

UNIFYING PHRASAL AND SUBWORD RIGHT-NODE RAISING: A MULTIDOMINANCE ACCOUNT*

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PITCH

- Much recent work has aimed to unify morphology and syntax within a single module.
- Here, we compare English Right-Node Raising (RNR) constructions at the phrasal and the subword level.
- Instead of positing a specialized operation for subword RNR, we develop a unified multidominance analysis to account for both.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Right-Node Raising (RNR), an element is semantically present inside both conjuncts but is only linearized once, typically occupying the rightmost position in the sentence. We refer to this element as the pivot (**bold** in (1)):

- (1) John likes_(remnant), and Mary dislikes_(correlate), **opera**_(pivot). (Belk et al., 2023:685)

Besides the traditional phrasal cases, RNR is also attested at the subword level (Artstein, 2005; Booij, 1985; Chaves, 2008; Höhle, 1982; Smith, 2000; Wiese, 2000) (2):

- (2) Bill and Martha are ortho-_(remnant) and perio-_(correlate)dontists_(pivot). (Artstein, 2005:359)
✓ Bill and Martha are both orthodontists and periodontists. *collective reading*
✓ Bill is an orthodontist and Martha is a periodontist. *distributive reading*¹
- (3) Bill_{SG} → -dontist_{SG}; Martha_{SG} → -dontist_{SG} *distributive reading*
[[-dontists]_{PL} = {-dontist_{SG} ⊕ -dontist_{SG}}]

The coordinated word parts in (2) are for most speakers not meaningful in isolation. Hence, it is not clear that they should be analyzed as independent morphemes that could be coordinated in the syntax.

In response, one might analyze (2) as being derived from an underlying full coordination via deletion of a prosodic constituent (*-dontists*), which does not have to correspond to a syntactic constituent. However, the distributive reading in (2) is not available in the full coordination, (4):

- (4) Bill and Martha are orthodontists and periodontists. *collective reading*
✓ Bill and Martha are both orthodontists and periodontists. *distributive reading*
✗ Bill is an orthodontist and Martha is a periodontist. *distributive reading*

In sum, example (2) raises two questions (Artstein, 2005):

*Thanks to Kyle Johnson, as well as audiences at the Syn-Sem Reading Group at QMUL (with UCL faculty generously participating) and the UMass Syntax Workshop for many helpful suggestions. All remaining errors are our own.

¹In the present study, we employ the term *distributive reading* in a descriptive and theory-neutral manner to refer to cases

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: Assuming that *ortho*, *perio* and *dontist* are not interpretable in isolation, how is (2) composed semantically?

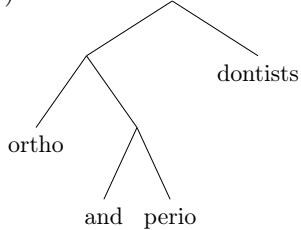
Q2: How can we derive the distributive reading?

We argue that examples like (2) do involve morphological decomposition in the syntax, and we rely on a multidominance analysis (Abels, 2004; Bachrach and Katzir, 2009; Barros and Vicente, 2011; Belk et al., 2023; Graçanin-Yuksek, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Wilder, 1999, 2008) to derive the distributive reading.

2. PREVIOUS WORK: ARTSTEIN (2005)

Artstein (2005) proposes a surface coordination analysis for (2), shown in (5), relying on *phonological decomposition*. This mechanism allows remnant and correlate to denote strings of sound, which are treated as arguments (6). The pivot is interpreted as a function which takes a string and returns the meaning of the word consisting of the input string concatenated with *-dontist* (7).

(5)



(6)

- a. $\llbracket \text{ortho} \rrbracket \in D_e$: the string *ortho*
- b. $\llbracket \text{perio} \rrbracket \in D_e$: the string *perio*

(7) $\llbracket \text{dontist} \rrbracket \in D_{eet}$: the function $h : D_e \rightarrow D_{et}$ such that for all $\alpha \in D_e$, $h(\alpha) = \llbracket \alpha \text{dontist} \rrbracket$ if $\alpha \text{dontist}$ is a word and $\llbracket \alpha \text{dontist} \rrbracket \in D_e$, undefined otherwise (Artstein, 2005:363)

Phonological decomposition can thus coordinate meaningless strings and is only restricted prosodically.² It applies when regular semantic decomposition fails.

The distributive reading can then be computed as in (8):

(8)
$$\llbracket \text{dontists} \rrbracket = \lambda \beta \lambda \alpha. \alpha \in PL \wedge \exists n, m \in N, \alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_m [\alpha = \alpha_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \alpha_n \wedge \beta = \beta_1 \oplus \dots \oplus \beta_m \wedge \forall i \leq n \exists j \leq m \llbracket \text{dontist} \rrbracket(\alpha_i, \beta_j)] \wedge \forall j \leq m \exists i \leq n \llbracket \text{dontist} \rrbracket(\alpha_i, \beta_j)]^3$$

We see two main problems. First, it remains unclear why RNR is blocked when the two compounds receive an idiomatic interpretation (9a) or are in no way morphologically compositional (9b). Phonological decomposition should still be able to apply.

(9) a. *black- and hummingbirds
b. *Man- or Winchester

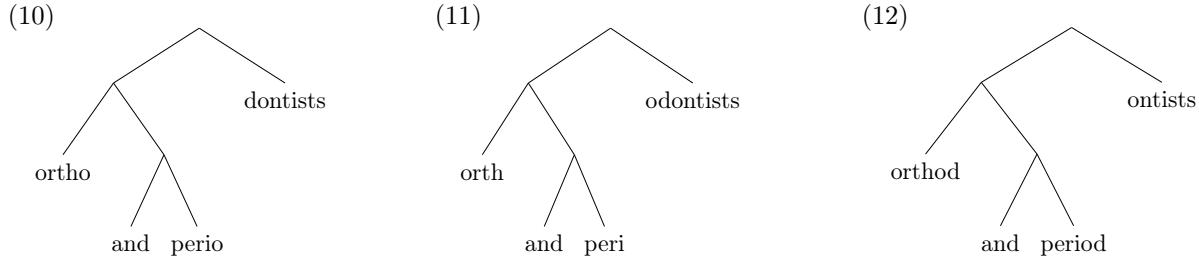
(David Adger, p.c.)
(Wilder, 2008:282)

where a sentence with two plural expressions gives rise to multiple, corresponding relations between their individual members. For instance, if one plural refers to two individuals (singular_1 and singular_2), and another plural refers to two others (singular_3 and singular_4). The possible pairings between these singular individuals could be: $\text{singular}_1 \xleftarrow{\text{Relation}} \text{singular}_3$; $\text{singular}_2 \xleftarrow{\text{Relation}} \text{singular}_4$. Other terms that indicate this phenomenon include *serially distributive* (Kroch, 1974), *codistributive reading* (Sauerland, 1998; Winter, 2000), *cumulative reading* (Beck and Sauerland, 2000; Sauerland, 2003; Champollion, 2017).

²We do not rule out that subword RNR might be restricted prosodically, but have not seen clear evidence for it yet. Ask us in the Q&A!

³Natural language gloss: $\llbracket \text{dontists} \rrbracket$ is a relation between two arguments α and β (the inner argument β is $\llbracket \text{ortho} \rrbracket \oplus \llbracket \text{perio} \rrbracket$, and the outer argument α is *Bill and Martha*) such that α is a plurality, both α and β can be broken down into individual parts, and every part of α is related by $\llbracket \text{dontists} \rrbracket$ to at least one part of β , and every part of β is related by $\llbracket \text{dontists} \rrbracket$ to at least one part of α .

Second, Artstein's base-generation analysis predicts that, e.g., (10)–(12) are all syntactically possible structures. Thus, syntax would not operate on a finite set of discrete morphemes.



INTERIM SUMMARY

- Phonological decomposition, even if correctly deriving (2), vastly overgenerates.
- The surface coordination analysis, which depends on phonological decomposition, thus loses its advantage.

3. Q1: MORPHOLOGICAL DECOMPOSITION

Instead of positing a specialized operation for RNR at the subword level, we assume that phrasal and subword RNRs are derived by the same mechanism (Chaves, 2008; Wilder, 2008). First, we address the question how seemingly meaningless word parts are composed.

Chaves (2008) observes that subword RNR is sensitive to whether or not the complex forms are semantically transparent (13)–(14) (see also Smith, 2000):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. pre- and post-war b. under- and overestimate c. plant- and meat-eaters | <p>(14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. *black- and hummingbirds b. *gold- and chaffinches c. *butter- and dragonflies |
|---|---|

We formalize the relevant restriction as follows:

- (15)
- a. The words consisting of remnant and pivot, and of correlate and pivot, respectively, must be morphologically decomposed.
 - b. The pivot must receive the same interpretation in each conjunct.

The examples in (14) violate (15a) (and, by extension, (15b)). Example (16) only violates (15b).

- (16) *a one- and well-armed man (Chaves, 2008:274)

However, Artstein's original example (17) at first sight violates the conditions in (15):

- (17) ortho- and periodontists

We propose to analyze *ortho* and *perio* as cases of contextual allomorphy, e.g., as in (18). Both *ortho* and *perio* would then combine with *dontist* via predicate modification.

- (18)
- a. $\llbracket \text{dontist} \rrbracket = \lambda x. x \text{ is a dentist}$
 - b. $\llbracket \text{ortho} \rrbracket$ in the context of $\text{dontist} = \lambda x. x \text{ is a specialist in mal-positioned teeth and jaws}$
 - c. $\llbracket \text{perio} \rrbracket$ in the context of $\text{dontist} = \lambda x. x \text{ is a specialist in gums and supporting structures}$

Hence, both conditions in (15) are met. An allomorphic analysis could also apply to the examples in (19).

- (19) a. mono- and dialogues
 b. boysen- and huckle-berries
 c. Him- und Brombeeren ‘raspberries and blackberries’
- (adapted from Booij, 1985)
 (Artstein, 2005)
 (Kleinhenz, 1997, German)

For all but the most transparent compounds, judgments appear highly variable and gradient. We assume that different speakers might entertain different analyses of the same item, or even several analyses at once. Connecting our hypothesis to the experimental literature on morphological decomposition (see Zwitserlood, 2018 for an overview) would make it more testable.

The same restrictions in (15) obtain for phrasal RNR (Chaves, 2008):

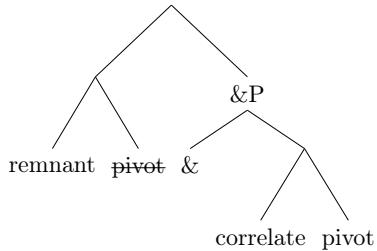
- (20) a. ?I take, and you drive, the bus.
 b. *Sue had to erase, and Tom was asked to join, the board.
 c. *I put the money, while Roger left the boat, in the bank.
 d. *His words rang, and I heard in the distance, a bell.
 e. *At the dinner party, the chatty guests were spilling, and the hostess was serving, the beans.
 f. ?The mother needed, but only her daughter could take, a really good nap.
 g. ?The boys enjoyed, but then their teacher killed, the conversation about soccer.
- (Chaves, 2008:274)
 (Chaves, 2008:274)

Thus, syntactically, RNR is just as available at the subword as at the phrasal level. The fact that subword RNR is more constrained can be accounted for if this level is more prone to idiomatic and allosemic interpretation.

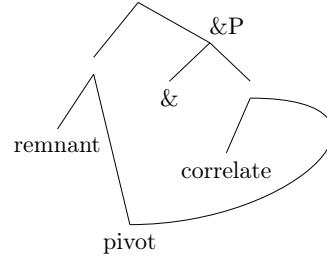
4. Q2: DERIVING THE DISTRIBUTIVE READING

Recent research has suggested that phrasal RNRs can be captured by a (constituent) ellipsis (21) and/or multidominance (22) account (Barros and Vicente, 2011; Belk et al., 2023; see Appendix A for counterarguments to an RNR-ATB analysis, Abels, 2004). The restrictions in (15) are compatible with both.

(21) *Ellipsis structure for RNR*



(22) *Multidominance structure for RNR*



Ellipsis, as a descriptive term that we have adopted here, requires that the deleted constituent can be semantically recovered from the postcedent (Chaves, 2008; Hartmann, 2001; Wilder, 1997). In a *multidominance* structure, a single node can only receive a single interpretation (Abels, 2004; An, 2007; Bachrach and Katzir, 2009; Graçanin-Yuksek, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Wilder, 1999, 2008).

However, certain cases of both phrasal and subword RNR require multidominance instead of ellipsis. Recall that (23) allows for a distributive reading:

- (23) Bill and Martha are ortho- and periodontists.
 ✓ Bill and Martha are both orthodontists and periodontists.
 ✓ Bill is an orthodontist and Martha is a periodontist.
- (Artstein, 2005:359)
collective reading
distributive reading

The same has been observed for phrasal RNR (24):

- (24) Ava will soon, and Habib is going to, study Oceanic languages.
✓ Ava and Habib are each going to study more than one Oceanic language.
✓ Ava and Habib are going to study one Oceanic language each.
- (25) $\text{Ava}_{\text{SG}} \rightarrow \text{Oceanic language}_{\text{SG}}$; $\text{Habib}_{\text{SG}} \rightarrow \text{Oceanic language}_{\text{SG}}$
 $[\![\text{Oceanic languages}]\!]_{\text{PL}} = \{\text{Oceanic language}_{\text{SG}} \oplus \text{Oceanic language}_{\text{SG}}\}$

(Belk et al., 2023:700)
collective reading
distributive reading

distributive reading

Building on the availability of an internal reading of *same*, which necessitates a wide scope of *same* over multiple events (Carlson, 1987; Barker, 2007), Belk et al. (2023) expand this analysis to (24), positing that a distributive reading is given raising *Oceanic languages* over two conjuncts at LF.

- (26) John and Ryo read the same book.
John and Ryo each read a book, and the books they read were the same.

(Belk et al., 2023:696)
internal reading

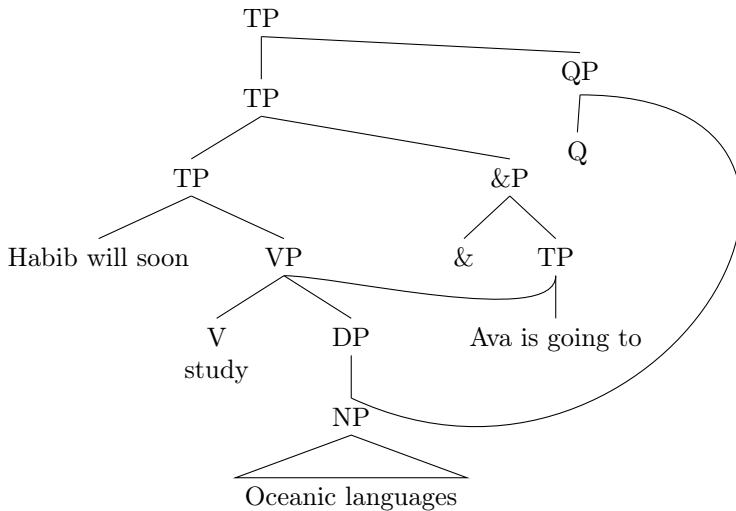
Moreover, Belk et al. (2023), following Barros and Vicente (2011), assume that the wide scope of the pivot is generated by RNR-multidominance. In the non-RNRaised example (27), the distributive reading is absent because covert ATB-movement is prohibited (Bošković and Franks, 2000; Citko, 2005)⁴.

- (27) Ava will soon study Oceanic languages, and Habib is going to study Oceanic languages.
✓ Ava and Habib each study more than one Oceanic language.
✗ Ava and Habib each study one Oceanic language.

collective reading
distributive reading

Multidominance, on the other hand, involves only one instance of *Oceanic languages* in (24) and therefore permits QR. We adopt the analysis of QR in Fox and Johnson (2016) according to which only the NP is raised. Here, only part of the pivot undergoes QR (see also Belk et al., 2023).

- (28) *Phrasal multidominance for (24)*

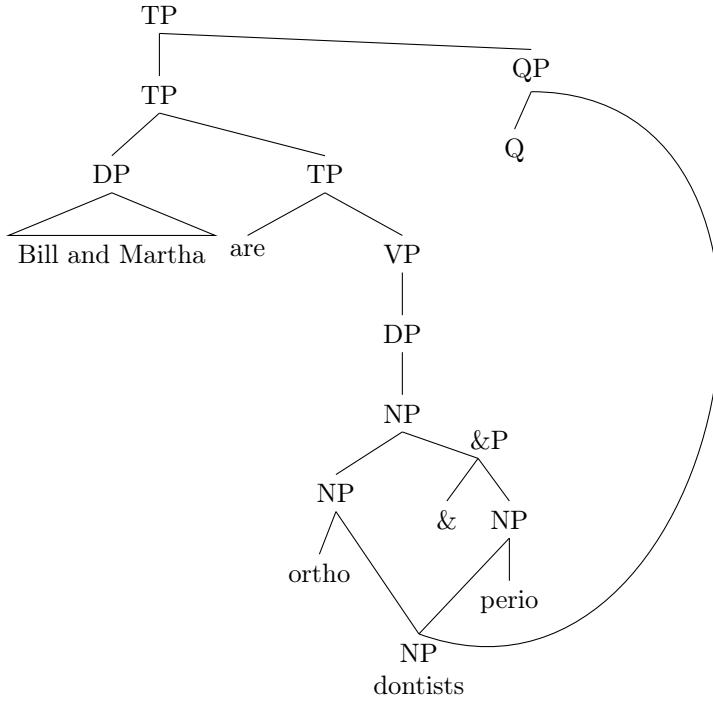


We extend this analysis to subword RNR (29):

⁴See the example below from Belk et al. (2023, p. 699): i) In (b), the reading in which the universal quantifier *every theorem* takes scope over the disjunction is missing. This rules out covert ATB-movement, unlike in (a). ii) Partial materials in an RNR pivot can also QR, thereby achieving a broad scope of *every theorem* over the disjunction in (a).

- (i) a. Mary managed to prove, or she managed to disprove, every theorem she studied.
For every theorem that Mary studied, she managed to prove it or managed to disprove it. $(\forall > \vee)$
b. Mary managed to prove every theorem, or she managed to disprove every theorem, that she studied.
For every theorem that Mary studied, she managed to prove it or managed to disprove it. $(\forall > \vee)$

(29) *Subword multidominance*



QR is vacuous; the correct word order is derived via a linearization algorithm. The fact that *periodontist* is realized as a single prosodic word can be accounted for either by M-word formation via head movement or a phase-based mapping onto PF. We suggest that the covert nature of QR is able to circumvent the ban on extraction out of words.

Belk et al. (2023) leave it open how concretely to derive a distributive reading from the QR'ed structure. Here, we adopt Beck and Sauerland's (2000) ** -operator (see also Barker, 2007; Beck, 2000; Krifka, 1986; Sauerland, 1998; Sternefeld, 1998):

$$(30) \quad [\text{**R}](X)(Y) = 1 \text{ if and only if } \forall x \in X \exists y \in Y R(x)(y) \text{ and } \forall y \in Y \exists x \in X R(x)(y)^5$$

We list an illustration of (30) below:

- (31) a. The soldiers hit the targets. (Winter, 2000:349)
Intended reading: $s_1 \rightarrow t_1; s_2 \rightarrow t_2, t_3; s_3 \rightarrow t_3$
b. $[\text{**hit}](S)(T) = 1$ if and only if $\forall s \in S \exists t \in T \text{ hit}(s)(t)$ and $\forall t \in T \exists s \in S \text{ hit}(s)(t)$

Crucially, the operator requires a binary predicate/relation. In order to apply to a non-lexical predicate such as ‘want to marry,’ the object needs to QR (32):

- (32) a. The two women wanted to marry the two men.
b. [the two women] $\lambda x [x \text{ want to marry the two men}]$
c. QR: [the two women] [the two men] $\lambda y \lambda x [x \text{ want to marry } y]$
d. **-insertion: [the two women] [the two men] $\text{**} \lambda y \lambda x. [x \text{ want to marry } y]$

(Beck and Sauerland, 2000:364)

Returning to RNR, let us first look at our subword example (33):

- (33) Bill and Martha are ortho- and periodontists.

⁵Natural language gloss: the pluralities X and Y stand in the relation R if and only if each member of X is related by R to at least one member of Y , and each member of Y is related by R to at least one member of X .

There are two pluralities: the set containing Bill and Martha, and the set containing different kinds of dentists (34). These sets are identified with each other:

- (34) [Bill and Martha] [dontists] $^{**}\lambda y\lambda x [x \text{ is } y]$ (preliminary)

However, there is no single relation holding between the two sets (35):

- (35) [Bill₁ and Martha₂] [dontists] $\lambda y\lambda x [x_1 \text{ is } y_1 \text{ and a specialist in mal-positioned teeth and jaws, and } x_2 \text{ is } y_2 \text{ and a specialist in gums and supporting structures}]$

The phrasal case, (36), poses an additional challenge:

- (36) Ava will soon, and Habib is going to, study Oceanic languages.

Glossing over the problem that there is no single relation holding between the two pluralities, the LF we are aiming for is in (37):

- (37) [Ava and Habib] [Oceanic languages] $^{**}\lambda y\lambda x [x \text{ studies } y]$

However, the syntax does not contain a DP denoting the set of Ava and Habib which could serve as input to the double starred predicate. The singular subjects would need to ‘ATB’ QR as well. Such an analysis has been proposed for cases of split antecedence (38) (Fox and Johnson, 2016, see also Abels, 2004):

- (38) A man entered the room and a woman went out who were quite similar.(Perlmutter and Ross, 1970:350)

How to formalize the movement that would be required in both cases is a question we leave to future research.

CONCLUSION

- Following previous work, we have argued for a unified analysis of phrasal and subword RNR, and against a strict syntax-morphology divide.
- We have formalized the restrictions holding on (both phrasal and subword) RNR in terms of morphological decomposition, also introducing contextual allometry as an option. We hope to stimulate further research on this question from an experimental perspective.
- To derive the distributive reading, we have relied on multidominance and QR (Belk et al., 2023) as well as a ** -operator (Beck and Sauerland, 2000), but faced challenges. Whichever route we find to distributivity, we argue that it should account for both the phrasal and the subword cases.

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APPENDIX

A. RNR-ATB

Note that, at first glance, both the ATB-movement and the multidominance analyses appear capable of capturing the distributive readings of (2) and (24). Concretely, if the distributive reading of *Oceanic languages* is achieved by taking wide scope over the coordination, then the ATB-movement analysis seems highly relevant since the pivot *study Oceanic languages* is raised to a higher position over the coordination within the ATB framework. On the other hand, the shared VP *study Oceanic languages* is multi-dominated by both conjuncts, demonstrating that it is realised in both conjuncts, but linearised only once (Wilder, 1999, 2008). It is QR that covertly raises *Oceanic languages* over the coordination to produce a distributive reading.

However, we follow Abels (2004) and assume that the ATB-movement analysis faces problem to explain (2) and (24) (see arguments for ATB-movement in (Hirsch and Wagner, 2015)). We list two arguments from Abels (2004) below.

- i. Raising of *study Oceanic languages* does not guarantee that DP *Oceanic languages* can take wide scope over the coordination from within VP. Thus the mechanism (i.e., QR) that allows distributive readings may be independent of ATB-movement (Abels (2004), see Hirsch and Wagner (2015, p. 192) for different judgements of the same type of data).
- ii. If it is ATB-movement that derives an RNR having a distributive scope over the coordination, the RNR pivot should survive VP-ellipsis since it has raised out of both conjuncts, but this prediction is not borne out, compare the following two examples:

- (39) a. Jane talked about and/but Frank didn't *(talk about) two very different sets of problems.
 b. ?Who did you say that John had visited t_{who} long ago but that Mary hadn't visited t_{who} until yesterday?

B. Island effects

QR is assumed to be sensitive to island effects, in particular the contrast between finite and non-finite clauses (Beck and Sauerland, 2000). Therefore, a distributive reading in (40a) should be more available than in (40b), (41a) and (41b).

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| (40) | a. Ava wants, and Habib would like, Martha to study Oceanic languages. | NON-FINITE |
| | b. Ava thinks, and Habib is certain, that Martha studies Oceanic languages. | FINITE |
| (41) | a. Ava wonders, and Habib is unsure, whether Martha studies Oceanic languages. | WH-ISLAND |
| | b. Ava has read, and Habib wants to write, a book about Oceanic languages. | CNPC |

We found that non-distributive readings are always judged to be more acceptable than distributive readings in the above examples. However, it is not clear whether a) the difference in scores between non-distributive and distributive readings is significant, and b) whether the scores for distributive readings in finite and island contexts are significantly lower than the baseline data score in (24). Consider also a possible distributive reading from an island in Abels (2004), see also Hirsch and Wagner (2015, p. 192) for an alternative interpretation of the following sentence:

- (42) Konrad and Friederike know men who have written quite different songs.

We therefore call for a systematic experimental study to test these patterns of data.