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語言學及現代語言系

Department of Linguistics and
Modern Languages

Scope, Quantifier Raising, and the Typology of Ditransitive VPs

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Time: 4:30pm - 6:15pm (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)

Venue: Y C Liang Hall, LHC G04 (G/F),
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



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Abstract

Work on the structure of ditransitive VPs in Polish (reported in Grabska & Abels 2022) suggests that indirect objects in both double object structures and to-dative structures are systematically introduced in a position above the direct object. I start by reviewing key facts that offer cross-linguistic support for Grabska & Abels's conclusion. Some of the evidence comes from traditional constituency diagnostics, and some from quantifier scope, which is a revealing structural diagnostic particularly in languages that show rigid surface scope.

Interestingly, even languages with otherwise rigid surface scope (including Mandarin and Vietnamese) allow the phenomenon of inverse linking, that is, the interpretation of a quantifier inside of a DP with scope over the container DP and potentially the entire clause. For example, English examples of inverse linking such as 'Someone on every committee voted for the amendment' were long taken to be a strong argument for covert quantifier raising.

However, later discussions pointed out some problems with the initial characterisation of such examples. It has been argued that DP-internal readings of such structures must be allowed (Heim & Kratzer 1998), that the contained DP always takes scope together with the container DP (Larson's generalization, Larson 1985), and that the overt position of the quantifier within its container DP plays an important part in determining its scope (Huang 1982, Thoms 2023). In the second part of the talk, I will outline a system of quantifier interpretation building on several previous analyses which explains the availability of inverse linking in scopally rigid languages, explains its sensitivity to surface syntax in English, and at the same time explains the core facts of quantifier interpretation, including scope, without relying on covert quantifier raising for scopally rigid languages (contra Huang 1982). This reduces the role of quantifier raising in the theory to just the scope shifting function available in scopally fluid languages like English.

Speaker

Klaus Abels is professor of Linguistics at University College London, where he has worked since 2007. Prior to this, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in 2003 and held positions at the University of Leipzig and the University of Tromsø. He specialises on syntax, semantics, and the syntax-semantics interface and has worked among other things on word order typology, the theory of movement, successive cyclicity and the Williams cycle, ellipsis, negation, and quantifier scope. He was co-editor of the journal *Syntax* between 2013 and 2024 and became founding member of the community owned, open access journal *Syntactic Theory and Research (STAR)* with Suzanne Flynn of MIT in 2024.

All Are Welcome

Enquiries

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