

A note on p-stranding and adjunct extraction from nominals

1 Intro

Bošković 2005, 2008 outlines a phase-based analysis of adjunct extraction in determinerless languages like Serbo-Croatian (SC). The analysis is modeled on recent phase based analyses of P-stranding (c.f. Abels 2003) wherein the richness of the functional structure of the PP determines whether extraction is possible. This squib identifies a problem for a unified analysis of these two phenomena. Prohibitions of adjunct extraction are obviated under sluicing while prohibitions of p-stranding are not.

2 The Paradigm in Question

First, Bošković 2008 (as well as Uriagereka 1988 and Corver 1992) notes a distinction between languages with regard to adjunct extraction from nominals. Languages that lack overt determiners like SC allow extraction of nominal modifiers. Languages with determiners like English (2) and Spanish (3) do not.

(1) [Iz kojeg grada]_i je Petar sreo [djevojke t_i]? (SC)

from which city is Petar met girls

‘From which city did Petar meet girls?’

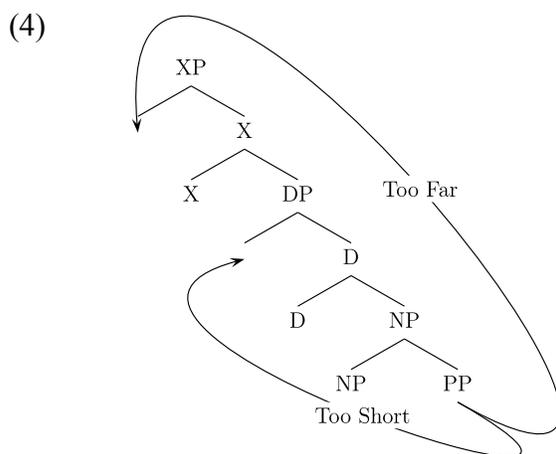
(2) *[From which city]_i did Peter meet [girls t_i]?

(3) *[Con que]_i comiste [une hamburguesa t_i]?

with what eat.pst.2nd a hamburger

‘what [topping] did you eat a hamburger with?’

Bošković develops a phase-based, derivational account for this distinction as follows. English is a language with DPs and assuming that DPs are phases, no movement can cross them without first landing in the specifier position Spec,DP. However, the PP in (2) is adjoined to its host NP and cannot move to that specifier position due to conditions that block derivational steps that are too “small.” These anti-locality restrictions require that a moving element minimally cross an entire phrasal boundary, segments being insufficient (Grohmann 2003, Abels 2003). There is thus no licit derivational avenue for extracting the adjunct



This problem does not arise for SC, which, according to Bošković, lacks a DP layer. As NPs contrast with DPs in not being phases,¹ there is no need for the adjunct to

¹ Bošković has two different yet related theories about the phasehood of nominal and we have concentrated on the simpler one. In other work (Bošković 2010) he argues that some NPs are phases in languages without determiners. Adjunct extraction is allowed here because the adjunct is generated on the edge of a phasal NP. The problem presented in this squib holds for both theories.

first move to the NP edge before exiting the nominal and so anti-locality can be honored. Consequently, movement of the adjunct can proceed unimpeded out of the NP.

Second, as is widely known, some languages allow preposition stranding (e.g. English (5)), while other languages do not (e.g. German (6) and Spanish (7)).

(5) Who_i did you talk to t_i?

(6) *Wem_i hast du mit t_i gesprochen?

Who have you with spoken

‘who have you spoken with?’

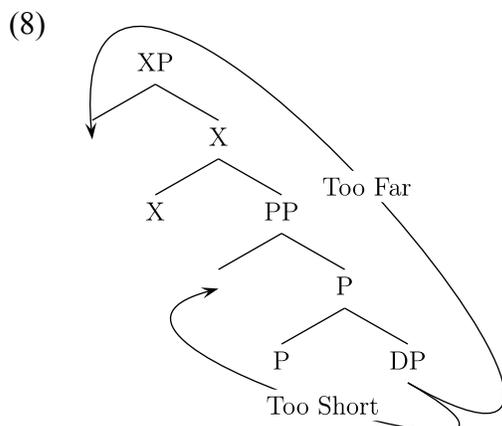
(7) *Quien_i contaron todos con t_i?

who counted everyone with

‘Who did everyone count on?’

(from Campos 1991)

The same logic applies to preposition stranding. The derivational constraints that work together to rule out (2) also rule out (6). In German, the preposition is a phase head that cannot be crossed without first landing in its specifier position. However, the complement of this phase-head preposition will not cross a full phrasal boundary in moving to the specifier position and is thus blocked:



In English, preposition heads are not phasal and movement can proceed across them freely (Abels 2003).

3 The Problem: Ellipsis Facts

The phase-based analysis of preposition stranding is understood derivationally so as to accommodate an important fact: ellipsis does not improve P-stranding violations. The tight parallelism between the proposal and Bošković's analysis of extraction from nominal's would suggest a parallel interpretation of his proposal. This predicts that subsequent ellipsis should leave the nominal extraction data unaffected. For example, just as German and Spanish do not allow the extraction of the object of a preposition even if followed by sluicing English and Spanish should not allow the extraction of nominal modifiers even if followed by sluicing. However as (9)/(10) and (11)/(12) indicate, this is incorrect.

(9) Johannes hat mit jemandem gesprochen, aber ich weiss nicht *(mit) wem.

Johannes has with someone spoken but I know not with who

'Johannes spoke with someone, but I don't know who'

(10) Con que chica ha salido Juan? *(con) Elena?

with what girl has gone.out Juan with Elena

'What girl did Juan go out with? Elena?'

(Rodrigues et al. 2009)

(11) Ivan wanted to eat a cheeseburger with a particular topping. I just can't remember with which topping.

(12) Ayer comí una hamburguesa con algo pero no me acuerdo con que
Yesterday ate.pst.1st a hamburger with something but no CL recall with what
'Yesterday I ate a hamburger with something, but I don't remember with what.'

Note again that the un-elided version of (11) is unacceptable:²

(13) *[With which topping] did Ivan want to eat a cheeseburger

Both Spanish and English are DP languages in Bošković's sense and are correctly predicted to forbid extraction from nominals. However, as these ellipsis data indicate, the effects of ellipsis on acceptability do not correlate with its effects on P-stranding. Bans on preposition stranding hold under ellipsis whereas bans on adjunct extraction from nominals do not hold under sluicing.

² The pied-piping of preposition is generally dispreferred in English, but there is nevertheless a very strong distinction between (11) and (13). Note also that there is no possible grammatical 'short source' for the example in (11). Some explanations of island effect amelioration under sluicing (like Merchant 2001) have posited there is sometimes no island in the elided material (i). However, the copular short source of (11) is unacceptable (ii)

(i) Ivy sold a large car, but I can't remember [how large]; ~~the car was t_i~~

(ii) *With which topping was the cheeseburger (to be)?

Conclusion

The differential effects of ellipsis on derivations involving P-stranding and adjunct extraction from nominal (even within a single language in Spanish) suggest that different conditions regulate the two processes. A unified phase-based account of the kind proposed by Bošković would thus seem to be inapposite.

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