To Left branch extraction or not to left branch extraction

**Introduction** Discontinuous determiner phrases (DPs) are permitted in Algonquian languages as illustrated for Michif in (1).

(1)  
\[
\text{li } \text{pwsoneyen mischayt kée-kawschitin-ayw lee pwssoon} \\
\text{DEF.m fisherman much Pst-catch.TA-3→3 DEF.p fish} \\
\text{‘The fisherman caught many fish’ (Laverdure & Allard 1983:96)}
\]

I will argue that discontinuous elements are not the result of left branch extraction (LBE) but focus movement. The typology of LBE languages are described by (Bošković 2005), not having overt determiners or articles but rather lexical items such as quantifiers and demonstratives which occupy the adjective position. These adjectival elements have the ability to ‘stack’ in prenominal positions similar to adjectives in English e.g., *the fat fluffy white cat*. Finally, these elements are freely ordered.

The characteristics of LBE are evident in many Algonquian languages such as Menominee, Ojibwe, Plains Cree etc (Johnson & Rosen to appear). Bošković argues that nominal phrases in LBE languages are without determiners; I will show that Michif nominal phrases are definitely DPs. Even though nominal elements are stackable in Michif (2a); Michif has overt determiners (2b) and does not permit the stacking of prenominal elements (2c).

(2)  
\[
\text{a. awa la fij} \\
\text{this.3 DEF.f girl} \\
\text{‘this girl’ (Bakker 1992:103)} \\
\text{b. en mouche ayo-w dawn li let} \\
\text{INDEF.f fly be.AI-3 PREP DEF.m milk} \\
\text{‘there is a fly in the milk’ (Laverdure & Allard 1983:99)} \\
\text{c. *la awa fij} \\
\text{DEF.f this.3 girl} \\
\text{‘*the this girl’ (Rosen 2003:40)}
\]

Johnson and Rosen (to appear) argue that Discontinuous NPs are the result not of focus movement which has been previously argued (Dahlstrom 1987; Reinholtz 1995; Reinholtz 1999) but as a result Left branch extraction (LBE). Asymmetry is evident in Michif discontinuous nominal phrases where the object is discontinuous but not the subject. This asymmetry does not follow from LBE. The object is within the verbal domain whereas the subject is not. While Michif permits discontinuity it is not LBE rather it is the result of focus movement.

**References**


**Bošković, Željko.** 2005. On the locality of left branch extraction and the structure of NP. *Studia Linguistica* 59.1–45.


