

Association of floated quantifiers with expressions other than the local grammatical subjects in John Updike's *Rabbit, Run*

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The conventional wisdom about quantifier float in “standard” varieties of English is that a floated quantifier that immediately precedes a VP can be associated only with the subject of that VP (see Bobaljik (2003)). This unanimously held view, however, is contradicted by the following two sentences, found in John Updike's novel, *Rabbit, Run*, to the extent that Updike's idiolect can be regarded as one of the “standard” varieties of English.

- (1) Alcohol and cards Rabbit both associates with a depressing kind of sin, sin with bad breath, ... (p. 16)
- (2) The houses, many of them no longer lived in by the people whose faces he all knew, are like the houses in a town you see from the train, ... (p. 229)

The page references are to Updike (1964). In (1), the quantifier *both* is associated with the topicalized expression *alcohol and cards*, and in (2), the quantifier *all* is associated with *whose faces*, a preposed phrase containing a relative pronoun. These sentences indicate that Updike's idiolect allowed a floated quantifier that immediately precedes a VP to be associated with an expression that has been preposed to a position preceding the subject.

The existence of sentences of this type is predicted by a theory that combines the view, due to Sportiche (1988), that the location of a floated quantifier marks the location of a trace left behind by the noun phrase that the floated quantifier is associated with and the view, due to Chomsky (1986), that an expression that is preposed out of a VP leaves a trace in a position that is left-adjoined to that VP. Such a theory, however, would probably have to be augmented by an account of why floated quantifiers cannot mark the locations of CP-initial intermediate traces, since it seems unlikely that a sentence like **Alcohol and cards she believes both that Rabbit associates with a depressing kind of sin* would have been possible even in Updike's idiolect.

On the other hand, the phenomenon under discussion is unexpected in theories such as Dowty and Brodie's (1984), in which floated quantifiers in

English are viewed as adjuncts that do not have any syntactic relationship with the noun phrases they seem to be semantically associated with. However, it is certainly possible to modify this latter theory in such a way that sentences like (1) and (2) will no longer be problematic.

Thus, at the moment, the existence of sentences like (1) and (2) cannot be said to favor one or the other of the two major theoretical approaches to quantifier float that have been offered in the literature. However it does place further constraints on the possible form that a theory of quantifier float can take, ruling out, for instance, theories that categorically state that quantifier float can be licensed by A-movement but not by \bar{A} -movement.

References

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