Breaking chains: a parenthetical analysis of the German w...w-copy construction

Andrew Murphy

I will argue that the w...w-copy construction (CC) (1a) is in fact not, as widely assumed (Fanselow & Mahajan 2000), an extraction structure with glaubst du as a matrix clause (with an overt intermediate copy), but rather involves insertion of a V1-parenthetical (Reis 1995).

(1) a. [CP Wen glaubst du [CP wen [TP Maria wen liebt]]]
   Who believe.2SG you who Mary who loves
   ‘Who do you think Mary loves?’

b. [FocP Wen [CP wen [TP Maria wen liebt]]]
   [glaubst du]

After showing that an extraction analysis is not tenable, I will pursue the idea that the CC comes from the counter-cyclic insertion of a parenthetical glaubst du to a (non-matrix) interrogative CP. Counter-cyclic adjunction is viewed as a Last Resort operation, which can be used to save a derivation in which a predicate, e.g. glauben (‘to believe’), cannot embed a wh-question. Counter-cyclicity has some drastic consequences as I assume that it destroys any long-distance dependencies across the adjunction site – e.g. it can split a uniform chain created by wh-movement into two chains. The PF rule Chain Reduction (Nunes 2004) blindly deletes all copies of each chain except the highest resulting in a double Spellout of the wh-phrases separated by the counter-cyclically adjoined parenthetical:

(2) [FocP Wen[wh, Foc] Foc[\_\_\_\_] [CP1 [CP2 glaubst du] [CP1 wen C[\_\_\_\_] [TP Maria [\_\_\_\_] wen besuchen] wird]]]

Chain 1

Chain 2

Bibliography


1 Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: amurphy87@gmail.com