# Focus association into copies and the scope of even



**References:** Erlewine 2014. *Movement Out of Focus*. MIT dissertation • Jackendoff 1972. Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar • Karttunen & Peters 1979. "Conventional implicature." In Syntax and Semantics 11 • Nakanishi 2012. "The scope of even and quantifier raising." NLS 20 • Rooth 1985. Association with Focus. UMass Amherst dissertation

(Kayne 1998, fn 75)

# Background: even in DE contexts

The scalar inference of *even* is reversed in downward-entailing (DE) contexts. Two dominant approaches:

- The Scope Theory: (5) а. *Even* takes scope outside of the DE operator at LF
  - Lexical ambiguity theory: b. There are PPI and NPI evens which introduce reverse scalar inferences (Rooth, 1985), and are lexically distinguished in some languages.

# *Even*, ACD, and the Scope Theory

Nakanishi (2012) presents an argument for the Scope Theory from Antecedent-Contained Deletion. Different ellipsis in (8) require QR of the DP to different heights (Sag 1976, Fox 2002):

(8) Bill [ $_{VP1}$  failed to [ $_{VP2}$  lift [ $_{DP}$  the box that Mary did  $\triangle$ ]]]. a.  $\triangle =$  "lift": Bill failed to

 $\left[\left[antecedent=VP2 \mid ft x\right] \lambda x \left[the box \left[ate that Mary did \Delta\right]\right]\right]$ 

b. <u>△ = "fail to lift":</u> Bill PAST

#### Nakanishi's argument:

(9) Mary tried to lift the piano, the desk, and the box, but she has  $\triangle$ ].

→ the box is the most likely to be lifted (vs piano, desk)

Nakanishi's argument goes as follows:

- (a) the intended  $\triangle$  = "failed to (even) lift" reading requires QR of the DP to a position above *fail*;
- (b) the focus will then be out of the scope of even (assuming movement leaves traces, not copies);
- (c) *even* then must covertly scope above *fail* (Scope Theory).

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(Karttunen and Peters, 1979; Wilkinson, 1996; Nakanishi, 2012, a.o.)

### Scope Theory doesn't explain backwards association

We might imagine the Scope Theory (5a) would be useful for backwards association with *even*, but it would overgenerate.

- (6)

The Scope Theory predicts the focus *student* to be in the scope of even at LF, and predicts no raising vs control contrast in (3) or (7).

 $\left[\left[ant=VP1\right]$  fail to lift x]  $\lambda x$  [the box  $\left[ate$  that Mary did  $\Delta$ ]] \_\_\_\_\_\_<sup>\*</sup>

couldn't lift any of them. Bill said that he can lift all of them. However, he has failed to lift the piano that Mary has failed to lift, and has also failed to lift the desk that she has failed to lift. Moreover, he has failed to even lift [DP the [box]F that (Nakanishi 2012: p. 127)

The Copy Theory proposal here defuses Nakanishi's (2012) argument. A copy of the focused *box* will be in the surface scope of even in (9), while resolving the ACD as intended.

### An ACD argument *against* the Scope Theory

Nakanishi's Scope Theory account for (9) *predicts that even can* associate with any subpart of the DP. In contrast, my account predicts only association with the head noun to be possible, not the relative clause which is late-merged (Fox, 2002).

Mary 🗙



And now it's Bill's turn. He normally does quite well, but somehow he did terribly. Today... (11) \* he has **failed** to *even* lift [ $_{DP}$  the box [ $_{RC}$  that [Mary]<sub>F</sub> has  $\triangle$ ]]. (12)  $\checkmark$  he has even **failed** to lift [<sub>DP</sub> the box [<sub>RC</sub> that [Mary]<sub>F</sub> has  $\triangle$ ]].

The contrast between (11) and (12) is unexpected by Nakanishi's account.



**No** student {seems / wants} to *even* read [Aspects]<sub>F</sub> (anymore). *Aspects* is the *most* likely to be read.

<u>Scope Theory predicts even is above DE operator at LF:</u> EVEN (**no** student {seems / wants} to read [Aspects]<sub>F</sub>) **No** [student]<sub>F</sub> { $\checkmark$  seems / \*wants} to even be at the party.

(10) <u>Context:</u> At the box-lifting competition, Sue first lifted the 25kg box and then failed to lift the 30kg box. John lifted the 20kg box but failed to lift the 25kg box. Mary was disqualified immediately, failing to lift the 15kg box.