

Discontinuing Objects in Michif
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Introduction As in many Algonquian languages (Dahlstrom 1987, Reinholtz 1995, Bruening and Lin 2001) discontinuous nominal expressions are observed in Michif determiner phrases (DP) (Bakker 1997, Rhodes 1977, Strader 2014), as seen in (1).

- (1) li pwesonyeen **mischayt** kee-kawschitin-ayw **lee** **pwesoon**.
DET.M fisherman much PST-catch.TA-33 DET.P fish
‘The fisherman caught many fish.’ (Laverdure and Allard 1983:96)

There are restrictions on which DP quantifier expression is able to be discontinuous. Quantifiers appearing with the object DP can separate from their associate DP whereas quantifiers occurring with the subject DP cannot.

Proposal In this talk, we illustrate that Local Instability (Ott 2012) explains the mechanism of the discontinuous phenomenon in DPs, and that discontinuous quantifiers are the result of focus movement (Lochbihler 2009, Johnson and Rosen 2015).

Local instability Ott (2012) argues that if two autonomous nominal expressions merge, this unity is unstable because it is unlabelled; therefore one expression is forced to move. Similar to split topic in German, we illustrate that quantifier expressions in Michif are autonomous nominal constituents which cause local instability. Local instability between the DP and the quantifier phrase (QP) requires the QP to move.

Distribution It appears that only the object can be discontinuous, as shown in (1). We demonstrate that subjects, in both transitive and intransitive sentences, resist becoming discontinuous. The direct object permits discontinuity, however, it seems that the indirect object does not, see (2). We demonstrate, applying Ott (2012), this asymmetry is explained by local instability which predicts that only the complement can be associated with discontinuous quantifiers.

- (2) **awtiht** menish-a **lee** **brawnsh** daw li zawbr ouschi.
some cut.off.TI-IMP.2 DET.P branch PREP DET tree PREP
‘Lop off some of the branches from the tree.’ (Laverdure and Allard 1983:166)

Focus argument Discontinuous quantifiers precede tense and preverbal person agreement, as illustrated in (1&3). Discontinuous quantifiers reside at the left edge of the verbal complex and we assume that this is a focus position (Dahlstrom 1987, Lochbihler 2009, Johnson and Rosen 2015). As illustrated in (3), discontinuous quantifiers in Michif are assigned a focus interpretation.

- (3) namakaykuy ni-tayhtum-nan maaka **mischet** ni-kaaschintin-aanak **lii** **poison**.
NEG 1-thought.AI-1.P but many 1-caught.TA-1P→3P DET.P fish
‘We wouldn’t have thought but we caught a lot of fish.’ (Unexpected event) (NF 2015)

Conclusion We argue that the quantifier movement is the result of local instability. The movement is focus movement. If this analysis is correct, there are implications on the derivation of verbal predicate and discourse properties of the causal domain.

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