The apparent lack of a complementizer-trace effect in Indonesian supaya complements

Complementizer-trace (C-t) effects, where a preverbal subject cannot be extracted from an embedded clause headed by an overt C (Who did you think [*that/Ø ___ met Budi yesterday]?), are considered part of UG and have been reported in a number of unrelated languages (Pesetsky 2017). This paper points out that supaya complement clauses in Standard Indonesian present a potential counterexample to the universality of C-t effects. We argue, however, that they involve obligatory control, and hence no C-t configuration.

Supaya clauses can contain a subject gap, as in (1), thus suggesting the absence of a C-t effect.

(1) Siapakah yang kamu usulkan [¼ supaya/Ø ___ ketemu Budi besok]?
   ‘To whom did you suggest meeting Budi tomorrow?’

However, the relevant gap is unlikely to have resulted from extraction. A pseudo-raising sentence like (2) indicates that a subject gap can in fact arise without extraction. (2) cannot involve A-movement; given that A-movement does not stop by Spec,CP, the putative movement would incur a locality violation (e.g. Chomsky’s (2001) Phase Impenetrability Condition).

(2) Mesin itu diusulkan [CP supaya ___ diperbaiki oleh tukang].
   ‘The machine was suggested to be repaired by a craftsman.’

We analyse supaya complement clauses by extending Fortin’s (2006) analysis of adjunct clauses. Fortin claims that CP adjuncts without an overt subject involve obligatory control, where the T head lacks Case-assigning ability, unlike those with an overt subject. (2) and its overt subject counterpart have the structures shown in (3a) and (3b), respectively.

(3) a. Mesin itu diusulkan [CP supaya PROi T diperbaiki oleh tukang].
    b. Mereka mengusulkan [CP supaya mesin itu T[NOM] diperbaiki oleh tukang].
   ‘They suggested that the machine be repaired by a craftsman.’

We argue that in (2)/(3a), mesin itu ‘the machine’ is a based-generated topic and the matrix subject position is empty. This is because the former DP is not subcategorized by the verb usulkan ‘to suggest’, as shown in (4). Moreover, (5) confirms that the preverbal subject position can be left open for passive verbs taking a clausal complement.

(4) *Mereka mengusulkan [DP mesin itu] [CP supaya PRO/iα diperbaiki oleh tukang].
(5) Telah diusulkan [supaya mesin itu diperbaiki oleh tukang].
   ‘It was suggested that the machine be repaired by a craftsman.’

In conclusion, Indonesian supaya complements are compatible with the hypothesis that C-t effects are part of UG. The presence of the pseudo-raising structure as in (2) can be regarded as a way of circumventing the illicit C-t configuration.
References

