Reducing (CP) phasality to minimality effects.

Traditionally, syntactic theory distinguishes two types of locality: absolute locality and relative locality. Absolute locality, going back to Ross' (1967) strong islands, Huang's (1985) Constraint on Domain Extraction and Chomsky's (1986) Barriers, involves domains that are opaque for extraction, such as sentential subjects or adjuncts. In more recent theories, absolutive locality is often implemented in terms of phasality (most notably, Chomsky 2001). Relative locality (going back to Rizzi's 1990 Relativized Minimality) states that certain domains are not opaque by themselves but that particular syntactic dependencies cannot apply across interveners of the relevant kind. This kind of locality is relative because it only blocks certain dependencies from applying across clauses and not all dependencies.

Recently, several attempts have been made to reduce absolute locality to relative locality, for instance concerning adjunction (Truswell et al. 2022) or vP-phasality (Rackowski & Richards 2005, and Keine & Zeijlstra 2021 who follow ideas by Branan and Erlewine 2021). In this paper, I propose an attempt to reduce the crown juwel of absolute locality, the alleged phasality of CPs, to Relative Minimality.

Evidence for (CP-)phasality comes from *obligatory* successive cyclic movement (which shows that certain elements *must* land in a phase edge before they move out). That is, a configuration like (1) is ungrammatical, while (2) is fine.

(1) $*[_{CP}\ XP_i\ C \ldots [_{CP}\ C \ldots XP_i \ldots]]$

(2) $[_{CP}\ XP_i\ C \ldots [_{CP}\ XP_i\ C \ldots XP_i \ldots]]$

As Abels (2003) already pointed out, the difference between (1) and (2) can be partially understood in terms of Relativized Minimality. Relativized Minimality forbids syntactic movement across interveners where an intervener is a c-commanding element that shares some feature with the moved goal and the higher probe, as in (3).

(3) $*[Z_{i[F]}\ \ Z_{[F]}\ \ \ Z_{i[F]}]$

Now, in (1), given that the highest C head attracts XP, an intervention effect will arise. The highest C and the XP must share some feature (otherwise C couldn't attract XP). If the lower C and the higher C share this feature as well, a Relativized Minimality effect arises: the lower CP is an intervener for XP-movement (provided C and XP share some feature). By first raising XP into the specifier of the lower CP, as in (2), this intervention effect no longer arises, and the XP can move up to higher Spec,CP. For Abels, the question arises as to what makes phase heads, like C, special in the sense that these, unlike other heads, always give rise to such Relativized Minimality configurations that trigger successive cyclic movement. He addresses this question by arguing that phase heads like C are special because of certain (clause-type-related) properties of the features that they bear, which cause them to behave as general interveners

However, it is far from clear that C must be special in this sense. It is indeed a given fact that every instance of cross-clausal movement into some Spec,CP requires an intermediate landing site. But it is less straightforward that this is something that is restricted to heads like C only. In this paper, I argue that (1)-(2) are actually special instances of (4)-(5) (where *H ... H* stands for any set of two similar heads). This way, there is no reason to assume that CPs or any other XPs, form phases and all instances of obligatory successive cyclicity can be taken to be due to Relativized Minimality.

(4) $*[_{HP}\ XP_i\ H \ldots [_{HP}\ H \ldots XP_i \ldots]]$

(5) $[_{HP}\ XP_i\ H \ldots [_{HP}\ XP_i\ H \ldots XP_i \ldots]]$

In order to evaluate the validity of (4)-(5), of which (1)-(2) are then instances, as the sole source of successive cyclic movement, (4)-(5) first need to be verified for movement into Spec,HP where H crucially is not a phase head. Moreover, to show that successive cyclicity in CP is purely due to Relativized Minimality along the lines of (1)-(2)(/(4)-(5)), it also needs to be shown that in absence of movement into a higher Spec,CP, no intermediate landing site in an embedded CP is targeted either. I.e., (6) should be fine.

(6) $[_{CP}\ [_{HP}\ XP_i\ H \ldots [_{CP} \ldots [_{HP}\ XP_i\ H \ldots XP_i \ldots]]]]$

Let me discuss each in turn. Baltin (1995) has shown that subjects in infinitival clauses do not move into embedded Spec,TP unless they raise into matrix Spec,TP, as shown in (7) (where I take floating quantifiers to diagnose the position of (copies of) embedded subjects):

(7) a. The students hoped {*all} to {all} win the race
b. The students seemed {all} to {all} win the race

Given that embedded T does not require subject movement into Spec,TP (otherwise higher *all* should be fine in (7a)), (7b) must reflect an instance of successive cyclic movement of the type in (6) (where H is T and XP is the subject).

In addition, support for (5) can be given as well. As Kobayashi (2020) shows, in Brazilian Portuguese, CPs don't block A-movement, a phenomenon known as hyperraising. But strikingly, CP does not bleed *Wh*-movement (8) either. That is unexpected under a CP-phasality approach where the raised subjects and the *Wh*-term should compete for the landing site in embedded Spec,CP, but this follows straightforwardly from the account presented here.

(8) [Quais livros]$_1$ elas$_2$ parec-em [que t_1 ler-am t_2]?
Which books they seem-pl that read-pl
'Which books do they seems to have read?'

As Keine (2018) points out, many (though not all) approaches to hyperraising, for instance Zeller's (2006) and Halpert's (2019) accounts of Bantu, argue that hyperraising does not proceed through the edge of the lower clause. That is in full accordance with our proposal. Note that in order to make (8) compatible with CP-phasality, one should assume that the embedded CP should contain at least two specifiers, one for A-extraction and one A-Bar-extraction. However, while there is strong evidence in favor of successive cyclic A-Bar movement in embedded Spec,CPs, the presence of additional landing sites for A-movement in embedded Spec,CPs is motivated primarily by theory-internal considerations concerning phasality and is not independently motivated.

Naturally, the theoretical move proposed here renders hyperraising no longer incompatible with the ban on improper movement and would require alternative explanations for the ban on hyperraising in many other languages. Here, I crucially follow Carstens & Diercks (2013) and Halpert (2019) who argue that hyperraising can be understood in terms of a CP's (in)ability to act as a possible raiser as well. For instance, Halpert (2019) shows that in Zulu, infinitivals can be hosted in a preverbal subject position (9), but finite clauses cannot (10):

(9) uku-xova ujeqe ku-mnandi
AUG.15-make AUG.1steamed.bread15S-nice
'Making steamed bread is nice.'

(10) *[ukuthi w-a-thatha umhlala phansi] ku-ya-ngi-mangaza
that 1S-PST-take AUG.1sit down 17S-ya-1SG.O-surprise
Intended: 'That he retired surprises me.'

Strikingly, subject-to-subject raising out of an infinite TP-clause is not allowed in Zulu (11), but subject-to-subject raising out of a finite CP-clause is fine (12). Again, such facts lend themselves very well to a Relativized Minimality analysis. Only if the intervening CP/TP is not a potential raiser to subject position itself, is subject-to-subject raising allowed.

(11) *uZinhle$_i$ u-bonakala [$_{TP}$ t_i uku-(zo)-xova ujeqe]
AUG.1Zinhle$_i$ 1S-seem t_i INF-(FUT)-make AUG.1bread
Intended: 'Zinhle seems to make steamed bread'

(12) uZinhle$_i$ u-bonakala[$_{CP}$ ukuthi t_i u-zo-xova ujeqe]
AUG.1Zinhle$_i$ 1S-seem that t_i 1S-FUT-make AUG.1bread
'It seems that Zinhle will make steamed bread.'

To sum up, the proposal in (4)-(5) opens up a way to rethink phasality in terms of Relativized Minimality, makes predictions that appear correct and renders the attested phenomenon of hyperraising less of a problem in terms of syntactic locality.