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THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 08/02/2024
16:15-17:45
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Joint work with Einar Freyr Sigurðsson

https://tau-ac-il.zoom.us/j/83976149168?pwd=TE95S2Fnc1o2b3Z2bVcxR1JCaE53Zz09

Coordination of Verbs in Icelandic

Icelandic verb coordination has been taken to provide evidence that heads can be coordinated directly, without any phrasal projections in the conjuncts.

(1) $[_{TP}$ Jón $[[_V$ keypti $]$ og $[_V$ borðaði $]]_i$ $[_{VP}$ t_i matinn $]]$.
        $[_{TP}$ John.NOM $[[_V$ bought $]$ and $[_V$ ate $]]_i$ $[_{VP}$ t_i food.the.ACC $]]$
        'John bought and ate the food.'

The argument is that coordinated verbs can undergo T-to-C movement, which is generally considered to be head-movement to a head position.

(2) $[_{CP}$ $[_C$ keypti og   borðaði $]_i$ $[_{TP}$ Jón t_i $[_{VP}$ t_i matinn $]]]$?
        $[_{CP}$ $[_C$ bought and ate $]_i$ $[_{TP}$ John.NOM t_i $[_{VP}$ t_i food.the.ACC $]]]$
        'Did John buy and eat the food?'

However, the syntax of Icelandic verb coordination is fairly understudied, and it turns out that a closer scrutiny of Icelandic verb coordination reveals fairly strong arguments against a head coordination analysis. For one example, in the presence of a single clausal negation marker, only the second verb is interpreted under the scope of negation.

(3) $[_{TP}$ Jón $[_T$ keypti og   borðaði $]$ $[_{NegP}$ ekki $[_{VP}$ ⟨keypti og borðaði⟩ matinn $]]]$.
        $[_{TP}$ Jón $[_T$ bought and ate $]$ $[_{NegP}$ not $[_{VP}$ ⟨bought and ate⟩   food.the $]]]$
        = 'John bought and didn't eat the food.'
        ≠ 'John didn't buy and eat the food.'

This is problematic for the head coordination analysis, where both verbs would be expected to be under the scope of negation. For every property that a head coordination analysis is supposed to explain, there are unambiguously phrasal constructions that have those properties as well. The mechanisms needed to explain the phrasal cases would also explain that apparent head coordination cases.
These facts seem to point toward an analysis similar to what has been proposed for coordination of wh-words, where full CPs are coordinated, and the shared material is silent (either by ellipsis or multi-dominance).

(4) $[_{CP}$ What ~~did Mary eat~~ $]$ and $[_{CP}$ where did Mary eat $]$

We sketch out the challenges and prospects of such an analysis, including the possibility of accounting for a number of puzzling properties of verb coordination, as well as a number of disparate puzzles that arise in other domains, including Coordinate Object Drop, Stylistic Fronting, Closest Conjunct Agreement, Stripping and Gapping.

Click here to see the colloquium program.