

Pronouns and obligatory displacement (I): Object shift and scrambling

- the WEAK/STRONG distinction diagnosed by Cardinaletti & Starke (1999) based on coordination and modification (*i.a.*) also manifests itself in the fact that weak and strong pronouns distribute differently by occurring in different syntactic positions
 - in Mainland Scandinavian (MSc), **object shift** (targeting a position to the left of adverbial modifiers) obligatorily targets WEAK pronouns whenever the structural description for the operation is met (i.e., iff the main verb undergoes movement out of the VP — ‘**Holmberg’s Generalisation**’; cf. (1b~c)); STRONG pronouns and common-noun phrases, on the other hand, do not undergo object shift: (1a)
- (1)
- a. jeg likte <*filmen/*DEN> ikke <filmen/DEN> (Norwegian)
I liked film.the/that not film.the/that
‘I didn’t like the movie/THAT’
 - b. jeg likte <den> ikke <*den>
I liked PRON.M.SG not PRON.M.SG
‘I didn’t like it’
 - c. han tror at jeg <*den> ikke likte <den>
he thinks that I PRON.M.SG not liked PRON.M.SG
‘he thinks that I didn’t like it’
- in West-Germanic, WEAK pronouns obligatorily undergo a process similar to object shift, called **scrambling** (again typically targeting a position to the left of adverbial modifiers): (2) [within Germanic, scrambling is found in the OV-languages Afrikaans, Dutch, Frisian and German, and also in Yiddish (the only Germanic VO-language featuring scrambling); outside Germanic, scrambling is also found, for example, in Russian, a VO-language, and in Japanese and Korean, both OV-languages]
- (2)
- a. ik heb <{die/*een} collega> gisteren <{die/een} collega> ontmoet (Dutch)
I have that/a colleague yesterday that/a colleague met
‘I met that/a colleague yesterday’
 - b. ik heb <'m> gisteren <*'m> ontmoet
I have him_{weak} yesterday him_{weak} met
‘I met him yesterday’
 - c. ik heb <HEM> gisteren <HEM> ontmoet, niet HAAR
I have him_{strong} yesterday him_{strong} met not her_{strong}
‘I met HIM yesterday, not HER’
- scrambling differs from object shift in (at least) the following respects:
 - scrambling, unlike object shift, is not contingent on V leaving the VP
 - scrambling, unlike Mainland Scandinavian object shift, is not confined to WEAK proforms
 - scrambling, unlike object shift, can easily target non-nominal WEAK proforms: (3)

- (3) ik heb <er/daar/hier> gisteren <*er/daar/hier> een collega ontmoet
 I have there_{weak}/there_{strong}/here yesterday there_{weak}/there_{strong}/here a colleague met
 ‘I met a colleague there/here yesterday’

- scrambling, unlike object shift, can (under the right circumstances) place objects to the left of the structural subject: (4)
 [in the Scandinavian languages, Swedish and Icelandic have been reported to sometimes allow ‘long object shift’, targeting a position to the left of the subject; but at least in Icelandic (no information on this is available for Swedish), this requires the subject to remain *low*, in a position that is arguably not the structural subject position, SpecIP]

- (4) a. dass den Hans der Maria der Peter gestern vorgestellt hat (German)
 that the.ACC Hans the.DAT Maria the.NOM Peter yesterday introduced has
 ‘that yesterday Peter introduced Hans to Maria’
 b. nekhtn hot dos bukh maks nit geleyent (Yiddish)
 yesterday has the.ACC book Max not read
 ‘Max did not read the book yesterday’

- although their nature is probably different, object shift and scrambling are **functionally and information-structurally** very similar operations
- both object shift and scrambling have traditionally been treated as instances of **movement**
- it will be helpful to evaluate the ‘movement consensus’ against the background of a phenomenon for which the pendulum has swung back and forth multiple times in the history of generative grammar with regard to the question of whether movement is involved in it — ‘**raising to object**’ (or ‘subject to object raising’, SOR)

- (5) a. Bill believed John to be a liar
 b.i Bill made out John *(to be) a liar
 b.ii Bill made John out (to be) a liar

- Postal (1974) treats ‘raising to object’ literally as a case of raising of the subject of the infinitival clause into an object(-like) position in the matrix clause
- Chomsky (1981, 1986) reimages ‘raising to object’ without recourse to movement, with an appeal to *in situ* licensing of the infinitival subject via ‘Exceptional Case-Marking’ (ECM)
- a renewed focus on Postal’s data (Pesetsky 1989, Johnson 1991) coupled with the abolition of government (Chomsky 1995:Ch. 3) heightened the interest in object shift and Holmberg’s Generalisation (Holmberg 1986, 1999) and revived the movement approach to ‘raising to object’, with SpecAgrOP (later an ‘outer specifier’ of vP) as the landing-site
- the introduction of Agree (effectively a revival of government) facilitated a re-emergence of *in situ* approaches
- the alternation in (5b) (Kayne 1985) may warrant a compromise (see Lasnik 2001):

- an *in situ* approach for (5b.i)
 - a movement approach for (5b.ii)
- NB** Bošković (1997): object shift is optional for objects but obligatory for accusative subjects of small and infinitival clausal complements
 Hong & Lasnik (2010): object shift of accusative subjects of predication is obligatory only for small clause subjects, not for subjects of infinitival clausal complements
- **bottom line** regarding ‘raising to object’:
- it’s complicated
 - it’s not clearly a case of movement
- *if* object shift involves movement, it must be A-movement (rather than \bar{A} -movement):
 - only A-movement can (begin to) account for the fact that object shift never targets anything other than nominal elements
 - only A-movement can make sense of the facts of Holmberg’s Generalisation, which links object shift to movement of the verb out of VP (‘order preservation’)
 - if object shift is A-movement and a stopover on the edge of vP (the lower phase of the clause) instantiates \bar{A} -movement, then a stopover on the edge of vP under object shift will instantiate ‘improper movement’ and object shift must proceed ‘in one fell swoop’ — which Fox & Pesetsky (2005) develop into an account for the order preserving nature of object shift
 - an alternative response to the prohibition on an intermediate stopover would be to deny that object shift involves movement; order preservation is not as easily dealt with on these terms
 - *if* scrambling involves movement, it is less clear what kind of movement (A or \bar{A}) it is:
 - the fact that scrambling can affect non-nominal elements, incl. ones that do not originate in A-positions, suggests that A-movement cannot cover all instances of scrambling
 - the fact that scrambling can traverse the (*ex situ*) subject is also problematic for an A-movement approach: no well-established case of A-movement is able to cross over the structural subject position (‘super-raising’; **John seems that it is likely to win the race*)
 - the fact that scrambling can give rise to what appear to be ‘parasitic gaps’ (6) (Bennis & Hoekstra 1986), which canonical A-movement dependencies cannot, is an additional potential (though by no means airtight) argument for the involvement of \bar{A} -movement
- (6) dat Jan het boek zonder (het) eerst door te lezen heeft weggegooid (Dutch)
 that Jan the book without it first through to read has away.thrown
 ‘that Jan threw away the book without perusing *(it) first’
- Salzmann’s (2023) overview chapter on scrambling in the West-Germanic OV-languages takes great care to demonstrate that the involvement of movement is far from straightforward, especially for scrambling of *nominals*
 - Salzmann considers seven potential arguments:

- (i) ‘freezing effects’
 - (ii) locality effects
 - (iii) the ‘Müller-Takano generalisation’
[i.e., the fact that remnant movement cannot involve the same kind of movement as the operation that created the remnant]
 - (iv) parasitic gap licensing
 - (v) connectivity effects (‘reconstruction’)
 - (vi) focus projection
 - (vii) opacity
- Salzmänn dismisses (i), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi), and considers only (vii) to provide reasonably reliable support for movement being involved in scrambling
 - but in my survey article on object shift and scrambling, I show that the extant discussion of (vii) (due to Heck & Himmelreich 2017) presents only a fragment of the full puzzle, and that once the puzzle is complete and properly understood, it probably provides no argument for scrambling-as-movement
- if object shift and/or scrambling involve(s) movement, a question that naturally arises is what might **trigger** such movement
 - a lot of the literature on object shift scrambling has tried to find an answer to the trigger question at the interfaces between syntax and prosody and meaning — **prominence** and **information structure**
 - probably both prosodic and information-structural considerations have a say in the distribution of object shift across the Scandinavian language family; for scrambling, too, it is impossible to dismiss the involvement of prosody (destressing) and information structure (givenness or ‘anti-focus’)
 - but neither prosody nor or information structure can be a *trigger* for object shift and/or scrambling
 - topic- and focus-hood are discourse properties of the referents of syntactic phrases, not properties attributable to the heads of such phrases
 - the phrasal stress rules assign stress to phrases, not to their heads; the prosodic head of a phrase is not necessarily the morphosyntactic head of the phrase
 - it may be best to disavow the idea that movement requires a trigger (see also Chomsky 2015, which marks a sharp U-turn after a decade of trigger-centric minimalist syntax)
 - object shift and scrambling happen when they happen (a) because they *can* (i.e., nothing forbids their application) and (b) because their outputs can profitably be *interpreted* by the post-syntactic components of the grammar
 - note that this conclusion is neutral with respect to the question of whether object shift and/or scrambling involve(s) movement or not
- there is a lot more material in my survey article on object shift and scrambling, to which I refer you for discussion