Split-NPs as an Instance of Sideward Movement

Introduction: Split-NPs in German exhibit properties of both base-generation and movement: while *welch* ‘some’ can only occur in split-NPs (see (1a)), the reciprocal *einander* ‘each other’ must be c-commanded by the lower binder at some point in the derivation (1b). As Fanselow (1988) notices, these paradoxical properties can occur in one and the same datum. Compare (2a-b). Besides these, there are other properties indicating base-generation and movement: with regard to the former, the possibility of a noun phrase with an indefinite (second) determiner in Spec,CP (3a), the occurrence of an apparent non-constituent in Spec,CP (3b), and the possibility of morphological dis-agreement in number and adjectival inflection (3c); as for the latter, restrictions on split adjective sequences (and others). Compare (4a-b).

A Former Proposal: To capture these different types of properties, Fanselow (1988) proposes to base-generate two noun phrases in the VP (5): the one in Spec,VP contains *pro*, the other forms a complex predicate with the verbal head. Grewendorf (1989: 28) interprets Fanselow’s verbal complex as the result of reanalysis inside the VP. Furthermore, Fanselow (1988: 101) and Grewendorf (1991: 304) suggest that *pro* must be identified by a strong ending. The following data are incompatible with these assumptions.

Some Problems: According to Grewendorf (1989), reanalysis is subject to adjacency. However, with the intervening demonstrative intensifier *da* ‘there’, this adjacency does not hold in (6b). Furthermore, *pro* may also be licensed by elements that do not have a strong ending (7) (note that split NPs can be definite in the context of *immer nur* ‘always only’). These (and other) facts necessitate a new analysis.

A New Proposal: I propose to reanalyze Fanselow’s account as an instance of sideward movement of the verb (cf. Nunes 2001) between two independent noun phrases. Replacing *pro* with the empty noun *eN* (Panagiotidis 2002), the derivation for (3b) proceeds as follows (8a-c): first, *keine* ‘no’ is merged with *eN* projecting a DP. This is followed by the predicate merging with this DP projecting a VP (8a); copying the predicate, the verb is merged with the independently assembled noun phrase *polnische Gänse* ‘Polish geese’ as an instance of sideward movement projecting a second VP (8b); next, VP1 is adjoined to VP2 (the verb in VP1 is deleted in PF defining the command relation by categories) (8c); finally, the lower VP2 moves to Spec,CP. To constrain the derivations such that either only the lower VP2 (as just discussed) or NP2 in (8c) may move, I formulate a semantic and syntactic condition on the occurrence of split NPs.

With the discontinuous noun phrase interpreted as one semantic unit, only one part can bear a theta role: I propose that DP1 is an argument and NP2 a complex nominal predicate (Haider 1990, Fanselow 1988). Among others, this assumption explains why the moved NP2 in (3a) can only have an indefinite “determiner”. With regard to the semantic condition, I propose that only NP2 or the lower VP2 may move if we assume that *eN* is a semantic anaphoric element that needs to be licensed by a preceding antecedent. Consequently, if neither NP2 nor lower VP2 moves or, alternatively, if DP1, VP1 or the upper VP2 do, *eN* will not be licensed properly (by a preceding antecedent) leading to non-interpretability of *eN*. In more detail, with the exception of the determiner, every other, lower part in the noun phrase can in principle form a NP2 in Spec,CP. As the determiner is of type <<e,t>,e>, I argue that *eN* in DP1 is an empty predicate (of type <e,t>) (cf. Fanselow 1988). Note now that both the predicative NP2 and the null predicative *eN* are of the same semantic type (<e,t>). I propose that a semantic anaphoric relation between *eN* and its antecedent may be established and the content of *eN* can be identified by the preceding element.

Syntactically, *eN* must have an appropriate licenser that is (i) overt, (ii) c-commands it, and (iii) shows an inflection (if possible). While I cannot fully motivate these sub-conditions here, note that (i) rules out the “stranding” of a (null) plural indefinite determiner in split-NPs (which would have the same surface order as the moved *unsplit* counterparts); (ii) is motivated by pre-nominal possessives such as *Peters* ‘Peter’s, which can license *eN* but not post-nominal ones such as *meines Vaters* ‘my(GEN) father(GEN)’; (iii) is independently motivated by adjectives of the type *lila* ‘purple’, which have an optional ending when followed by an overt noun but an obligatory one when followed by a null noun.

The properties indicating base-generation (1a), (3a-c) are derived by sideward movement of the verb between two independent noun phrases (thus avoiding the adjacency problem in (6b), where the demonstrative intensifier is now part of DP1), and the ones indicating displacement (1b), (4) by movement of the complex nominal predicate and the interpretation of the anaphoric empty predicate *eN* on the basis of it (thus avoiding the need to allow morphological dis-agreement inside the noun phrase in (3c)).
Examples:

(1) a. **Brot** gibt es welches.  (cf. *Es gibt welches **Brot**.*
    bread is there some there is some bread (Haider 1990)
    
    b. **Bücher von einander** sind uns keine bekannt.
    books by one another are to us none known (van Riemsdijk 1989)

(2) a. **Bücher über einander** würden die Männer niemals welche schreiben.
    books about one another would the men never some write
    
    b. Die Männer würden niemals (*welche) **Bücher über einander** schreiben.
    the men would never some books about one another write

(3) a. **Einen Wagen** hat er sich noch keinen leisten können.
    a car has he refl yet none afford could (van Riemsdijk 1989)
    
    b. [ **Polnische Gänse** gekauft ] hat sie keine.
    Polish geese bought has she none (Fanselow 1988)
    
    c. **Rote Hemden** habe ich eins gekauft.
    red(STRONG) shirts have I one(STRONG) bought (Müller 1986, Fanselow 1988)

(4) a. ** Amerikanisches Auto** kann ich mir kein neues leisten (cf. neues amerikan.)
    American car can I refl no new afford
    
    b. * **Neues Auto** kann ich mir kein amerikanisches leisten (cf. *amerikan. neues)
    new car can I refl no American afford (van Riemsdijk 1989)

(5) [ VP [ NP keine pro, ] [ V [ NP polnische Gänse ], gekauft ] ]
    none Polish geese bought

    I have always only the shirts there worn (there)
    
    b. [ **Hemden** (*da) getragen, ] habe ich immer nur die **t, da t**.
    shirts (there) worn have I always only the there

(7) **Hemden** habe ich immer nur {Peters / zwei / ein paar / diese red(STRONG)} pro getragen.
    shirts have I always only Peter’s / two / a couple / these(STRONG) red(WEAK) worn

(8) a. [ VP1 [ DP1 keine eN ] gekauft ]
    
    b. [ VP1 [ DP1 keine eN ] gekauft, ] -> [ VP2 [ NP2 polnische Gänse ] gekauft ]
    
    c. [ VP2 [ VP1 [ DP1 keine eN ] gekauft ] [ VP2 [ NP2 polnische Gänse ] gekauft ] ]

References:


