

On the treatment of minimality violations – a comparative argument

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Background: Branan (2022) discusses the fact in Luganda “[...] when an underlying ditransitive is marked with the applicative and is in the passive, [...] the indirect object may be promoted to subject position, but the direct object may not”. This is illustrated in (1); (1-a) involves raising to subject of the indirect object across the higher applicative object, (1-b) raising of the direct object.

- (1) a. Omusomesa_i y-a-lag-is-ibw-a omuggo _i abaana.
1.teacher 1-PST-show-APPL-PASS-FV 3.stick 2.child
‘The teacher was shown the children using a stick.’
b. *Abaana_i ba-a-lag-is-ibw-a omuggo omusomesa _i.
2.child 2-PST-show-APPL-PASS-FV 3.stick 1.teacher
‘The children were shown to the teacher using a stick.’

Based on (1-a,b) and two further case studies (from Tongan and Japanese), Branan (2022) reaches the descriptive generalization in (2), which is phrased in terms of an interaction between anti-locality and minimality.

- (2) *Principle of Conflicting Requirements (PCR):*

Elements do not count for minimality if their movement would violate antilocality.

According to (2), when raising the indirect object across the higher applicative object in (1-a) minimality can be ignored because raising of the applicative would violate generalized Spec-to-Spec antilocality (Bošković 2015, Brillman and Hirsch 2016, Erlewine 2016):

- (3) *Generalized Spec-to-Spec antilocality (GSSAL):*

Movement of a phrase from Spec,XP must cross a maximal projection other than XP.

In contrast, raising of the direct object in (1-b) across the higher indirect object must not ignore minimality because raising of the indirect object would not violate antilocality (witness (1-a)).

Branan (2022) addresses two interpretations of (2). **a)** Antilocality is the result of the probing algorithm: No probe can see a category occupying the specifier of its complement. Consequently, minimality is vacuously satisfied in (1-a): The applicative object lies outside the probe’s search space. In (1-b), both the indirect and the direct object are part of the probe’s search space, and raising respects minimality. **b)** (1-a) involves a genuine violation of minimality. But since antilocality is more important than minimality, this violation is licensed. In contrast, raising of the direct object in (1-b) involves an unmotivated and therefore fatal violation of minimality: the alternative, namely raising the indirect object, violates neither antilocality nor minimality. This latter interpretation is optimality theoretic. Crucially, Branan (2022) leaves open the question which of the two interpretations is to be preferred.

Claim and shape of argument: In the talk, we defend the claim that, presupposing that the generalization in (2) is on the right track, the optimality theoretic interpretation is to be preferred over an interpretation in terms of a restriction on probing.

The abstract shape of our comparative argument is the following: There phenomena from other languages that appear to involve a violation of minimality but where antilocality arguably is not involved. Therefore, deriving antilocality from a restriction on probing does not help there, and new assumptions have to be invoked. In contrast, the resolution

mechanism inherent to optimality theory allows it to unify these phenomena with Branan's (2022) analysis of Luganda by merely identifying a constraint C such that C is ranked higher than minimality. Phenomena to be discussed involve raising in Nez Perce and Niu-ean, and scrambling in Tongan. In what follows, the argument based on Nez Perce is sketched.

Case study: Deal (2019) discusses transitive unaccusatives in Nez Perce. It is argued that they involve raising to ergative of the direct object to Specv, across the higher applicative object.

- (4) Ha-'aayat-**om**_i nuun-e _i **hi**-pa-naas-pay-noo-yo'-kom.
 PL-woman-**ERG** 1PL-ACC **3SBJ**-S.PL-O.PL-come-APPL-FUT-CIS
 'The women will come to us.'

According to Deal (2019), such raising does not violate minimality because raising of the higher applicative object would violate antilocality. The logic is the same as in Branan (2022).

However, in Nez Perce there is an additional twist. Deal (2019) argues that a possessor merged in the applicative object of a transitive unaccusative must raise to a specifier position of a phrase μ P between ApplP and vP. In this case, one would expect the applicative object to undergo raising to ergative because the additional μ P renders antilocality irrelevant. And raising to ergative of the direct object should be blocked by minimality. This, however, is not what one finds. Instead, again the direct object raises.

- (5) Ko-nim_j **ha**-'ayato-**na**_i _j **hi**-nees-'ileese-nuu-ey'-se [_i pi'amkin].
 DEM-ERG PL-woman-ACC 3SBJ-O.PL-make.noise-APPL- μ -IMP meeting.NOM
 'That person is making noise at the ladies' meeting.'

Deal (2019) explains this by assuming that raising of the applicative object is blocked by a constraint on remnant movement (Müller 1996, Takano 2000).

Deal's (2019) logic can be directly translated into an analysis in terms of violable, ranked constraints plus optimization by assuming that both the constraint on remnant movement and antilocality are ranked higher than minimality in Nez Perce. In contrast, it is unclear what an analysis in terms of a restriction on probing should look like. Obviously, antilocality is not the only factor in play. Thus, although the pattern and the logic of analysis for raising in Luganda and Nez Perce seem to be parallel, a unified analysis of both in terms of Branan's proposal a) is far from straightforward.

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