snippets

Issue 27 **September 2013**

Contents

2.

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Violations of the Right Edge Constraint in Right Node Raising

Background. A well-known descriptive trait of *Right Node Raising* (RNR) is the *Right Edge Constraint* (REC): material targeted by RNR must occur rightmost in all coordinates (cf. Wilder 1999, Sabbagh 2007, Bachrach and Katzir 2009 a.o.). (1) illustrates the REC for German: in (1a), but not in ungrammatical (1b), the material targeted by RNR is rightmost in all coordinates.

(1) a. Hans heiratete seine Freundin vor ___ und Maria trennte sich   von ihrem
     Hans married his   girlfriend before and Maria separated REFL from her

   Freund   nach ___**den olympischen Spielen.**
   boyfriend after   the Olympic   games
   'Hans married his girlfriend before and Maria separated from her boyfriend after the olympics.'

   b. * Hans heiratete seine Freundin vor ___ und Maria trennte sich   nach ___
        Hans married his girlfriend before and Maria separated REFL after

   den olympischen Spielen von ihrem Freund.
   the Olympic games from her boyfriend

The problem. While some have pointed at spurious exceptions to the REC (cf. Wilder 1999), German exhibits a hitherto unnoticed class of regular exceptions: (2) is a possible configuration with **D** being the RNR-ed material, if *E* is a negation or a focus sensitive particle.

(2) A B *and* / *or* / *but* C **D** *E*.

(3) involves RNR of the reflexive pronoun. Since negation follows it in the second conjunct, it too should have undergone RNR. However, negation is interpreted exclusively in the second conjunct. It therefore has not been targeted by RNR, yielding a violation of the REC.

(3) Die Schauspieler verbeugten ___*aber* bedankten ___ **sich** *nicht*.
   The actors   bowed   but thanked   REFL not.
   'The actors bowed, but didn't thank the audience.'

The phenomenon is not tied to the conjunction *aber* (which might be argued to be a positive polarity item), (4b), (4c), nor to the RNR-ed material in (3) being a "phonologically light" reflexive pronoun, (4a), (4c). Further, it is found not only with negation, but with focus-sensitive particles, (4b), (4c), or, more generally, material sensitive to contrast, (5).

(4) a. Die Jugendlich schlugen ___*aber* töteten ___**Hans** *nicht*.
     The teenagers   beat   but killed   Hans not.
     'The teenagers beat Hans, but they did not kill him.'

    b. Die Schauspieler verbeugten ___*und* bedankten ___ **sich** *sogar*.
       The actors   bowed   and thanked   REFL even.
       'The actors bowed and even thanked the audience .'

    c. Die Jugendlich töteten ___*oder* verletzten ___**Hans** *nur*.
       The teenagers killed   or   hurt   Hans only.
       'The teenagers killed Hans or they only hurt him.

(5) Die Jugendlichen mögen ___*aber* verprügeln ___**Hans** *trotzdem*.
   The teenagers   like   but beat-up   Hans still
    'The teenagers like Hans, but they still beat him up.'

In sum, the REC is a descriptive property of RNR in most cases, but can be blocked by elements that contrast the second coordinate with the first one.

      Overt movement theories of RNR (cf. Sabbagh 2007) cannot account for the data in (4), (5), since the target position of movement of the shared element is above the coordinate structure, therefore it should occur in the rightmost position. Prosodic deletion accounts (as in Hartmann 2000) could in principle assume that the overt counterpart of the elided material does not have to be peripheral in the second coordinate, but this would lead to massive overgeneralization. Sharing analyses (cf. for instance Wilder 1999, Bachrach and Katzir 2009) essentially face the same problem: they could assume that material is shared and linearized non-peripherally within the second coordinate, but again the resulting system would be too unconstrained.

References

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