

# Josef: Felicitation and some reminiscences

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First, some memories. My friendship with Josef Bayer dates from 1984. I presented a paper at the 1984 GLOW Colloquium which was held at the University of Copenhagen. It was the first paper I had presented at a major conference, and I remember my nervousness as I read the paper. But the audience was very kind—more kind than convinced, I now think! Josef introduced himself to me after the paper and we quickly became friends. At his invitation I visited him at his home in Aachen—where he had a job at that time—and I met his wife. Maybe I was surprised to see that he had an Indian wife, and I understood his special connection to India. We have been friends ever since that first meeting. I believe, nearly every time the Bayers visited India, they have come to Hyderabad and paid me and Amrit a visit at our home. In 1992, when we organized an International Summer School in Syntax (ISIS) at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad (which is my place of work—now renamed English & Foreign Languages University), Josef Bayer was—along with Tanya Reinhart, Jacqueline Gueron, Jean-Yves Pollock, and other luminaries—one of the “star” teachers.

I have leaned on Josef’s support in my research. There is a special quality about his work that I value. He is conservative, in a way that I think of as typical of European scholarship. European scholarship has as its background Philology, Indo-European studies, comparative Sanskrit-Germanic studies and so on, and also linguists like Otto Jespersen. It is this accumulated wealth (and burden) of knowledge that makes European scholarship conservative. I have generally found that if Josef plumbs for a new idea or proposal in Linguistics, one can be sure that it is right. I am on the other hand impulsive and tend to go for new ideas perhaps too easily. Josef has sometimes acted as ballast for my ship, which is light in many respects.

We have differed regarding some major ideas. Thus I believe, Josef Bayer did not adopt the idea of antisymmetry when it was proposed; this was possibly because a good bit of his work was premised on the idea of the directionality of the head-complement relation, cf. his habilitation thesis for the University of Konstanz (Bayer, 1990) which formed the basis for his important book *Directionality and Logical Form: On the Scope of Focusing Particles and Wh-in-Situ* (Bayer, 1996). But then this book—ironically—acted as a stimulus for some important and far-reaching developments in the complex of ideas that we identify with the “antisymmetry camp.” Trying to account for Bayer’s detailed observations about the scope facts of German focusing particles, Richard Kayne came up with the proposal of remnant movement (Kayne, 1998). This latter idea has been the basis for a great deal of research

relating to word order and structure, and has led to new explanations and insights. (In my own work, I used remnant VP movement to generate the VO vs. OV difference in word order between languages.)

But Josef Bayer (again)—as far as I know—never “bought into” remnant movement.

One of the strong areas of research in European linguistics is the investigation of dialect syntax. Thus there is an important initiative to map the dialect geography of Dutch that is based in the University of Utrecht. Similarly, Italian linguists have been examining Italian dialects. Josef Bayer’s interest in German dialectal data was the origin of one of his first papers to receive widespread attention, “COMP-Node in Bavarian Syntax” (Bayer, 1984). This was one of the early papers to shake our faith in the neat picture of COMP as consisting of a single phrase, a head and a specifier; this picture went unquestioned for a long time in linguistic debate, although it was dictated entirely by English data (cf. the idea of the “doubly-filled COMP”). The attempt to understand better the full complexity of this area of clause structure led directly to Luigi Rizzi’s proposal to split C into several phrases. Which in turn was the beginning of cartography, one of the main thrust areas of contemporary linguistic research.

I bring this matter up for a more personal reason, namely to mention how Josef’s interest in dialect data and in the left periphery quite incidentally benefited my research. In his paper “Decomposing the Left Periphery: Dialectal and Cross-Linguistic Evidence” (Bayer, 2004), he discusses some data from “colloquial substandard Dutch” which he cites from an earlier paper by Eric Hoekstra:

- (1) Ze weet [wie [of [dat [hij had willen opbellen]]]].  
she knows who if that he had wanted call  
‘She knows who he wanted to call.’

Note the ‘who – if – that’ sequence in the left periphery of the embedded clause. I remember how I gleefully “jumped at” the Dutch data, for it provided some support for a claim that I had been pushing for some time but without much success, namely that ‘if’ is underlyingly present in the C-domain of English constituent questions (Jayaseelan, 2012).

I already spoke of Josef’s “Indian connection”. His wife being a Bangla (Bengali) speaker, he turned to advantage the presence of this native speaker competence in the home to produce some of the most important work on Bangla syntax in the generative framework. Possibly he was the first to observe some theoretically challenging scope facts about the *wh*-elements of Bangla (unless of course they had been noted in Probal Dasgupta’s Ph.D. thesis done at NYU in 1980, which is a treasure house of observations about Bangla; Dasgupta, 1980). Finite complement clauses in Bangla can appear in two positions: the canonical position of the Direct Object which is to the immediate left of the matrix verb, or a right-extraposed position. A *wh*-phrase in the extraposed complement can only have a clause-internal (narrow) scope, while a *wh*-phrase in a clause in the canonical position exhibits the expected scope ambiguity. He proposed an explanation of this fact in terms of directionality: Bangla being a head-final language, canonical government is to the left; and any phrase or clause which is right-extraposed is governed in the “wrong” direction, and this makes it an island. (I attempted to assimilate the Bangla/Hindi scope facts to Malayalam scope facts and proposed an alternative

explanation in terms of movement to focus in Jayaseelan, 2003 but I will not describe my solution here.)

Some of Josef's most recent research is on Bangla, see his joint paper with Probal Dasgupta on Bangla particles (Bayer & Dasgupta, forthcoming).

Let me take this occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday felicitations, to wish Josef Bayer many years more of active research!

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