

The ban on rightward P-stranding is a global constraint

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English does not permit Heavy DP Shift (HDPS) of the complement of a preposition:

- (1) * I talked to t_1 yesterday [someone I'd met before]₁.

This snippet will present evidence that this constraint cannot be stated in a “Markovian” fashion. Instead, it must be stated as a “global” constraint along the following lines:

- (2) Heavy DP Shift may not apply to a DP which has been — *at any stage in the derivation* — the complement of a preposition.

Evidence for (2) comes from ECM subjects, which marginally undergo HDPS:

- (3) ? I expect t_1 to do well [every boy who enters the competition]₁.

The complement of P can be promoted to ECM subject position via pseudopassivization:

- (4) I believe [every prisoner who tried to escape]₁ to have been shot at t_1 .

Surprisingly, however, such derived ECM subjects cannot subsequently undergo HDPS — (5). In this respect they contrast with the derived ECM subjects of ordinary passives — (6):

- (5) a. * I believe t_1' to have been shot **at** t_1 [every prisoner who tried to escape]₁.
 b. * I'll have t_1' shot **at** t_1 on sight [any prisoner who tries to escape]₁.
- (6) a. ? I believe t_1' to have been shot t_1 [every prisoner who tried to escape]₁.
 b. ? I'll have t_1' shot t_1 on sight [any prisoner who tries to escape]₁.

This cannot be because A-movement in general fails to feed HDPS, as (7)-(8) demonstrate:

- (7) * I gave t_1 free books [every student in the class]₁.
- (8) ? I believe t_1' to have been given t_1 free books [every student in the class]₁.

Here we see that although the first object in the English double object construction cannot undergo HDPS, promotion to ECM subject position renders subsequent HDPS as acceptable in (8) as it is in (3). Thus, it is only the ban on rightward P-stranding which cannot be obviated via A-movement. Consequently, (1) cannot be unified with (7) (as proposed e.g. by Kayne (1984, 200), who argues that the first object in (7) is the complement of a null P).

As a final speculation, I suggest that (2) may — given somewhat tendentious assumptions regarding phasehood — follow from Drummond, Hornstein & Lasnik's (2010) analysis of (1). DH&L propose that PP is a strong phase in English. This implies that any phrase extracted from PP must pass through [Spec,PP]. Thus, the shifted DPs in (5) must have moved to the ECM subject position via [Spec,PP]. DH&L note that if specifiers are always on the left, then the linearization algorithm of Fox & Pesetsky (2004) predicts that no phrase which has passed through [Spec,PP] should be able to undergo subsequent rightward movement. In contrast, if passive vP is a weak phase (Chomsky 2001, cf. Chomsky 2008), then both passivization and HNPS are plausibly taken to occur within the same strong phase in (6) (matrix vP). If so, there is no linearization conflict.

References

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