

When Multiple Wh-fronting is Not Multiple

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1. Introduction

(1) Standard generalization about Slavic: obligatory multiple wh-fronting (Rudin 1988, among others).

a. Komu čto Ivan podaril? [Russian]
who_{DAT} what_{ACC} Ivan gave
'Who did Ivan give what (as a present)?'

b. *Komu Ivan podaril čto?

(2) In this work, I focus on all the potential counter-examples to this generalization and conclude that, at least for Russian, although multiple wh-fronting is possible, it is never obligatory, and in some cases is prohibited.

(3) Toward understanding the new generalization.

2. When obligatoriness of multiple wh-fronting breaks down

(4) *Identical wh-phrases* (Bošković 1998, Stepanov 1998, Franks and Bošković 2001):

a. *Čto čto obuslavlivajet?
what what conditions
'What conditions what?'

b. Čto obuslavlivajet čto?
what conditions what
'What conditions what?'

(5) *Multiple left-branch extraction (LBE)*:

a. [Kakoj dom] on kupil t?
what house he bought
'What kind of a house did he buy?'

b. Kakoj₁ on kupil [t₁ dom]?

c. *Kakoj₁ čju₂ [t₁ student] kupil [t₂ mašinu]?
which whose student bought car
'Which student bought whose car?'

(6) The generalization about the impossibility of multiple LBE has been also made for Serbo-Croatian by Fernandez-Salgueiro (2006).

(7) *Complex wh-phrases*:

a. Komu čto Ivan podaril?
who_{DAT} what_{ACC} Ivan gave
'Who did Ivan give what (as a present)?'

b. *Komu Ivan podaril čto?

c. Kakomu studentu kakuju knigu Ivan podaril?
which student_{DAT} which book_{ACC} Ivan gave
'Which student did Ivan give which book?'

d. Kakomu studentu Ivan podaril kakuju knigu?
which student_{DAT} Ivan gave which book_{ACC}

(8) *Partial wh-fronting*:

a. Komu čto Ivan podaril?
who_{DAT} what_{ACC} Ivan gave
'Who did Ivan give what (as a present)?'

b. Komu Ivan čto podaril?
who_{DAT} Ivan what_{ACC} gave
'Who did Ivan give what (as a present)?'

c. Kogo Ivan gde uvidel?
who_{ACC} Ivan where saw
'Who did Ivan see where?'

(9) Revised generalization about multiple wh-fronting (at least for Russian):

Multiple wh-fronting is *possible* in Russian, unless multiple LBE.

3. Sluicing does not repair the multiple LBE violation.

(10) *Sluicing (Ross 1969)*

John bought something but I don't know what [~~John bought #~~]

(11) Sluicing with multiple wh-remnants is possible in Russian:

Každyj priglasil kogo-to na tanec, no ja ne pomnju kto kogo [_{IP} ~~priglasil na tanec~~]
everyone invited someone to dance but I not remember who whom
'Everyone invited someone to a dance but I don't remember who invited who'

(12) Sluicing is compatible with LBE:

Ona kupila dostatočno doroguju mašinu, no ja ne pomnju naskol'ko doroguju
she bought rather expensive car but I not remember how expensive
'She bought an expensive car but I don't know how expensive'

(13) Sluicing is known to repair locality violations (e.g., amelioration of island effects (Ross 1969, Lasnik 2000, and Merchant 2001)

- a. *No one knows a student who owns a certain car but I can't remember what car
[no one knows a student who owns *t*].
- b. No one knows a student who owns a certain car but I can't remember what car [~~no
one knows a student who owns *t*~~].

(14) Sluicing does not repair multiple LBE violation:

*Kakoj-to student kupil čju-to mašinu, no ja ne pomnju kakoj čju
some student bought someone's car but I not remember what whose
'Some student bought someone's car but I don't remember what student bought
whose car'

4. Distinguishing LBE from NP-ellipsis under Sluicing

(15) On kupil doroguju mašinu, a ja tol'ko mogu sebe pozvolit' deševuju [e]
he bought expensive car and I only can myself afford cheap
'He bought an expensive car and I can only afford a cheap one'

(16) NP-ellipsis with attributive adjectives in Russian requires an adjective to be present in the antecedent:

- a. *Ona ne prosto doktor, ona xorošij [e]!
she not just doctor_{MASC}, she good_{MASC}
'Not only is she a doctor, she is a good one!'
- b. Ona ne prosto doktor, ona xorošij doktor!
she not just doctor_{MASC}, she good_{MASC} doctor
- c. Ona doktor, i xorošij [~~doktor~~]!
she doctor_{MASC}, and good_{MASC}
'She is a doctor, and an excellent one!'

(17) Sluicing is not sensitive to this constraint:

- a. Ivan kupil mašinu, no ja ne znaju naskol'ko novuju
Ivan bought car but I not know how new
'Ivan bought a car but I don't know how new a car'
- b. *Ivan kupil mašinu, no ja ne znaju [naskol'ko novuju [e]] Ivan kupil.
Ivan bought car but I not know how new Ivan bought
'Ivan bought a car but I don't know how new a car Ivan bought.'

(18) *Odn actër kupil mašinu, no ja ne pomnju naskol'ko bogatyj naskol'ko
one actor bought car but I not remember how rich how

doroguju [~~actër kupil mašinu~~]
expensive actor bought car

'One actor bought a car but I don't remember how rich an actor bought how
expensive a car'

5. Toward analysis: complex wh-phrases and LBE

(19) LBE takes place out of complex wh-phrases, so it seems closely related to movement of complex wh-phrases.

(20) a. Kakomu studentu kakuju knigu Ivan podaril?
which student_{DAT} which book_{ACC} Ivan gave
'Which student did Ivan give which book?'

b. Kakomu studentu Ivan podaril kakuju knigu?
 which student_{DAT} Ivan gave which book_{ACC}

(21) *Boskovic (2002)*: multiple wh-fronting is not about checking a [+wh] feature of C⁰ but rather it is a result of wh-phrases being inherently focused and moving to a focus position. D-linked wh-phrases (as in Pesetsky 1987) are associated with presuppositions (old information), hence are not focused. This allows D-linked wh-phrase to stay in-situ, as in (20b).

(22) But how can we explain (20a)? Why can d-linked wh-phrases be multiply fronted at all?

(23) *Fernandez-Salgueiro (2006)*: when wh-phrases are not focused, C⁰ with a strong [+wh] feature is merged overtly in main clauses and, since that is the only thing that triggers movement in this case, no multiple LBE is allowed (assuming that LBE undergoes the same type of movement as D-linked wh-phrases).

(24) *Problems*:

- a. Ruling out the possibility of multiple fronting of complex wh-phrases, (20a).
- b. Absence of superiority effects with d-linked wh-phrases.

6. An alternative analysis: Minimality

(25) *Boeckx and Grohmann (2004)*: unified analysis of Scrambling and D-linking. D-linked wh-phrases are scrambled; hence, the optionality of fronting. Due to their old information, d-linked wh-phrases move to a Topic Phrase (TopP).

(26) Boeckx and Grohmann (2004) are concerned with single instances of d-linked wh-fronting. It needs to be specified further whether multiple d-linked wh-phrases move to different TopPs or a single TopP.

(27) *Kakoj student, po tvojemu mneniju, kakuju knigu kupil?*
 which student in your opinion which book bought
 ‘Which student, in your opinion, bought which book?’

(28) Thus, it seems plausible to hypothesize multiple TopPs.

(29) [_{TopP} kakoj student [_{TopP} kakuju knigu [t kupil t]
 which student which book bought

(30) *Proposal*: LBE, like movement of a d-linked wh-phrase, is movement to TopP.

(31) Step1: [_{TopP} kakomu Top⁰ [Ivan zadal [t studentu] [kakoj vopros]]]
 which Ivan asked student which question

Step 2: [_{TopP} Top⁰ [_{TopP} kakomu Top⁰ [Ivan zadal [t studentu] [kakoj vopros]]]]
 which Ivan asked student which question

Step 3: *[[_{TopP} kakoj₂ Top⁰] [_{TopP} kakomu₁ Top⁰ [Ivan zadal [t₁ studentu] [t₂ vopros]]]]

(32) Attracting *kakoj* by the higher Top⁰ is impossible over the intervening *kakomu* in the Spec of the lower Top⁰.

(33) Hence, multiple LBE is impossible due to a Minimality violation: Attract Closest/Minimal Link Condition (MLC), Chomsky (1995).

7. Sluicing

(34) **Odin acer kupil mašinu, no ja ne pomnju naskol’ko bogatyj naskol’ko*
 one actor bought car but I not remember how rich how

doroguju [t-acer kupil t- mašinu]
 expensive actor bought car

‘One actor bought a car but I don’t remember how rich an actor bought how expensive a car’

(35) Why Sluicing cannot repair multiple LBE derivations? Because Sluicing does not repair minimality violations in general (Merchant 2001), under the assumption that Minimality is part of the definition of Attract (i.e., a derivational constraint; hence, cannot be repaired at a later point in the derivation).

8. Conclusions

(36) Multiple wh-fronting is not obligatory in Russian:

- a. Complex wh-phrases do not have to multiply front (Scrambling)
- b. Multiple LBE is impossible (Minimality).
- c. Bare wh-phrases can ‘partially’ front (a lower focus position or scrambling – leaving for further research).

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