The Hare and the Hedgehog

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0. The shifts of interest and focus in my academic life as a syntactician reflect general trends in the field of generative syntax. We started out in the eighties, now some 35 years ago, with some initial scepticism over the univeralist and cognitive claims made by GB-theory, but soon this scepticism gave way to a considerable enthusiasm. Then, the time came when we felt the universalist and cognitive claims should be tested seriously, and we got involved in psycholinguistics and extended the scope of inquiry beyond German and English. And we realized how much we could gain from the analysis of dialectal data.

When I entered these fields at different times in my career, I always found Josef Bayer there, already having done respected work in the area that I tried to familiarize myself with. So, my academic relation with Josef is nicely captured by Grimms fairy tale of the hare and the hedgehog. Josef would always say "ik bün al hier"—I am already here. Josef has indeed always been at the forefront of the development in syntax.

1. There are also areas into which I have never followed Josef. Focus particles are such a domain. Bayer (1996) is the first important crosslinguistic investigation of the interaction of syntax and semantics for scalar particles, showing, among other things, the impact of branching direction on the grammar of focus particles. I have never thought about this topic deeply, but I will grab the present opportunity, and write a few lines on it.

The focus particles *nur* 'only', *sogar* 'even', and *auch* 'also' adjoin to verbal projections, but also to DPs, as shown by Müller (2005). The default hypothesis is that the particles adjoin to the XP they take scope over. This is illustrated in (1), with the particle adjoined to DP in (1a), and VP in (1b).

(1)   a.   Nur Anna war nicht da.
           only Anna was not there
           $\forall x \, ((\neg \textbf{present} \, (x)) \rightarrow x = \textbf{anna})$
      b.   Sogar den K2 besteigen wird Josef nach der Pensionierung.
           even the K2 scale will Josef after the retirement
           'Josef will even scale the K2 after retirement'
           Even P, P=**scaling the K2**, (will (P(josef)))

Can a constituent that is semantically in the scope of the particle be extracted from the c-command domain of the particle? Is it mandatory for constituents c-commanded by the particle to leave its syntactic domain if they are not in the semantic scope of the particle?

When a formal requirement must be met, movement out of the scope of the particle has

no semantic effect. In the SOV language German, the finite verb must go to second position in main clauses. The phonetic string of (2) allows a reading in which *nur* quantifies over predicates: the alternative set consists of predicates such as *going to work, answering her mail*, etc., i.e. *liest* is in the scope of *nur* even though it was moved to a position above the particle.

(2)   Anna liest   nur   [$_{VP}$ die Zeitung   t$_V$].
      Anna reads only   the newspaper
      $\forall$ P (P(**anna**) $\rightarrow$P=**read the newspaper**)

As noted in Fanselow (1993), (3) is not only compatible with an alternative set of DPs (consisting of books like Pride and Prejudice, Lectures on Government and Binding, etc.), but also with an alternative set of properties (praying, giving to the poor, …)—the sentence can mean that the only pious thing the priest fails to do is bible-reading.

(3)   <u>Nur</u> <u>die</u> <u>Bibel</u> liest   der Pfarrer nicht.
      only the bible reads the priest   not
      $\forall$ P ($\neg$P(**the priest**) $\rightarrow$P=**read the bible**)

Note that the VP of (3) looks like [$_{VP}$ *nur die Bibel* t$_V$] after *liest* has been moved to second position, so that the underlined material in (3) can be analysed as a remnant VP, cf. Fanselow (1993), Müller (2005).

   One disadvantage of an account of the scope taking of *nur* in (3) with a VP [$_{VP}$ nur die Bibel t$_V$] created by remnant movement, already noted in Fanselow (1993), lies in the fact that quantification over the predicate is possible for scalar particles co-occuring with an object in the left periphery even when it is not clear which position is targeted by the necessary extraction of the verb out of VP. Thus, an interpretation analogous to (3) with an alternative set consisting of properties is also fine in (4), in which the main verb has not moved to second position (the auxiliary has done so). The required additional movement of the main verb *gelesen* out of VP, necessary for the creation of [$_{VP}$ *nur die Bibel* t$_V$], is not motivated independently, and it is not clear which position it would target.

(4)   Nur die Bibel hat der Pfarrer nicht gelesen.
      only the bible has the priest   not   read

Likewise, in addition to the interpretation that Anna took everyone to school but the children, (5) allows for the reading that Anna did all her morning jobs except for taking the kids to school. An analysis of (5) along the lines proposed for (2) would require that not only the verb but also the goal PP would have to be extracted from VP in order to allow the analysis of *nur die Kinder* as a remnant VP. And in (6), the resultative/secondary predicate *weich* 'soft (boiled)' would have to leave VP, although it is, normally, immobile—since again, the alternative set may consist of properties (e.g. those that characterize a perfect waiter).

(5)   Nur die Kinder   hat Anna nicht zur   Schule gebracht.
      only the children has Anna not   to-the school brought
      $\forall$ P ($\neg$P(**anna**) $\rightarrow$P=**take the children to school**)

(6)   Nur die Eier hat er nicht weich   serviert.
      only the eggs has he not   soft-boiled served
      $\forall P\ (\neg P(\mathbf{he}) \rightarrow P=\mathbf{serve\ the\ eggs\ soft\ boiled})$

Thus, it seems that the relevant derivation does not involve remnant movement in the normal sense, but rather distributed deletion as developed in Fanselow & Cavar (2002) for discontinuous noun phrases: Syntactically, the complete VP is copied to the left, but, in contrast to standard instances of movement, the deletion operation following copying does not only affect the lower copy, but also the higher one.

(7)   [VP nur die Kinder ~~nicht zur Schule gebracht~~] hat Anna [VP ~~nur die Kinder~~ nicht zur Schule gebracht].

With distributed deletion, VP fronting can also create a structure in which the indirect object is the only part of VP that is overtly realized at the left edge. Hence, (8) also comes with a predicate alternative set: the person talked about may be a perfect guest (he never comes too early, he never drinks too much, he is always polite, etc.) but one property is missing. The very same readings arise in (9) and (10), in which more material is realized in the left copy, and is hence missing in the right one.

(8)   *Nur den Kindern* hat er nie   *ein Geschenk mitgebracht.*
      only the children has he never a   present   brought
      $\forall P\ (\neg P(\mathbf{he}) \rightarrow P=\mathbf{bring\ the\ children\ a\ present})$

(9)   *Nur den Kindern ein Geschenk* hat er *nie mitgebracht.*

(10) *Nur den Kindern ein Geschenk mitgebracht* hat er nie.

(11) and (12) illustrate that distributed deletion also affects verbal projections with a subject at the left edge: (11) can state that all the predictions of some clairvoyant came true (global warming was halted, the aliens landed on earth) with one exception. (12) can talk about someone who has realized all his plans by his twentieth birthday (become a billionaire, become the German chancellor, be awarded a Nobel prize …), again with a deplorable exception.

(11) Nur der dritte Weltkrieg ist nicht ausgebrochen.
      only the third world war is not   broken out
      $\forall p\ (\neg p) \rightarrow p=\mathbf{the\ third\ world\ war\ broke\ out})$

(12) a.   Nur ein Mädchen hat ihn noch nicht geküsst.
           only a   girl   has him not   yet   kissed
           $\forall p\ (\neg p \rightarrow p=\mathbf{a\ girl\ has\ kissed\ him})$
      b.   Nur ein Mädchen geküsst hat ihn noch nie.

2. In German main clauses, one constituent needs to be placed in front of the finite verb. This is a formal requirement, just like verb placement. Can a category move to the position to the left of the verb, and nevertheless remain in the scope of a scalar particle?

Imagine you booked the tour "Scary night in the forest," but all promises are broken: no bats flying around your head, no howling wolves, no ghost light appearing in the moor. You complain to the organizer. In this context, (13a) is a perfect formulation of the complaint, in which the left edge is filled by an expletive and all material that is in the semantic scope of *nur* is c-commanded by it. But (13b), (13c) are also wellformed in this context, though they may be a bit marked. They allow a reading in which *nur* affects the whole proposition. The same holds in (14) with *sogar*, which is fine in a context like this one: all predictions of some clairvoyant came true, not only the predictions about the eruption of volcanoes in Yellowstone National Park, Putin becoming a movie star, and aliens landing in New York City, but even the prediction about the pope.

(13)   a.   Es   haben nur Hunde gebellt.
            there have   only dogs   barked
            $\forall$ p (p $\rightarrow$ p=**dogs barked**)
       b.   Hunde haben nur gebellt
       c.   Die Hunde haben nur gebellt

(14)   Der Papst ist sogar (auch) gestorben.
       the pope is even also   died
       'Even it was the case that the pope died'

3. Formally triggered operations such as the fronting of the finite verb and the movement of some XP to the left of the finite verb in German main clauses do not affect the scope assignment of *nur* and the other focus particles. But what about a less formal operation such as scrambling? Relevant examples can be found in (15) and (16), with the crucial readings indicated. The definite indirect (15) and direct (16) objects precede the focus particle *nur*—so if they can be in the scope of the particle, they must have been scrambled out of the VP.

(15)   Hans hat ja   der   Maria nur einen Heiratsantrag   gemacht, und nicht
       Hans has PTC the.DAT Mary only a   proposal of marriage made   and not
       auch noch   der   Anna Blumen geschenkt.
       also additionally the.DAT Anna flowers presented
       (Hans is not a marriage impostor:) 'Hans has only made Mary a proposal of marriage, he has not in addition given flowers to Anna as a present'

(16)   Hans hat ja   die Bücher nur ins   Regal   gelegt, und nicht auch noch
       Hans has PTC the books   only into.the shelves put   and not   also additionally
       den   Kindern die Haare gekämmt.
       the.DAT children the hair   combed
       (Hans has not done all he promised:) 'Hans only put the books on the shelves, he has not in addition combed the children's hair'

There is no uniform reaction to such sentences. We sent out similar sentences (*Fritz hat ja am Freitag der Maria nur ein paar Blumen mitgebracht und nicht auch noch am Samstag der Franziska einen Heiratsantrag gemacht, Fritz hat ja am Freitag der Maria nur ein paar Blumen mitgebracht, und nicht auch noch am Samstag der Franziska einen Präsentkorb*) to 30 linguists

who are German native speakers by e-mail, and found that nearly half of them (13/30 and 12/30, respectively) accepted them in a forced choice task. Apparently, there is no uniform way of resolving the conflict between the factors favoring the scrambling of a DP out of VP (e.g., definiteness) and the constraint that demands parallelism between syntactic and semantic scope. A subject can also be placed in front of a focus particle yet remain in its scope, as shown by (17), in which the alternative set contains complete propositions (Wlodek sparking off fireworks, Marzena reciting a poem, Teresa cooking a perfekt dinner …)

(17) Bestimmt hat Derk nur ein paar   Eulen gezeigt, und nicht auch noch   Wlodek
      certainly has Derk only a   couple owls   shown   and not   also additionally Wlodek
      ein Feuerwerk gezündet.
      a   fireworks   sparked off

4. 14 out of 30 linguists also accepted sentence (18).

(18) Fritz hat ja   nur am   Freitag der   Maria ein paar   Blumen mitgebracht, und
      Fritz has PTC only on-the Friday the.DAT Mary a   couple flowers brought   and
      nicht auch noch   einen Präsentkorb.
      not   also additionally a   gift basket
      'Fritz only brought Mary a couple of flowers on Friday, and not also a gift basket'

The continuation in the second conjunct might suggest that the alternative set consists of several possible presents for Mary, i.e., under this reading, *nur* would sit in a position quite far away from its scope. This could mean that elements not in the semantic scope of *nur* can remain in its syntactic scope. However, one can also assume that the alternatives are indeed properties (bringing Mary flowers on Friday, bringing Mary a gift basket on Friday, bringing Mary a cat on Friday), with the given parts of the property being phonologically unrealized in the second conjunct. It is difficult to decide between these alternatives.

5. To my ears, the examples discussed in sections 3 and 4 differ from the ones discussed earlier in the additional presence of an evaluative component. To what extent the syntactic analysis can be influenced by this component is also an issue I want to leave open here.

References

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