

WCO and Focus in Czech

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It is widely accepted that wh-movement and focus movement behave alike, because both types of operations are created by A'-movement. Thus (1) and (2) are bad, since *JOHN* in (1) moves covertly to some A'-position in the same way as *who* moves overtly in (2):

- (1) *His_i mother loves JOHN_i.
- (2) *Who_i does his_i mother love t_i?

However there are some data which show that this assumption is not accurate. As can be seen from sentences¹ like (3), island-creating operators intervening between the operator and the focus do not interfere, but the same sentence with wh-movement would be ungrammatical – (4). The possible solution is to claim that focus configurations consist of a focus licensing operator such as *even* which has to c-command the focused element.

- (3) Sam even saw the man who was wearing the [F RED] hat.
- (4) *What_i did Sam even see the man who was wearing t_i?

As can be seen from Czech sentences like (5) and (6) in configuration where wh-phrase or focus stay in situ wh-phrases and focused elements give raise to WCO:

- (5) *Jeho_i matka miluje KARLA_i.
His mother loves CHARLES
'His_i mother loves CHARLES'
- (6) *Jeho_i matka miluje koho_i?
His mother loves who?
'His_i mother does love who_i?'

But surprisingly if we move wh-phrase or focused element, then WCO nearly disappears:

- (7) ?KARLA_i jeho_i matka miluje t_i.
CHARLES his mother loves t
'His_i mother loves CHARLES_i'
- (8) ?Koho_i jeho_i matka miluje t_i?
who his mother love t?
'Who_i does his_i mother love t_i?'

Wh-movement and focus movement behave similar in this respect and this poses a problem for the focus operator approach. Apart from that this is also a problem if we assume that focus movement and wh-movement are covert in examples like (5) and (6). We can still claim (as Puskas (1997) does) that in (7) is NP *Karla* topic

¹This sentence is from Meinunger (2003)

and topics are not operators, because topicalized constituents do not lead to WCO like in the following Hungarian sentence:²

- (9) Jànost_i SZERETI az pro_i anya t_i
John loves the pro mother
'John_i, his_i mother loves him'

But this solution does not work on the example (8), because wh-phrase can hardly be topic. Besides there are Hungarian sentences³ like (10) and (11) where *Kit* is a wh-phrase and *Jànost* is a focus expression and they are grammatical:

- (10) Kit_i szeret az pro_i anyja?
who loves the pro mother
'Who does his mother love?'
- (11) (?)JÀNOST_i szereti az pro_i anyja.
John loves the pro mother
'His_i mother loves JOHN_i'

In my report I will attempt to solve these problems.

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²Example (42) from Puskas (1997).

³Sentence from footnotes 7 and 12 from Puskas (1997).