

snippets

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8.

Gary Thoms - University of Strathclyde ***P-stranding diagnoses A'-movement in tough constructions***

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“Tough movement” (TM) is exemplified by the pair in (1).

- (1) a. It is tough to please linguists.
b. Linguists₁ are tough to please t₁.

The literature on TM reports that it exhibits both A- and A'-properties, and some analyses (e.g. Hicks 2009) have proposed to account for this by decomposing TM derivations into two steps, where the first is A'-movement to the embedded Spec,CP and the second A-movement to Spec,TP. Here I provide a new argument for diagnosing the first step as A'-movement with data from preposition stranding (p-stranding) across languages.

P-stranding languages like English allow for p-stranding with TM:

- (2) Magicians₁ are difficult to talk to t₁.

As one might expect, non-p-stranding languages like Italian do not allow for TM with p-stranding:

- (3) a. *I maghi sono difficili da parlare a
the magicians are difficult DA talk.INF to
'Magicians are difficult to talk to.'
b. È difficile parlare ai maghi.
is difficult talk.INF to.the magicians.
'It is difficult to talk to magicians.'

It is known that some languages, such as Danish and Icelandic, allow for p-stranding with A'-movement but not A-movement, while there are no known languages that allow for p-stranding in A-movement but not A'-movement. The Danish stranding data is in (4) and the Icelandic in (5) (from Truswell 2009):

- (4) a. Hvem har Peter snakket med?
Who has Peter talked with
'Who has Peter talked with?'
b. *Han blev grinet af
He was laughed at
'He was laughed at.'

- (5) a. Hvern hefur Pétur talað við?
Who has Peter talked with
'Who has Peter talked with?'
- b. *Ég tel Vigdís vera oftast talað vel um.
I believe Vigdís be.INF most.often spoken well of
'I believe Vigdís to be most often spoken well of.'

These languages can diagnose whether or not TM – specifically the step of movement from the base position – is A- or A'-movement: if p-stranding is possible in Icelandic and Danish TM, the first step must be A'-movement.

Danish (6) and Icelandic (7) show that these languages allow for p-stranding under TM:

- (6) a. Tryllekunstnere er svære at tale med
Magicians are tough to talk with
'Magicians are tough to talk to.'
- b. Det er svært at tale med tryllekunstnere
Expl. is tough to talk with magicians.
'It is tough to talk to magicians.'
- (7) a. Töframenn eru erfiðir að tala við.
Magicians are difficult to talk with.
'Magicians are difficult to talk to.'
- b. Það er erfitt að tala við töframenn
Expl. is tough to talk with magicians
'It is tough to talk to magicians.'
- c. Hinrik VIII var erfiðir að búa með
Henry VIII was difficult to live with (Thráinsson 2007: 431)

This indicates that the first move in TM dependencies must be A'-movement.

References

- Hicks, G. (2009) "Tough-constructions and their derivation." *Linguistic Inquiry* 40, 535-566.
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