Non-intersective readings in the Slavic Noun Phrase: diagnosing two varieties of left branch extraction

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Overview: we examine *Left Branch Extraction (LBE)* (Ross 1967, Corver 1990) in Slavic. Based on evidence from *non-intersective* readings of adjectives, we argue that 'LBE' reflects two distinct strategies: (i) literal extraction from the edge of the Noun Phrase, and (ii) a base-generated long-distance dependency.

LBE: extraction of adjectival modifiers from the DP is impossible in, e.g., English (1), but possible in many Slavic languages, such as Serbo-Croatian (SC) (3) and Czech (5) (see Bošković 2005 for an overview).

Non-intersective readings: some adjectives are ambiguous between *intersective* and *non-intersective* readings. In (4a) the *intersective* reading entails the Olga is both a dancer, and beautiful. The *non-intersective* reading entails that Olga dances beautifully, but not that she is beautiful *per se*. Similarly, under their non-intersective readings, (2) entails that Meri barely works, and (5) entails that Marie has known her friend for a long time.

Analysis: we follow Larson (1998) in claiming that certain nouns introduce an event variable, which certain adjectives can modify. The event variable is closed off at a fixed position in the NP by a covert event quantifier GEN, partitioning NP into the *evenitive domain* and *non-eventive domain*. Non-intersective adjectives are merged below GEN, and intersective adjectives are merged above. This explains why the non-intersective reading is unavailable when (i) the modifier is a predicate (4b), and (ii) there is an intervening intersective adjective (4d). It is not bled by DegP inversion (4c), rather the moved DegP can reconstruct to its base position below GEN. (4c) suggests that if LBE is literal extraction from the NP (as in Bošković 2005) the non-intersective reading should be available, since the moved DegP should reconstruct to its base-position below GEN. This is true for Czech (5) but not for SC (3) (we provide a cross-linguistic survey in the talk). We argue that in Czech-type languages, LBE is literal extraction from the NP, but in SC-type languages, it is a *scope-marking* construction involve base-generation of a *wh*-operator in SpecCP. In the talk, we provide additional evidence for these two strategies from *intervention effects* (Beck 2006).

(1) *[DegP How beautiful]$_i$ is Olga [DP a t_i dancer]?

(2) [NP Koliko teškog neradnika]$_i$ je   Meri   zaposlila t_i?
       how   heavy   non-worker.ACC   be.3P.SG   Meri.NOM   hire.3P.SG.PAST
       $^?$*intersective*, ^{OK}*non-intersective*

(3) [DegP Koliko teškog]$_i$ je   Meri   zaposlila   [NP t_i neradnika]?
       How   heavy   be.3P.SG   Meri.NOM hire.3P.SG.PAST   non-worker.ACC
       ^{OK}*intersective*, **non-intersective*

(4a) Olga is [DP a [GEN [DegP beautiful] dancer]].   (4b) [DP That [GEN dancer]] is [DegP beautiful]
      ^{OK}*intersective*, ^{Ok}*non-intersective* ^{OK}*intersective*, **non-intersective*

(4c) [DP [DegP How beautiful]$_j$ a [GEN t_j dancer]]$_i$ is Olga t_i? ^{OK}*intersective*, ^{OK}*non-intersective*

(4d) Olga is [DP a [DegP beautiful] [DegP talkative] [GEN dancer]].^{OK}*intersective*, **non-intersective*

(5)   [DegP Jak   starého]$_i$ Marie včera   potkala   [NP t_i přítele]?
       How   old.ACC   Marie yesterday   met   friend.ACC
       ^{OK}intersective, ^{OK}non-intersective

References

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