

To the Discussion of Quantifier Scope in Russian

Svitlana Antonyuk-Yudina
SUNY Stony Brook

Russian has been famously argued to be a language with rigid Quantifier Scope, with the unavailability of covert movement such as “long” (past vP-level) Quantifier Raising (QR) accounted for by the fact that Russian is a discourse-oriented language with overt discourse-driven movements (Ionin 2001). This position has been recently challenged on the basis of empirical evidence suggesting QR past vP-level does in fact exist in Russian (Antonyuk 2006). The current paper offers further support for the claim that Russian is in fact much more like English with respect to the availability of covert QR and concomitant inverse scope readings than is commonly thought to be the case.

The data supporting the claim come from several sources. First, we present novel empirical evidence from VP-ellipsis in Russian that not only argues for the availability of QR in Russian, but also suggests that scope in Russian is constrained by scope economy considerations (as it has been originally argued to be the case in English by Fox). Specifically, as shown in (1a- 1b), the presence of an ellipsed clause disambiguates scope in favor of the surface reading (1b). However, this is not always the case, as (2a) demonstrates: whenever the ellipsed clause is itself ambiguous, the antecedent clause is ambiguous as well; the lack of ambiguity in the ellipsis-containing clause (2b) precludes the antecedent clause from being interpreted as ambiguous. This paradigm thus supports Fox’s (1993) findings for English: the requirement on parallelism interacts with the Scope Economy in ways that straightforwardly account for the presence/absence of scope ambiguity in sentences with VP ellipsis; QP scope in Russian is thus shown to operate in ways quite similar to those in English.

- (1) a. *Kakoj-to malčik potseloval každuju devočku*
some boy_{NOM} kissed every girl_{ACC}
“Some boy kissed every girl” (some > every, every > some)
- b. *Kakoj-to malčik potseloval každuju devočku, a Vanja–tol’ko odnu/net.*
Some boy kissed every girl_{ACC} but Vania just one_{ACC}/not
“Some boy kissed every girl but Vania (kissed) just one/but Vania didn’t”
(some > every, *every > some)
- (2) a. *Kakoj-to malčik vosxiščaetsja každym učitelem i kakaja-to devočka tože*
some boy admires every teacher and some girl too
“Some boy admires every teacher and some girl does, too”
(some > every, every > some)
- b. *Kakoj-to malčik vosxišaetsia každym učitelem i každaja devočka tože*
some boy admires every teacher and every girl too
“Some boy admires every teacher and every girl does, too”
(some > every, *every > some)

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