On Scrambling and Differential Object Marking in German and Romanian - with a focus on indefinite direct objects

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References

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Introduction


along the lines of Milbark (1974), they distinguish between strong and weak indefinites.

Weak indefinites are not quantifiers proper or variables which need to be bound by a quantifier e.g., a universal QP; an existential QP etc. At LF, these indefinites are argued to remain within the VP where they get bound by the QP. They are mapped into the nuclear scope and receive a weak/non-presuppositional interpretation.

Strong indefinites on the other hand are QPs and as such raise out of the VP to TP creating a thematic hierarchy (Quantifier > Subject > Scope): the restrictor is presuppositional and thus the strong indefinite is interpreted as specific.

Our proposal (Lopez 2012): configuration is crucial for interpretation. Nonetheless, differences, against Diesing and Milbark, although there is a correlation between the syntactic position of the indefinite and the possibility of specific interpretation, this correlation is not a direct one.

This hypothesis seems to be substantiated by the behavior of Romanian indefinites (similar to Spanish indefinites): pe-marked indefinites are shown to get (short-)scrambled out of VP but they are not necessarily specific i.e., they may be specific but they do not need to be so contra Diesing (1992, 1996) & Diesing and Jelinek (1995).

Thus it is unlikely with German indefinites which may be short-scrambled out of VP but unspecific (Frey, Lopez (2012)).

Discussion of the Romanian data

Re-marked DOs are not necessarily specific but they always move out of VP

Movement > case-driven (Lopez 2012)

M unmarked DOs have a smaller structure: DP, NP or IP (Lopez 2002)

-get case within the VP: incorporate into V which further incorporates into v which the feature of the incorporated nominal will be valued when the lexical V incorporates into v with a valued [accusative] feature

> pe-marked DOs have an extra functional head binding pe = KPs (Gusti 2005, Lopez 2002)

Material of VP for purposes of case: KP cannot incorporated into V; phases = self-contained they are not transferred together with the lexical verb to the interpretive systems (> incorporation) > KP that splits the syntactic tree from v as it is too far > moves out of VP to a position where it can be probed by v and granted case.

Semantic interpretation

the presence of pe places constraints on the denotation of the DO: <e> or <v,t,> – these DOs never have a property (Cornilescu 2000)

Marked DPs = type-shifted by a choice function variable f (pe) and undergo Function Application (Lopez 2012).

Kp <e,> = f(dp)

K<e,>e DP <e,t,>

f (Lopez 2012 p. 78)

Specificity is a feature which is parasitic on f and only type-shifted indefinites can be specific

Specificity is a matter of strong preference not a grammatical requirement

direct connection between choice function, (short) scrambling and pe-marking

Lopez 2012: configuration is subjected to a mode of syntactic composition which, in turn, yields the interpretation: interpretation obtains from syntactic position via type shifting

Direct mapping of structure onto semantic interpretation

Logical representations of quantified sentences (< Heim 1982)

(1) a. Every lama ate a banana.
   b. Every x a lama (3y) y is a banana and x ate y

quantifier restrictive clause nuclear scope

(2) the Mapping Hypothesis: the tripartite logical representations mentioned above can be derived from the syntactic representation of a sentence. This process splits the syntactic tree into two parts, which are mapped into the major components of the logical representation, the restrictive clause and the nuclear scope.

Data from German

de Hoop (1996) and Frey (1991): an indefinite to the right of DO or similar adverb in ja can have a strong reading:

3. a... well... do ja doch zwei Celeben in diesem Hotel abgebogen sein.
   b... well... ja doch zwe Celeben in diesem Hotel abgebogen sein.

Evidence from German:

(1a) a... well... ja doch zwei Celeben in diesem Hotel abgebogen sein.
   b... well... ja doch zwei Celeben in diesem Hotel abgebogen sein.

> the pe-marked DP does not do a normal function

(2) Professor ist nu a pără cei colegulei ei nici nici colegă.
   Mihal has not denounced headmaster.DAT her one of his colleagues.
   "Mihal has not denounced any of his colleagues to her headmaster"
   >> the pe-marked DP does not occup any position from the one occupied by its unmarked counterpart. This position is above that occupied by the IO and below the one occupied by the base generated subject DP.

Data from Romanian

word order (in TOCs where the ACC DP is marked by pe):

the marked DP covers the 1st

(1a) 'Mihal nu a pără cei colegulei ei nici nici colegă.
   Mihal has not denounced headmaster.DAT her one of his colleagues.
   "Mihal has not denounced any of his colleagues to her headmaster"

Subject > pe DO > ACC unmarked DO

> interpretation: pe-marked objects are not obligatorily specific

mood used as a test of specificity: if a nominal phrase includes a relative clause, the mood of the relative clause depends on specificity (Krivoy 1979):

(3a) Maria caudă un profesor care a ajutat-o în clasă.
   "Maria looks for a professor who helped her with her classes"
   (dintre cei a cată de engleță)

(4a) Maria caudă pe un profesor care a ajutat-o în clasă.
   "Maria looks for (a) professor who has helped her with her classes"
   (dintre cei a cată de engleță)

b. aicare (any)

(5a) cau (pe) un student aicare care să vorbă bine engleză la clasă.
   "Look (at) a student who (a) speaks well English"
   (class)
   (5b) pe un student aicare care să vorbă bine engleză la clasă.
   "Look (at) a student who (a) speaks well English"
   (class)
   (5c) 'indeed' / 'test'

f. ficare cunoaște câte un actor celebru.
   Everyone knows some kind, art, famous actor
   ficare cunoaște (pe) câte un actor celebru.

(7a) Când au pe câte un politician că se laudă cu ce va face dacă va fi ales.
   When I heard one politician that brags with what he will do if he will be elected
   el este telezitet.
   turn I off the TV.

Whenever I hear some politician bragging about his future deeds in case he gets elected I turn off the TV.