# A Unified Account of A- and A'-Reconstruction: Evidence from German

**Introduction:** It has often been argued that there seems to be an A- vs. A'-distinction with regard to reconstruction (cf. Chomsky (1995), Kim (1996), Epstein et al. (1998), Lasnik (1998), and Fox (1999, 2000)). This claim was usually based on contrasts like the one between (1-a) and (1-b), and led some linguists to conclude that there is no reconstruction with A-movement at all, while others assumed that reconstruction works quite differently depending on the type of chain that is affected.

(1)    a.   *Which claim that John$_i$ was asleep was he$_i$ willing to discuss ?

       b.   The claim that John$_i$ was asleep seems to him$_i$ to be correct.

**Problem:** The following data show that German behaves differently from English with respect to A-movement. In (2-a), a noun-complement CP containing an R-expression is raised over a coindexed pronoun (in analogy to (1-b)), but in contrast to the English sentence, the German example yields a Condition C effect. As sentence (3-a) indicates, the same is true for picture noun contexts. If there is no crossover configuration, the sentences are grammatical, as (2-b) and (3-b) show.

(2)    a.   *Ich glaube, dass die Behauptung, dass Timo$_i$ faul sei,    ihm$_i$ übertrieben zu sein scheint.
           I    believe   that   the claim       that   Timo   lazy would be him   exaggerated   to   be     seems

       b.   Ich glaube, dass die Behauptung, dass er$_i$ faul sei,     Timo$_i$ übertrieben zu sein scheint.
           I    believe   that   the claim        that   he   lazy would be   Timo   exaggerated    to    be     seems

(3)    a.   *Ich glaube, dass dieses Foto von Paul$_i$ ihm$_i$ sehr gut   getroffen zu sein scheint.
           I    believe    that   this    picture of   Paul   him   very   good   succeeded   to   be     seems

       b.   Ich glaube, dass dieses Foto von sich$_i$    Paul$_i$ sehr gut getroffen zu sein scheint.
           I    believe    that   this    picture of   himself   Paul   very   good   succeeded   to   be     seems

In the light of former analyses, the deviant status of sentences like (2-a) or (3-a) in German is unexpected. In order to account for the grammaticality of English examples like (1-b), it has usually been assumed that A-movement bleeds Condition C of the Binding Theory for some reason or other (in contrast to A'-movement, which captured the contrast in (1)). However, the German sentences in (2) and (3) show that A-chains can be sensitive to Condition C as well. In fact, on the basis of these German data it rather seems to be the case that the difference between A- and A'-reconstruction is not as great as the English data makes one believe at first sight. Therefore the goal of my talk is to show that a unified account of A- and A'-reconstruction is not only possible but suggests itself if one considers German A-chains.

**Analysis:** One conclusion that can be drawn from the data above is that German A-chains seem to exhibit Condition C effects, whereas English ones do not. This difference shows that the grammaticality of the English sentence (1-b) cannot be attributed to the particular movement type it involves. Instead, it suggests that whatever prevents (1-b) from yielding a violation of Condition C is not given in (2-a) and (3-a). One quite obvious difference between the raising constructions in the two languages concerns the structural position of the pronoun, which is contained in a PP in English but not in German. According to the standard definitions of c-command, this should actually lead to the

conclusion that *him* in (1-b) cannot c-command any material outside the PP, including the subject trace. But because of the ungrammaticality of sentences like (4), the opposite is nevertheless often assumed.

(4)    * They seem to him$_i$ to like John$_i$.

To circumvent this contradiction (c-command and no c-command), Epstein et al. (1998) (who encounter a similar problem for different reasons) have proposed that *him* c-commands material outside the PP only after Spell-Out when the preposition's features have all been stripped of and *to* is therefore eliminated (cf. also Branigan (1992) for a related proposal). If it is additionally assumed that Condition C is checked derivationally, i.e., at every point in the derivation, the data above can be accounted for straightforwardly. In (1-b), no Condition C effect arises, since *him* does not c-command *John* in its base position, and at the time when the pronoun's c-command domain changes, the constituent containing the R-expression has already raised to the matrix subject position. Of course the copy in the base position must not count when Condition C is checked at LF. This can be achieved by assuming that the formal features of traces of A-movement are erased (cf. Chomsky (1995), Epstein et al. (1998)), or by abandoning the copy theory of movement.

The ungrammaticality of (1-a) as well as (2-a) and (3-a) follows immediately, because Condition C is already violated before movement takes place.

**Conclusion and Theoretical Implications:** The conclusion that can be drawn is that A- and A'-reconstruction can be handled in the same way and that the apparent differences between English and German as far as Condition C effects in A-chains are concerned can be traced back to the simple fact that German datives do not involve prepositions, whereas English ones do.

As far as Binding Theory is concerned, this analysis implies that Condition C is not only checked at LF but at all points in the derivation. The first option is not sufficient with regard to the differences between the English and German data discussed above, since the LF-representations of sentences like (1-b) and (2-a) are identical. Therefore it can be concluded that the arguments presented here argue for a derivational view of syntax.

**Selected References:**

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