AGAINST PARTIAL WH-MOVEMENT IN RUSSIAN

0. INTRODUCTION. Russian is often claimed to be among languages that exhibit partial wh-movement (Stepanov 2000, Fanselow 2006). This paper explores the properties of the Russian construction that is treated by researchers as partial wh-movement. I then show that (i) Russian does not have real partial movement and (ii) that the construction resembling partial movement is a full-fledged parenthetical.

1. BACKGROUND. Russian has a construction consisting of two clauses, one with complementizer *kak* 'how' and another with a fronted wh-phrase. I will call these two clauses the *kak*-clause and the wh-clause:

(1) <u>kak</u>   tɨ   duma-iʃ,   <u>kamu</u>   an-a   kupʲila   ~~kamu~~ bʲilʲet   f   tʲiatr?
    how   you.NOM think.2SG.PR who.DAT she-NOM buy.3SG.F.PST ticket.ACC in   theatre.ACC
    'For whom do you think she bought a theatre ticket?; lit. How you think for whom she bought a ticket?'

This is a question analogous in its semantics to the sentences with the long extraction, exemplified by the English translation. In Hamblin-style semantics for questions the meaning of (1) is a set of possible answers: a set of individuals for whom she might have bought a ticket in all worlds compatible with the hearer's ideas.

On the surface, (1) strikingly resembles partial movement. It is a situation when a wh-constituent takes scope in the higher clause but moves only to the specifier of its own clause instead, hence the name P(artial) M(ovement). In PM, there may or may not be a semantically empty wh-phrase (wh-expletive, or scope-marker) that occupies the position that the meaningful wh-phrase would occupy if the movement were completed. Canonical examples of the first type (<u>with a wh-expletive</u>) come from Hindi, Hungarian, German, Romani, of the second type (<u>without a wh-expletive</u>) – from Bahasa Indonesian, Iraqi Arabic, Kikuyu, Malay (for many more details, see the introduction to and the papers in (Lutz et al. 2002)). Consider an example from Hungarian (Horvath 1997: 527):

(2) <u>Mit</u>   mondtál,   hogy <u>kinek</u>   vett János   színházjegyet   ~~kinek~~?
    what-ACC said-2SG-INDEF.DO that who-DAT   bought John-NOM theatre-ticket-ACC
    Lit. 'What did you say for whom John bought a theatre ticket?'

In Hungarian, the wh-phrase *kinek* 'for whom' stays in its own clause but takes scope over the whole sentence by virtue of the wh-expletive *mit* 'what' in the main clause. The sentence has semantics of a regular question (set of Hamblin alternatives). (1) looks similar: the meaningful wh-phrase remains in its own clause, and a semantically empty wh-phrase occupies the specifier of the main clause. This leads to a frequent claim that the Russian construction instantiates **PM** of the first type (Stepanov 2000, Fanselow 2006, a.o.), with the complementizer *kak* 'how' being the scope-marker.

2. RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTION VS. REAL PM. Instead of treating Russian construction in (1) like PM, I propose that the *kak*-clause here is a speech-act oriented parenthetical that attaches to the main clause. This approach is capable to handle issues troublesome for the PM approach.

2.1. In some cases, the two approaches make the same grammaticality predictions. One of the core properties of PM with a scope marker is locality and the chain requirement observed in structures with three clauses. The wh-phrase and the scope marker should be in adjacent clauses, which is maintained either by repeating the scope marker in the intermediate clause or by further movement of the wh-phrase. It seems to hold for Russian: *kak* and the wh-phrase are not met in non-adjacent clauses (3a), doubling of *kak* is impossible (3b) and it might look like the wh-phrase moves higher for the sake of locality (3c):

(3) a.*[kak tʲibʲe   kaʒɨtsa,   [Pʲetʲa   duma-it,   [ʃto   ja   tʲibʲe   padarʲ-u   ~~ʃto~~]]]?
       how you.DAT seem.3SG.PR Peter.NOM think-3SG.PR what.ACC I.NOM you.DAT give.1SG.FUT
       lit. '[How it seems to you [Peter thinks [what I will give to you]]]?'
    b.*[kak   tʲibʲe   kaʒɨtsa,   [<u>kak</u> Pʲetʲa   duma-it,   [ʃto   ja tʲibʲe   padarʲ-u   ~~ʃto~~]]]?
       lit. '[How it seems to you [how Peter thinks [what I will give to you]]]?'
    c. [<u>kak</u>   tʲibʲe   kaʒɨtsa,   [ʃto   Pʲetʲa   duma-it,   [ja tʲibʲe   padarʲ-u   ~~ʃto~~]]]?
       lit. '[How it seems to you [what Peter thinks [I will give to you]]]?'

The meaning intended in all three cases: 'What does it seem to you that Peter thinks I will give to you?'

Nevertheless, the parenthetical approach does not exclude (3c) either. This example can be analyzed as a parenthetical *kak*-clause attached to the sentence with long extraction. Note that the long extraction without the *kak*-clause is absolutely possible here:

(4) [ʃto   Pʲetʲa   duma-it,   [ja   tʲibʲe   padarʲ-u   ~~ʃto~~]] ?
    what.ACC Peter.NOM think-3SG.PR I.NOM you.DAT give.1SG.FUT
    'What Peter thinks I will give to you?'

2.2. The two approaches diverge w.r.t. the possibility of further embedding of the construction itself. Under the PM approach, it should be licit and form an indirect question. In Russian it is not the case:

(5) ja   znaj-u,   <u>kak</u> t'ib'e   kaʒɨtsa,   <u>kavo</u>   najm-ut.
    I.NOM   know-1SG.PR how   you.DAT seem.3SG.PR who.ACC   hire-3PL.FUT
    a. *'I know the person such that it seems to you that (s)he will be hired'.
    b. OK with a different intonation only: 'It seems to you that I know who will be hired'.

The sentence is felicitous only if it means 'It seems to the hearer that the speaker knows who will be hired'. It is exactly the meaning expected under the parenthetical approach, when the *kak*-clause is interpreted only as non-embedded. The PM approach fails to predict infelicity of (4) as an indirect question.

2.3. Also, the PM approach is unable to explain why the construction is limited to four predicates only: kazatsa 'seem', dumat' 'think', palagat' 'suppose', ʃʲitat' 'consider', which is a proper subset of predicates allowing for long extraction. In German, e.g., PM is limited semantically to verbs of saying, believing and thinking, but here the set is smaller. For a parenthetical, however, it is normal to have lexical idiosyncrasies.

2.4. Another issue the PM approach cannot explain is the linear order of the two clauses w.r.t. each other. The *kak*-clause may be to the left of, to the right of, or inside the wh-clause (1, 6a, 6b respectively):

(6) a. <u>kamu</u>   an-a   kup'ila   b'il'et' f   t'iatr, <u>kak</u> tɨ   duma-iʃ?
    b. <u>kamu</u>,   <u>kak</u>   tɨ   duma-iʃ, an-a kup'ila b'il'et' f   t'iatr?
    'For whom do you think she bought a theatre ticket?'

This is difficult to handle within the PM approach that presupposes that this is a case of subordination, so such variety of permutations should not be allowed. It is quite expected from a parenthetical, though.

2.5. It is noteworthy that the complementizer *kak* is not just a semantically empty expletive. It is frequently used to introduce parentheticals throughout the language (cf. English *as* in *as it known*).

3. RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTION VS. GERMAN PARENTHETICALS. Reis (2000) proposed that German has both PM and sentences that are only similar to it. The latter are called Integrated Parentheticals (IP) and differ from PM in several aspects (Reis 2000): 1) clause with the hypothetical wh-expletive is subordinate; 2) it occupies any linear position w.r.t. the wh-clause; 3) it has no prosodic autonomy, e.g., no explicit comma intonation; 4) it can be iterated; 5) the wh-clause may contain no wh-phrase being a yes/no question. While the Russian construction shares the properties 2, 5, and maybe 1, it differs from the German IPs in many other respects, which indicates that is not an IP.

3.1. The *kak*-clause in Russian has a clear-cut comma intonation, reflected by the punctuation (cf. the long extraction sentences, where there is no comma between the extracted wh-phrase and the main clause).

3.2. The *kak*-clause rarely contains anything besides *kak* itself, the subject and the predicate. This restriction looks rather phonological than syntactic: short adverbs such as *s'ijtʃas* 'now' are fine.

3.3. The *kak*-clause cannot be iterated. Unlike German, the following is impossible in Russian 'How you think, how you consider, who came?', although both 'How you think, who came?' and 'How you consider, who came?' are good. I explain it by the weirdness of having in one sentence two distinct speech-acty parentheticals that convey similar meanings.

4. PROPOSAL. I show that the Russian construction that looks like PM does not actually behave like one, e.g., it cannot be embedded unlike genuine PM. Nor does it fully pattern with German IPs that also resemble PM (independently present in the language) but have a different structure and semantics, e.g., the Russian construction has a clear comma intonation unlike German IPs. I propose that the Russian construction is a full-fledged parenthetical. My proposal explains why this construction behaves differently from both genuine PM and German IPs. The *kak*-clause parenthetical is speech-act oriented, hence is attached to the highest clause and cannot be embedded further. I suggest that the Russian construction can be analyzed as a conventional implicature á la (Potts 2005). Across languages, there is no such unified construction as PM: it is subject to a deeper variation, and Russian provides evidence for that. This makes the typology of PM and similar looking phenomena even broader than demonstrated in (Lutz et al. 2000).

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