

How is Reconstruction Constrained?

This paper proposes that a certain type of reconstruction (scope and remnant reconstruction) obeys a minimality condition, which I will call the Minimality Condition on Reconstruction (MCR). This condition is designed to rule out a situation depicted in (1). I will provide three pieces of evidence for MCR, and then suggest that MCR is a condition on representations, rather than one on derivations.

The first piece of evidence comes from the lack of scope ambiguity in multiple scrambling constructions. It is well known that scrambling languages such as German and Japanese, though generally scope rigid in non-scrambled structures, show scope ambiguity if one quantifier is scrambled over the other, (2). (The examples are from German, but Japanese behaves the same way.) The ambiguity in (2b) is standardly attributed to reconstruction of the scrambled element (e.g., Lechner 1998). However, this account would predict that scope ambiguity would arise if two QPs undergo scrambling, which is not the case, (3). If there is no constraint on reconstruction, it should be possible for einem Kind alone to undergo reconstruction under the scope of jedes Buch in (3a), and similarly for einer Frau under the scope of jeden Mann in (3b). I interpret this data as evidence for MCR, which prevents a scrambled phrase from undergoing reconstruction across another scrambled phrase.

The second piece of evidence comes from Müller's generalization, (4). This generalization rules out (5a) because it is derived first by applying scrambling to das Buch, and then applying scrambling to the VP. On the other hand, (5b) is ruled in because das Buch is scrambled whereas the VP is topicalized. Sauerland (1999) and others try to derive the generalization, assuming that scrambling is a feature-driven minimality-sensitive movement. The idea is that the remnant cannot be scrambled over another scrambled element. However, scrambling over another scrambled element is allowed, which we can see in (6), where the linear order of the two scrambled objects in (3a) is flipped. To explain away this problem, Sauerland and others argue that in deriving (6), jedes Buch first forms multiple Spec's with einem Kind, thereby making the two equidistant from outside, and then the former is further scrambled. Note that this analysis voids the original account of (5a) as it would allow the remnant to undergo similar steps. Turning now to my proposal, (5a) can be ruled out by MCR. Assuming with Heycock (1995) that predicates must reconstruct, it follows that the VP needs to reconstruct across the scrambled object das Buch, but this violates MCR. By contrast, MCR does not constrain reconstruction of the topicalized VP across the scrambled object, hence (5b) is grammatical.

The third piece of evidence comes from the impossibility of scope reconstruction into islands. As is argued in detail by Cresti (1995), wh-expression *how many NP* can be decomposed into a Wh-operator and an existential quantifier, and the latter can scopally interact with other scope bearing elements. For example, (7a) has two distinct LF representations (7b,c). (In (7c), n-many people is reconstructed to the edge of VP below should.) However, the reconstructed reading is blocked if there is an A'-intervener in the reconstruction path. Thus, (8a) is unambiguous, allowing only the reading (8b). Though Cresti takes the unavailability of the reading (8c) as evidence against creating a higher type variable at the CP-adjoined position, I would like to interpret the data as further evidence for MCR. That is, A'-moved element cannot undergo reconstruction across another A'-element.

Let us now consider the nature of MCR and its implications. First of all, given that the condition is sensitive to the types of syntactic positions of both the reconstructed phrase and the intervening phrase, it should be taken as a syntactic condition. The next question is whether MCR is a derivational condition or a representational one. Conceptually, MCR cannot be a derivational condition because reconstruction is not a derivational operation under a strict derivational view that derivational operations are only those operations that contribute to structure building, i.e., Merge and Move. Indeed, there is evidence that even the minimality condition on Move is representational in nature. Consider (9). These data feature raising constructions in Italian. As is shown in (9a), the subject cannot be raised across the intervening experiencer. However, the raising becomes possible if the experiencer is dislocated by topicalization or Wh-movement, (9b,c). Notice that if the minimality condition on Move is a condition on derivation that must be satisfied at each derivational step, (9b,c) cannot be grammatical. This suggests that the condition on Move must be evaluated based on the outputs of derivation, i.e., representations. Given the representational character of the minimality condition on Move, it is not unreasonable to conclude that MCR is also representational in nature. The strongest interpretation of this conclusion implies that the theory of syntax should be representational/output-oriented in that the well-formedness of linguistic expressions is determined based on terminal representations, rather than on each derivational step.

- (1) *X ... Y ... t_X, where X and Y are structurally non-distinct.

- (2) a. weil fast jeder irgendein Buch mit Freude gelesen hat (every>some)
 since almost everybody some book with pleasure read has
 'Since almost everybody read some book with pleasure.'
 b. weil [irgendein Buch]₁ fast jeder t₁ mit Freude gelesen hat (Ambiguous)
- (3) a. dass [einem Kind]₁ [jedes Buch]₂ nur der Hans t₁ t₂ vorlesen wollte (a>every)
 that a child every book only the Hans read wanted
 'Only Hans wanted to read every book to a child'
 b. dass Hans [einer Frau]₁ [jeden Mann]₂ ohne Zweifel t₁ t₂ vorstellte (a>every)
 that Hans a woman every man without doubt introduced
 'Hans introduced every man to a woman without doubt.'
- (4) In deriving the configuration "[YP...t_{XP}]...XP...t_{YP}," XP and YP must have been moved by a different movement rule. (Müller 1996, 1998)
- (5) a. *dass [_{VP} t_{Obj} gelesen] [_{Obj} das Buch] keiner t_{VP} hat
 that read the book no one has
 'That no one has read the book.'
 b. [_{VP} t_{Obj} gelesen] hat [_{Obj} das Buch] keiner t_{VP}
 read has the book no one
 'None has read the book.'
- (6) dass [jedes Buch]₂ [einem Kind]₁ nur der Hans t₁ t₂ vorlesen wollte
 that every book a child only the Hans read wanted
- (7) a. How many people do you think I should talk to?
 b. Wh₁ [n₁-many people]_x you think that should I talk to x
 (For what n: there are n-many people x such that you think I should talk to x.)
 c. Wh₁ you think that should [n₁-many people]_x I talk to x
 (For what n: you think there should be n-many people x such that I talk to x.)
- (8) a. How many people do you wonder whether I should talk to?
 b. Wh₁ [n₁-many people]_x you wonder whether should I talk to x.
 (For what n: there are n-many people such that you wonder whether I should talk to x.)
 c. *Wh₁ you wonder whether should [n₁-many people]_x I talk to x
 (For what n: you wonder whether there should be n-many people x such that I talk to x.)
- (9) a. *Gianni_i sembra a Maria [t_i essere stanco]
 Gianni seems to Maria be ill
 b. [A Maria]_j, Gianni_i gli t_j sembra [t_i essere stanco]
 to Maria Gianni her seems be ill
 c. [A chi]_j sembra_k Gianni_i t_k t_j [t_i essere stanco]
 to whom seems Gianni be ill

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