

Applicatives at the syntax-semantics interface

In recent years, two interesting hypotheses have emerged regarding the nature of applicative/double object constructions:

(i) Pylkkänen's 2002 semantic typology of applicative constructions, distinguishing between high applicatives [HA] (relation between an individual (IO; indirect object) and an event) (1), and low applicatives [LA] (relation between two individuals, IO and DO, direct object) (2).

According to Pylkkänen, HA and LA have the structures in (3) and (4), respectively.

(ii) McGinnis's 2003 use of Pylkkänen's typology to account for the variable behavior of passivization in double object constructions (5)-(6).

The key idea here is that HAs provide an escape hatch for the lower object ('leapfrogging') because the HA phrase is a phase (with extra EPP feature/specifier position) (7)-(8). By contrast the LA phrase is not a phase, hence lacks the extra specifier position needed for circumvention of a locality violation.

If McGinnis is right, we have a strong syntax/semantics correlation in the domain of applicatives. That is, we can correlate variable behavior under passivization (syntax) to variable semantics (reflected phrase structurally). Unfortunately, her idea runs into problems. In particular, it meets with the following 3 difficulties (see McGinnis 2004):

(A) Some HAs only allow passivization of IO; yet McGinnis predicts that all HA phrases are phase-heads (hence they should allow leapfrogging, via the extra EPP position that phases have)

(B) Some LAs allow passivization of DO. McGinnis predicts this to be impossible since LAs are not phases, hence lack the extra EPP feature that allows leapfrogging.

(C) Some HAs appear to be lower than DO (as reflected by the following binding asymmetry), contra (3).

To preserve the desirable one-to-one mapping between syntax and semantics in the domain of applicatives, I propose the following alternative strategies to deal with the issues in (A-B-C):

(D) [RE (A)]: Contra McGinnis, I do not assume a phase-based locality, and hence do not distinguish between phase heads (HAs) and non-phase heads (LAs). To get her basic results regarding passivization in HA/LA contexts, I would like to use Boskovic's 1994 notion of anti-locality, which in essence bans movement from one position to another position inside the same projection (e.g., movement from complement of X to spec of X(P)) (12).

Accordingly, DO can't leapfrog IO in the case of LAs because of anti-locality (leapfrogging over IO in such cases would still land DO in ApplP) not because of phase-hood (13).

Once we don't assume phases, we can say that some HA heads lack an EPP feature (and escape hatch) (see Anagnostopoulou 2003). We know from work on passives for example that the content of a head influences the projection of specifiers. This seems *not* to be a language-specific thing, but a head/feature-specific thing, so in the case of applicatives, it is possible to say that, for example, only locatives lack the extra specifier position, hence blocking leapfrogging/long-passivization.

(E) [RE (B)]: In addition to the HA/LA distinction (3-4), I claim that one must implicate the inherent/structural case distinction. If IO bears inherent case, DO may passivize (if it bears structural case). No leapfrogging is necessary here. IO will not act as an intervener (IO doesn't have a matching (structural) case feature). Also, if scrambling is available in the language, DO may move over IO via scrambling to vP and passivize in low applicative constructions, as schematized in (14).

(F) [RE (C)]: I propose that applied elements come in two flavors: as DPs associated with an Appl head (cf. (3)), or as PPs. If a PP merges with V, that PP is a high applicative, since it merges with an event-head (In Bare Phrase Structure terms, V and VP are identical.) So, HAs may have the structure in (15) in addition to the structure in (3).

I propose that the structure in (15) captures the data concerning HAs merged 'low.'

In sum, I argue that in order to capture the full range of variation in the domain of applicative constructions, one must consider the following dimensions: configuration (HA vs. LA; (3 vs. 4)), case (structural vs. inherent), and categorial status (DP vs. PP). Also crucial for my proposal is the rejection of phase-based locality, and the adoption of a specific version of anti-locality.

- (1) Mukasa ya-som-e-dde Katonga ekitabo [Luganda]
 Mukasa 3G.PAST-read-APPL-past Katonga book
 ‘Mukasa read a book for Katonga’ (i.e, M read a book and it (reading a book) was for K)
- (2) John sent Mary a book
- (3) [_{VP} Subj v [_{AppIP} IO Appl [_{VP} V DO]]]
- (4) [_{VP} Subj v [_{VP} V [_{AppIP} IO Appl DO]]]
- (5) a. **Umukoôbwa** a-ra-andik-ir-w-a **íbárúwa** n’ûmuhuûngu
 girl SP-Pres-write-AppI-Pass-Asp letter by boy
 ‘The girl is having the letter written for her by the boy’
 b. **Íbárúwa** i-ra-andik-ir-w-a **umukoôbwa** n’ûmuhuûngu
 ‘The letter is written for the girl by the boy’ [Luganda]
- (6) a. **Mary** was written a **letter** by John
 b. ***A letter** was written **Mary** by John
- (7) a. [_{TP} IO T [_{VP} v_{pass} [_{AppIP} t_{IO} Appl [_{VP} V DO]]]]
 b. [_{TP} DO T [_{VP} v_{pass} [_{AppIP} t_{DO}’ [IO Appl [_{VP} V t_{DO}]]]]]
- (8) a. [_{TP} IO T [_{VP} v_{pass} [_{VP} V [_{AppIP} t_{IO} Appl DO]]]]
 b. * [_{TP} DO T [_{VP} v_{pass} [_{VP} V [_{AppIP} t_{DO}’ [IO Appl t_{DO}]]]]]
- (9) a. Ishuûrii ry-oohere-j-w-é-ho ti igitabo n’úúmwáalímu. [Kinyarwanda]
 school it-send-ASP-PASS-ASP-LOC book by-teacher
 ‘The school was sent the book by the teacher’
 b. *Igitaboi cy-oohere-j-w-é-ho ishuûri ti n’úúmwáalímu.
 book it-send-ASP-PASS-ASP-LOC school by-teacher
 ‘The book was sent to the school by the teacher’
- (10) a. Ímbwai i-rá-hé-er-w-a umugabo ti ibíryo n’ûmugóre. [Kinyarwanda]
 dog it-PR-give-BEN-PASS-ASP man food by woman
 ‘The dog is given food for the man by the woman.’
 b. Ibíryoi bi-rá-hé-er-w-a umugabo ímbwa ti n’ûmugóre.
 food it-PR-give-BEN-PASS-ASP man dog by woman
 ‘The food is given to the dog for the man by the woman.’
- (11) a. N-a-fúngul-ish-ije buri muryango úrufunguzo rwáwo. [Kinyarwanda]
 I-PST-open-INST-ASP each door key its
 ‘I opened each door_i with its_i key’
 b. N-a-fúngul-ish-ije umuryango wáyo buri rufunguzo.
 I-PST-open-INST-ASP door its each key
 ‘I opened its_i door with each key_{j/*i}’
- (12) A chain link from A to B is of length *n* iff there are *n* “nodes” (X, X’, or XP, but not segments of these) that dominate A and exclude B
- (13) *T° ... [_{AppIP} DO_i [_{AppIP} IO [Appl° t_{DO}]]]
- (14) T° ... [_{VP} DO_i v° [_{VP} V° [_{AppIP} IO [Appl° t_{DO}]]]]]
- (15) [_{VP} Subj v [_{VP} DO V PP]]

References

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