A distributed deletion account of Q-Float in West Ulster English

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<u>Analysis</u>: The novel approach to successive-cyclic A'-movement (Blümel 2012, Chomsky 2013) represents a theoretical step forward in that (a) the Extension Condition is obeyed, in contrast to Takahashi (1994) and Boeckx (2003); (b) look-ahead is avoided, in contrast to approaches that derive the pattern by stipulated movement-driving features on the moving element (Bošković 2007, Zeijlstra 2012); and (c) the stipulative notion specifier has no place in it, i.e. it concords with the simplest conception of Merge. It solves the movement trigger problem in that $\{XP, YP\}=\alpha$ structures force vacating one member to render α labellable. From this perspective, the question ceases to be "What drives movement?", but rather becomes: "What stops it?", and special conditions (such as AGREEplus shared features (Chomsky 2013)) have been claimed to provide an answer.

<u>Known Variation as a Problem</u>: Despite the elegance of the analysis, pieces of empirical evidence advanced in favor of intermediate touch-down points raise questions. As is well-known, West Ulster English allows Q-float in intermediate SPEC-CP positions under long-distance A'-extraction, unlike standard varieties of English:

1) **What** did he say **all** (that) he wanted? ^{OK}*WestUlster English/*Standard English*

McCloskey (2000:59ff.) suggests a stranding account with a complex DP, a "host" DP headed by the quantifier – dubbed DP1 for exposition – and the WH-DP, called DP2 here:

2) $[_{DP1} [_{DP2}what] [_{D'}D1=all\ t_{DP2}]]$

Q-float in intermediate positions then involves movement of DP1 to SPEC-CP1 and subsequent subextraction of DP2 towards higher CP-SPEC-positions, stranding D1=*all* to yield the surface distributional profile (cf. McCloskey 2000:62):

3) $[_{CP2} [_{DP2}what] [C2 \dots [_{CP1} [_{DP1} t'_{DP2} [_{D'} D1=all\ t_{DP2}]] [C1 \dots t_{DP1}]]]]$

A labelling-based account of successive-cyclic A'-movement raises the question how CP1 gets its label in the first place: the non-copy D1=*all* is the head of the movement chain and thus is expected to be labelling-visible: the labelling algorithm cannot assign $\{CP1, DP1\}$ the category CP1, because the syntactically stranded DP1 is an equally available candidate. A stranding account thus makesthe wrong prediction that either the structure is not interpretable or that Q-float shouldn't be possible.

<u>An Interface Solution</u>: This paper suggests that the labelling-account can be retained if at least a Distributed Deletion (DD) (Fanselow and Cavar 2002) is adopted for Q-float. Syntactically and cross-dialectally, the complex DP is compelledto move **in full** as required by labelling. Phonologically and dialect-specifically, pronunciation of the relevant material superficially yields a discontinuous pattern in West Ulster English:

4) $[_{CP2} [_{DP}what~~all~~] [C2 \dots [_{CP1}[_{DP}~~what~~ all]] [C1 \dots t_{DP1}]]]]$

Fanselow and Cavar (2002: 15) propose a pragmatic constraint that yields DD whenever conflicting grammatical requirements force pronunciation in different positions: "XP bears a feature f1 that requires that XP be overtly realized in position A, and an additional feature f2 that forces XP into position B. Then XP is split up." I argue that phonological factors that enter into Q-float (Rochman 2005) lend further support for a DD-approach in that the (language-specific) features like [+contrast] that trigger DDin these cases are empirically well-motivated.

I argue that the current approach is preferable in that(a)the minimally needed copies,(b) phonological factors and (c) DD *alone* suffice to capture Q-float. No additional syntactic idiosyncrasy is needed as in astranding account: The latterexhibits an analytical redundancy in that it employsthe syntactic mechanism of subextractionin addition to phonological factors to account for the distribution of floating quantifiers.

References

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