Contents


2. George Balabanian, Justin Case, and Dennis Ott. *Sluicing bleeds differential object marking in Western Armenian.*


A curious A/A non-interaction in Tamil double-object constructions

Sandhya Sundaresan · University of Göttingen

Double object constructions (DOCs) in Norwegian (Lundquist 2006) and Zulu (Adams 2010) are symmetric for A and A-extractions: i.e. either Recipient (R) or Theme (Th) may be passivized or wh-extracted. But a curious asymmetry arises when passivization is combined with wh-extraction: Th-wh+R-passivization is licit, but R-wh+Th-passivization is not. Holmberg et al. (2019) argue that this “Double Object Movement Asymmetry (DOMA)” is more pervasive, applying to symmetric and asymmetric languages (like Italian: √Th-wh; √R-wh; √Th-passive; ×R-passive) alike. For Holmberg et al., DOMA follows from intervention and the PIC (Chomsky 2001; Citko 2014). In a Th-passive, the Theme first A-moves to the ApplP phase edge containing both Theme and Recipient, blocking subsequent A-movement of the Recipient to that edge, thereby making it invisible to extraction at C — analogously with subject/object extraction asymmetries with syntactic ergatives (Aldridge 2008).

Here, I showcase an unexpected violation of DOMA in Tamil (Dravidian). DOCs in Tamil pattern just like in Italian (√Th-wh; √R-wh; √Th-passive; ×R-passive). Given DOMA, we still predict that Th-passive + R-wh should be barred even if Th-pass + Th-wh is licit (as in Italian). But curiously, both options are perfectly licit, as shown in (2), given the baselines in (1).

(1) a. Sri Sai-kkû andæ pustagatt-kë kuññittaaan.
   Sri Sai-DAT that book-ACC gave
   ‘Sri gave Sai that book (Active DOC)’

   b. Andæ pustagam Sai-kkû kuññükka-paṭṭ-adû.
      that book.NOM Sai-DAT give-PASS-3NSG
      ‘That book was given to Sai’ (Th-passive)

(2) a. Endæ pustagam sai-kkû kuññükka-paṭṭ-adû?
   which book.NOM Sai-DAT give-PASS-3NSG
   ‘Which book was given to Sai?’ (Th-wh + Th-passive)

   b. Andæ pustagam yaar-ûkkû kuññükka-paṭṭ-adû?
      that book.NOM who-DAT give-PASS-3NSG
      ‘Who was that book given’ (×DOMA: R-wh + Th-passive)

Various objections that the data above constitute a counterexample can be rejected. First, Holmberg et al. argue that to-PPs are exempt from DOMA due to their different thematic structure. But (2b) cannot involve a to-PP. Recipients in to-PP structures are suffixed with a postposition kîftæ, not a dative marker, and show systematic interpretive (Oehrle 1976) and verb-class (Levin 1993) distinctions from the dative variant, paralleling those observed for to-PPs vs. DOCs, respectively (Sundaresan 2006). Second, DOCs in languages with fully symmetric passives, e.g. Luganda
(Niger-Congo), seem exempt from DOMA (Holmberg et al. 2017). But Tamil is asymmetric for passivization (√ Th-passive; × R-passive). Third, Holmberg et al. show, e.g. for Sesotho (Niger-Congo), that DOMA is violable if R is inanimate and Th is animate. But in (2b), R is animate and Th is inanimate and DOMA is still violated.

Finally, given that Tamil is wh-in-situ on the surface, a ready explanation could be that the wh-elements in (2) are not extracted at all, but are unselectively bound in-situ. A common diagnostic to tease these options apart involves intervention effects (e.g. Beck 2006 and Kotek 2019). A c-commanding scope-bearing element should block in-situ wh-licensing, yielding ungrammaticality; but if the wh-element can covertly move past the scope-bearing element at LF, such intervention should be obviated. Applying the diagnostic to Tamil shows that focus-intervention effects are prominently absent in ditransitives with a wh-Theme (3) or wh-Goal (4) showing that wh-elements are covertly extracted in such structures.

(3) Raman Seetha-ʋükku ma[tun] ed-ʋ kuʋu-ʋt-ʋan?
Raman.NOM Seetha-DAT only.FOC what-ACC give-PST-3MSG
‘What did Raman give only Seetha?’

only.FOC who-DAT give-PST-3MSG
‘Who(m) did Raman give only the book?’

Preliminary further evidence in violation of DOMA, which also suggests that the wh-in-/ex-situ parameter is independent of the DOMA-violation, comes from German. German is wh-ex-situ with a DOC profile like Italian/Tamil (√ Th-wh; √ R-wh; √ Th-passive; × R-passive), but it potentially also violates DOMA:

(5) Ich habe ihm den Kuchen gegeben.
I.NOM have him.DAT the.ACC cake given.PTCP
‘I gave him the cake.’ (Active)

(6) Welche-r Kuchen wurde ihm gegeben?
which-NOM cake was.PASS him.DAT given.PTCP
‘Which cake was he given?’ (Th-wh + Th-passive)

(7) Wem wurde der Kuchen gegeben?
who.DAT was.PASS the.NOM cake given.PTCP
‘Who was the cake given?’ (×DOMA: R-wh + Th-passive)

A different explanation for DOMA is thus called for.

References


Holmberg, Anders, Michelle Sheehan, and Jenneke van der Wal. 2017. Movement from the double object construction is not fully symmetrical. *Lingbuzz/003075*.


Sandhya Sundaresan
sandhya@sndrsn.org
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Wilhelmsplatz 1
37073 Göttingen
Germany