Raising and control predicates in heritage German

In this presentation, we explore the syntactic structures associated with raising and control predicates in Moundridge Schweitzer German (hereafter MSG), a moribund heritage dialect of German with a predominantly Eastern Palatinate heritage spoken in and around Moundridge, Kansas. To the best of our knowledge, our research on these predicates breaks new grounds in the literature on heritage German. As our provisional results show, MSG appears to lack a raising predicate equivalent to *seem* in English where the subject of the infinitival clause can "raise" into the matrix clause. Secondly, MSG speakers can produce subject control predicates, but appear to lack object control predicates except for limited instances (such as the construction of *let*-causatives). Here we outline the methodology of our study, provide a brief discussion of our results, and model of our findings in Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG; Bresnan 2001).

Methodology and data
This study was designed to determine the state of raising and control constructions in the MSG grammar. 16 speakers (7 male, 9 female; average age 81.2) of MSG participated in the study, in which they were presented with a total of 40 sentences in their dominant L2, English, 10 sentences in four conditions, and asked to provide a translation. The conditions were: (a) raising ('he seems to be sick'), (b) subject control ('I tried to tie my shoe'), (c) object control ('I asked him to go outside') and (d) what we have termed "serial verbs" ('he kept eating dinner').

Preliminary results from our research indicate raising verbs (such as standard German *scheinen* and English *seem*) do not co-occur with a non-pleonastic subject in MSG. Instead, speakers use a construction consisting of a pleonastic subject and the raising verb *scheine* 'to seem' bearing 3rd person singular agreement ('es scheint' – 'it seems') as in (1):

(1) *Es scheint, sie   gleichen Bier   trinke.*
    it seems they like   beer drink
    'It seems they like to drink beer.'
    Target: 'They seem to like to drink beer.'

Subject control appears to still be intact for the majority of MSG speakers:

(2) *Er hat aufgehört, Soccer spiele.*
    he has stopped   soccer playing
    'He stopped playing soccer.'
    Target: 'He stops playing soccer.'

Speakers of MSG appear to avoid object control, overwhelmingly preferring to use alternative constructions such as subordinate clauses (9 out of 10 stimuli), often with a modal verb (6 out of 9):

(3) *Er hat ihnen gesagt, sie   sollen   fortgehe.*
    he has them said   they should leave
    'He told them they should leave.'
    Target: 'He told them to leave.'

Object control was elicited, however, with one instance of object control occurring with the causative verb *lasse* 'to allow' as in (4):

(4) *Er hat die Gaul   gelass im   Feld jah.*
   he has the horses   let   in the field run
   'He let the horses run in the field.'
   Target: 'He let the horses run in the field.'

Lastly, "serial verbs" is the term given to the condition for predicates that resemble raising and subject control predicates, but where it is unclear if the predicate in the matrix clause assigns thematic properties to the shared structure, or whether this verb only provides aspectual modification to a monovalent event (see Jackendoff 2002, Goldberg 2006):

(5) *Er ist fertig   das Haus painte.*
   he is finished the house paint
   'He is finished painting the house.'
   Target: 'He finished painting the house.'

Results and analysis

The results of our pilot research on the status of raising and control predicates in MSG can be summarized as follows: (1) the raising predicate *scheine* 'to seem' only occurs in a set/frozen derivational construction and (2) although subject control predicates are still a licit option in the MSG grammar, object control predicates are largely avoided and circumscribed by the remaining MSG speakers. These findings are potentially surprising, given that the dominant L2 grammar (English) licenses all of these aforementioned constructions. Finally, these findings pose a daunting challenge to theoretical treatments of the syntax and semantics of raising and control predicates. In particular, from an LFG-perspective these structure blur the distinction between open complements and functional control (i.e. where the SUBJ of the raising verb functionally controls the subordinate XCOMP) and closed complements and anaphoric control (where the SUBJ of a obligatory anaphoric control verb such as *try* anaphorically-controls the subject of COMP, 'closed' infinitival clauses) (see e.g. Dalrymple 2001: Chapter 12). These data present the theoretical puzzle of how best to classify the syntax and semantics of (what remains of) the syntax and semantics of raising and control predicates of MSG.

References

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