Left-Branch Extraction and Barss' Generalization: Against a Remnant Movement Approach

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1. Introduction

In a subset of Slavic languages, e.g. Russian (1a) and Polish (1b), it is possible to extract 'left-branches' (such as possessors) from a noun phrase:

(1) a. Čju$_1$ on kupil [$_{NP}$ ___$_1$ mašinu] ?
         whose he bought   car
         'Whose car did he buy?'   (*Russian*; Grebenyova 2012:83)
     b. Czyjego$_1$ widziałeś [$_{NP}$ ___$_1$ brata] ?
         whose   saw.2SG   brother
         'Whose brother did you see?'   (*Polish*; Borsley 1983:340)

There have been various proposals for how to account for this phenomenon of *Left-Branch Extraction* (LBE). Some appeal to traditional sub-extraction (Ross 1967; Uriagereka 1988; Borsley & Jaworska 1988; Corver 1990; Bošković 2005), where the left-branch is extracted directly from the NP (2). An alternative proposal, often termed *distributed* or *scattered deletion*, holds that a full NP is moved, with copy deletion applying to distinct parts of the higher and lower copies of movement (3) (Fanselow & Ćavar 2002; Pereltsvaig 2008; Fanselow & Féry 2013; Bondarenko & Davis 2019).

(2) *Sub-extraction*
     Čju$_1$ on kupil [$_{NP}$ t$_1$ mašinu] ?
     whose he bought   car

(3) *Distributed deletion*
     [$_{NP}$ Čju ~~mašinu~~] on kupil [$_{NP}$ ~~čju~~ mašinu] ?
        whose   he bought   car

There has also been a third kind of approach to LBE, namely that cases of apparent sub-extraction of a single element actually involve fronting of a remnant category (Franks & Progovac 1994; Abels 2003, 2012; Bašić 2004, 2008, 2009). This is shown in (4), where what was is fronted is actually the entire NP containing a trace of the head noun *mašinu* ('car').

(4) *Remnant movement*
     [$_{NP}$ Čju t$_1$]$_2$ on kupil mašinu$_1$ t$_2$?
   whose   he bought car

This analysis has also been pursued for *combien*-splits in French (Starke 2001; Kayne 2002), DP-splits in Greek (Androutsopoulou 1998), and *was für*-split in German (Abels 2003; Leu 2008). In this paper, I focus on showing that LBE does not conform to a well-known generalization about remnant movement, namely *Barss' Generalization*. Consequently, I argue that this casts significant doubt on the validity of the remnant movement analysis.

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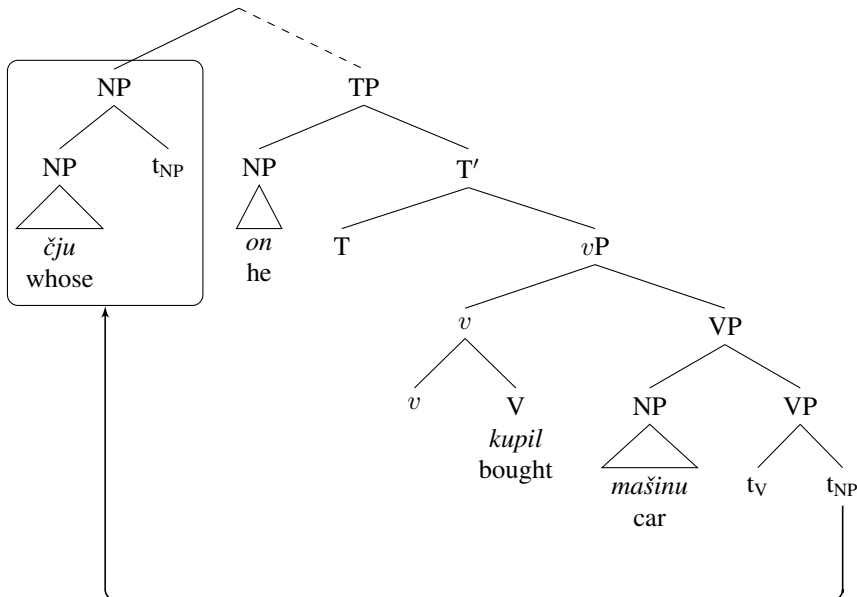
2. Remnant movement

The remnant movement derivation of the Russian example in (1a) is presented in more detail in (5). In the first step, the head noun is evacuated from the NP by short scrambling which I assume targets VP. Subsequently, the entire NP containing the trace of the head noun is moved to a higher position (this could be CP or TP depending on one's exact assumptions about wh-movement in Slavic; Bošković see e.g. 2002). Furthermore, I assume that the verb moves to v, deriving SVO order.

(5)   *Remnant movement (step 1): evacuate head noun*
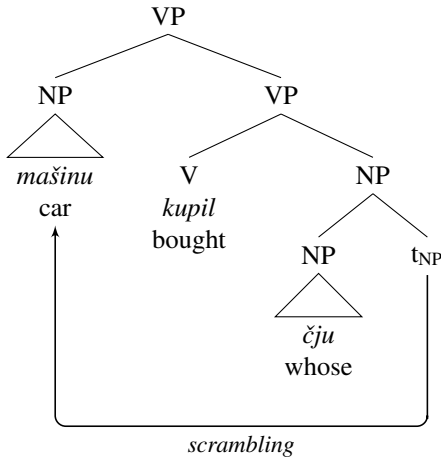
Remnant movement (step 2): move remnant NP

In the following sections, I will briefly review the two main arguments that have been put forward in support of this remnant movement analysis of LBE.

2.1. Extraordinary LBE

One often-cited piece of evidence in favour of the remnant movement approach comes from what Bošković (2005) calls *extraordinary LBE*. This refers to examples such as (6) which seem to involve

movement of a non-constituent, e.g. a preposition and a demonstrative to the exclusion of the noun phrase.

(6) *Extraordinary LBE in Polish* (Borsley & Jaworska 1988:688)

    a.   Jan rozmawiał [PP z   [NP tym   studentem]]
          Jan talked   with   this.INST student

    b.   Z   tym   Jan rozmawiał [PP ___ studentem]
          with this.INST Jan talked   student
   'Jan talked with this student.'

As proponents of this theory have pointed out (e.g. Abels 2003, 2012; Bašić 2004), extraordinary LBE is entirely expected under the remnant movement analysis since ordinary LBE also involves movement of a remnant category. Thus, extraordinary LBE simply involves a slightly larger remnant, a PP in (7).

(7) *Remnant movement analysis of extraordinary LBE*
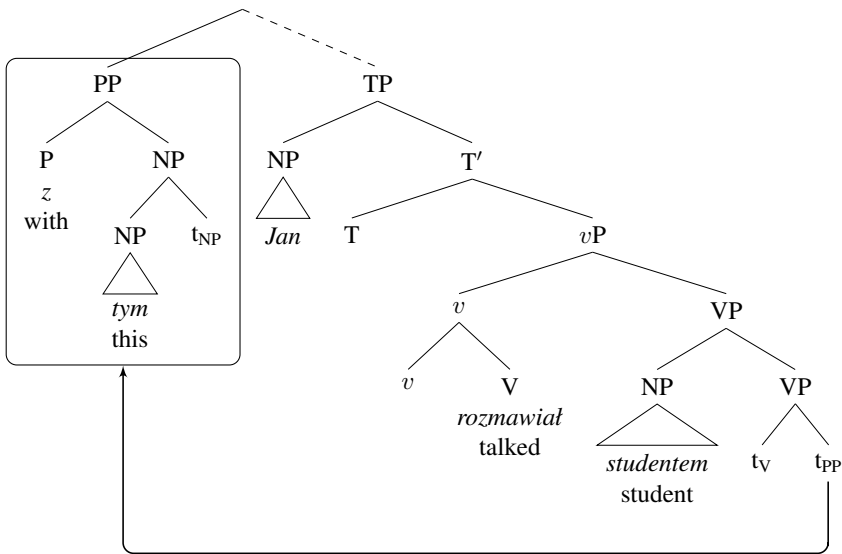
That said, there have been alternative proposals for this construction. Those pursuing the more traditional sub-extraction approach assume that the preposition somehow 'fuses' with the left-branch prior to movement (8), e.g. by means of a reanalysis rule (Borsley & Jaworska 1988), head adjunction (Corver 1992), (syntactic) lowering (Martinović 2019) or cliticization (Talić 2019).[1]

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[1] Furthermore, extraordinary LBE does not seem to propose a significant challenge for distributed deletion accounts.

(8) *Fusion analysis of extraordinary LBE*
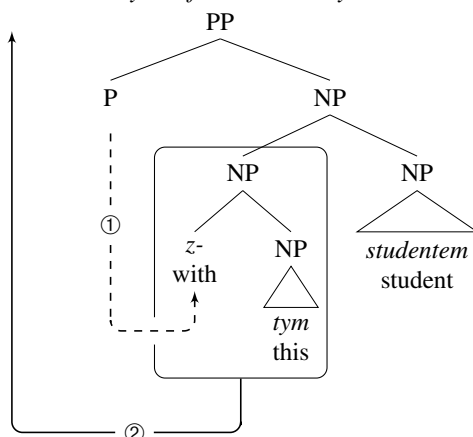
In support of this approach, Radkevich (2010) has argued that the preposition involved in extraordinary LBE in Russian must be phonologically-light, i.e. monosyllabic, as the contrast in (9) shows.

(9) *Extraordinary LBE in Russian* (Radkevich 2010:145ff.)

    a.   V bol'šoj Ivan sidel [$_{PP}$ ___ komnate]
        in big   Ivan sat   room
        'Ivan sat in the big room.'
    b. ??Čerez vyskokij Ivan perelez   [$_{PP}$ ___ zabor]
        over tall   Ivan climbed.over   fence
        'Ivan climbed over a tall fence.'

This restriction is puzzling under the remnant movement analysis since the kind of the preposition contained the remnant category should not affect the availability of remnant movement. This could, however, be straightforwardly incorporated as a condition on the fusion operation in (8). For this reason, extraordinary LBE does not seem to provide a clear argument for remnant movement over competing approaches.

2.2. The position of the associate

Another argument suggested by proponents of remnant pertains to the position of the associate of LBE, i.e. the NP which is stranded by displacement. Bašić (2004) argues that there is the possibility (and even preference) for preverbal placement of LBE associates in Serbo Croatian (10).

(10) *Preverbal placement of extraction associate* (Bašić 2004:57)

    a. ?*Novi* je   on slupao *auto*
        new AUX he crashed car
    b. *Novi* je   on *auto* slupao
        new AUX he car bought
        'He crashed the new car.'

It has been argued that the possibility for preverbal placement of the extraction associate follows under the remnant movement analysis because the head noun necessarily scrambles to a higher position. Recall that in (5), we assumed that there can be movement of the verb to v. If this movement is optional, for example, then the order in (10b) can be derived straightforwardly.

There is an alternative approach, however, that is compatible with other approaches to LBE. In the sub-extraction approach, for example, Wiland (2010) argues that the extraction associate can be stranded

at intermediate phase-edge positions (also see Davis 2020). In Polish, the NP in LBE can either be stranded in its base-position (11a), intermediate Spec-CP (11b) or matrix Spec-vP (11c).

(11)　　*Left-Branch Extraction in Polish* (Wiland 2010:335f.)

    a.　Jaki$_1$ Paweł kupił　swojej żonie [$_{NP}$ ——$_1$ samochód] ?
       what Pavel　bought his　　wife　　　car
       'What car did Pavel buy for his wife?'

    b.　?Jaki$_1$ *pro* myślisz [$_{CP}$ [$_{NP}$ ——$_1$ samochód] Paweł kupił　swojej żonie　　——$_{NP}$] ?
       what　　think　　　　　car　　　　Pavel bought his　　wife.DAT
       'What car did Maria think Pavel bought his wife?'

    c.　%Jaki$_1$ Maria [$_{vP}$ [$_{NP}$ ——$_1$ samochód] myślała że　Paweł kupił　swojej żonie t$_{NP}$] ?
       what Maria　　　　car.ACC　thought that Pavel bought his　　wife
       'What car did Maria think Pavel bought his wife?'

Thus, the preverbal position of the associate in (10b) could correspond to stranding in the edge of the vP phase. Furthermore, Wiland (2010) points out that (11c) actually poses a serious challenge for the remnant movement approach, as it would require scrambling of the head noun to the matrix clause (12a), then followed by long-distance remnant movement (12b).

(12)　a.　[$_{vP}$ NP [$_{VP}$ V [$_{CP}$ C [$_{TP}$ … [$_{VP}$ [$_{NP}$ wh ——$_{NP}$]]]]]]

    b.　[$_{CP}$ [$_{NP}$ wh ——$_{NP}$] C … [$_{vP}$ NP [$_{VP}$ V [$_{CP}$ C [$_{TP}$ … [$_{vP}$ ——$_{NP}$]]]]]]

However, this first step of scrambling would actually not be possible since scrambling cannot cross a clause-boundary in Polish (13).

(13)　　*Polish scrambling is clause-bounded* (Wiland 2010:344)
    *Maria pieniądze$_1$　powiedziała [$_{CP}$ że　Piotr oddał　bratu　　　——$_1$]
    Maria money.ACC said　　　　that Piotr returned brother.DAT
    'Maria said that Piotr returned the money to his brother.'

For these reasons, preverbal position of the extraction associate does not provide a conclusive argument in favour of the remnant movement analysis over its competitors. Furthermore, the possibility of stranding the associate in the matrix clause under long-distance LBE provides a substantial challenge to this analysis.

2.3. Interim summary

So far we have seen that the arguments that have been put forward in favour of the remnant movement analysis of LBE are inconclusive. In the remainder of this paper, I present an argument against the remnant movement analysis based on an incorrect prediction regarding a well-known anti-reconstruction property of remnant movement configurations, namely Barss' Generalization.
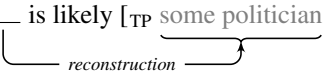
3. Barss' Generalization

Remnant movement gives rise to a unique structural configuration, namely one in which a moved item does not c-command its trace (a violation of the *Proper Binding Condition*; Fiengo 1977). Going back to Barss (1986), this construction has been shown to exhibit a curious anti-reconstruction effect that is commonly known as *Barss' Generalization* (14) (see van de Koot 2004; Sauerland & Elbourne 2002; Neeleman & van de Koot 2010; Heck & Assmann 2014). Barss' Generalization states that a phrase α cannot reconstruct to a position that it does not c-command in the surface syntax (14).

(14) *Barss' Generalization (BG)* (Barss 1986)
      Reconstruction of a phrase α to its trace t_α is only possible if α c-commands t_α overtly.
      $[[_\beta \ldots t_\alpha \ldots] \ldots [\ldots \alpha \ldots [\ldots t_\beta \ldots]]] \rightarrow$ *No reconstruction of α!*

To see the original motivation for this generalization, first consider that the example in (15) allows for an inverse scope interpretation below *likely*.

(15) Some politician$_1$ is likely [$_{TP}$ t$_1$ to address every rally]   (*likely* $\succ \forall \succ \exists$)
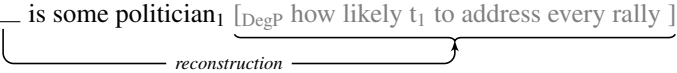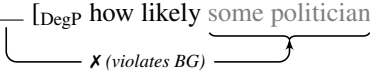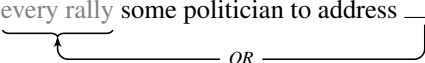
This interpretation requires that the existential quantifier *some senator* is interpreted below *likely*, whereas the universal quantifier *every rally* must be interpreted above the existential, but still below *likely*. In order to derive the correct LF for this reading, *some politician* must first reconstruct to its base position below *likely* (16a), followed by QR of the universal quantifier within the embedded TP (16b).

(16) Some politician is likely [$_{TP}$ t$_1$ to address every rally]
      a. ___ is likely [$_{TP}$ some politician to address every rally]
          |_____ reconstruction _____↗
      b. ___ is likely [$_{TP}$ every rally some politician to address ___]
          ↳_____ QR _____|

Importantly, Barss (1986) noticed that this reading becomes unavailable in a remnant movement configuration where the embedded clause is pied-piped under wh-movement (17).

(17) *Scope reconstruction blocked by BG* (Barss 1986:531)
      [$_{DegP}$ How likely t$_1$ to address every rally]$_2$ is some politican$_1$ t$_2$?   (**likely* $\succ \forall \succ \exists$)

This follows from Barss' Generalization in (14) because the step in (18b) requires reconstruction of the subject to a position that is not overtly c-commanded due to remnant movement of a phrase containing its trace (18b).

(18) [$_{DegP}$ How likely t$_1$ to address every rally]$_2$ is some politican$_1$ t$_2$?
      a. ___ is some politician$_1$ [$_{DegP}$ how likely t$_1$ to address every rally]
          |_____ reconstruction _____↗
      b. *___ is ___ [$_{DegP}$ how likely some politician to address every rally]
          |_____ ✗ *(violates BG)* _____↗
      c. ___ is ___ [$_{DegP}$ how likely every rally some politician to address ___]
   ↳_____ QR _____|

Barss' Generalization has been used to diagnose remnant movement in a variety of languages and phenomena: e.g. with complex prefields (Müller 2018) and idioms in German (Heck & Assmann 2014), rightward movement in Hindi (Bhatt & Dayal 2007), expletive-associate constructions (Preminger 2009) and ECM-constructions in English (Neeleman & Payne 2020). In the following section, I will develop of a test for Left-Branch Extraction on the basis of inverse linking constructions.

4. Inverse linking

Inverse scope with two NP-internal quantifiers is known as *inverse linking* (May 1985; Larson 1985; May & Bale 2017). As the examples in (19) show, the preferred reading in such examples involves wide scope of the universal quantifier above either the existential (19a) or the numeral (19b).

(19)   a.   I have met [$_{DP}$ someone [$_{PP}$ from every city in America]]   ($\forall \succ \exists$)

        b.   The students have to read [$_{DP}$ two books [$_{PP}$ by every author (on the reading list)]]

                                                                                                  ($\forall \succ 2$)

Following May (1985), the standard approach to inverse linking involves Quantifier Raising of the universal (20) (also see Heim & Kratzer 1998).

(20)
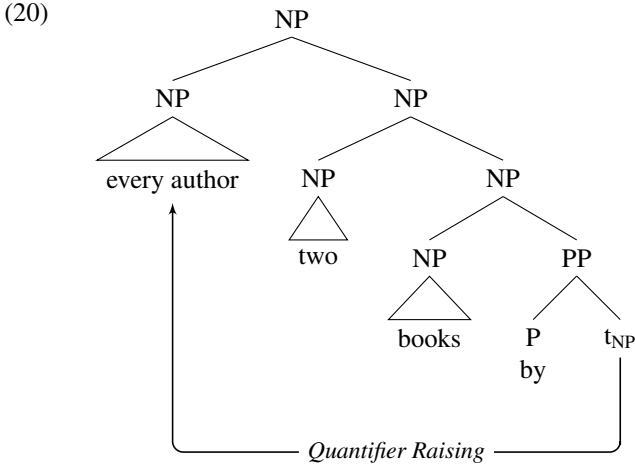
I follow May (1985) in assuming that QR for inverse linking does not leave the noun phrase, i.e. NP is a scope island for QR. Some supporting evidence for this comes from the observation by Larson (1985) that an inversely-linked universal quantifier cannot outscope a quantificational subject (21). This follows if QR must target a DP-internal position, rather than a position above the subject such as TP, for example.[2]

(21)   Two politicians spy on [$_{DP}$ someone [$_{PP}$ from every city]]   (*$\forall \succ 2 \succ \exists$)

This same restriction has also been reported for Russian (Antonyuk 2019:8) and Polish (Tomaszewicz 2015:225), as (22) shows. This suggests that NP also counts as a scope island in these languages if we adopt the view that languages with LBE do not have a DP layer (Bošković 2005, 2008).

(22)   Dwie dziewczyny przywitały [$_{NP}$ studentów [$_{PP}$ z   każdego miasta]]

        two   girls   met   students   from every   city

        'Two girls met students from every city.'   (*Polish*; *$\forall \succ 2 \succ \exists$)

4.1. Inverse linking and LBE

As (22) shows, inverse linking can be found in Slavic languages too (Godjevac 2003; Antonyuk 2015, 2019). Further examples of inverse linking in Polish and Russian are given in (23a) and (23b) respectively.

(23)   a.   Hania spotkała [$_{NP}$ dwóch profesorów [$_{PP}$ z   każdego uniwersytetu]

               Hania met   two   professors   from every   university

               'Hania met two professors from every university.'   ($\forall \succ 2$; *Polish*)

        b.   Ivan vstretil [$_{NP}$ dvukh studentov [$_{PP}$ iz   každogo goroda]]

               Ivan met   two   students   from every   city

               'Ivan met two students from every city'   ($\forall \succ 2$; *Russian*)

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2 For English, this has been disputed by Sauerland (2005), which I will return to below.

A clear prediction that emerges from the remnant movement analysis of LBE is that inverse linking should not be possible if the higher scope-bearing element undergoes LBE. For example, LBE of the numeral 'two' in (23b) would be analyzed as in (24) under the remnant movement approach.

(24)
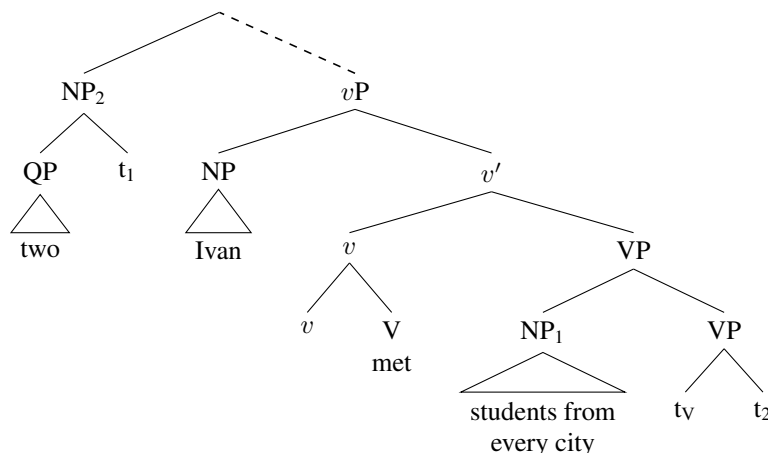
Given Barss' Generalization, NP_1 should not be able to reconstruct to its trace position t_1 since it is not c-commanded by NP_1. However, this step of reconstruction is required in (25b) to allow the universal to QR above the numeral within the NP in the subsequent step (25c).

(25)　　$[_{NP}$ two t_1 $]_2$ … $[_{NP}$ students from every city $]_1$ t_2

a.　　___ … $[_{NP}$ students from every city $]_1$ $[_{NP}$ two t_1 $]$
　　　　　　　　　　　　reconstruction

b.　*___ … ___ $[_{NP}$ two $[_{NP}$ students from every city $]$ $]$
　　　　　　　　　　✗ *(violates BG)*

c.　　___ … ___ $[_{NP}$ every city $[_{NP}$ two $[_{NP}$ students from ___ $]$ $]]$
　　　　　　　　　　　　QR

Consequently, a unique prediction of the remnant movement analysis (that is not shared by competing approaches) is that inverse linking readings should disappear under LBE. As (26) shows, this does not seem to be the case in Polish (26a) or Russian (26b). While these examples are reportedly most acceptable with contrastive focus on the extracted numeral, the inverse linking reading is clearly still present.

(26)　a.　$[_{NP}$ DWÓCH t_1 $]$ Hania spotkała $[_{NP}$ profesorów z　każdego uniwersytetu $]_1$ t_2
　　　　　　two　　　　Hania met　　　professors　from every　university
　　　　　'Hania met TWO professors from every university.'

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　($\forall \succ 2$; *Polish*)

　　b.　$[_{NP}$ DVUKH t_1 $]$ Ivan vstretil $[_{NP}$ studentov iz　každogo goroda $]_1$ t_2
　　　　　　two　　　Ivan met　　　students　from every　city
　　　　　'Ivan met TWO students from every city'　　　　　　　　($\forall \succ 2$; *Russian*)

4.2. What if NP is not a scope island?

So far, I have suggested that the remnant movement approach makes an incorrect prediction with regard to Barss' Generalization. In order to achieve inverse linking with respect to an extracted left-branch numeral, we would require reconstruction to a non-overtly commanded position (25b), in violation of BG. However, the necessity of this step depends to a large degree on the assumption that NP is a scope island. If this were not the case, one could imagine that QR could simply move the quantifier to a position

where it scopes over the numeral in its derived position (27a). This would derive the desired scope ($\forall \succ 2$) without reconstruction.

(27) $[_{NP}$ two t_1 $]_2$ ... $[_{NP}$ students from every city $]_1$ t_2

    a.   every city ... $[_{NP}$ two t_1 $]_2$ ... $[_{NP}$ students from ___ $]_1$ t_2

                                       _QR_

I have assumed so far that the derivation in (27a) is blocked by the fact that NP is a scope island. While examples like (21) and its grammatical counterparts in Slavic (22) support this assumption, Sauerland (2005) has argued that there is evidence that DP is not always a scope island in English. Sauerland (2005:306) points to data such as (28) in which the inversely-linked numeral has wide scope with regard to *want*, i.e. a ~~de dicto~~ interpretation.

(28) *Context*: Mary has a personal ad that says she is looking for a Japanese or Canadian man to marry.

    Mary wanted to marry $[_{DP}$ someone $[_{PP}$ from these two countries $]$

                                                          ($2 \succ$ *want* $\succ \exists$)

If DP is a scope island for inverse linking, as May (1985) suggested, then it is unclear how the correct scope relations for the reading in (28) could be derived (but see Charlow 2010 for critical discussion of these examples).

    In order to rule out the dependence of this argument on NP as a scope island, we can try to force reconstruction of the head noun for another reason. This can be done by adding a third scope-bearing element, similar to *likely* in Barss' original example in (17). The possibility of the derivation in (27) will be ruled out if both the numeral and universal quantifier must scope below some other operator, namely intensional *want*. In (29), the context requires a *de dicto* interpretation of the numeral and the universal, i.e. that meeting two people from every country is Hania's explicit desire. Importantly, the associate of LBE containing the universal has been scrambled out of the embedded infinitive to the matrix clause above the intensional verb *chce* ('want') (see section 2.2).

(29) *Context*: Paweł mistakenly thinks that Hania's new life ambition is to have met three people from every country in the world.

    Nie, $[_{NP}$ DWIE t_1 $]_2$ Hania $[_{NP}$ osoby z   każdego kraju $]_1$ chce $[_{VP}$ poznać t_2 $]$, nie trzy.

    no   two   Hania   people from every   country   wants   meet   not three

    'No, Hania wants to meet TWO people from every country, not three.'

                                                (*want* $\succ \forall \succ 2$)

In order to derive the reading in (29), both the head noun containing the universal quantifier and the numeral must be interpreted below intensional *want*. Here, we can be sure that the BG-violating step is necessary to derive the correct scope. First, the remnant phrase containing the numeral would have to reconstruct (30a). This would then be followed by reconstruction of the head noun (30b), a step which violates Barss' Generalization. Subsequently, the inverse linking relation can be derived by QR below intensional *want* (30c).

(30) $[_{NP}$ two t_1 $]_2$ ... $[_{NP}$ people from every country $]_1$ want ... t_2

    a. ___ ... $[_{NP}$ people from every country $]_1$ want ... $[_{NP}$ two t_1 $]$

                                     reconstruction

    b. *___ ... ___ want ... $[_{NP}$ two $[_{NP}$ people from everyone country $]$ $]$

                                  ✗ *(violates BG)*

    c. ___ ... ___ want every country ... $[_{NP}$ two $[_{NP}$ students from ___ $]$ $]$

                                        _QR_

This more complex example serves to show that, although the assumption of NP as a scope island in Slavic is independently motivated, the general validity of the argument presented here does not depend on it.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented some reasons to be skeptical about the remnant movement analysis of Left-Branch Extraction. First, the few empirical arguments that have been advanced in favour of it, involving extraordinary LBE and preverbal placement of extraction associates, are either problematic or can also be captured by competing analyses. Furthermore, I focused on developing a novel argument against this approach using Barss' Generalization effects as a diagnostic for remnant movement. I have tried to show that, given what we know about remnant movement more generally, we would expect to find the anti-reconstruction effects associated with Barss' Generalization with LBE too. Inverse linking constructions in which the higher scope-bearing item is extracted seem to provide the right configuration for such an anti-reconstruction effect to arise, yet we do not find one. If we take this anti-reconstruction diagnostic seriously, then this suggests that remnant movement is not the right analysis of LBE.

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