

Reconstruction Conflict: An Argument for Multidominance and Parallel Merge

Synopsis. This study explores a phenomenon which I call *reconstruction conflict* in Japanese. The phenomenon is observed in configurations where a moved phrase contains both an element which requires reconstruction and an R-expression which resists reconstruction. I argue that resolving the conflict calls for the multidominance theory of movement.

Background: Negative Sensitive Item in Japanese. A negative sensitive item *-shika* in Japanese requires a clause-mate negation to be licensed. When licensed, *-shika* means ‘only’, as in (1).

- (1) *Taro-wa hon-shika* { *yoma-nak-atta* / **yom-da* }.
 Taro-TOP book-SHIKA read-NEG-PAST read-PAST
 ‘Taro only read books.’

-Shika must be licensed ‘early’ in a derivation. In (2), for example, *shika* is scrambled to the higher clause that contains a negation. However, the higher-clause negation does not license *-shika*. As a result the sentence is ungrammatical.

- (2) * *Taroo-shika Jiroo-wa* [*Hanako-ga t nagu-tta to*] *omow-anak-atta*.
 Taroo-SHIKA Jiro-TOP Hanako-NOM *t* hit-PAST C think-NEG-PAST.
 Intended: ‘Only Taro, Jiro thinks Hanako hit.’

It is not a goal of this study to properly characterize the licensing condition of *-shika*. For the purpose of the following discussion, I state the condition as (3). (As Fong (2019) observes, a Mongolian negative polarity item shows the same pattern.) Following Watanabe (2004), I assume that *-shika* is licensed by syntactic *Agree* (Chomsky, 2001). Note that *-shika* is not licensed derivationally. That is, for *-shika* to be licensed, it is not sufficient to *Agree* with a negation *at some point of a derivation*. This is why (2) is ruled out.

- (3) *-Shika* must *Agree* with a negation within the local clause of its in-situ position.

Reconstruction Conflict. Reconstruction conflict is exemplified in (4), where DP_j containing *shika* and a relative clause undergoes long-scrambling. DP_j must be *syntactically* reconstructed to the position of t_j for *-shika* to *Agree* with the negation in the embedded clause. However, the relative clause in DP_j contains an R-expression, and reconstruction would result in a condition C violation caused by the matrix subject pronoun, hence a conflict. Nevertheless, the sentence is grammatical with coreference between the pronoun and the R-expression.

- (4) [DP_j *Hanako-ga* [*Taroo*]_{*i*}-*ni kaita tegami-shika*] [*kare*]_{*i*}-*wa* [*Mary-ga t_j*
 Hanako-NOM Taro-DAT wrote letter-SHIKA he-TOP Mary-NOM *t_j*
yoma-nak-atta to] *omotteiru*.
 read-NEG-PAST C think
 Lit: ‘Only the letter Hanako wrote to Taro, he thinks Mary read.’

Below I will propose that the multidominance resolves this conflict. Two comments are in order here. Firstly, the configuration in (4) is reminiscent of Lechner’s (1999) observation in German. Lechner observes a configuration schematically represented in (5). There, an existential quantifier with a relative clause is scrambled. The construction has the $\forall > \exists$ reading, but reconstruction of DP_j cause a Condition C violation by the same reason as above. Lechner resolves the conflict with *semantic reconstruction*, by which the trace t_j is interpreted as of $\langle et, t \rangle$ type. This achieves reconstruction of semantic scope *without reconstructing a syntactic constituent*. Thus, it produces the $\forall > \exists$ reading without causing a condition C violation.

(5) [DP_j ... John_i ...]-∃ [he_i ... ∨ ... t_j ...]

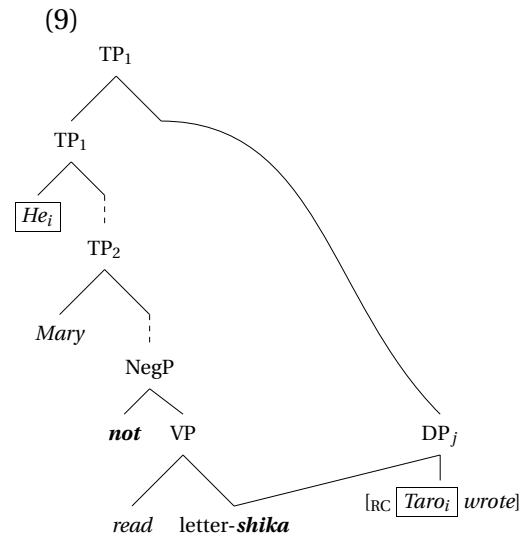
This proposal does not work for (4), however. This is because *-shika* has to syntactically *Agree* with a negation. *-Shika* has to be syntactically reconstructed, not semantically.

Secondly, late-merger (Lebeaux, 1991) of the relative clause in (4) does not resolve the conflict. Suppose the adjunct relative clause there late-merges the moved position. Then we would obtain the PF representation in (6a). In contrast, *a letter-shika* must be reconstructed to the in-situ position at LF, as in (6b). The representation is semantically uninterpretable. The relative clause does not have anything to modify. The sentence should be infelicitous, contrary to fact.

- (6) a. PF: A letter-**shika** [that Hanako wrote to Taro] [he thinks Mary did not read a letter-**shika**].
 b. LF(?): A letter-**shika** [that Hanako wrote to Taro] [he thinks Mary did not read a letter-**shika**].

Multidominance as a Rescue. In order to resolve the conflict I follow Citko (2005) and Johnson (2018) and assume that the syntax allows *parallel merge* and *multidominance*. An syntactic object α can be dominated by nodes β and γ even when there is no dominance relation between β and γ . Movement α is also understood as multidominance of α by a lower and a higher node.

The structure of (4) I propose is in (9). Dashed lines indicate that some irrelevant details are omitted. The embedded object *letter-shika* has two mothers, VP and DP_j. DP_j ‘moves’ by long scrambling and adjoins to TP₁. Notice then that DP_j (and its daughters *letter-shika* and RC) occupies two places at the same time. The higher occurrence of these items are pronounced at PF, hence movement. (See Johnson (2018) for the detail of linearization.) Furthermore, since *letter-shika* is in the *Agree* configuration with a negation in the in-situ position, *-shika* is successfully licensed (with or without ‘reconstruction’ I describe below). I assume that the lower occurrence of DP_j is interpreted at LF. This is achieved by ‘ignoring’ the merger of TP₁ and DP₁ semantically (Johnson, 2018). It replicates the reconstruction effect. Still, the R-expression Taro is never bound by the bleeding pronoun. Binding is a combination of co-indexing and C-command. Simplifying somewhat, α C-commands β iff α ’s sister dominates β . The pronoun’s sister does *not* dominate DP_j, so the R-expression is not bound by the pronoun. Finally, I propose semantic composition rule (7) to guarantee the relative clause is interpreted as usual. It lets us compose *letter-shika* and RC first, and feed the result to computation of $\llbracket \text{VP} \rrbracket$.



- (7) Suppose α is a node with daughters β of type $\langle \sigma, \tau \rangle$ and γ of type σ . If there is any node δ ($\alpha \neq \delta$) that dominates γ , γ^+ is the result of applying a composition rule for δ . Then $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket = \llbracket \beta \rrbracket (\llbracket \gamma^+ \rrbracket)$, as long as γ^+ is of type σ .

Conclusion. This study presents the novel observation in (4). It provides a new evidence for the multidominance theory of movement.

Selected References: Johnson. 2018. *A Multidominant Theory of Movement*. Ms. Citko. 2005. *On the Nature of Merge: External Merge, Internal Merge, and Parallel Merge*. LI. 36. pp. 475–496.