

# Specificity Condition

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## 0. Introduction

I will be concerned with the Specificity Condition in this paper. Consider the following examples:

- (1) a. Who did you see pictures of?  
 b. Who did you see a picture of?  
 c. Who did you see many pictures of?  
 d. Who did you see several pictures of?  
 e. Who did you see some pictures of?
- (2) a. \*?Who did you see the picture of?  
 b. \*?Who did you see every picture of?  
 c. \*?Who did you see most pictures of?  
 d. \*?Who did you see each picture of?  
 e. ??Who did you see the pictures of? (Diesing (1992))

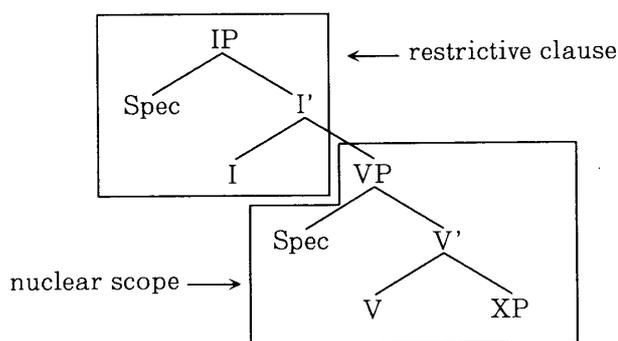
Diesing (1992) and Enç (1991) argue that DPs in (1) and (2) can be distinguished in terms of “specificity” or “presuppositionarity”. While the existence of the entities is not presupposed in the case of DPs with weak determiners in (1), it is presupposed in the case of DPs with strong determiners (for example *the, every, most,...*) in (2). Then, it can be assumed that the acceptability of extraction is deeply related to a presuppositional reading of the object DPs.

In the following sections, we examine how Specificity Condition effects can be accounted for. In section 1, 2 and 3, we briefly examine three recent treatments of the Specificity Condition made by Diesing (1992), Mahajan (1992) and Uriagereka (unpub.), respectively. It is argued that Diesing’s and Mahajan’s accounts run into some problems and a correct account of Specificity Condition effects must make reference to the internal structure of specific nominals, as argued in Uriageraka (unpub.). In section 4, I modify Uriagereka’s account in line with Chomsky (1993, 1994) and propose that the way the specific feature of specific nominals is checked differs between English and Hindi.

## 1. Diesing’s (1992) Account

In Diesing (1992), it is assumed that the Kamp-Heim-style tripartite logical representation is derived from the syntactic representation by Mapping Hypothesis, which splits the syntactic tree into two parts:

## (3) Mapping Hypothesis (tree splitting)



This mapping procedure divides the sentence into a restrictive clause and a nuclear scope. In a tripartite logical representation, the restrictive clause defines a set that the quantifier quantifies over and this set can be taken to represent the existence presupposition. Then, a picture noun which receives a presuppositional reading must somehow be tied to the restrictive clause. As indicated in (3), the Mapping Hypothesis requires that material from IP, not from VP, is mapped into a restrictive clause. Therefore, presuppositional NPs must be raised by QR to adjoin to IP. According to this framework, the syntactic representation of (2a) at the level at which tree splitting occurs is as follows:

(4) \* $[_{CP} \text{who}_i \text{ did } [_{IP} [_{DP} \text{the picture of } t_i] ; [_{IP} \text{you } [\text{see } t_i]]]]?$ 

Diesing (1992), following Browning (1991), assumes that Subjacency is a condition on representations, rather than on movement. It is also assumed that Subjacency applies at LF as well as S-structure. In (4), the IP-adjoined object is not L-marked at LF, although it is L-marked by the verb *see* at S-structure. Since an adjoined IP segment is assumed to inherit barrierhood, the trace is separated from its antecedent *who* by two barriers, DP and IP. Thus, the ungrammaticality of (2a) can be accounted for as violation of the Subjacency condition.

Diesing's (1992) analysis crucially relies on the assumption that Subjacency may apply to representations at LF. This assumption runs into some problems. Consider the following examples:

- (5) a. \* $\text{Who}_i \text{ do you think that } [_{IP} [_{DP} \text{pictures of } t_i] \text{ are on sale}]?$   
 b.  $\text{Who}$  thinks that  $[_{IP} [_{DP} \text{pictures of who}] \text{ are on sale}]?$

This contrast shows a systematic S-structure / LF asymmetry with respect to the Subject Condition (or Subjacency).<sup>1)</sup> In (5b), the *wh*-in-situ can be extracted out of the picture noun at LF, which indicates the irrelevance of Subjacency Condition at LF.

Let us next consider the following contrast:

- (6) a. \* $\text{Vowel harmony}_i, \text{ I think that } [_{IP} \text{articles about } t_i] [_{VP} \text{have been published}]$   
 b. ? $\text{Vowel harmony}_i, \text{ I think that } [_{IP} [_{NP} \text{articles about } t_i] ; [_{IP} \text{you should read } t_i \text{ carefully}]]$

(Fiengo, Huang, Lasnik and Reinhart (1988))

In (6a), topicalization of a DP from the subject gives rise to a violation of Subjacency since the subject position is not L-marked. Under Diesing's assumption that an IP-adjoined DP becomes a barrier, the possibility of subsequent extraction of DPs from topicalized phrases as in (6b) cannot be accounted for if topicalized DPs are assumed to be adjoined to IP. The grammaticality of (6b) leads us to assume that a phrase moved to A' positions is not a barrier as argued in Fiengo, Huang, Lasnik and Reinhart (1988).

With respect to scope interpretation, "inversely linked" quantification cannot be accounted for if Subjacency is assumed to apply at LF:

(7) Several pictures of everybody are on sale.

In (7), *everybody* may take scope over the entire sentence, external to the subject DP that contains it. (7) has the following structure at LF:

(8) [<sub>IP</sub> everybody<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> [DP several pictures of t<sub>i</sub>]; [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> are on sale]]]

Since DP is not L-marked, DP and the segment IP, which are underlined in (8), are taken to be barriers within Diesing's (1992) analysis. Then, *everybody* is predicted to have scope internal to the subject DP. Thus, the examples which include wh-in-situ and inversely linked quantification cast doubt on the application of the Subjacency Condition at LF.

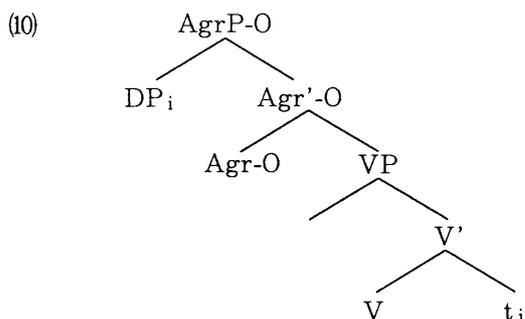
In sum, it is pointed out that the Specificity Condition does not follow from Diesing's (1992) assumption that the Subjacency Condition applies at LF as well as S-structure.

## 2. Mahajan's (1992) Account

Mahajan (1992) shows that specificity is indicated by object agreement in a language like Hindi. The object DP in (9a) has a presuppositional reading since the verb shows agreement with the DP. On the other hand, the object DP in (9b) has an existential reading, which is clear from the lack of object agreement.

- (9) a. Raam-ne            kitaab    parhii.  
       Raam-ERG (M) book (F) read (PERF F SG)  
       'Raam read the book.'
- b. Raam            ek kitaab parhegaa.  
       Raam (M) a book (F) read (FUT M SG)  
       'Raam will read a book.'

He connects the appearance or lack of object agreement with the difference in the structural positions which object DPs occupy. The presuppositional DPs move to the Spec of AgrP-O at S-structure, as shown in (10) :



Given that the Spec of Agr-O is not L-marked, the impossibility of extraction as in (2) is subsumed under the Subject Condition.

If this account is on the right track, it could be predicted that languages which do not display Subject Condition effects will not show Specificity Condition effects. This prediction is borne out in Hindi:

- (11) Kiskii tum socte ho ki Mohan-ne kitaab curaaai thii?  
 whose you think that Mohan-ERG book (F) stolen (F) be (PAST)  
 (Lit.) 'Of whom do you think that Mohan stole the book?'

Since Hindi does not show Subject Condition effects, wh-movement from the presuppositional DP is possible.

But Mahajan's (1992) account is argued against by Uriagereka (unpub.). It is shown in Uriagereka (unpub.) that Mahajan's account is undermined by the following Spanish data:

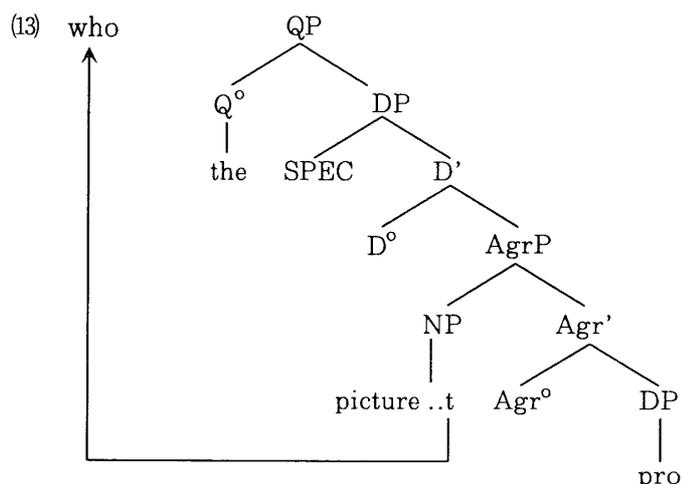
- (12) a. de que paises quieres que vengan delegados  
 of what countries want. you that come. AGR delegates  
 'What countries do you want delegates from to come?'  
 b. \*de que paises quieres que vengan los delegados que han sido elegidos  
 of what countries want. you what come. AGR the delegates that have been chosen  
 'What countries do you want the delegates from to arrive that have been chosen?'

As is shown in (12a), extraction from the subject is possible in Spanish. That is, Spanish does not display Subject Condition effects. However, the prediction made by Mahajan's account is contrary to fact as (12b).

It has been argued in section 1 and 2 that the Specificity Condition cannot be accounted for in terms of positional differences between specific expressions and non-specific ones.

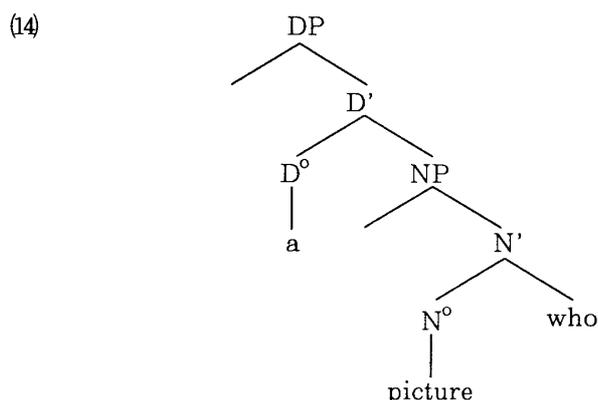
### 3. Uriagereka's (unpub.) Account

Arguing against Diesing's (1992) and Mahajan's (1992) accounts, Uriagereka (unpub.) discusses that the Specificity Condition does not follow from the position where specific nominals occupy, but rather from the internal structure of specific nominals. According to his proposal, a specific nominal has a much more elaborate structure than a non-specific nominal.<sup>2)</sup> For example, a specific expression *the picture* is assumed to have the following structure:



As indicated in (13), an N predicate like *picture* is generated at the Spec of AgrP, from which *wh*-phrases are extracted. Given that the Spec of AgrP is an intrinsic barrier, the impossibility of extraction can be accounted for.

In contrast, a non-specific expression has the simple internal structure as shown below:



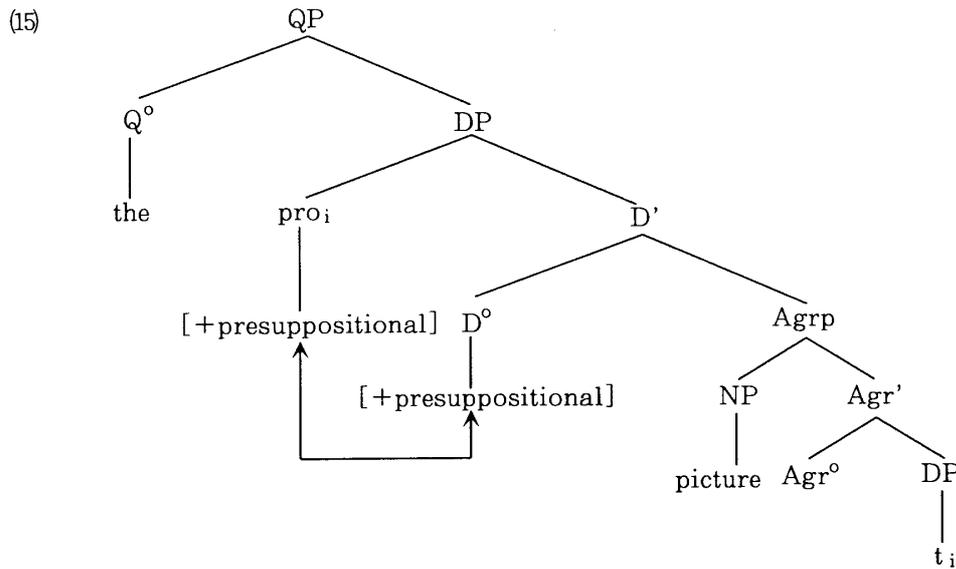
In this structure, extraction of *wh*-phrases is not blocked by any barriers.

Though Mahajan's analysis can account for the contrast shown by (1) and (2), it is left open why some languages like Hindi don't show Specificity Condition effects. In the next section, it is argued that the possibility of extraction follows from Mahajan's analysis when it is slightly modified in terms of Chomsky's (1993,1994) checking theory.

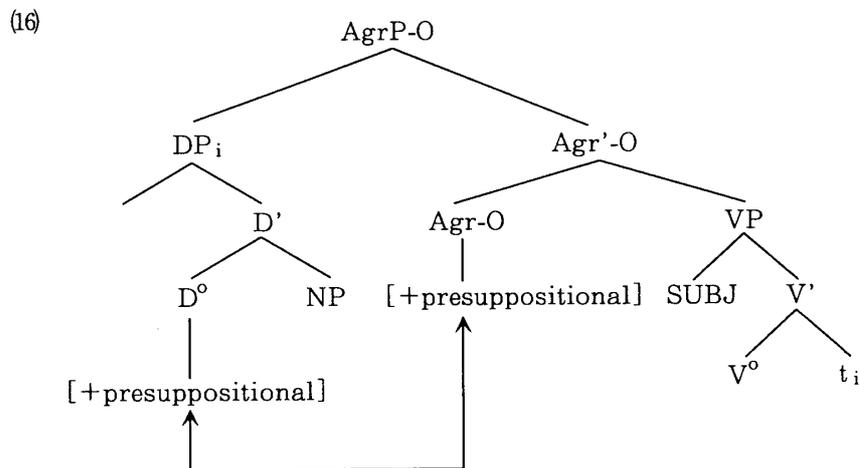
#### 4. A Modified Version of Uriagereka (unpub.)

In Uriagereka (unpub.), it is argued that a specific nominal involves a reified variable *pro*, whose function is to mark specificity. The variable *pro* is furthermore assumed to move to the Spec of [+possessive] D°. Given that syntactic operations must be motivated in some way, as argued in Chomsky (1993,1994), the variable *pro* is raised only when it enters into a checking relation with a feature F of a head D°. I propose that this feature F is the [+presuppositional] feature and that specificity of the entire DP is determined by whether a head D° has the [presuppositional] feature or not. In languages like English, which have the complex internal structure as shown in (13), repeated here as (15), the [+presuppositional] feature of a head D° is satisfied by raising a reified variable *pro*. Accordingly, the checking relation is established

within the specific object itself.



On the other hand, we assume that languages like Hindi do not have as complex the internal structure as English and Spanish. The [+presuppositional] feature of a head  $D^\circ$  in these languages is not checked against that of the variable  $pro$ . Since specificity is indicated by object agreement, as argued in section 2, the [+presuppositional] feature of a head  $D^\circ$  is checked against the [+presuppositional] feature represented in Agr-O when the object moves into the Spec of AgrP-O:



Since a specific expression is assumed to have the same internal structure as a non-specific one in Hindi, extraction from a specific object does not move across any barriers and does not show Specific Condition effects.

## 5. Conclusion

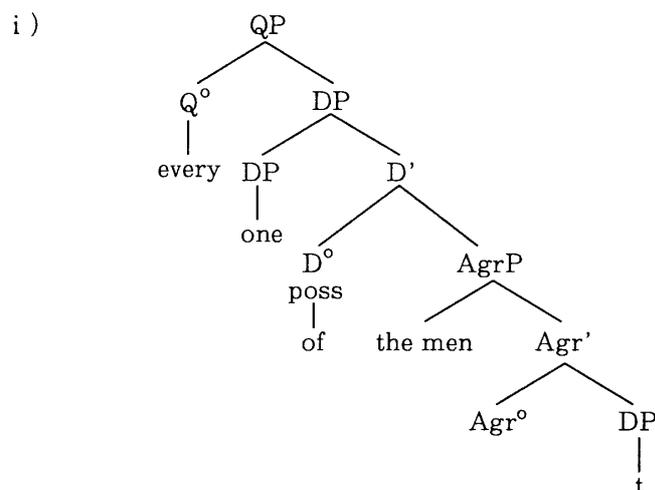
In this paper it has been argued that the Specificity Condition follows from a modified version of Uriagereka's (unpub.) analysis. We have argued following Uriagereka (unpub.) that Specificity Condition effects can be best accounted for in terms of the difference in the internal structures of the nominals. The difference in the acceptability of extraction between

specific nominals and non-specific ones in English as shown in (1) and (2) is derived from Uriagereka's proposal that specific nominals have a more complex structure than non-specific ones. The difference in the acceptability of extraction from specific nominals between English and Hindi is derived from the analysis proposed in section 4 that specific and non-specific nominals in Hindi have the same simple internal structure in contrast to English. I have proposed that the way the [+presuppositional] feature of a specific nominal is checked differs between English and Hindi.

## Notes

1) In Huang (1982), it is argued that the bounding conditions like condition on extraction domain apply only to movement at S-structure, but do not affect movement in LF. In contrast with Huang, Nishigauchi (1986) assumes that the entire island which includes wh-in-situ is pied-piped to Spec of CP. According to the Pied-Piping hypothesis, the asymmetry between (5a) and (5b) can be accounted for since the entire phrase (*pictures of who*) is moved to Spec of CP in (5b) without violating the Subjacency Condition. But see Fiengo, Huang, Lasnik and Reinhart (1988) for arguments against the Pied-Piping hypothesis.

2) His analysis that specific expressions have basically the same syntax as partitives is based on Szabolcsi's (1983) analysis of possessives. Uriagereka (unpub.) assumes that partitives, such as *every one of the men*, have the following structure:



Note that *one*, which is base-generated as the complement of Agr, is raised to the Spec of DP.

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