

Long head movement in Finnish

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In Finnish, an infinitival can move over the finite verb to C^0 (1).

- (1) Myy-dä-kö₁ Pekka aiko-o __₁ koko omaisuutensa?
sell-A/INF-Q Pekka plan-PRS.3SG all possessions
'Does Pekka plan to sell all his possessions?' (Special prosody or emphasis on *sell*).
'Was it selling that Pekka wanted to do with all his possessions?'

This occurs (if and) only if the verb contains a left peripheral particle (here the yes/no particle Q) or prosodic stress expressing contrastive focus. Semantically the fronted complex predicate is “targeted” for special interpretation marked by the left peripheral feature, depending on what the feature is. The head forms an \bar{A} chain. We develop a formula that provides sufficient and necessary conditions for this pattern. Specifically, we consider several hypothesis concerning the syntax and semantics of this construction and develop an idealized “brain model” of speakers of Finnish and English that incorporates our analysis and calculates the syntactic and semantic properties of (1). The model will be formalized in Python and tested by simulation. The analysis (Brattico, 2021b, 2021a) builds on (Chomsky, 2008; Roberts, 1993, 2010) but is reverse-engineered so that it maps sensory inputs into sets of syntactic analyses and semantic interpretations. The hypothesis is a variation of the standard theory where head movement creates complex heads. Phrasal movement is the same operation + pied-piping.

References

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