Reviews
Comptes rendus

Luis López. 2012. *Indefinite objects: Scrambling, choice functions, and differential marking.* In the series *Linguistic Inquiry Monographs* 63. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp. xi + 184. US$30.00 (softcover).

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The monograph under review introduces a new approach to the study of indefinite noun phrases at the syntax–semantics interface. In the Preface, the author outlines the purpose of his book — to provide a synthesis of three different approaches to the study of the polyvalent behaviour of indefinite objects. According to the first approach (Diesing 1992) a syntactic configuration maps onto a semantic configuration. In the second, the Differential Object Marking (DOM) approach, there is a link between certain morphemes (e.g., the particle *a* in Spanish) and a specific interpretation. The third (and purely semantic) approach uses choice functions to account for the wide scope readings of indefinite nouns. The synthesis put forth in this monograph serves as a basis for a new proposal that can be formulated as: "DOM and wide scope of indefinites entail scrambling" (p. x). A wide range of data from a variety of mainly Indo-European languages is drawn upon. The author also claims that a major contribution of this work consists in his developing a "more nuanced view of the syntax–semantics interface" (p. x) by arguing, contra Diesing (1992), that "there is no rigid 'syntactic position–semantic interpretation' mapping" (p. x).

In chapter 1, "Introduction: Remarks on the grammar of indefinite objects", the author introduces some data from English and Spanish and shows that: (a) Spanish objects marked with what he calls "accusative A" (p. 1) can (but do not have to) be specific, while unmarked objects cannot be; (b) the accusative particle *a* also has the property of widening scope; and, (c) if the noun in the object position appears with a strong quantifier (preceded by the particle *a* without which the structure would be ungrammatical), wide scope is then disallowed. Next, Diesing's (1992) approach is discussed, according to which weak indefinites must appear within the VP at LF, while strong ones are quantifiers that scramble out of VP into TP. Within this configuration, predicate-internal (or in-situ) indefinites are mapped onto a nuclear scope and are interpreted as nonspecific, whereas scrambled indefinites are mapped onto a restrictive clause and are interpreted as specific or generic. Next, the author tackles the question of the modes of semantic composition that may affect indefinites and argues that the syntactic position of indefinites is crucial. He then introduces the proposal that indefinite objects which stay in-situ can only be composed by the process

known as Restrict, whereas the scrambled indefinites (that are not to be identified with quantifier raising) can only be interpreted by choice functions.

The rest of chapter 1 is dedicated to the discussion of different instances of DOM in Spanish and Maori showing that: (a) specific readings of marked objects are optional; (b) marked objects are incompatible with existential and possessor predicates; and (c) the scale approach to DOM (Aissen 2003, among others) cannot account for the phenomena mentioned above or the obligatoriness of the "accusative A" in small clauses, clause union, and object control.

In chapter 2, "Scrambling and differential object marking", it is argued that indefinite objects are characterized by a special syntax and that DOM morphology realizes a particular syntactic configuration. The author argues that indefinite objects marked with accusative A in Spanish are short-scrambled to an intermediate position between the initial Merge position of the IO and that of the EA (external argument) and can be merged as a KP. Meanwhile, unmarked DPs are smaller nominal phrases (i.e., smaller than KP) whose highest functional head incorporates into V, which in turn incorporates into v so that the case requirement of these in-situ nominals is satisfied. KP is probed by v, raises to its specifier and receives ACC case from it. K may be spelled out as accusative A if the nominal associated with this Vocabulary Item has certain requisite features such as animacy, and so on. Finally, the author discusses the question of incorporation and makes several observations that lead him to conclude that Niuean incorporated objects (Massam 2001) are structurally equivalent to the Spanish unmarked objects and that it is hard "to draw a line between phenomena that are clearly cases of 'incorporation' and phenomena that clearly are not" (p. 67).

The main objective of chapter 3, "Scrambling and semantic composition", is to demonstrate that certain processes of semantic composition lead to the optional specific interpretations of indefinite DPs. Building on his findings and proposals in chapters 1 and 2, the author develops a model according to which short scrambling conditions the application of a choice function (that allows for wide and intermediate scopes) to marked indefinite objects. K is associated with the choice function variable f (p. 83) responsible for shifting the type of indefinite DPs. KP merged as the complement of V raises out of VP to receive Case and is of type <e>. As for the in-situ objects, they are of type <e,t>, incorporate into V, and are interpreted by means of Restrict (and therefore take narrow scope).

While in chapters 2 and 3 the author draws mainly on data from Spanish, chapter 4, "Crosslinguistic predictions", is dedicated to testing the results of the study against data from languages with specific marked objects and nonspecific unmarked objects as well as languages that do not have overtly marked objects, but show scrambling. The languages used for this purpose are Persian, Hindi, Romanian, Kiswahili, and German. At the end of the chapter, the results are summarized and interpretations are provided. In general, the predictions of the author are confirmed.

While the book largely achieves its goals, there are some minor issues and inexactitudes as well as problematic assumptions about certain data. Let me mention a few examples. On page 1, the author introduces the term "accusative A" without providing a brief explanation of why he prefers to treat the Spanish pre-nominal particle *a* as "Accusative" rather than "Dative", as some linguists have done. A brief

note referring the reader to p. 49 (Chapter 2, Sections 2.2.6 and 2.3) would be very helpful, where a detailed analysis of this animate object marking (as a morphological expression of the head K) is provided. The author fails to discuss one more logically possible configuration ruled out by Diesing's Mapping Hypothesis (p. 5) that could be listed under (13f), being the opposite of (13e), albeit similar to the undocumented (13b): [±specific] in the restrictor and [+specific] in the nuclear scope. It is not clear why he is silent on this possibility.

One could also take issue with the assumption that IOs (indirect objects) do not incorporate (p. 50), since it depends on the type of analysis one adopts (see also Bilous 2011:307 about "differential marking of IOs"). In French, for example, the seemingly structural DO of the verb *aider* can be interpreted as an incorporated IO, given that, in German and Slavic, this verb selects an IO receiving DAT case and the thematic role of Beneficiary (see also Bilous 2011: 309). Similarly, on page 62, the object in (69a: *siguió a la sequía*) does not receive ACC case, but a PREP (prepositional) case (syncretized with DAT case). The morpheme *a* is better analyzed as a preposition here, not as a particle or clitic. This verb assigns the same case in German (e.g., *folgen* + DO.DAT) and, in Ukrainian, both possibilities are available: PREP and DAT case: *sliduvaty* + DO.DAT/*za*[PREP] + noun.INSTR).

As to the Spanish particle or clitic *a*, in my view, it represents an instance of what I call "pseudo-DOM" (and crosslinguistic observations on p. 59 contribute somewhat to this belief). This particle is in the process of undergoing a grammatical reanalysis. Once this reanalysis is over and it becomes responsible for the realization of a certain semantic feature, then it will become a clear instance of DOM, which in languages with rich case morphology represents any case other than ACC. As for the ACC case, it is a structural case that is part of a "universal default configuration" and checked as an uninterpretable feature under Spec-TrP (TrP being Transitivity Phrase) (Bilous 2011:149, 291, 302). Under this approach DOs can be preceded by a null P that may be spelled out in some languages as a pre-nominal morpheme that looks like an instance of DOM.

To conclude, this is a very well written and unique monograph, which deals with a set of complex phenomena and provides very interesting accounts for them. The book is highly recommended for those who specialize in the syntax–semantics interface and are interested in issues related to the phenomena of DOM, morphosyntactic realizations of different semantic features, and scrambling.

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