Phrasal Movement vs. Head Movement: On Licensing Conditions on NPIs

This work claims that the Japanese Negative Polarity Item (NPI) -sika undergoes head-movement to Neg, and shows that there is a kind of LF head-movement. (cf. Chomsky 2000)

Cross-linguistic differences in licensing conditions on NPIs have been observed. [Difference A] Long-distance licensing of NPIs is possible in English, while Korean/Japanese (K/J) NPIs require a clause-mate Neg. [Difference B] K/J allow subject NPIs, unlike English. Lee (1993) accounts for these differences by proposing that [Spec, NegP] is an A'-position in English and an A-position in K/J. She assumes that NPIs covertly move to [Spec, NegP]. [Diff. A] is derived because when a K/J NPI moves long-distance through an embedded [Spec, CP] ([θ position] to [Spec, CP] to [Spec, NegP]), it forms an improper chain A-A'-A, while movement of English NPIs forms a legitimate A-A'-A' chain. [Diff. B] is derived because overt movement of the subject ([θ position] to [Spec, NegP] to [Spec, AgrsP]) makes an improper A-A'-A chain in English, while it forms a legitimate A-A-A chain in Korean.

The Japanese NPI -sika behaves in the same way as Korean NPIs with respect to [Diff. A/B]: it needs a clause-mate Neg, and it can occur as a subject ((1)). We show, however, that Lee’s analyses of Korean cannot be extended to the analysis of -sika. First, -sika can attach to adjuncts ((2)). If the adjunct-sika phrase were licensed in an A-position, it should form an improper chain A-A'-A (explicable given a ban on "comp" to non-"comp" movement in Chomsky (1973)). Second, -sika can attach to heads. In (3)a, the scope of -sika is only the V-head, because it only means ‘John only licked (as opposed to drink) the juice,’ while in (3)b, the implication is ‘John didn’t do any activities other than to lick cough drops.’ The contrast shows that -sika is ambiguous between V- or VP-attachment depending on the context. If -sika is licensed by phrasal movement, it would be hard to account for how a head can move to a Spec position.

Given above, we propose that covert head-movement of -sika onto Neg is relevant to the licensing of -sika. If this movement crosses a CP, the head-movement of -sika onto the matrix Neg is blocked because the embedded C is filled by the C morpheme to (See (1)b). As a result, -sika cannot be attracted to the matrix clause, due to the Phase Impenetrability Condition. On the other hand, English NPIs undergo covert phrasal movement to [Spec, NegP]. When an English NPI moves long-distance, the embedded [Spec, CP] is available as an escape hatch. [Diff A] is thus derived. This system enables us to assume that [Spec, NegP] is uniformly an A'-position, contra Lee’s stipulation. [Diff. B] is derived because movement of an English NPI subject forms an improper chain (in the same way as Lee’s analysis). On the other hand, -sika in (1)c is licensed by head-movement and subject movement to [Spec, TP] is irrelevant in forming the chain of -sika.

If our analysis is on the right track, it provides an instance of covert head-movement, which shows that not all head-movement is PF-movement. Our system also implies that only CP is a phase in Japanese because morphemes on v (e.g. passives, causatives) do not block -sika movement as opposed to C morphemes. Finally, the proposed system suggests that NPIs need to move to NegP even under the probe-goal system. This enables us to account for the covert long-distance licensing of wh-phrases/NPIs without cumbersome assumptions such as long-distance Agree.

(1) a. Mary-wa ringo-sika tabe-nakat-ta. ‘Mary ate only apples.’
   Mary-Top apple-sika eat-not-past (= lit. ‘Mary didn’t eat except for apples.’)
      Mary-Top John-Nom apple-sika eat-past to think-not-past
      ‘Mary did not think that John ate only apples.’
   c. Mary-sika ringo-o tabe-nakat-ta. ‘Only Mary ate apples.’
      Mary-sika apple-Acc eat-not-past
(2) Mary-wa yukkuri-sika ringo-o tabe-nakat-ta. ‘Mary ate apples only slowly.’
   Mary-Top slowly-sika apple-Acc eat-not-past
(3) a. [context: John hates the vegetable juice. Juice is normally what you drink, but…]
   John-wa sono juusu-o name-sika si-nakat-ta.
   John-Top the juice-Acc lick-sika do-not-past
   ‘John only licked the juice./All John did was to lick the juice.’
   b. [context: John has a terrible cold. He should take a proper care of himself, but…]
   John-wa nodoame-o name-sika si-nakat-ta.
   John-Top cough-drop-Acc lick-sika do-not-past
   ‘John only licked cough drops./ All John did was to lick cough drops.’