Intermediate landing sites by Sjef Barbiers

1. The problem

In the standard view on A-bar movement (Chomsky 1981), extraction from embedded CP occurs in two steps: first, the extracted constituent moves to embedded SpecCP; subsequently, it moves to the next SpecCP higher up in one fell swoop. The evidence for embedded SpecCP as an intermediate landing site is only indirect. When some constituent is in the embedded SpecCP, this blocks extraction of another constituent from the same CP. In addition, in some languages extraction triggers the occurrence of a discourse marker, complementizer (e.g. Irish). However, direct evidence for movement via embedded SpecCP is not available, as it is not possible to strand a part of a moved constituent in an embedded SpecCP.

Less standard is the view in Chomsky (1986: 29), that long extraction obligatorily takes place via two intermediate positions: the embedded SpecCP and another intermediate landing site in the middle field of the dominating clause. The existence of the second intermediate landing site follows from barriers theory in which matrix VP is a barrier which can only be voided by intermediate adjunction of the moved constituent to this VP. As far as I know, no evidence has been provided for intermediate adjunction. This squib presents a set of new data strongly suggesting that long A-bar movement in Dutch proceeds via a position in the middle field of the dominating clause, but not via the embedded SpecCP.

2. Stranding in intermediate positions

Dutch has the following material in which a moved constituent is stranded: the well-known wat voor-split construction (1), the proposition stranding construction (2), and the less well-known focus particle stranding construction (3); Barbiers 1995.

(1) Wat had je gedacht dat Jan [t voor boeken] zou lezen?
(2) Waar, had je dan [t mee], gedacht/ontzond [dat j de vis zou eten]?
(3) a. [EEN book], had ik [maar t], gedacht/ontzond [dat Jan [en] zou lezen]]
   b. Een student had gedacht [dat Jan maar zou werken]
   c. Een student had gedacht [dat Jan maar zou werken] one student had thought that Jan just would work

The stranding in (1) and (2) is self-evident. As for stranding of focus particles, the minimal pair in (3) shows that a focus particle can only be interpreted as modifying the numeral of a noun phrase in the matrix clause if this noun phrase originates in the embedded clause. As is argued in Barbiers (1995), in such cases the focus particle must be adjacent to the base position of the extracted noun phrase.

It is well-known that stranding of material in embedded SpecCP is impossible:

(4) a. Wat had je dan gedacht [dat Jan [t voor boeken] zou lezen]]
   b. Waar, had je dan gedacht [dat Jan [t mee], [en] zou lezen]]
   c. [EEN book], had ik [maar t], [en] zou lezen]

The data in (1)–(4) (it might be concluded that) stranding is possible only in base- (or A-) positions. However, the novel data in (5a–c) show that this cannot be the right generalization. Stranding in the middle field of the matrix clause is possible when a verb takes a propositional complement (CP)-complements typically occurring with verbs like think, hope, expect, even though this clearly is not the base position of the moved constituents. It cannot be their base-position because verbs like think do not take DP-arguments or with-PP-arguments. The sentence in (5d) is added to show that maar ‘only’ can only modify EEN book ‘one book’ if the latter is extracted from the embedded clause. For some speakers, (5d) is even ungrammatical, which confirms that the possibility to have maar ‘only’ in the middle field as in (5c) depends on the presence of the proposed constituent.

(5) a. Wat, had jij dan [t voor boeken, [en] gedacht/ontzond [dat j je zou lezen]]?
b. Waar, had jij dan [t mee], [en] gedacht/ontzond [dat j de vis zou eten, zou zien]]?
c. [EEN book], had ik [maar t], gedacht/ontzond [dat Jan [en] zou lezen]]
   d. had maar [maar, gedacht [dat Jan EEN book zou lezen]]
   e. I had thought/heard the book that John would read
   f. I had thought/heard what John would read

On the other hand, focalization by moving a constituent into the middle field of the matrix clause is possible. This is found in a construction in (5) never allow embedded wh.

(6) a. Ik had gedacht/gehoopt [het boek], [dat Jan [en] zou lezen]]
   b. Ik had gedacht/gehoopt [dat wat], [dat Jan [en] zou lezen]]
   c. I had thought/heard the book that John would read
   d. I had thought/heard what John would read

I would like to argue that the answers in (7) involve reduced embedded finite clauses. The pronoun in (7a) has nominative case, which is only available for the subject of a finite clause. Since John in principle A, has no visible antecedent within the clause, but this does not give rise to ungrammaticality. There must be a hidden antecedent, since Dutch zichzelf cannot be a logophor (cf. Vanden Wyngaerd 1994, Varela 1995, Barbiers to appear a). The locative PP in (7c) does not modify the verb think, but the event denoted by give his talk. Note incidentally that something similar holds for the construction John prefers through the woods discussed by Neeleman (1997) as evidence for the existence of a special type of argument of category PP. It is therefore plausible that those two should occur in a special kind of PP but the remnant of a rephrased verbal constituent.

I propose the structure in (8) for LAS: a constituent moves into the middle field of the higher clause and the embedded CP is subsequently deleted at PF.

(7) a. Wie denkt/denk je dat Jan zijn zaakje zal noemen?
   b. Wie denkt/denk je dat Jan zijn zaakje zal noemen?
   c. Jan denkt/denk je dat Jan zijn zaakje zal noemen?
   d. Jan denkt/denk je dat Jan zijn zaakje zal noemen?

binding (8) takes place under reconstruction of the anaphor into its base position.

Next to reconstruction there are other indications that movement is involved in LAS, since it is only possible with propositional CPs, not with factive CPs (9a–d), and it is also impossible with CPs that are islands, such as CPs contained in DPs (10a) and CP-adjuncts (10b).

(9) John says that Pete will come and fix something.
   a. en ik denk/hoop/meen/geloof dat Pete zal komen
   b. en ik denk/hoop/meen/geloof dat Pete zal komen
   c. *en ik weet/onthou/verklap de goeie
   d. *en ik weet/onthou/verklap de goeie

LAS is not the same construction as sluicing or gap-filling unlike LAS, the latter constructions are possible with factives:

(10) a. Piet komt iets repareren en ik weet wat
   b. Piet komt iets repareren en ik weet wat
   c. Piet komt iets repareren en ik weet wat
   d. Piet komt iets repareren en ik weet wat

As Zwart (1995: 200) notes, the construction in (12) can be observed in colloquial Dutch, even though some speakers do not accept it. Those who accept the construction need a strong focus on the moved constituent. In English, PP-deletion seems to be obligatory with LAS: *I had thought in the garden that the party would be... I had thought a book that John would buy.

The sentences in (12) clearly show that the landing site is not in the embedded clause, but in the middle field of the matrix clause. They further show that the LAS-construction cannot be analyzed as involving parentheticals.

As we have seen in (8), reconstruction of the moved constituent is possible. The moved constituent gives rise to Weak Cross Over effects (13a), and movement to this position cannot be triggered by case. There is sufficient reason, then, to conclude that the landing site in the matrix middle field is an A-bar position. This A-bar position has in common with matrix SpecCP that it is only accessible to constituents that can bear focus (13b,c). Finally, if the A-bar position in the middle field is filled, this gives rise to subjecacy effects (13d).

(12) a. *Ik had [EEN book], gedacht [dat Jan [t zou kopen]]
   b. *Ik had [one book that John would buy]
   c. *Ik had [in de TUIN, gedacht [dat het fietse t zoen]]

I had in the garden hoped that the party would be...

4. Conclusion

The situation may now be characterized as follows. In Dutch, “embedded SpecCP” is on the wrong side of the matrix V, since there is an (intermediate) landing site for A’-movement preceding matrix V, but no such position following matrix V. The standard view on extraction from CP-complement is therefore in need of revision. The facts are at least in Dutch embedded SpecCP does not project in long extraction constructions. In Barbiers (to appear b.), I explain why this is the case, and I give a further characterization of the landing site of LAS as the Spec of a functional projection previously thought to be in the...
In English, the situation is more complicated. As opposed to Dutch, LAS in English is possible only if the embedded clause is deleted. Moreover, the possibility of LAS in English leads to the expectation that intermediate stranding should be possible in English as well. However, the only stranding test applicable to English yields ungrammatical results: *This knife I had thought with that John would cut the bread. I leave these differences between English and Dutch for future research.

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References


