Multidominance, ellipsis, and quantifier scope
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1   Empirical domain and theoretical scope

This dissertation provides a novel perspective on the interaction between quantifier scope and ellipsis. On the empirical side, it investigates the scopal behavior of English negative indefinites, modals, and quantified phrases in ellipsis.

Firstly, the present dissertation investigates previously undiscussed data concerning the scope possibilities of negative indefinites in ellipsis. One of the crucial observations is that a negative indefinite in object position cannot scope out of a verbal ellipsis site (for instance, above a modal). Consider the contrast in (1)-(2):

(1)   Quentin Tarantino can offer no help. $(\neg > can, {}^{\%} can > \neg)$

(2)   Q: Who can offer no help?
       A: ${}^{\%}$ Quentin Tarantino can ⟨ ~~offer no help~~ ⟩. $(* \neg > can, {}^{\%} can > \neg)$

While the negative indefinite can either scope above or below the modal *can* in a non-elliptical clause (cf. (1)), it cannot scope over the modal if it is contained in a verbal ellipsis site (cf. (2)).

Although negative indefinites and quantificational DPs are often considered two sides of the same coin, their scopal behavior in ellipsis seems to indicate otherwise. On the basis of data from the literature and new observations, it is shown that Quantifier Raising (QR) of a quantificational object (for instance, across a modal) can escape a verbal ellipsis site. Consider the sentences in (3) and (4):

(3)   [Suppose someone wants to give you a present, gives you a list, and says:]

You can order every item on the list.

Reading 1:   The person is very generous; you are allowed to order all items on the list. (*can* > ∀)

Reading 2:   You will receive a present, but the present has to be one of the items on the list. For every item that is on the list, though, you are allowed to choose it. That is, you are allowed to choose whatever item you like from the list. (∀ > *can*)

(4)   [Suppose someone wants to give you and John a present, gives you a list, and says:]

You can order every item on the list and John can too.

To the extent that the inverse scope reading (∀ > *can*) is available in the non-elliptical sentence in (3) for my informants, it is also available in the elliptical counterpart in (4). As this inverse scope is the result of an object QP undergoing QR to a position above the modal, this means that QR of the object QP is able to escape a verbal ellipsis site (to a position above the licensing modal).

This dissertation investigates these scopal patterns in ellipsis, most of which have gone hitherto unnoticed. The primary empirical goal of this dissertation is to answer the two main research questions in (5):

(5)   a.   Why does ellipsis block high scope of object negative indefinites?

b.   Why is QR of a quantified object out of an ellipsis site allowed?

The research question in (5)a also raises the following additional research questions, which will be addressed in this dissertation:

(6)   a.   If verbal ellipsis is licensed by a modal, do negative indefinites always show the same scopal possibilities when this modal is deontic, epistemic, or dynamic? If so/not, why (not)?

b.   Is it possible for a negative polarity item *any* to antecede the ellipsis of a negative indefinite? If so/not, why (not)?

This dissertation presents a unified account of why negative indefinites in object positions cannot scope out of a verbal ellipsis site, while quantificational objects can undergo QR out of a verbal ellipsis site.

It is argued that both English negative indefinites and quantificational phrases

decompose into two independent elements. Their formation is the result of a morphological process, which I refer to as Fusion Under Adjacency (FUA). An analysis of English negative indefinites that involves decomposition and fusion might seem surprising at first sight, as the two components of a negative indefinite (sentential negation and an indefinite determiner) are not obviously string adjacent. I propose that the locality/adjacency required for fusion of the negation and the indefinite is established under remerge (multidominance), in combination with cyclic Spell-Out/linearization. Similarly, two components of a quantified determiner – a quantificational operator and the determiner heading its restriction – fuse under adjacency in a multidominant, cyclic model of the grammar.

The main claim of this dissertation is that the PF-process of ellipsis can bleed the formation of negative indefinites. I consider ellipsis to be PF-phenomenon that involves the non-pronunciation of terminal elements and the deletion of linearization statements. This dissertation argues that, given that ellipsis is a PF-process, it can block the morphological process of Fusion Under Adjacency (at PF) in the formation of a negative indefinite. I take (the licensing of) ellipsis to occur in the course of the derivation: an ellipsis site is shipped off to PF as soon as the licensing head is merged. I propose that the timing of FUA plays a crucial role: it has to happen before the ellipsis licensor merges. If FUA does not take place before merger of the licensor, the formation of the negative indefinite is bled. The lack of a blocking effect of ellipsis in QR (which also involves FUA) is accounted for by the fact that QR always targets the vP-periphery. Because QR is always short, FUA always takes place before the ellipsis licensor is merged, explaining why ellipsis never blocks QR.

As such, in addition to providing an account for the scopal behavior of quantificational elements in ellipsis, this dissertation also sheds new light on the syntax-to-PF mapping. The theoretical aim of the present dissertation is to contribute to our understanding of the transfer of multidominant phrase markers – built in narrow syntax – to PF for (non-) pronunciation in a model that assumes cyclic Spell-Out/linearization and derivational ellipsis (i.e. a cyclic view on the syntax-to-PF-mapping).

2   Outline of the dissertation

Chapter 2
Chapter two establishes the theoretical foundations of the dissertation. It is argued that a syntactic object can be remerged, which results in this object having two mothers (i.e. multidominance). This chapter also discusses how multidominant structures are linearized in a cyclic Spell-Out/linearization model of the grammar. Finally, it introduces the PF-phenomenon of ellipsis, (the licensing of) which is considered to take place in the course of the derivation.

Chapter 3
After having established the theoretical base, this dissertation moves on to a detailed study of the scopal behavior of English negative indefinites in clausal and verbal ellipsis. Chapter three first introduces two empirical generalizations, establishing that verbal ellipsis blocks high-scoping negative indefinites (for instance, scoping above a deontic modal), while clausal ellipsis does not. This chapter presents an analysis of negative indefinites and their interaction with verbal and clausal ellipsis in the multidominant, cyclic framework developed in chapter two. It is argued that English negative indefinites consist of two subparts, sentential negation and an indefinite determiner, which undergo Fusion Under Adjacency. The PF-process of ellipsis, (the marking of) which occurs in the course of the derivation, can bleed this morphological process.

Chapter 4
Chapter four presents an extensive empirical overview of the interaction between English epistemic and dynamic modals, negative indefinites, and verbal ellipsis. It is shown that only a narrow scope reading is available for an object negative indefinite in verbal ellipsis licensed by an epistemic or dynamic modal (irrespective of its scopal possibilities in a non-elliptical clause), confirming the findings of chapter three. The account developed in chapter three straightforwardly carries over to verbal ellipsis licensed by epistemic and dynamic modals.

  When an epistemic modal co-occurs with an aspectual auxiliary in verbal ellipsis, however, the negative indefinite may not only have a narrow scope reading: it may also scope high, above the epistemic modal. Similarly, when a dynamic modal does not license ellipsis, but is part of a verbal ellipsis site licensed by *do,* all scopal possibilities become available. In this chapter, it will be argued that the former observation is accounted for if the epistemic modal and the aspectual auxiliary co-license verbal ellipsis. This co-licensing only occurs after movement of the epistemic

modal. The latter observation is shown to follow from the account developed in chapter three if the dynamic modals under scrutiny involve a biclausal structure.

Chapter 5

Chapter five first presents data showing that Quantifier Raising can escape a verbal ellipsis site in English. This chapter provides an analysis of this observation in the cyclic, multidominant framework developed in this dissertation. QR is proposed to be the result of remerge of the NP-part of a quantificational phrase and Fusion between two adjacent heads, the quantificational operator and the head of its restriction. This chapter argues that verbal ellipsis does not block QR because QR always targets vP, so that Fusion Under Adjacency always occurs before the ellipsis licensing head is merged.

Chapter 6

The final chapter summarizes the dissertation, concludes and formulates suggestions for further research.