

SOME COMMENTS ON PHILLIPS (2002)

In this collection of brief notes and comments, which were written as a reply to a reply (Phillips 2002) to Lechner (2001a,b), I attempt to provide answers to and speculations on some issues raised by Phillips (2002). In addition, I hope to be able to correct some misleading interpretations of Lechner (2001a,b). Since I extensively refer to topics discussed in Lechner (2001a,b) and Phillips (2002) without necessarily repeating the background behind which these discussions were cast in all cases, this collection of notes should not be read out of context, i.e. without prior consultation of the sources mentioned above.

A. CONNECTIVITY EFFECTS IN THE ANTECEDENT CLAUSE (see Phillips 2002, p. 3ff)

In Lechner (2001a,b), I assumed that focused remnants can be ignored in the computation of the parallelism requirement for VP-ellipsis (incidentally, this idea is due to Sauerland (1998), building on Rooth (1992), and should not be attributed to me). But, as is pointed out in Phillips (2002), this raises the following question: Why can *quickly* in (3)b (taken from Phillips 2002: 2) not attach low in the antecedent clause, producing a distributive reading, and high in the ellipsis clause, yielding a collective interpretation?

- (3) a. Mary read all the books quickly. (collective and distributive scope readings)
b. Mary read all the books quickly, and John did slowly. (collective reading only)

There are two venues to pursue. Both lines of argumentation exploit interpretational asymmetries between the various types of adverbs involved. More precisely, frequency or manner adverbials such as *quickly* contribute different semantic information than temporal ones such as *on his birthday* or *today*. While members of the latter group invariably serve the function of intersective modifiers of events, and therefore can attach to any node denoting a property of events (vP, VP, and possible higher; see von Stechow's recent paper on PPs, available at his web page at <http://www2.sfs.nphil.uni-tuebingen.de/arnim/>) the interpretation of the members of the former group (*quickly*) is contingent upon their hierarchical location. Speculatively, there are two ways to capture this position sensitivity: either (i) the semantics of manner adverbs necessarily requires that the node they modify includes the subject or (ii) their interpretation varies w.r.t. their height of attachment (above or below the subject). These two perspectives generate two different approaches towards the adjunct-scope puzzle in (3b):

The first approach is simple, and my hunch is that it cannot be made to work. Assume that *quickly* cannot be merged lower than vP (adopting position (i) above; see e.g. Alexiadou 1997, 2001 for syntactic arguments). Suppose moreover that the distributive reading in (3b) is sponsored by some factor X (a distributivity operator, the * operator of the plural literature, QR of the object or the like). Then, the puzzle can be solved if it is possible to find a plausible reason for why factor X has to be absent in contexts of ellipsis. Naturally, this reason cannot be related

to construction specific properties of VP-ellipsis, but should fall out from independent restrictions imposed by the ellipsis operation itself. The challenge consists in identifying this restriction. That's the reason I believe it is hard to defend this position.

The alternative account seems quite promising to me, though. To begin with, this approach adopts Phillips's analysis of the distributive-collective asymmetry in terms of the relative scope of the adverb w.r.t. a suitable QP-object. Assume now that merging *quickly* into different positions (say, above or below the subject) covaries with truth conditionally distinct readings even in simple clauses without quantifiers. I'm thinking here of semantic contrasts similar to the ones which von Stechow discussed for *again* (see von Stechow's paper on *again* on his web page). In short, clauses modified by *again* display ambiguity between a repetitive and a restitutive reading, which can be roughly paraphrased as in (i).

- (i) John closed the door again
a. repetitive: it was again the case that John closed the door
b. restitutive: it was again the case that the door became closed, and John was the agent of the closing event

von Stechow demonstrates that merging *again* above the subject (vP or higher) leads to the repetitive reading, while low VP-adjunction correlates with the restitutive interpretation. Although an analogous semantics for *quickly* still has to be worked out in detail, the structure of the argument can be summarized as follows:

" Low and high *quickly* - unlike low and high manifestations of purely intersective modifiers such as *on his birthday* - contribute distinct semantic information. Crucially, this has the consequence that the focus semantic value of an antecedent clause including a low manner adverb does not match the focus semantic value of an ellipsis clause including a high one. The focus semantic parallelism requirement on ellipsis therefore prohibits a combination of high and low manner adverbs.

" Next, as low attachment in both the antecedent and the ellipsis clause is incompatible with VP-ellipsis - ellipsis could not operate on a VP/vP node to the exclusion of the remnant - (3b) can only be construed in terms of high (vP) attachment of the adjuncts.

" Finally, the assumption that high attachment unambiguously covaries with the collective reading (Phillips 1996) yields the correct result that both conjuncts of (3b) can only be interpreted collectively. (I retain here the position that vP-adverbs take scope over adverbs, while VP-adverbs take narrow scope; different solutions are possible.) Thus, the decision between a distributive and a collective construal is only a by-product of the general principles which govern the possible height of attachment of manner adverbs in elliptical contexts.

Note also that this (sketch of an) analysis correctly predicts that *again* and *quickly* behave alike: both modifiers only retain their wide scope interpretation in ellipsis context. For one, the elliptical clause (ii)b appears to allow only a restitutive reading of both conjuncts, which derives

ambitious statements. Thus, to maintain, as is done on page 4, that “this [i.e. WL’s] criticism is orthogonal to the main claim of incremental structure building” is correct, but ignores the fact that I never intended to criticize the essence of this interesting and stimulating theory in the first place. In fact, I follow a long tradition in adopting some version of Branch Right (Haider, Frazier, Kayne, Phillips, among many others) for ‘intact’ clauses, i.e. clauses that do not involve VP-fronting. This assumption is crucial, and - unlike suggested by the content of fn. 2 - explicitly discussed in my papers.

3.3. Fn. 3 reports that “[Lechner] leaves the scope-freezing effect as an unexplained phenomena”. This is not correct, as I refer in Lechner (2001a, fn. 7) to work by Sauerland and Elbourne (2000) and by my own (Lechner 1988), which offers solutions to one half of the SF puzzle (No reconstruction of overtly moved QPs into the VP-copy!). As far as I know, no consistent set of assumptions has been presented to date that takes care of the other half (No QR out of the VP copy in its base position!).

3.4. The examples in (12) (as well as the contrast between (1)c and (7)) raise an interesting challenge to the orthodox perspective on the SF generalization.

- (12) a. John didn’t want to sing just some of the songs. He intended to sing every single song to one or other of his first-graders, and sing every single song he did to one or other of his second-graders. (collective reading only)
- b. John didn’t want to sing just some of the songs. He intended to sing every single song, and sing every single song he did to one or other of his secondgraders. (collective & distributive readings both available)

In absence of a unifying and concrete alternative theory of SF, I fail to understand, though, why the “scope facts tend to align themselves more squarely with the predictions of incremental structure building [p.6]”. More precisely, using a rather liberal metric, I would like to suggest that what the unexplained contrasts between the exceptional cases in (12) and the standard ones in (9)b demonstrate at most is that the two theories tie: one fails where the other succeeds and v.v. The debate which of the two paradigms is more representative of the constraints at work in VP-fronting (SF or no SF) still needs to be decided. Personally, I tend to believe that a restrictive theory of scope which allows exceptions under well-defined conditions (focus, phonological heaviness, etc...) is to be preferred over one which generalizes to the worst case scenario (as in earlier Montague grammar).

4. ACD

To the best of my knowledge, the observation that the necessary conditions on SF in contexts of incomplete category fronting include one which dictates that the quantificational wide scope remnant surfaces in a structurally high position is uncontroversial. (Whether it reaches this

position by movement or not is irrelevant for present purposes.) Would the fact that the remnant containing the ACD site in (14) needs to be located high therefore not in itself constitute an argument against a theory that posits low merger, such as the incremental structure building analysis?

- (14) Mary asked him to give a book to some of the boys,
 ...and [give a book] he did [to every boy Mary wanted him to ___]

Furthermore, my additional and explicit assumptions about SF are - to the extent that they can be specified (see 3.3. above) - theory neutral. Hence, the statement which disqualifies the counter-evidence from ACD on the grounds that “Lechner’s argument depends entirely upon his assumptions about how scope freezing effects should be captured [p.7, below (17)]” seems to me to require further justification. Note in this context that this conclusion also aligns poorly with the claim in fn. 3 that “[Lechner] leaves SF as an unexplained phenomenon”.

C. LOCALITY CONSTRAINTS

(p. 7f)

In Lechner (2001a), the discussion of the nature of the movement process which evacuates the remnant of VP-fronting can be found in appendix I (Lechner 2001b refers to such an appendix, which however never materialized - my apologies). Moreover, following standard practice I subsume under the concept of ‘islandhood’ all constraints that prohibit establishing a movement dependency in a given antecedent - trace configuration. This step makes it possible to use the same term for the standard Ross cases, later additions such as Negative and Scope Islands as well as for the constraints recently identified by Johnson (1997) for remnant extraction in contexts of Pseudogapping (i.e. VP-ellipsis). These two imprudent decisions on my part might have led to a wrong impression of my position on how the remnant is associated with its trace in VP-fronting, and the next three paragraphs will hopefully aid in clarifying this issue. Nonetheless, it is also necessary to point out that the discussion on pages 7 and 9 of Phillips (2002) attributes to me two statements which I never made in these forms.

" First, in a brief part on locality, I comment in Lechner (2001a, above ex. (20)) that “the remnant in VP-F must not be separated from the position in which it is interpreted by an island”. This does not imply - counter to what is reported in Phillips (2002, p. 8, below example (20), following (i)) - that the relation between the remnant and its trace is *exclusively* restricted by islands conditions. The position I defend, and which is explicitly marked in the appendix, is rather that remnant movement manifests an instance of extraposition. It therefore should be subject to the Right Roof Constraint. Example (17b) indicates that this position also seems to be too weak, requiring some fine tuning - it seems to be more likely that the remnant leaves its base position by the same type of Scrambling process which Johnson (1997) postulated for

Pseudogapping.

- (17) a. Wallace wanted to remember how Gromit rescued the sheep, and remember how Gromit rescued the sheep he did at the farm. (PP in matrix VP only)
- b. Wallace wanted to confirm that Gromit had prepared the porridge, and confirm that Gromit had prepared the porridge he did before breakfast. (PP in matrix VP only)
- c. Wallace needed to resolve to fix the motorcycle, and resolve to the fix the motorcycle he did in the garage. (PP in matrix VP only)

" Second, I have never expressed the opinion that the locality constraints exclusively apply to VP-fronting, as is mistakenly reported in Phillips (2002, p. 8, below example (20), following (ii)). On the opposite, the remnant movement analysis for VP-fronting is explicitly modeled after the Jayaseelan (1990)-Lasnik (1995)-Johnson (1997) analysis of Pseudogapping (see statements to this effect in appendix I of Lechner 2001a, and the prose above ex. (22) in Lechner 2001b). On this prominent view, Pseudogapping is the result of movement of the stranded remnant prior to VP-ellipsis. One is therefore correctly led to expect that remnant evacuation is subject to locality in both constructions. Moreover, if it is assumed that the movement processes in VP-fronting and VP-ellipsis are alike, it also follows that the locality properties of these two constructions should be identical. (As mentioned above, I assumed that partial VP-fronting involves extraposition, but the Scrambling analysis developed by Johnson for VP-ellipsis looks more promising. Thus, parallelism is expected.)

From what has been said above (or in Lechner 2001ab), it also follows that the Pseudogapping examples involving VP-ellipsis in (18) do not pose a problem, as they are captured by the theory of Johnson (1997).

- (18) a. Wallace remembered how Gromit rescued the sheep at the farm, and Wendolene did at the wool shop. (PP in matrix VP only)
- b. Wallace confirmed that Gromit had prepared the porridge before breakfast, and Preston did late at night. (PP in matrix VP only)
- c. Wallace resolved to fix the motorcycle in the garage, and Gromit did in the basement. (PP in matrix VP only)

To exemplify the interplay between Johnson (1997) and Lechner (2001ab), the adjunct remnants in (18) only have a very limited freedom in choosing their base position: they can attach to the minimal vP or to the minimal VP node dominating the predicate they modify (just as remnants in VP-fronting; fn. 5 acknowledges this option). In all of the examples in (18), ellipsis removes a VP embedding another VP. The remnant therefore either (i) has to be merged with the superordinate clause, yielding the matrix reading or (ii) needs to move from its base position

inside the subordinate clause to a node including the elided VP. Option (ii) is blocked, since, as observed by Johnson (1997), Pseudogapping remnants appear to be able to travel only at the same distance as Scrambled categories in languages such as Dutch and German.

In sum, the movement account in conjunction with Johnson (1997) fares better than the incremental structure building analysis, as it (i) derives locality effects in VP-fronting and (ii) helps to gain an understanding for the identical properties of VP-ellipsis and VP-fronting. The assessment that the "alternative that Lechner proposes ultimately fares much worse, since it does not account for the facts, even descriptively" [Phillips 2002, top of p.9] therefore strikes me as inaccurate.

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