

Exceptional Scope Across Islands (Keywords: Indefinites, Exceptional Scope, Experimental Semantics. Both General and Experimental Session (preferred))

This paper presents experimental evidence on the scopal behavior of the Spanish indefinites *un* and *algún* and discusses the theoretical implications of these data. We report two experiments that show that, in Spanish, the availability of exceptional scope depends on both the type of indefinite and the type of island. These results are challenging for most theories of indefinites, which predict any given indefinite to behave uniformly across islands. We propose an account for this puzzling pattern cast in K(ratzer) and S(himoyama)'s (2002) Hamblin semantics.

Rationale for Experiment 1. Schwarzschild (2002) argues that indefinites are existential quantifiers whose scope is island-bound. Apparent cases of exceptional scope result from restricting the indefinite's domain to a singleton. The indefinites *un* and *algún* provide an ideal testing ground for this theory: according to A(lonso)-O(valle) and M(enéndez)-B(enito) (2003), *algún* is a domain widener, and, therefore, its domain cannot be a singleton. In contrast, *un* can restrict its domain to a singleton. Thus, exceptional scope should be possible for *un* but not for *algún* (see also Zamparelli 2007).

Experiment 1. A written questionnaire tested this prediction by investigating whether intermediate scope is available for *algún* and *un* in two types of islands: R(elative) C(lauses) and *if*-clauses. Ten experimental sentences (subexperiment 1A) were like (1) (they had an indefinite inside a RC, *algún* in condition 1, *un* in condition 2), and ten (subexperiment 1B) were like (2) (indefinite inside an *if*-clause, *algún* in condition 1, *un* in condition 2). Sentences were preceded by a context in which only the intermediate scope reading was true. The subjects' task was to decide whether the sentences described the contexts appropriately. A 'yes' response indicated that the intermediate scope reading was available.

The results, in (3), can be interpreted as follows: in RCs (1A) intermediate scope is possible to some extent for both indefinites, although significantly more available for *un*. In conditionals (1B) intermediate scope is very hard for both indefinites. These results do not support the initial hypothesis, according to which exceptional scope should be blocked for *algún* and available for *un* regardless of the type of island.

The Account. We assume that *un* and *algún* are Hamblin indefinites: they denote sets of alternatives that expand up the syntactic tree until they meet an appropriate operator (K & S 2002). Thus, an indefinite is trapped within a syntactic environment only if that environment contains an operator that stops the alternatives. This setup gives us a way of understanding why different islands might differ with respect to indefinite scope: only the syntactic environments that contain an operator that stops alternative expansion will limit the scope of indefinites. This, we claim, is what explains the contrast between our two islands: *If*-clauses introduce a universal operator that stops alternative expansion (Alonso-Ovalle 2006), thereby blocking exceptional scope, but RCs allow alternatives to project up, allowing for exceptional scope. The contrast between *un* and *algún* in RCs is attributed to the fact that the domain widening induced by *algún* is not motivated in that configuration, which reduces the acceptability of the *algún* sentences.

Experiment 2. The contrast between RCs and conditionals is amenable to an alternative analysis, namely that conditionals are rejected more often because they are syntactically more complex ((1) contains two CPs; (2) contains three). A questionnaire tested this by comparing RCs with sentences with no subordination ((1) vs. (4)) (subexperiment 2A), and embedded unembedded conditionals ((2) vs. (5)) (subexperiment 2B). The experimental task was as in Experiment 1. Under the alternative analysis, RCs should get less 'yes' responses than sentences with no subordination, and embedded conditionals, less 'yes' answers than unembedded conditionals. The results are summarized in (6). As before, exceptional scope was harder in conditionals than in RCs. No main effect of embedding was found, suggesting that the difference between conditionals and RCs is not a complexity effect. In conditionals, intermediate scope was significantly more available for *un* (unlike in Exp. 1). This might be accounted for if the domain of *un* can be a singleton in the scope of the universal introduced by the *if*-clause (hence allowing for exceptional scope). However, given that the two experiments had different outcomes with respect to type of indefinite in conditionals, further experiments should be run to determine if this effect is solid.

This research contributes experimental data that should inform our theories of indefinites. The main empirical contribution is that indefinites may display different scope possibilities depending on the type

of island. While these results are challenging for most theories of indefinites, we argue that they can be accommodated easily in K & S's Hamblin semantics.

1) Todos los profesores de lengua enviaron al concurso de redacción todos los trabajos [island que les entregó **algún** / **un** alumno suyo.]
 All the teachers of language sent to-the contest of writing all the papers that to-them gave algún / un student of theirs
 'All language teachers sent all their papers to the writing contest.'

2) Todos los investigadores piensan que [island si envían **algún** / **un** artículo suyo conseguirán la beca.]
 All the researchers think that if they send algún / un article of theirs they will get the fellowship
 'All reseachers think that if they send a paper of theirs, they will get the fellowship.'

3)

Experiment 1A (RCs)	<i>Algún</i>	<i>Un</i>	Experiment 1B (<i>if</i> -clauses)	<i>Algún</i>	<i>Un</i>
% 'yes' answers	33	54	% 'yes' answers	14	16

4) Todos los profesores dieron todos sus trabajos a **algún** / **un** estudiante.
 All the teachers gave all of their papers to algún / un student.
 'All teachers gave all their papers to a student.'

5) Si Juan envía **algún** / **un** artículo suyo, conseguirá la beca.
 If Juan sends algún / un article of his, he will get the fellowship.
 'If Juan sends a paper of his, he will get the fellowship.'

6)

A	Embedded	Unembedded	B	Relatives	No subord.
%	<i>Algún</i> : 13 <i>Un</i> : 23	<i>Algún</i> :1 <i>Un</i> : 23	%	<i>Algún</i> : 36 <i>Un</i> : 48	<i>Algún</i> : 36 <i>Un</i> : 45

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