

Semantic Effects of Topicality

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In the talk, we aim at reducing two seemingly unrelated phenomena to one underlying principle: the fact that topic marked indefinites are interpreted in the restrictor of the Q-adverb in adverbially quantified sentences, and the fact that in sentences with two or more quantificational DPs topical indefinites take widest scope.

It is widely assumed that syntax determines the arguments of determiner quantifiers, whereas information structure is the decisive factor in the definition of restrictor and nucleus in constructions with adverbial quantifiers (cf. Rooth, 1985 and Partee, 1991 among many others). Despite many differences, the theories that explain the different interpretations occurring with A-quantifiers as an information structural effect agree that topical/non-focal material is mapped onto the restrictor and focal/non-topical material is mapped onto the nuclear scope.

Concerning D-quantification, it has been observed that the topical status of a quantificational DP also affects its interpretation. Whereas restrictor and nucleus of a D-quantifier are determined widely independent of information structure, the topical status of a quantificational DP still contributes to the truth conditions of the sentence: a topical DP can only receive a strong interpretation and can either be interpreted generically (cf. Kuno, 1972) or 'specifically', i.e. as taking wide scope over all other involved operators (cf. Cresti, 1995).

It is not at all obvious how these observations can be related to each other. In our talk, we want to provide an answer to this question. We will argue that all semantic effects of topicality result from one and the same principle, namely the *Topic Occurrence Principle*: topical material cannot be interpreted in the nuclear scope of a quantifier. This principle suggests itself if quantification is understood as a higher order predication process, where the nucleus naturally corresponds to the predication of the sentence and the restrictor is understood as the object of predication (i.e. the topical part), while the role of the quantificational determiner itself is to specify the degree to which the predicate applies to this object (cf. Löbner 2000). The actual underlying principle could then be rephrased as: '*Topical material resists predicative environment*', which would be a very natural principle.

We will furthermore elaborate on the notion of aboutness-topicality in the context of the proposed principle, i.e. in particular discuss non-straightforward cases of topical indefinites, e.g. indefinites in the scope of event/situation quantifiers or dependent topical indefinites containing a bound pronoun, which we take to be *functional topics*.

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Kuno, Susumu (1972): Functional Sentence Perspective: A Case Study from Japanese and English. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 3:269–336.

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Partee, Barbara (1991): Topic, Focus and Quantification, in: S. Moore & A. Z. Wyner (eds.), *Proceedings from Semantics and Linguistic Theory*, volume 1 of Cornell Working Papers in Linguistics.

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