

How obligatory is the obligatory narrow scope of bare plurals?

Bert Le Bruyn
Utrecht University

Janine Berns
Radboud University

Abstract

Bare plurals are generally claimed to take narrow scope only. A sentence like ‘Charlotte didn’t find rabbits’ is assumed to be compatible only with a situation in which Charlotte has found no rabbit at all. Interestingly, Dutch seems to allow for wide scope readings of bare nouns in sentences where object scrambling has taken place, like in the following example: *Er waren momenten dat ze doorhad dat ze dingen niet meer wist* (‘There were moments she realised that there were things she didn’t know anymore’). In order to be able to determine the value of such examples in the wide vs. narrow scope discussion of bare nouns, it should first be clarified which role scrambling plays.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the semantic effects of scrambling. We present a synthesis of the Dutch scrambling debate and assess whether scrambling is an operation affecting the inherent semantics of the bare nouns, or whether it is rather an independent operation that may entail secondary semantic effects. We will argue, in line with the majority of analyses on Dutch scrambling, that this phenomenon is not semantically-induced, but that when scrambling takes place, surface scope relations between constituents may change, thus potentially yielding a secondary semantic effect. We will finish our exploration by considering the implications of this view for the theoretical debates on bare nouns, determinerhood and faded partitive constructions.

1. Bare plurals and scope: what is the issue?

Bare plurals are plural nouns without a determiner.¹ In English, bare plurals can express different meanings, as shown by the examples in (1):

- (1) a. Dogs are pets.
b. Dogs are walking on the bridge.

In sentence (1a) the speaker is referring to the entire category of dogs (kind reading).² In sentence (1b), by contrast, the speaker is referring to a particular group of dogs, and the sentence receives an existential interpretation.³

Bare plurals do not show a uniform behaviour cross-linguistically. For instance, unlike English, a language like Spanish does not allow for bare plurals to express the generic reading and a language like French proscribes bare plurals altogether (at least in standard argument position):

- (2) a. *Ballenas son mamíferos.
‘Whales are mammals’
b. *J’ai mangé biscuits.
‘I have eaten biscuits’

¹ There is no agreement in the literature on whether there is an underlying null determiner/zero morpheme or whether there is no determiner at all. For discussion, we refer to Carlson (1977), Longobardi (1991), Chierchia (1998), Dobrovie-Sorin & Laca (2003), Dayal (2004), Borer (2005), Bošković (2008) and Davidse (2009), among many others.

² A bare plural with a generic meaning does not necessarily express an exceptionless quality. Carlson (1977:413-414) illustrates the potential readings of generics by means of different examples involving the same noun. In the sentence *Horses are animals*, the quality of being an animal indeed holds for each member belonging to the category of horses. In a generic sentence like *Horses are smart*, by contrast, it is not necessarily the case that *all* horses are smart, and the noun could be read as “Some horses” or “Most horses”. A third possible generic reading is obtained in a sentence like *Horses are widespread*, which does not imply that every individual horse belonging to this category is widespread, but rather that the category as such meets this characteristic.

³ The bare plural like the one in (1b) has also been analysed as an indefinite plural, as in English it seems to be the plural counterpart of the singular indefinite article *a(n)*. Carlson (1977) strongly opposes against this view and instead claims that all distinct readings of bare plurals should be analysed as instantiations of a unified syntactic and semantic phenomenon, the context in which the bare plural occurs bringing about the relevant interpretation.

How obligatory is the obligatory narrow scope of bare plurals? 3

Unlike singular indefinite nouns, bare plurals are typically believed to take narrow scope only. That is, a sentence with a singular indefinite, such as *Every boy is reading a book*, can be interpreted in two different ways: it could be the case that there is some particular book that every boy is reading or that every boy is reading some book – potentially a different one per boy. In the case of a bare plural, the wide scope reading is assumed to be no longer available. This unavailability of the wide scope reading becomes even more apparent if the sentence includes another scope operator such as negation: a sentence like ‘We didn’t read books’ is for instance assumed to be incompatible with a situation in which we have read (even) one book.

Publications supporting the obligatory narrow scope of bare nouns by far outnumber publications that claim the opposite (e.g. Chierchia 1998; Krifka 2004 and see Le Bruyn et al. 2012 for an overview).⁴ The present paper contributes to the existing observations and insights by investigating an interesting phrasal configuration in Dutch that seems to allow for wide scope readings of bare plurals. Consider for instance the following sentence:

- (3) Er waren momenten dat ze doorhad dat ze dingen niet meer wist.
there were moments that she realised that she things not anymore knew
‘There were moments she realised that there were things she didn’t know anymore.’

In (3), the object has undergone “scrambling”, i.e. it is positioned before the adverbial. Speakers familiar with Dutch will intuitively interpret the situation depicted in this sentence as one where the person involved may have forgotten one or more things but still does remember some other things.

The crucial question that thus arises is whether sentence (3) represents an instance of a genuine wide scope of a real bare plural or whether a semantic effect is brought about by the operation of scrambling. This paper investigates the effects of Dutch scrambling and we evaluate whether it is a syntactic operation bringing

⁴ Most of the claims are however based on armchair judgements and therefore Le Bruyn et al. (2012) decided to put bare plurals to the test. The setup of their paper and pencil experiment was to check whether they could find a difference between Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) like *any* (e.g. *any of them*) and bare plurals (e.g. *colleagues on his team*). Their results were in accordance with their expectations: the items with bare plurals were indeed considered more acceptable than the items with NPIs, implying that bare plurals allow for wide scope. The conclusion that bare plurals can take wide scope is not necessarily warranted though. The problem is that part of the explanation for the effect they found might actually reside in the amount of pragmatic slack NPIs and bare plurals accept. NPIs being considerably more prominent could be argued to allow for less pragmatic slack (i.e. exceptions) than the very light bare plurals.

out an interpretation that is available independently or whether it changes the semantic type of the bare plural. The outcome of this evaluation is crucial for determining the relevance of examples like (3) in the discussion on the scope of bare plurals. Our exploration continues in section 2, where Dutch scrambling is exemplified in more detail. In section 3, the different formal linguistic analyses of this phenomenon are presented. The implications of this literature synthesis for the scope of bare plurals will be discussed in section 4, where we will also address the perspectives for future research. The paper will be concluded by means of a short summary in section 5.

2. Dutch scrambling

Scrambling is a phrase-structure option available in languages such as Dutch and German, but not in English. In Dutch main and subordinate clauses, the position of a direct object relative to an adverb may vary: the object may either follow or precede it. As we have already seen in the previous section, if the object precedes the adverb, the object is said to have “scrambled”:

- (4) a. ... dat Julia gisteren **de taart** heeft gebakken.
that Julia yesterday the cake has baked
b. ... dat Julia **de taart** gisteren heeft gebakken.
that Julia the cake yesterday has baked
- (5) a. ... dat ik vandaag **haar** heb gesproken.
that I today her have spoken
b. ... dat ik **haar** vandaag heb gesproken.
that I her today have spoken
- (6) a. ... dat hij vaak **een hond** heeft gezien.
that he often a dog has seen
b. ... dat hij **een hond** vaak heeft gezien.
that he a dog often has seen
c. ... dat hij vaak **honden** heeft gezien.
that he often dogs has seen
d. ... dat hij **honden** vaak heeft gezien.
that he dogs often has seen

As examples (4)-(6) show, definite objects, indefinite objects and pronouns can all be found in scrambled position. Pronouns (cf. (5)) scramble (quasi-)categorically

How obligatory is the obligatory narrow scope of bare plurals? 5

and only in the specific context of a contrastive reading they remain *in situ*. For indefinites the scrambling effects are different. In unscrambled position (6a/c) they may receive either a “de re” or “de dicto” reading, but if indefinites do scramble, they get a strong reading and become [+quantificational] (6b/d).⁵ An existential (weak) reading of scrambled indefinites is only obtained under contrastive focus (cf. Choi 1996, De Hoop 2000). Definites (cf. (4)) appear to scramble rather freely, but we will see below that different linguists have put forward rather different and even conflicting characterisations of the scrambling behaviour of this nominal category.

The phenomenon of scrambling has received a considerable amount of attention in the literature on Germanic languages. Syntacticians have been occupied with the exact circumstances in which scrambling takes place and the way the operation should be formalised in terms of tree structures.⁶ Semanticists have been looking into the relation between scrambling and meaning, for instance in the light of the theoretical type of scrambled and unscrambled nouns.

In the following subsections we will describe the views on scrambling put forward by the four main players on the formal linguistic side: Diesing (e.g. Diesing 1992; Diesing & Jelinek 1995), de Hoop (e.g. de Hoop 1992, van der Does & de Hoop 1998), Ruys (2001) and van Bergen & de Swart (2009, 2010). The overview will be more or less chronological, as in this way we can nicely illustrate how the different researchers have reacted to previous analyses and how the insights on scrambling have evolved over time.

⁵ Kerstens (1975) provided a first investigation of the semantic implications of scrambling for indefinites. He linked the emergence or absence of a quantificational interpretation to the object’s position in the tree structure at surface level (i.e. inside or outside the VP).

⁶ We will not address the formal syntactic operation underlying scrambling in this paper. For possible analyses of scrambling in terms of tree structures, we refer to e.g. Bennis & Hoekstra (1984), vanden Wyngaerd (1989), Neeleman (1994).

3. The scrambling debate

3.1. *Diesing: Mapping Hypothesis*

Diesing (Diesing 1992; Diesing & Jelinek 1995) puts forward the “Mapping Hypothesis” to account for the derivation of logical forms and the interactions between syntax and semantics. Let us explore in this section which claims and predictions this framework makes with respect to object scrambling.

In Diesing’s conceptualisation (based on Kamp 1981 and Heim 1982), syntactic trees split into two parts: an IP and a VP part, which map onto the “restrictive clause” and the “nuclear scope”, respectively (1992:9). The VP is the domain where default existential closure takes place, which means that all NP material that does not receive an existential reading (in principle) has to move out of the VP towards the IP (and hence scrambles). The IP then functions as a host for quantificational⁷ and presuppositional expressions (anaphoric definites and pronouns).⁸ The German subordinate clauses in (7) illustrate the syntactic and semantic effects of the Mapping Hypothesis (Diesing 1992:107-108):

- (7) a. ... daß Otto immer Bücher über Wombats liest.
 that Otto always books about wombats reads.
 $[_{CP} \text{daß } [_{IP} \text{Otto immer } [_{VP} \text{Bücher über Wombats liest}]]]$
 Always_{*t*} [*t* is a time] $\exists_x x$ is a book \wedge Otto reads *x* at *t*
- b. ... daß Otto Bücher über Wombats immer liest.
 that Otto books about wombats always reads
 $[_{CP} \text{daß } [_{IP} \text{Otto Bücher über Wombats immer } [_{VP} \text{liest}]]]$
 Always_{*x*} [*x* is a book] \exists Otto reads *x*

The bare plural object *Bücher über Wombats* expresses an existential meaning in (7a), but is interpreted as a quantificational constituent in (7b). As specific structural positions in the syntactic tree are linked to specific meanings, scrambling is an essentially semantically-driven phenomenon (Diesing 1992:108; Diesing & Jelinek 1995:172).

⁷ Quantificational expressions move out of the VP by “Quantifier Raising”, which is “essentially a process of type mismatch resolution” (Diesing & Jelinek 1995:126).

⁸ The existential interacts with the “Novelty Condition” (Heim 1982), which stipulates that variables that are subject to existential closure must be new in the discourse (Diesing & Jelinek 1995:130).

3.2. *De Hoop: scrambling is basically a syntactic possibility*

De Hoop (1992, 2000, 2003; van der Does & de Hoop 1998) disagrees with Diesing's view on scrambling at several points. The fundamental difference between the two analyses resides in the fact that de Hoop does not see scrambling as a semantically-driven phenomenon. Scrambling is basically an instance of word order variation that is not triggered by one specific principle, but factors such as definiteness and anaphoricity influence the scrambling (dis)preferences of NPs (e.g. 2000:154-155). A second important deviation from Diesing's analysis is that, according to de Hoop, scrambling is "truly optional" (van der Does & de Hoop 1998:399) for all definites, and that no shift in meaning is involved (cf. (4)).

De Hoop describes and explains the phenomenon of scrambling in the light of her Case configuration theory (1992) and the debate on strong/weak expressions (Milsark 1974). If objects scramble, they must be of the generalised quantifier type (i.e. strong NPs or weak NPs that may be assigned a strong reading after scrambling (2000:153)). Scrambling is however proscribed for nominal expressions that depend on the verb they combine with for establishing reference. This holds for instance for the incorporated indefinite *een plas* in (8) (cf. van der Does & de Hoop 1998:396).

- (8) a. omdat iedereen nog een plas moet doen
because everyone still a piss must do
b. *omdat iedereen een plas nog moet doen
because everyone a piss still must do

(8a) shows that *een plas* is grammatical in unscrambled position and (8b) shows that the scrambled position is proscribed for this same constituent. The insight that scrambling requires the nominal expression to establish reference independently of the verb entails that – everything else being equal – unincorporated indefinites, quantificational expressions, definites and pronouns can in principle scramble.

Let us now, with the crucial underpinnings of de Hoop's analysis in mind, consider in more detail how the Dutch scrambling patterns are formalised. Van der Does & de Hoop (1998) look into the differences in scrambling behaviour of different types of NPs (indefinites, definites, pronouns). It is claimed that each type of NP has its own basic word order, which corresponds to the most frequently used order for that particular category. If a sentence deviates from a specific category's basic word order, changes in meaning arise (1998:408).

For pronouns, the basic word order is the scrambled order, which is associated with a neutral reading. When pronouns are used in an unscrambled

word order, the non-neutral, deictic, meaning surfaces (cf. (5)). For indefinites, by contrast, the unscrambled variant is the default word order; if an indefinite object scrambles, only the (strong) referential reading is still available (cf. (6)). Definites, however, do not have a preferred word order: this category of NPs may freely scramble, without a change in meaning (cf. (4)).

In 2000 and 2003, de Hoop further explores the scrambling patterns: she looks into the role of anaphoricity and proposes a formal analysis within the framework of Optimality Theory (OT).⁹ The essential point that is confirmed in these two studies is that scrambling is not inherently driven. The scrambling (dis)preferences of the different NPs can be captured straightforwardly by means of OT, where constraints like “New” (anaphors scramble, 2003:209) and “Stay” (no scrambling, 2003:210) interact with scrambling constraints for different NP types. Depending on the constraint hierarchy and the relative ranking of the constraints (i.e. crucially ranked or equal status), the different scrambling patterns can be derived.

3.3. *Ruys: relative scope*

A fundamentally different view on scrambling is proposed in Ruys (2001), a paper that zooms in on the distinction between strong and weak determiners (Milsark 1974) and strong and weak readings of indefinites (Kerstens 1975). Although Ruys does not deny that scrambling may affect the meaning of an NP, he explicitly rejects analyses that claim that the *inherent* semantics of an NP changes depending on its exact position in the sentence.¹⁰ Ruys argues that there is no empirical evidence supporting such views and he instead presents an analysis where the semantic effects of scrambling are explained in terms of differences in scope relations and focus possibilities. The first piece of evidence Ruys puts forward in favour of his view is that, contrary to predictions made by existing analyses, NPs may still receive a *weak* reading when scrambled, as illustrated in (9) (2001:51).

- (9) ... dat elke arts wel een of andere ziekte meestal met penicilline behandelde
that every MD PRT some or other disease usually with penicillin treated
'that every MD treated some disease or other usually with penicillin'.

The above example is a well-formed Dutch sentence where the indefinite *een of andere ziekte* does not become strong after scrambling: it is not generic, nor

⁹ De Hoop takes the OT analysis provided by Choi (1996) as a starting point.

¹⁰ i.e. inside or outside the VP at surface structure (inside the VP: non-quantificational, outside the VP (=scrambled): quantificational).

How obligatory is the obligatory narrow scope of bare plurals? 9

partitive, nor specific. What happens in (9) is that the scrambled object now finds itself inside the scope of the subject ‘every MD’, yielding a weak reading. Note that a weak reading would also be fully possible with a bare plural object in a sentence like (9).

Ruys further sustains his alternative analysis by looking at the scope effects on scrambled *strong* indefinites, such as in (10) (2001:57).

- (10) a. ...dat Jan drie keer bijna alle glazen omgooide
On three occasions, John knocked over almost every glass
- b. ... dat Jan bijna alle glazen drie keer omgooide
Almost every glass, John knocked over three times.

In the above sentences, scrambling of the strong object also results in a change in interpretation, but this is not because the NP itself changes, but because the scope relation between the object *bijna alle glazen* and the adverbial *drie keer* is affected.

Given the effects in sentences such as (9) and (10), Ruys argues¹¹ that any semantic consequence of scrambling is in fact the result of a general phenomenon, which is independent of the strong/weak distinction: scrambling transforms the surface structure of the sentence (and hence c-command relations), which may affect scope relations between constituents in the sentence, and which thus may apply to any kind of object (cf. 2001:55-56).¹²

3.4. Van Bergen & de Swart: definiteness hierarchy

Van Bergen & de Swart (2009, 2010) aimed at evaluating to what extent the predictions made by the different theories on scrambling are actually reflected in natural language data. The most important outcome of their analyses of the Dutch spoken language corpus CGN (*Corpus Gesproken Nederlands*) is that, surprisingly, *all* types of DPs (unambiguously quantificational expressions, definites and indefinites) rather disfavour scrambling, whereas (as expected)

¹¹ Without taking a stand on whether scrambling fixes scope relations (cf. Diesing & Jelinek 1995).

¹² One of Ruys’ major criticisms of the scrambling accounts essentially relying on strong/weak readings is that these only stipulate that a strong reading emerges in a scrambled context, without making any further predictions about which quantificational reading (e.g. partitive, generic, specific) occurs when (2001:49). This inconvenience is also countered in an analysis based on scope, as the obtained reading is a direct result of the scope relations within the sentence.

pronouns scramble almost categorically. The scrambling frequencies detected in the corpus for the different types of objects can be translated into the following hierarchy, where “each step down [...] corresponds to a significant decrease in scrambling frequency”: pronouns (99%) > proper nouns (53%) > definites (12%) > indefinites (2%) (2009:122).¹³

Van Bergen & de Swart’s results thus empirically confirm the scrambling tendencies of pronouns and indefinites, and even more interestingly, the corpus data shed a totally new light on the scrambling behaviour of definites. As we have seen in section 3.2, de Hoop characterised scrambling of definites as “truly optional”, but in reality their patterning turns out to be far from randomly distributed: like indefinites, definites rather stay *in situ*, and also the effect of anaphoricity is very limited. The actual patterning of definites is even more problematic for Diesing, who considered scrambling to be a semantically driven phenomenon. If the object does not move out of the VP (i.e. does not scramble) the mapping hypothesis would lead to existential closure. The fact that definites and unambiguously quantificational expressions do *not* pattern with pronouns, strongly suggests that Diesing’s account is simply on the wrong track as far as Dutch is concerned.

The analysis van Bergen & de Swart propose is that in a language like Dutch two positions are available for objects: one to the left and another one to the right of the adverb. The intriguing question then of course is why, except for the category of pronouns, speakers of Dutch make only limited use of the scrambled word order. According to van Bergen & de Swart, the choice between the two positions is driven by processing considerations: by positioning longer or less easily accessible (i.e. indefinite, non-anaphoric, infrequent) material later in the sentence, the speaker gives herself more time to position the different elements in her utterance.¹⁴ If a specific element requires less planning because it is short, known, and/or belongs to a small category that is quickly searchable, objects scramble more easily. It is then not surprising that pronouns, which are function words (and are generally short and belong to a small category) scramble categorically (except in focus/contrastive contexts). Definite and indefinite nouns, by contrast, belong to larger categories and are generally longer, which makes them less easily accessible, and therefore less likely to scramble. Ease of access

¹³ Van Bergen & de Swart’s statistical analyses have shown that definiteness is a better predictor for the obtained patterns than grammatical weight, even though there is of course a relation between these two factors. This difference in explanatory power is the result of the relatively low scrambling frequency of existentially quantified pronouns (such as ‘someone’/‘nothing’): “[...] as these are relatively short, they would be predicted to scramble much more often than they do in practice” (2010:282).

¹⁴ This idea is based on the “Late commitment approach” put forward by Wasow (2002).

decreases along the definiteness hierarchy we have seen above, which thus explains the observed scrambling patterns.¹⁵

3.5. Conclusion: effect of scrambling

Of the authors discussed above, only Diesing has argued that scrambling happens purely because of the semantics of the scrambled expression. De Hoop, Ruys and van Bergen & de Swart have all argued in favour of a view where scrambling is not semantically-conditioned. Van Bergen & de Swart furthermore showed that processing considerations are crucial in explaining scrambling. It can therefore be concluded that scrambling is, in principle, nothing more than a syntactic option. If there is any semantic effect left, this has to do with changes in scope relations between quantifiers brought about by the change in word order. We thus predict that this consequence is particularly relevant for expressions that normally occur in unscrambled position: by scrambling them, special weight can be attributed to the surface scope relation between such an expression and the adverb, and inverse scope relations become less obvious.

4. Back to bare plurals

Having seen the essentials of the Dutch scrambling debate, let us now return to the example that forced us to have a look at scrambling in Dutch:

- (11) *Er waren momenten dat ze doorhad dat ze **dingen** niet meer wist.* = (3)
there were moments that she realised that she things not anymore knew
'There were moments she realised that there were things she didn't know anymore.'

Our exploration of the scrambling literature, which has led to the conclusion that scrambling is essentially a syntactic phenomenon, entails two conclusions about the bare plural in (11). The first conclusion to be drawn is that, given that scrambling has no independent effect on the expressions that scramble, the plural noun in (11) is unlikely to be anything more than a run-of-the-mill bare plural. The second conclusion follows from the secondary semantic effect that, as we have

¹⁵ Proper nouns have received little attention in the work of Diesing and de Hoop. These turn out to have medium predictability (most variation) as they scramble about half of the time. Given that proper nouns are claimed to have the same ease of access as adverbs, this true optionality is predicted by van Bergen & de Swart's analysis.

seen, scrambling may entail. An indefinite NP prefers to appear in unscrambled position. Realising it in scrambled position consequently draws attention to the surface scope relation between the NP and the adverb, making it hard to get a scope interpretation that goes against this surface word order. Even though the semantics of the indefinite NP does not change, this does mean that it will typically take scope over the adverb. The scrambled position is consequently a good position to test the availability of wide scope readings, in particular for expressions for which wide scope appears less obvious. Putting this differently: if an expression allows for wide scope readings at all, these should be traceable in scrambled position. This is exactly what we find in (11).

If we are right in assuming that scrambling is essentially a syntactic and not a semantic phenomenon, the availability of a wide scope reading for the bare plural in scrambled position cannot be a repair mechanism that coerces the bare plural into taking on a reading it normally does not have. The prediction this makes is that scrambled bare plurals should still allow for other readings as well. (12) demonstrates that this prediction is borne out:

- (12) Tegenwoordig ben ik diegene *die mensen niet herkent*. Mijn netvliezen zijn gescheurd, nog zo'n kwaal die met de jaren komt.
Nowadays, I'm the one *who doesn't recognize people*. My retinas are torn, another ailment that comes with age.

The first reading of (12) is that the speaker has a hard time recognizing anyone. This reading is particularly prominent because of the fact that a torn retina has an effect on vision and does not discriminate between people. The fact that *mensen* does not get a wide scope reading here provides strong support for our conclusion that the availability of a wide scope reading in (11) cannot be an effect of coercion.

Our findings are important for current theoretical debates. First of all, the wide scope potential of bare nominals in Dutch contributes to the time-honoured debate on the nature of bare nominals. This debate is concerned with the question whether bare nominals are kind denoting, indefinite, both or neither. Most facts can be turned against or in favour of any of these analyses. To give one specific example: Carlson (1977) proposes that the complementary distribution of the kind and the indefinite interpretation of bare plurals is a good argument to assume that they have a single (kind) semantics that compositionally leads to a kind or an indefinite analysis in the contexts they appear in (cf. endnote iii). Davidse (2009), on the other hand, sees the complementary distribution as a clear indication that bare plurals should be formally analysed as indefinites (with a zero determiner) in indefinite contexts and as real bare plurals (without zero determiner) in contexts in which they refer to kinds (cf. endnote i). The only empirical argument that has always clearly favoured a unified kind analysis is that bare plurals (allegedly)

never take wide scope. Without going into the details, this can be made to follow (more or less) automatically from a kind analysis but would have to be stipulated explicitly in an indefinite and an ambiguity analysis.

Secondly, the discussion on scope also contributes to the literature on the status and characterisation of determinerhood. An example of an ongoing discussion is the status of items like French *des* and Italian *dei* that have been analysed both as complex (partitive) expressions without upstairs noun/determiner and as simple determiners. The association between wide scope potential and full determinerhood continues to influence the debate. For instance, Cardinaletti & Giusti (2016) oppose *dei N* to bare plurals based (among other things) on the wide scope potential of the former and the (alleged) lack of wide scope of the latter.

Finally, an extension of our discussion on scrambling and scope that could play an important role in the analysis of *des* and *dei N* is the behaviour of so-called faded partitives in scrambled position (e.g. de Hoop, vanden Wyngaerd & Zwart 1990; Oosterhof 2005; Le Bruyn 2010):

(13) *Er waren momenten dat ze doorhad dat ze van die kleine dingen niet meer wist.*

there were moments that she realised that she of those little things not anymore knew

‘There were moments she realised that there were things she didn’t know anymore.’

If *van die* in (13) is not a determiner and if it takes wide scope over negation, it follows that complex partitives without upstairs noun/determiner allow for wide scope. The upshot of this would be that wide scope of *des* and *dei* cannot count as an argument in favour of their determinerhood.

5. Conclusion

Scrambling of bare plural objects in Dutch appears to enable a wide scope reading of these nouns. In order to assess the semantic effects of scrambling, we provided an armchair-linguistics overview of the Dutch scrambling literature. After a close inspection of the various analyses that have been put forward, we adopted the view that has become dominant in the Dutch scrambling debate, and concluded that scrambling is not a semantically-conditioned phenomenon. Scrambling rather is an instance of syntactic variation that may lead to changes in scope relations between operators, which may cause changes in meaning between the scrambled and unscrambled word orders. The Dutch data thus constitute an intriguing piece

of evidence to be taken into account in the theoretical debate on the scope of bare nouns, and we hope that our exploration of the semantic effects of scrambling will further the theoretical and empirical research on bare plurals, determiners and faded partitives.

References

- Bennis, H. and Hoekstra, T. (1984) ‘Gaps and Parasitic Gaps’. *The Linguistic Review* 4, 29-87.
- van Bergen, G. and de Swart, P. (2009) ‘Definiteness and Scrambling in Dutch: Where Theory Meets Practice’. In A. Schardl, M. Walkow and M. Abdurrahman, eds, *Proceedings of NELS 38*, 113-124. GLSA, Amherst MA.
- van Bergen, G. and de Swart, P. (2010) ‘Scrambling in Spoken Dutch: Definiteness versus Weight as Determinants of Word Order Variation’. *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory* 6 (2), 267-295.
- Borer, H. (2005) *In Name Only*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Bošković, Ž. (2008) ‘What Will You Have, DP or NP?’. In E. Elfner and M. Walkow, eds, *Proceedings of NELS 37*, 101-114. GLSA, Amherst MA.
- Cardinaletti, A., and Giusti, G. (2016). ‘The Syntax of the Italian Indefinite Determiner *dei*’. *Lingua* 181, 58-80.
- Carlson, G. N. (1977) ‘A Unified Account of the English Bare Plural’. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 1, 413-457.
- Chierchia, G. (1998) ‘References to Kinds across Languages’. *Natural Language Semantics* 6, 339-405.
- Choi, H.-W. (1996) *Optimizing Structure in Context: Scrambling and Information Structure*. Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University.
- Davidse, K. (2009) ‘Bare plural NPs in English: indefinites versus generics’. Paper presented at ‘Bare nominals and Indefinites’, Florianópolis, 4-5 June.
- Dayal, V. (2004) ‘Number Marking and (In)definiteness in Kind terms’. *Linguistics and philosophy* 27 (4), 393-450.
- Diesing, M. (1992) *Indefinites*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Diesing, M. and Jelinek, E. (1995) ‘Distributing Arguments’. *Natural Language Semantics* 3 (2), 123-176.
- Dobrovie-Sorin, C., and Laca, B. (2003) ‘Les Noms sans Déterminant dans les Langues Romanes. In D. Godard and A. Abeillé, eds, *Les Langues Romanes. Problèmes de la phrase simple*. Editions du CNRS, Paris, 235-281.
- van der Does, J. and de Hoop, H. (1998) ‘Type-shifting and Scrambled Definites’. *Journal of Semantics*, 15 (4), 393-416.

How obligatory is the obligatory narrow scope of bare plurals? 15

- Heim, I. (1982) *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts.
- de Hoop, H., vanden Wyngaerd, G. and Zwart, J.W. (1990) 'Syntaxis en Semantiek van de *Van die*-constructie'. *Gramma* 14, 81-106.
- de Hoop, H. (1992) *Case Configuration and Noun Phrase Interpretation*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Groningen.
- de Hoop, H. (2000) 'Optional Scrambling and Interpretation'. In: H. Bennis, M. Everaert and E. Reuland, eds, *Interface Strategies*, KNAW, Amsterdam, 153-168.
- de Hoop, H. (2003) 'Scrambling in Dutch: Optionality and Optimality'. In S. Karimi, ed, *Word Order and Scrambling*, 201-216. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford.
- Kamp, H. (1981) 'A Theory of Truth and Semantic Interpretation. In J. Groenendijk, T. Janssen and M. Stokhof, eds, *Formal Methods in the Study of Language*. Mathematical Centre: Amsterdam, 277-322.
- Kerstens, J. (1975) 'Over Afgeleide Structuur en de Interpretatie van Zinnen'. Ms., University of Amsterdam.
- Krifka, M. (2004) 'Bare NPs: Kind-referring, Indefinites, Both or neither?'. In R.B. Young and Y. Zhou, eds, *Proceedings of the 13th Conference on Semantics and Linguistic Theory*. Cornell University, New York, 180-203.
- Le Bruyn, B. (2010) *Indefinite Articles and Beyond*. Doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University. LOT: Utrecht.
- Le Bruyn, B., Que, M. and de Swart, H. (2012) 'The Scope of Bare Nominals'. In A. Mari, C. Beyssade and F. Del Prete, eds, *Genericity*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 116-139.
- Longobardi, G. (1991) 'Proper Names and the Theory of N-movement in Syntax and Logical Form'. *University of Venice Working Papers in Linguistics* 9. University of Venice.
- May, R. (1977) *The Grammar of Quantification*. Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Milsark, G. L. (1974) *Existential Sentences in English*. Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Neeleman, A. (1994) *Complex Predicates*. Doctoral dissertation, Utrecht University.
- Oosterhof, A. M. (2005) 'Dutch Bare Plurals, Faded Partitives and Subject-object Asymmetry'. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 19, 59-91.
- Ruys, E. G. (2001) 'Dutch Scrambling and the Strong-Weak Distinction'. *The Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 4 (1), 39-67.
- Wasow, T. (2002) *Postverbal Behavior*. CSLI Publications, Stanford, California.

16 Bert Le Bruyn & Janine Berns

vanden Wyngaerd, G. (1989) 'Object Shift as an A-Movement-Rule'. In P. Branigan et al., eds, *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 11, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 256-271.