snippets

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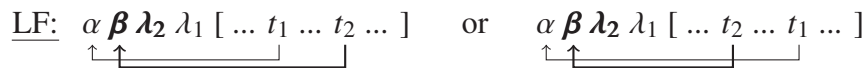
Can parasitic scope-taking movement be pronounced?

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Considerations of semantic interpretation have motivated LF structures that involve movement of an expression β to a position that ends up being located *in between* another expression α that is moved and α's corresponding λ-binder, as in (1). Barker (2007) describes β as taking "parasitic scope" in such configurations.

(1) **Parasitic scope:**

   LF: $\alpha\ \boldsymbol{\beta}\ \boldsymbol{\lambda_2}\ \lambda_1\ [\ ...\ t_1\ ...\ t_2\ ...\ ]$ or $\alpha\ \boldsymbol{\beta}\ \boldsymbol{\lambda_2}\ \lambda_1\ [\ ...\ t_2\ ...\ t_1\ ...\ ]$

Here I note that in prior work that has argued for parasitic scope-taking LFs, β is not pronounced in the hypothesized, parasitic scope-taking position (except for a couple potential exceptions, below).

I first survey prominent examples of constructions for which parasitic scope taking has been argued to be required. In (2)-(4), the semantics of the expression in bold requires a two-place predicate denotation for its sister, which parasitic scope makes possible. Similar analyses exist for reflexive anaphors (Lechner 2012) and NP-internal *only* (Sharvit 2015). In all of these cases, the proposed movement taking parasitic scope is covert.

(2) **Relative superlatives:**   (Heim 1999)

   Amy is angriest at [Bea]$_F$.

   LF: Bea **-est** $\boldsymbol{\lambda_2}$ λ_1 [Amy is t_2-angry at t_1]

(3) **Comparatives with phrasal standards:**   (Bhatt and Takahashi 2007, 2011)

   Cara is taller than Dana.

   LF: Cara [**-er** than Dana] $\boldsymbol{\lambda_2}$ λ_1 [t_1 is t_2-tall]
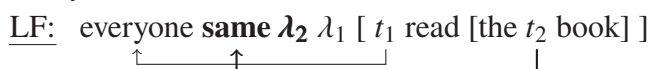
(4) **Sentence-internal *same* and *different*:**   (Barker 2007)

   Everyone read the same book.

   LF: everyone **same** $\boldsymbol{\lambda_2}$ λ_1 [t_1 read [the t_2 book]]

Kennedy and Stanley (2008, 2009) present an analysis for NP-internal *average* that involves overt movement of the containing NP taking parasitic scope, but their analysis can also be recast as involving (covert) parasitic scope-taking of *average* alone, as in Barker and Shan 2014:146.

The semantics of certain adjuncts also motivate parasitic scope (5), as they require a derived two-place predicate sister. Examples include adjuncts with multiple parasitic gaps (Nissenbaum 2000a,b), the ** cumulative operator (Sauerland 1998, Beck 2000, Beck and Sauerland 2000), and *on average* (Kennedy and Stanley 2008, 2009).

(5) **Movement taking parasitic scope, motivated by adjunct:**

LF: $\alpha\ \boldsymbol{\beta}$ [*adjunct* [$\boldsymbol{\lambda_2}\ \lambda_1$ [... t_1 ... t_2 ...]]]   or $\alpha\ \boldsymbol{\beta}$ [*adjunct* [$\boldsymbol{\lambda_2}\ \lambda_1$ [... t_2 ... t_1 ...]]]

Note that in contrast to the examples above, adjuncts with multiple parasitic gaps can be licensed by two overlapping, overt movement chains: see e.g., Nissenbaum 2000b:117, exx. 42a, 43a and Davis 2020:224, ex. 53. However, following these works, the configuration in (5) then holds at an intermediate *v*P edge, so β is again not pronounced there. In summary, in the many constructions that arguably necessitate parasitic scope in English, the critical β movement step in (1)/(5) is not pronounced there.

Potential counterexamples to this generalization are attested, but — perhaps notably — in other languages. For instance, as the editors note, Aihara (2009) and Hallman (2016) analyze examples where superlative morphemes (Japanese *ichiban* and Syrian Arabic *aktar šey*, respectively) are separated from their associated degree predicates, as involving overt equivalents of Heim's (2) above. However, as Aihara notes (p. 352, note 6), there is a potential, alternative account where the superlative morpheme does *not* take parasitic scope and is instead a focus-sensitive operator. Further work is necessary to determine which approach is most appropriate.

If such analyses involving overt movements taking parasitic scope are maintained, we must consider the intriguing possibility that the availability of overt parasitic scope-taking movement is subject to cross-linguistic variation. One possibility, building on a question from a reviewer, may be to relate this to independent variation in the pronunciation of multiple specifiers. Notice that in the parasitic scope configurations in (1-5) above, α and β form multiple specifiers of a single phrase. Richards (1997) and Pesetsky (2000) propose that multiple *wh*-phrases may move to form multiple specifiers of CP, but languages vary in how such structures are pronounced at PF: only the outermost specifier can be pronounced there in English, whereas multiple specifiers can be pronounced simultaneously in Bulgarian-type languages. If the proposed "pronunciation rule" extends to all phrases with multiple specifiers, regardless of whether they involve parasitic scope, the observation that β is not pronounced in the configurations in (1-5) in English above is explained, as it is an inner specifier of a multiple specifier configuration.

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