction that if there are indeed two full CPs in the categorical construction, then it should be possible to have a grammatical sentence with two sentence level adverbs. However, this is not borne out:

1. \*oru pkashe priyaye aanu [CP ullathu paranjaal raajan kandathu]  
    probably priya-Acc FM frankly rajan saw-Sg.N.  
    approx.: 'Probably it is Priya that frankly Rajan saw'

It follows from such empirical observations that we can safely assume that the categorical constructions have only a single CP in them, where the Topic and Focus positions are manifested.

A construction that has an obligatory distributive reading in Malayalam:

62. Karambi [Devi-kk-um Paily-kk-um] o:ro: pustakam koduttu  
Karambi Devi-dat-and Paily-dat-and a book each gave  
'Karambi gave a book each to Devi and Paily.'

Using this in a categorical sentence:

63. Devi-kk-um Paily-kk-um a:nu  
Devi-dat-and Paily-dat-and FM  
Karambi o:ro: pustakam kodutt-aDu  
Karambi a book each gave-Sg.N.  
approx: 'It is to Devi and Paily that Karambi gave a book each.'

Obligatory distributive interpretation where a total of two books have been given and Devi and Paily got a book each.

(64) is still not a logical consequence of (63).

64. Paily-kku a:nu Karambi oru pustakam kodutt-aDu  
Paily-dat FM Karambi a book gave-Sg.N.  
approx: 'It is to Paily that Karambi gave a book.'

### 7.2.2 *Distributional Restrictions*

É. Kiss (1998) : certain distributional restrictions associated with Exhaustivity : Quantificational elements, and phrases headed by 'even' and 'also' cannot appear at Exhaustive Focus.

65. \*ella:varum a:nu vann-aDu  
everyone fm came-Sg.N.  
'It is everyone that came.' [Quantificational Elements]
66. \*Karambi-um a:nu Paily-e kand-aDu  
Karambi-also FM Paily-acc saw-Sg.N.  
'It is Karambi also that saw Paily.' [Also phrase]
67. \*Karambi-po:lum a:nu Paily-e kand-aDu  
Karambi-even FM Paily-acc saw-Sg.N.  
'It is even Karambi who saw Paily.' [Even phrase]

Exhaustive Focus can manifest with or without a separate Topic at the left edge. However, whatever appears to the left of the *aanu* constituent is interpreted as the Topic:

68. rajan priyaye aanu bha:gyathinu kandathu  
rajan priya-Acc FM fortunately saw-Sg.N.  
≈ Rajan, fortunately it is Priya that he saw

- Focus encoded in a Categorical construction is Exhaustive
- Topic and Focus are manifested at the C-level
- *aanu* realises C-level head<sup>9</sup>.

### 7.2.3 *Position of the Verb*

- The morphological form of the verb is an Categorical construction is derived from the participial form
- Generally described as non-finite
- Capable of encoding past/present Tense distinctions:

69. priyaye aanu rajan kan-d-athu  
priya-Acc FM rajan see-Past-Sg.N.  
≈ It is Priya that Rajan saw
70. priyaye aanu rajan kan-unn-athu  
priya-Acc FM rajan see-Present-Sg.N.  
≈ It is Priya that Rajan sees.

The verb cannot realise a head above the Tense projection like Irrealis Mood, in sharp contrast to thethetic sentences:

71. rajan priyaye kan-um  
rajan priya-Acc see-Irrealis  
Rajan will see Priya
72. \*priyaye aanu rajan kaan-um-athu  
priya-Acc FM rajan see-Irrealis-Sg.N.  
≈ It is Priya that Rajan saw

<sup>9</sup> A keen reader might notice that the verb is realised head finally and at least superficially the C head *aanu* is realised as head initial. The same phenomenon happens whenever a C head is spelled out independently of the verb.

(a) rajan priyaye kaanam  
rajan priya-Acc see-must  
Rajan must see Priya

Add contrastive Focus:

(b) rajan venam priyaye kanaan  
rajan must priya-Acc to see  
It is Rajan who must see Priya.

The Irrealis needs to be spelled out by the Predication base marker *aanu* and the Verb appears in its non-finite citation form (which is different from the infinitival form):

73. *priyaye aavum rajan kan-uka*  
*priya-Acc FM rajan see-non finite*  
 ≈ It is Priya that Rajan will see

- ⇒ the verb in a categorical construction does not rise to C
- ⇒ the C elements Fin is realised by *aanu* along with Focus

Yes/No question particle is affixed to the Verb in athetic construction.

74. *rajan priyaye kand-o:?*  
*rajan priya-Acc saw-Y/N*  
 Did Rajan see Priya?

However, this is ungrammatical in a categorical construction.

75. \**rajan aanu priyaye kandathu-o:?*  
*rajanFM priya-Acc saw-Sg.N.*  
 to mean: Is it Rajan that saw Priya?

Y/N particle is affixed to *aanu*:

76. *rajan aan-o: priyaye kandathu?*  
*rajanFM-Y/N priya-Acc saw-Sg.N.*  
 ≈ Is it Rajan that saw Priya?

**The verb does not move to C in a Categorical construction, though the verb may raise to T**  
***aanu* realises at least the features Focus and Finiteness**

## 8 Analysis

### 8.1 What makes a Wh tick?

A notion that there is something, call it Wh, on the Wh word that needs to be legitimized through a corresponding element at the C domain. This idea can be instantiated by assuming a +/- Wh feature on the Wh and C, by making an operator originating with the Wh word move to C etc. Sometimes these result in overt movement, resulting in Wh fronting and sometimes in covert movement, resulting in various types of Wh in situ (Cheng 2003).

- (i) a Wh word carries a feature Q
- (ii) this feature Q causes a crash if it is not associated with a suitable licenser
- (iii) the licenser, in case of a question interpretation, resides in the C-domain
- (iv) Hence, the Wh word needs to be in a position where the Feature Q can enter into a relation with its counterpart in C, otherwise the sentence crashes.

The major debates revolve around the precise nature of the licensing mechanism between the relation between the Q on the Wh and the corresponding element in the C domain. However, I would like to explore when this Q becomes “accessible” for its counterpart in the C domain, leaving aside the mechanisms employed once they find each other.

The proposal:

**Islandhood of a Wh inside a phrase in Malayalam thetic-like constructions is a result of the inability of the Q on the Wh to be in the c-commanding domain of the corresponding C element.**

### 8.2 Categorical sentences

recap of crucial facts:

- *aanu* Lexicalises/realises the features Focus and Finiteness
- the verb itself does not raise to C

77. *aru a:nu rajan-e kand-a-thu?*  
*who FM rajan-Acc saw-a-Sg.N.*  
 ≈ Who is it that saw rajan?

The Wh at the Focus position, that is, in the C domain, the Q feature finds its counterpart and the derivation is fine.

78.  $[_{CP} \textit{aru} [_{C} \textit{a:nu} [_{IP} \textit{t}_i \textit{rajan-e kand-a-thu}]]]$ ?

The derivation crashes if the Wh is not in the C domain.

79. \**rajane a:nu aru kand-athu?*  
*rajan-Acc FM who saw-Sg.N.*

### 8.3 Thetic sentences : *Mountain goes to Mohammed*

Recap : the Topicalised element occupies the C domain:

80. rajan bhaagyatthinu priyaye kandu  
 rajan fortunately priya-Acc saw  
 'Fortunately, Rajan saw Priya'

So in a sentence like the following where the Wh subject is below the TP, how does it get associated with the corresponding feature in the C domain?

81. rajan-e innale a:ru kandu?  
 rajan-Acc yesterday who saw?  
 Who saw Rajan yesterday?

- the Verb overtly moves to C in a thetic construction (section 7.1)
- *v* and C are phase heads
- movement of the verb to C results in sliding the lower phasal boundary up, in effect resulting in one big phase headed by V in C (phase sliding Gallego (2006), a similar insight in phase extension Den Dikken (2006)).
- there is only a single phase, that makes the Wh inside the TP within the c-commanding domain of the relevant C head without any intervening phasal boundary.

A strong prediction : if a verb does not move upto C, then a Wh inside the TP should result in a crash.

Constructions with perfective aspect where the verb is lower in the clause and appears with the auxiliary *undu* which realizes the C head:

82. rajan priyaye kanditt-undu  
 rajan priya-Acc see-perf-be  
 ≈Rajan has seen Priya
83. \*rajan a:re kanditt-undu?  
 rajan who-Acc see-perf-be  
 ≈Who has Rajan seen?

Co-ordination test:

84. [rajan priyaye talli-yitt-um]  
 rajan priya-Acc hit-perf-disj  
 [aniyan meeraye nulli-yitt-um] undu  
 aniyana meera-Acc pinch-perf-disj be  
 ≈ It is the case that Rajan has hit Priya and Aniyana has poked Meera.

Wh inside Relative Clause or a Finite Complement Clause or a Complex NP in a position C-commanded by the verb in C receives a matrix question interpretation:

85. avan [a:ru vannu ennu] paranju? FCC  
 he who came comp said  
 ≈Who did he say came?
86. ennittu,avan [a:ru vannu enn-a ka:ryam] paranju CNP  
 then, he who came comp-a matter said  
 ≈ ... Who is x s.t. he related the news that x came.
87. avan a:ru ezhuthiya pusthakam vayichu? RelC  
 he who wrote-Relativiser book read.  
 ≈He read a book who wrote?

### 8.4 Islands explained!

- Islandhood depends on whether the Wh phrase is c-commanded by the corresponding feature encoded at the relevant C head.

recap: in a categorical construction the Wh appears at the Focus position; derivation crashes if the Wh is in any other position.

88. a:ru a:nu rajan-e kand-a-thu?  
 who FM rajan-Acc saw-a-Sg.N.  
 ≈ Who is it that saw rajan?
89. [CP a:ru [C a:nu [TP rajan-e kand-a-thu]]]?  
 90. \*rajan a:nu a:ru kandathu?  
 91. [CP rajane a:nu [TP a:ru kandathu]]?

Explained through phase sliding.

The verb raises to Tense in a categorical construction

- ⇒ Extends the *v* boundary upto T
- ⇒ resulting in a phase boundary at T.

A Wh at the Topic position above the focus position also makes the derivation crash:

92. \*<sub>[TOP a:ru [rajan-e a:nu] kand-a-thu]?</sub>  
 who rajan-Acc FM saw-a-Sg.N.  
 ≈ Who is it that saw rajan?

⇒ The Topic is in a c-commanding position vis-à-vis *aanu* and hence fails to enter into a relation with the it.

⇒ **the Wh should be in a position c-commanded by the relevant C head** (modulo phasal boundaries)

*Independently substantiated by NPI licensing facts.*

The NPI cannot be licensed, in a categorical construction if the NPI is in a position that c-commands the Neg.

93. \*<sub>[TOP rajan [[a:rum nirbandhicc-athu konu] a:nu]</sub>  
 rajan who-conj force-Sg.N. with FM  
 vi:ttil po:k-a:tth-athu]  
 home go-Neg-Sg.N.  
 ≈ There is no X such that Rajan does not go home because X forced him.

94. \*<sub>[[a:rum nirbandhicc-athu konu] rajan alla]</sub>  
 who-conj force-Sg.N. with rajan FM-Neg  
 vi:ttil po:y-athu]  
 home went-Sg.N.  
 ≈ There is no X such that Rajan does not go home because X forced him.

95. <sub>[a:rum nirbandhicc-athu konu] alla]</sub>  
 who-conj force-Sg.N. with FM-Neg  
 rajan vi:ttil po:y-athu]  
 rajan home went-Sg.N.  
 ≈ There is no X such that Rajan did not go home because X forced him.

⇒ A Topic c-commands the C head that realizes Negation here and results in ungrammaticality.

Bearing this in mind, let us now turn to the Adjunct Island in a thetic construction:

96. <sub>[manthri nirbandhiccathu konu] police avane arrest ceythu</sub>  
 minister force.Sg.N with police he-Acc arrest did  
 ≈ Police arrested him because the minister forced (them to act).

97. ?/\*<sub>police [manthri nirbandhiccathu konu]</sub>  
 police minister force.Sg.N with  
 avane arrest ceythu  
 he-Acc arrest did  
 ≈ Police arrested him because the minister forced (them to act).

The reason clause here has to be an adjunct at the C domain ( cf. Tsai 2008)

The Wh is outside the c-commanding domain of the relevant C head. The derivation crashes.

98. \*<sub>[a:ru nirbandhiccathu konu] police avane arrest chethu?</sub>  
 who force.Sg.N with police he-Acc arrest did  
 ≈ Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced them to do so?

Adjuncts merged within the c-commanding domain of the relevant C do not result in islands for Wh interpretation.

Instrumental/manner adjuncts do not constitute islands:

99. rajan pasuvine <sub>[a:rude ku:de konu po:yi]</sub>  
 rajan cow-Acc whose together with went  
 kuli-pp-ichu?  
 bathe-causative-past  
 ≈ Who is X such that Rajan went with X to bathe the cow?

Back to categorical constructions:

100. <sub>[a:ru nirbandhiccathu konu] a:nu</sub>  
 who force.Sg.N with FM  
 police avane arrest ceythathu?  
 police he-Acc arrest did-Sg.N  
 ≈ Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced them to do so?

The phrase with the Wh is c-commanded by *aanu*.

101. \* $\lceil$ a:ru nirbandhiccathu konu $\rceil$  police a:nu  
who force.Sg.N with police FM  
avane arrest ceythathu?  
he-Acc arrest did-Sg.N  
 $\approx$  Who is X such that the police arrested him because X forced  
them to do so?

Ungrammatical when at a Topic position.

## 9. Conclusion:

- It is the position of the phrase that determines the islandhood modulo phase boundaries.
- If the phrase containing the Wh is not c-commanded by the corresponding C head, Islandhood is obtained.
- Also points in the direction that head movement we discussed here is a syntactic phenomenon.

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