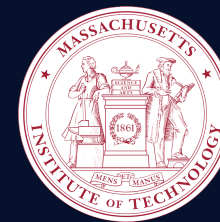


# A copy-based approach to *either* in *either... or...* sentences

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## Bipartite syntax of focus-sensitive operators

Bipartite syntax of *only* and question-particle: They come in two instances in a sentence (Hirsch 2017, Lee 2004, Cable 2007, a.o.)

- **Lower instance** is local to and c-commands focus
- **Higher instance** has some syntactic/semantic function, e.g. agrees with a probe, marks the scope

(1) John only learned only ONE language. (Hirsch 2017)

### Claims:

- *Either* has the same bipartite syntactic structure
- Puzzles about *either* can be resolved if we assume it is a focus-sensitive operator
- This bipartite syntactic structure is common to all focus-sensitive operators (ask me!)

## Analysis of *either*

The distribution of *either* looks quite free:

(2) <Either> John <either> will <either> eat <either> rice or beans.

Analysis: Two copies of *either* coexist in a sentence:

- **High *either***: Left periphery of the disjunction phrase (Spec, *orP*)
- **Low *either***: Inside *orP* and must c-command the leftmost focused element, Focus<sub>1</sub> in (3)

**High *either* is created by (overt or covert) movement of low *either***

(3) [<sub>orP</sub> **Either**<sub>i</sub> [<sub>or'</sub> [A ... **either**<sub>i</sub> ... Focus<sub>1</sub> ...] or [B ... Focus<sub>2</sub> ...]]]

Preview: Not only do there exist two copies of *either*, but they also have different properties in terms of syntactic position and scope

This analysis is inspired by and builds on several predecessors, including Larson (1985), Schwarz (1999), Han and Romero (2004), and den Dikken (2006). Ask me to discuss these proposals and compare them with the present one!

## Gapping

Independent factor obscuring the derivation:

(4) [<sub>orP</sub> **Either**<sub>i</sub> [<sub>or'</sub> [A ... **either**<sub>i</sub> X Focus<sub>1</sub> ...] or [B X Focus<sub>2</sub> ...]]]

## How this analysis works

3-step template:

Step 1: Identify the first focused element (foci are underlined). *Either* must c-command it.

Step 2: Identify *orP*.

Step 3: Determine if *either* is a high copy or a low copy. If *either* is in Spec, *orP*, it is a high copy. Otherwise, it is a low copy.

(5) John will either eat rice or he will eat beans.

(6) a. John will either eat rice or he will eat beans.

b. [<sub>orP</sub> [A John will either eat rice] or [B he will eat beans]].

c. [<sub>orP</sub> **Either**<sub>i</sub> [<sub>or'</sub> [A John will **either**<sub>i</sub> eat rice] or [B he will eat beans]]].

## Scope

(7) Sherlock pretended to be looking for **either** a burglar or a thief. (3 readings) (Larson 1985)

*Reading 1*: Sherlock pretended to look for someone who is either a burglar or a thief.

*Reading 2*: Sherlock pretended to do one of two things: either look for a burglar or look for a thief.

*Reading 3*: Either one of two things happened: Sherlock pretended to look for a burglar, or he pretended to look for a thief.

(8) Sherlock pretended to **either** be looking for a burglar or a thief. (reading 2 only)

(9) Sherlock **either** pretended to be looking for a burglar or a thief. (reading 3 only)

## Syntactic position

**Low *either* must c-command the first focus:**

(10) Sherlock <**either**> found <**\*either**> the <**\*either**> burglar <**\*either**> or <**\*either**> he got fired. (observed by den Dikken 2006, a.o.)

**Low *either* can form a constituent with focus, but high *either* can't:**

(11) [<sub>orP</sub> **Either**<sub>i</sub> [<sub>or'</sub> [A ... [**either**<sub>i</sub> Focus<sub>1</sub>] ...] or [B ... Focus<sub>2</sub> ...]]]

**High *either* can't intervene between verb and its direct object, but low *either* can** (ask me for examples!)

## High *either* is created by movement

Island effects: (ask me for examples!)

- **High *either*** may not occur above islands
- **Low *either*** may not occur below islands
- High and low *eithers* are copies of the same element, and either copy may be pronounced

## Solution to the scope problem

Solution to the scope problem:

- *Either* in (7) can be parsed as a low *either*, with the high copy being in different positions:

(12) Sherlock pretended to **either** [<sub>orP</sub> be looking for **either** a burglar or ~~be looking for~~ a thief].

(13) Sherlock **either** [<sub>orP</sub> pretended to be looking for **either** a burglar or ~~pretended to be looking for~~ a thief].

- Why can't *either* in (8) be a low *either* too?

(14) **Either** [<sub>orP</sub> Sherlock pretended to **either** be looking for a burglar or ~~he pretended to be looking for~~ a thief].

- Gapping is not possible in (14) because the antecedent and ellipsis site are not parallel (cf. Coppock 2001) (ask me for details and argument for gapping!)

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## Selected References

Coppock, Elizabeth. 2001. Gapping: In defense of deletion. In *Proceedings of CLS 37*, ed. by Mary Andronis, Christopher Ball, Heidi Elston, and Sylvain Neuvel, 133-148. • den Dikken, Marcel. 2006. Either-float and the syntax of co-ordination. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 24: 689-749. • Han, Chung-hye, and Maribel Romero. 2004. The syntax of whether/Q . . . or questions: ellipsis combined with movement. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 22: 527-564. • Hofmeister, Philip. 2010. A linearization account of either . . . or constructions. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 28: 275-314. • Larson, Richard. 1985. 'On the Syntax of Disjunction Scope', *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 3: 217-264. • Schwarz, Bernhard. 1999. 'On the Syntax of Either . . . or', *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 17: 339-370.

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