

Asymmetries in Russian multiple Sluicing: a purely syntactic account

Although there is considerable dispute about the location of the various WH-phrases in Russian basic multiple WH-questions such as (1a-b) (Stepanov 1998, Strahov 2001, Scott 2001, Bošković 2002), it is generally agreed that multiple WH-movement is required in Russian, and significantly better, in most registers, than constructions where one WH remains behind, as in (2). It is also generally agreed that matrix multiple WH questions in Russian do not exhibit superiority effects, as shown in (1a-b), as opposed to Bulgarian. However, it has recently been discovered that there are several contexts in which asymmetries such as superiority do emerge in Russian multiple WH constructions, namely in embedded multiple WH-constructions for some speakers (3), and for all speakers in multiple sluicing, illustrated in the contrasts in (4b) vs. (4c) and (5a) vs. (5b), respectively. In this paper, we argue, contra Grebenyova (2004, in press), Stepanov (1998) and others, for a purely syntactic account for *both* the lack of superiority in matrix Russian multiple WH questions (1b) *and* the superiority effects found in (4) and (5), without appeal to the semantic parallelism proposed by Grebenyova (2004, in press).

Our account explains the asymmetries between matrix and embedded clauses as a side-effect of a significant independent configurational difference between matrix and embedded clauses in Russian, first noted in Scott (2001), involving the presence of a matrix left periphery functional category TopicP, which is absent in embedded contexts, as schematized in (6). We show how the presence of TopP accounts for the lack of superiority in matrix multiple WH-questions such as (1a-b), whereas its absence in embedded contexts accounts for embedded superiority. Furthermore, the TopicP analysis independently accounts for a range of main clause possibilities not found in embedded clauses, such as the Top > WH construction illustrated in (7a) (unavailable in (7b)), certain *to*-particle constructions, which we analyze as manifesting the TopicP category overtly in (8a), (also unavailable in subordinates, (8b)), and others.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we establish, contra Stepanov (1998) and Strahov (2001), that Russian is in fact an overt WH-movement language, similar to Serbo-Croatian and other languages. We then argue against the Stepanov (1998), Bošković (2002) a.o. account of (basic) multiple WH-movement in Russian as Focus-driven, using embedded and other Focus-neutral constructions such as (3), which show that regardless of focus structure, multiple WH-fronting is still required. We then turn to the account of Russian multiple sluicing, a construction analyzed as IP-ellipsis by Grebenyova (2004, in press). Grebenyova reports the asymmetries in multiple sluicing found in (4) and (5), but crucially analyzes them as the result of “semantic parallelism”, whereby the surface order of matrix multiple sluices is parallel to the order of quantifiers in the non-sluiced constituent (hence the term “semantic parallelism”.) Several aspects of the Grebenyova account are discussed in detail: First, we show that there exists in fact a significant difference between superiority in multiple sluicing in main (4) and embedded (5) clauses, regardless of the order in the main clause. Second, we argue that the surface scope effects that underlie her semantic parallelism account are more complex than presented in those accounts. In particular, Grebenyova follows Ionin (2001) in claiming that surface word order always determines relative quantifier scope, whereas we present examples of inverse scope, proving that surface order itself is not always parallel to LF prominence. This casts doubt on the viability of a semantic parallelism account. Instead, we show that matrix multiple sluicing is in fact (syntactically) parallel to multiple WH-movement. If correct, this account predicts that in the presence of Obj > Subj order in the main clause source, embedded multiple sluices should anyway show Subj > Obj order, a prediction confirmed by (9). We end with discussion of an interesting (and previously unnoticed) adjunct/argument asymmetry lending support to the purely syntactic account of multiple sluicing in Russian.

- 1) a. Kto kogo ljubiti? (b) Kogo kto ljubiti? (no matrix WH superiority)
 who whom loves whom who loves
 ‘Who loves whom?’ ‘Who loves whom?’
- 2) ??? Kto ljubiti kogo ? (only OK as echo question and in some registers)
- 3) a. Ja ne znaju [kto kogo ljubiti] b. ?? Ja ne znaju [kogo kto ljubiti]
 I not know who whom loves (=embedded superiority)
 ‘I don’t remember who loves whom’
- 4) a. -- Každyj priglasil kogo-to na tanec b. --*Kto kogo?* c. ??-- *Kogo kto?*
 everyone invited someone to dance who whom whom who
 ‘Everyone invited someone to a dance’ ‘who whom?’ ‘whom who?’
- 5) a. Každyj priglasil kogo-to na tanec, no ja ne pomnju *kto kogo*
 everyone invited someone to dance but I not remember who whom
 ‘Everyone invited someone to a dance but I don’t remember who whom’
 b. *Každyj priglasil kogo-to na tanec, no ja ne pomnju *kogo kto*
 (superiority with embedded multiple sluicing)
- 6) a. main: [TopP..... [CP.....[TP.....]]]
 b. embedded: V [CP.....[TP.....]]
- 7) a. Ivan gde rabotaet [TopP Ivan [CP gde [TP rabotaet]]]
 Ivan where works
 ‘Where does Ivan work?’
 b. * Ja ne znaju, Ivan gde rabotaet. (... *gde Ivan rabotaet* = OK)
 I neg know Ivan where works
- 8) a. Ivan-to isčez b. ??? Ja uveren, čto Ivan-to isčez
 Ivan-TOP disappeared I sure that Ivan-TOP disappeared
- 9) a. Kogo-to kto-to udaril OBJ > SUBJ > V
 someone-ACC someone-NOM hit
 ‘Someone hit someone.’
 b. *Kogo-to kto-to udaril, no ja ne znaju kogo kto (*kto kogo* = OK)
 sbd.ACC sbd.NOM hit but I not know whom who
 ‘Someone hit someone, but I don’t know whom who.’

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