

Island-escaping indefinites and scopal independence

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While it is tempting to analyze island-escaping indefinites (i.e. indefinites that scope out of syntactic islands) in referential terms, two facts suggest that this move cannot suffice. First, some indefinites may scope out of islands and yet appear within the scope of some other quantifiers; a referential analysis is untenable for such cases (Reinhart 1997). Second, some instances of disjunction display the same island-escaping behavior as indefinites, even though they cannot be said to 'refer' in anything like the usual sense. Both facts may be accounted for by analyzing indefinites and disjunctions in terms of quantification over Skolem functions, in the spirit of the theory suggested by Hintikka to account for so-called 'branching' readings of first-order quantifiers and connectives. We discuss some of the weaknesses of the resulting theory, and the prospects for a purely pragmatic alternative to it.