

## On the selective wh-island effect

Željko Bošković

zeljko.boskovic@uconn.edu

University of Connecticut

Rudin (1988) notes Bulgarian voids the wh-island effect in some contexts, tying this to the possibility of multiple wh-fronting (MWF) in Bulgarian: since Bulgarian independently allows multiply filled whSpecCPs, a wh-phrase in Bulgarian can pass through a filled whSpecCP. Bošković (2003) argues against Rudin's analysis on account of the fact that in several contexts Bulgarian is sensitive to wh-islands, which is unexpected under Rudin's analysis. However, just like Rudin fails to provide an account of the contexts where Bulgarian exhibits wh-island sensitivity, Bošković fails to provide an account of the contexts where the wh-island effect is voided in Bulgarian, merely concluding that Bulgarian wh-phrases are not allowed to freely pass through filled whSpecCPs. This paper provides an account of the selective wh-island effect (SWE) in Bulgarian based on a new crosslinguistic generalization regarding SWE, where a particular type of D plays a crucial role in the phenomenon.

Bulgarian allows extraction out of wh-islands with argument relatives and questioning of D-linked wh-phrases, but disallows it with questioning of non-D-linked wh-phrases and quite generally with adjunct extraction. Where it allows extraction out of wh-islands, it also allows it out of multiple wh-islands (in contrast to, e.g. Italian, where such extraction is never allowed and which I argue belongs to a different language type).

- (1) a. Vidjah edna kniga, kojato<sub>i</sub> se čudja koj znae koj prodava t<sub>i</sub>.  
'I saw a book which I wonder who knows who sells.'
- b. \*Kakvo<sub>i</sub> se čudiš koj znae koj prodava t<sub>i</sub>?  
'What do you wonder who knows who sells?'
- c. Koja ot tezi knigi<sub>i</sub> se čudiš koj znae koj prodava t<sub>i</sub>?  
'Which of these books do you wonder who knows who sells?'
- d. \*\*pričinata, poradi kojato<sub>i</sub> [Ivan znae dali Boris e zaminal t<sub>i</sub>]  
'the reason for which Ivan knows whether Boris left'
- e. \*\*Zašto/poradi kakva pričina znae [dali Boris e zaminal t<sub>i</sub>]?  
'Why/for which reason does he know whether Boris left?'

I show Swedish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Romanian, Hebrew, and Albanian also display the SWE paradigm. As noted above, Rudin argued that the reason for the different behavior of Bulgarian and English regarding wh-islands is the availability of MWF in Bulgarian. But this cannot be right given that only Romanian has MWF among SWE languages. There is, however, something SWE languages have in common. They all have affixal articles. This leads me to posit (2).

- (2) The SWE paradigm is a property of languages with affixal articles.

I also propose an account of (2) based on Chomsky's (2000) Activation Condition, which requires Z to have an uninterpretable (*u*) feature to be visible for movement. Under this approach only a wh-phrase with a *u*WH feature can undergo wh-movement. The feature is checked off as a reflex of Q-feature checking between an interrogative C and a wh-phrase and movement of the latter to the interrogative C (driven by the EPP property of the C). As a result, a wh-phrase that moves to an interrogative SpecCP cannot undergo further wh-movement. (3) gives the relevant feature specifications (*u* indicates uninterpretable and *i* interpretable features).

- (3) whC ..... wh-phrase  
(*u*Q, EPP) (iQ, *u*WH)

The crucial ingredient of my account is the proposal, which follows a claim made in Lasnik (1999), that an affix gets to share morphological features of its host as a result of affixation. Applied to the case in question, an affixal article gets to share the morphological features of the element it is affixed to. I will outline here how this analysis captures the data in (1a-c). Following Abney (1987)/Postal (1966) I assume simple *wh*-pronouns are located in D. Furthermore, I assume D-linked *wh*-phrases have a special D-linking D, which is responsible for the special D-linking semantics. Relatives also have a special relativizing D, which is not a radical step to take given well-known special properties of relatives (e.g. regarding pied-piping). The upshot of this is that in non-D-linking questions, the *wh*-word is the D-element (in fact, the only D element), while in D-linking questions and relatives, the *wh*-element is merged with a D-linking/relativizing D. This is in fact obvious in Albanian, where an overt definite article (in bold) is suffixed to relative and D-linked *wh*-phrases (but not to non-D-linked *wh*-phrases).

- (4) a. Lexova një libër të cil-**in** pyes veten se kush e mori në bibliotekë.  
 ‘I read a book which I ask myself who got from the library.’  
 b. Cil-**ët** libra pyet veten se kush shet?  
 ‘Which books do you ask yourself who sells?’  
 c. cf. \*Çfarë pyet veten se kush shet?  
 ‘What do you ask yourself who sells?’

I argue a null definite article undergoes the same type of affixation with relative and D-linked *wh*-phrases when there is no overt article in SWE languages. The D thus undergoes affixation to the *wh*-phrase with relative/D-linked *wh*-phrases, sharing the features of the *wh*-phrase as a result of the affixation. There are then two *uWH* features in relative/D-linked *wh*-phrases in SWE languages: one in the *wh*-phrase and one in the D. When a relative/D-linked *wh*-phrase moves to a *whSpecCP* in SWE languages, the movement deletes one of the *uWH*s, in particular, the *uWH* of the *wh*-phrase as a reflex of feature checking with/movement to the *whC*. However, the whole complex *wh*-phrase is still active due to the presence of *uWH* on the D, which means the *wh*-phrase can move away from the interrogative *SpecCP* (provided it leaves behind a filled *SpecCP*, since empty interrogative *SpecCP*s are shown to be independently ruled out). The escape hatch from the *wh*-island effect is unavailable in non-relative/non-D-linking cases like (1b). Regarding Chomsky’s reflex feature checking, I argue reflex feature checking is forced only in configuration (5a), where *iF* and *uF* reside in the same element, not in (5b), where different parts of LP are involved in the checking, the situation which corresponds to the case where *uWH* on D activates *iQ* of the *wh*-phrase (reflex feature checking is possible but not forced in (5b)). This enables *wh*-phrases in SWE languages to move out of multiple *wh*-islands.

- (5) a. X     Y  
       (*uF*) (*iF*, *uK*)  
 b. X    [<sub>LP</sub> Y     Z]  
       (*uF*)    (*iF*)    (*uK*)

In the paper I also provide an account of (1d-f) and discuss the consequences of the above proposals for the proper analysis of MWF.

## References

- ABNEY, S. 1987. *The English noun phrase in its sentential aspect*. MIT thesis.  
 BOŠKOVIĆ, Ž. 2003. On *wh*-islands and obligatory *wh*-movement contexts in South Slavic. In *Multiple wh-fronting*, ed. C. Boeckx and K. Grohmann, John Benjamins.  
 CHOMSKY, N. 2000. Minimalist inquiries. In *Step by step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*, ed. R. Martin et al., MIT Press.  
 LASNIK, H. 1999. *Minimalist analysis*, Blackwell.  
 POSTAL, P. 1966. On so-called pronouns in English. *Monograph on Language and Linguistics* 19.  
 RUDIN, Catherine. 1988. On multiple questions and multiple *wh*-fronting. *NLLT* 6.