

Computing Quantifier Scope in Scrambling Languages: a study in Turkish

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Sentences containing two quantifier phrases can give rise to scope ambiguities. For example, the sentence in (1) has two possible interpretations.

(1) A student read every book.

First, it can receive a surface scope reading (SS) meaning that there is a single student who read every book. Second, it can get an inverse scope reading (IS), an interpretation in which for every book, there is some student who read it.

In contrast to English, languages that allow for flexible ordering of constituents are assumed to be rigid with respect to scope and lack this latter IS reading in canonical order (see Bobaljik & Wurmbrand, 2012, for a more refined view). Yet recent empirical findings for flexible word order languages has been conflicting and some scrambling languages such as German, Greek and Bangla are reported to have the IS interpretation available (Guha, Moitra, & Marty, 2021; Oikonomou, Golcher, & Alexiadou, 2020; Philipp & Zimmermann, 2020).

In this presentation, I sketch out an experimental design that aims at testing the availability of IS and the effect of linear order in computing scope in Turkish. I will focus on the issue of linear order and its interaction with scope, and address the possible processing mechanisms underlying SS and IS interpretations.

References

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