

# snippets

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## Two observations about reconstruction

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This snippet addresses two observations about reconstruction. The background to the first observation is what Sauerland and Elbourne (2002) call “Barss’s Generalization” (BG, going back to Barss 1986): if a moved category  $\alpha$  is contained in a category  $\beta$ , and  $\alpha$  moves out of  $\beta$ , then  $\alpha$  can reconstruct into  $\beta$  only if  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$  on the surface. BG is particularly difficult to account for within the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995). Sauerland and Elbourne (2002) (see also Sauerland 1999) offer an elegant explanation for instances of BG where  $\alpha$  undergoes A-movement. The idea is that A-movement applies in the syntax or at PF, but it never leaves a copy behind. Reconstruction of A-movement means that it has applied at PF. Crucially, this makes the prediction that there is no reconstruction in configurations where A-movement feeds syntactic  $\bar{A}$ -movement. As noted in (Sauerland 1999:592), this prediction is challenged by examples such as (1), where *seem* may out-scope *many men*.

- (1) How many men seemed to Kazuko to be downstairs?  $\exists > seem ; seem > \exists$

Sauerland (1999) suggests that (1) may have a derivation, where  $\bar{A}$ -movement of *how many men* applies first, followed by A-movement of its lower (later deleted) copy at PF (2) (thereby deriving reconstruction).

- (2)  $[_{CP}$  How many men  $[_{TP}$   $\overbrace{\text{how many men}}^{\text{PF}}$  seemed to Kazuko  $[_{TP}$   $\underbrace{\text{how many men}_{LF} \dots}_{\text{syntax}}$ ]]]?

While this fixes the problem with (1), examples like the one in (3) now pose a new challenge.

- (3)  $[_{CP}$  [ Which picture of some boy ]  $[_{TP}$   $t'$  seems  $[_{PP}$  to every girl ]  $[_{TP}$   $t$  to be the best]]]?
- $\exists > \forall ; ?*\forall > \exists$

According to the judgments of three speakers we consulted, *every girl* in (3) cannot take scope over *some boy*. If true, the lack of reconstruction in (3) supports Sauerland and Elbourne’s (2002) original theory, but it raises a problem for the fix suggested in Sauerland 1999, thus leaving the possibility of *many men* scoping below *seem* in (1) unexplained.

Turning to the second observation, it is well known that reconstruction for binding in raising contexts is possible, see (4).

- (4) Which picture of himself<sub>1</sub> seems to John<sub>1</sub> to be the best?

Similar to the asymmetry between (1) and (3), scope reconstruction is out in Barss configurations, whereas reconstruction for binding is possible; see (5) (with  $\alpha$  being extraposed and  $\beta$  undergoing remnant VP-topicalization).

- (5) a. ... and [<sub>VP</sub> give every handout t<sub>PP</sub> ]<sub>2</sub> David did t<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> to one of the students].  
 $\exists > \forall$ ;  $*\forall > \exists$  (Sauerland 1999)
- b. John promised to give books to them<sub>1</sub>, and [<sub>VP</sub> give books to them<sub>2</sub> t<sub>PP</sub> ] he did t<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> at each other's<sub>2</sub> birthdays].  
(Pesetsky 1995)

This suggests that reconstruction for scope and binding require different mechanisms (see Cresti 1995; Rullmann 1995, contra Romero 1998; Sternefeld 2001; Sportiche 2006; Lechner 2007, 2019). While we have no idea how to approach the first observation, the second may find an explanation in the theory of “flat binding” proposed by Sauerland (2007), which is specifically designed to derive binding (but not scope) without c-command. Cases where scope and binding pattern alike must then be accidental.

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