Quantifier scope in German
Kiss (2001)

Course on "Locality of grammatical relations"
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Quantifier Scope in German – Analysis

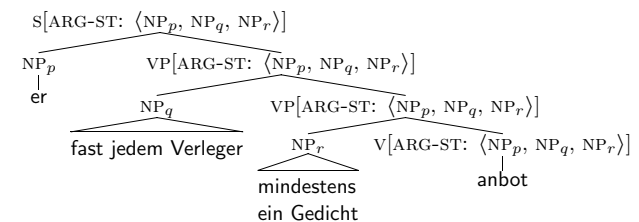Kiss (2001, p. 157) provides the following two definitions:

Quantifier Scope Principle in German: The scope of a quantifier is either the semantic contribution of the syntactic sister of the quantifier or the semantic contribution of a more oblique co-dependent of the quantifier.

(Less oblique) Co-dependency: A co-dependent of an element X is an element Y which is found on the same ARG-ST as X. X is less oblique than Y if X is realized to the left of Y on ARG-ST.

To capture the co-dependency aspect, he proposes to percolate ARG-ST along the head projection.
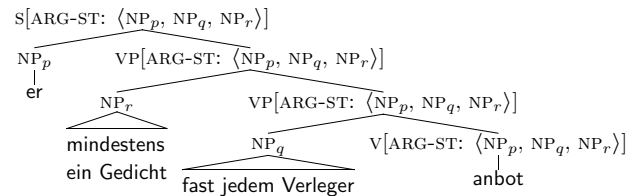

Quantifier Scope in German – Basic phenomenon

Unmarked word order → unambiguous quantifier scopings

(1) daß er fast   jedem Verleger mindestens ein Gedicht anbot
    that he almost every   publisher at-least   one poem   offered
    'He offered almost every publisher at least one poem.'

$\forall$ publisher $<$ $\exists$ poem

Scrambled word order → ambiguity

(2) daß er mindestens ein Gedicht fast   jedem Verleger anbot
    that he at-least   one poem   almost every   publisher offered

$\forall$ publisher $<$ $\exists$ poem & $\exists$ poem $<$ $\forall$ publisher

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Unambiguous example

(3) daß er fast   jedem Verleger mindestens ein Gedicht anbot
    that he almost every   publisher at-least   one poem   offered
    'He offered almost every publisher at least one poem.'

Ambiguous example

(4) daß er mindestens ein Gedicht fast jedem Verleger anbot
　　 that he at-least　one poem　almost every　publisher offered

$$S[\text{ARG-ST: } \langle NP_p, NP_q, NP_r \rangle]$$

NP$_p$ — VP[ARG-ST: $\langle NP_p, NP_q, NP_r \rangle$]

er

NP$_r$ — VP[ARG-ST: $\langle NP_p, NP_q, NP_r \rangle$]

mindestens
ein Gedicht　　NP$_q$ — V[ARG-ST: $\langle NP_p, NP_q, NP_r \rangle$]

　　　　fast jedem Verleger　　　anbot

Alternative formulation of the Scope Principle

The Scope Principle can be reformulated in terms of the local o-command relation of Pollard and Sag (1994, p. 253):

> Quantifier Scope Principle in German: "The scope of a quantifier is either the semantic contribution of the syntactic sister of the quantifier or the semantic contribution of an element which is locally o-commanded by the quantifier." Kiss (2001, p. 157, fn. 16)

⇒ Percolation of ARG-ST along head projection not required.

The local o-command relation is only encoded in the lexical head of the domain though! The second disjunct of the principle must thus take effect with respect to the lexical head to have access to this information.

Tibor's answers to the guiding questions

Which properties need to be accessible?

• The obliqueness relations among co-dependents.

How far and when are the obliqueness relations visible?

• They always need to be visible throughout the entire head domain.

Theoretical interpretation:

• Which representation and percolation mechanisms achieve the desired?
  – ARG-ST list containing *synsem* values of all arguments
  – redefined as *cat* feature + new Argument Projection Principle projects along head path (not HFP to allow for HEAD identity in coordination).

• How is the obliqueness relation used once it is visible?
  – Dedicated principle determining quantifier scope.

References

Kiss, Tibor (2001). Configurational and Relational Scope Determination in German. In W. D. Meurers and T. Kiss (Eds.), *Constraint-Based Approaches to Germanic Syntax*, Studies in Constraint-Based Lexicalism, pp. 141–175. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.

Pollard, Carl and Sag, Ivan A. (1994). *Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.