

Information-structural constraints on linearization in the DP

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Introduction

- ▶ Encoding of information-structural (IS) categories on a sentential level has received considerable attention in the last years.
- ▶ Different IS-categories (Topic, Focus and their sub-types) can be marked by different marking strategies across and within languages.
- ▶ Languages tend to select one of the following strategies as the main strategy for focus marking (cf. Büring 2009):
 - ▶ phonological marking
 - ▶ word order changes
 - ▶ morphological marking
 - ▶ (no marking at all)

Introduction

- ▶ IS encoding on the DP-level as well as its relation to sentential focus marking has been discussed much less frequently.
- ▶ For some languages, there seems to be a correspondence between IS marking strategies on the sentential and the DP level (cf. Samek-Lodovici 2010 for Italian)
- ▶ In this talk we will extend this discussion to the Mabia languages spoken in northern Ghana and surrounding areas.
- ▶ These languages
 - ▶ mark focus morphologically with particles;
 - ▶ do not allow any type of DP-internal focus marking.

Claims

Claim

Information-structural marking in the DP does not always correspond to the marking on a sentential level.

- ▶ There is no evidence for a designated focus projection inside of DPs in Maba languages
- ▶ The lack of a focus projection in the DP affects the linearization of the focus marker.

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Romance – Spanish

- ▶ For both Spanish and Italian, focus marking in the DP works in parallel to focus marking in the CP.
- ▶ In Spanish, new information focus must be realized in sentence final position, achieved by moving non-focal constituents to non-canonical positions (Zubizarreta 1998).

- (1) Q: *Who gave you the bottle of wine?*
A: Me regaló la botella de vino **Maria**.
me gave the bottle of wine Maria
'Maria gave me the bottle of wine.'
A': #**Maria** me regaló la botella de vino.

(Zubizarreta 1998: 126)

Romance – Spanish

- ▶ While the picture might be more complex on the phrasal level (del Mar Vanrell and Fernández-Soriano 2018), something similar can be observed inside the DP.
 - ▶ Bernstein (2001) argues that elements in DP-final position receive a focal interpretation.
- (2)
- a. el libro interesante **este**, no aquel
the book interesting this not that
'this interesting book, not that (one)'
 - b. *el libro interesante **este**, no aburrido
the book interesting this not boring
int.: 'this interesting book, not the boring (one)'
- (3) ??un estudiante rubio **cualquiera**, no moreno
a student blond any not brunette
'any blond student, not brunette'

(both from Bernstein 2001: 2)

Romance – Italian

- ▶ Something very similar has been discussed for Italian adjectival orderings (Samek-Lodovici 2010).
- ▶ Focus on the lower adjective as in (4-A) requires it to remain in right-peripheral position of the DP, blocking the otherwise possible raising of [noun+lower adjective] across the higher adjective (4-A').

- (4) Q: *Where is this splendid car from?*
A: È una splendida macchina **francese**.
is a splendid car French
'It is a splendid FRENCH car.'
A': *È una macchina **francese** splendida.

Romance – movement to a low FocP

- ▶ Focus marking in the DP seems to parallel focus marking in the clause in some Romance languages.
- ▶ While this is often attributed to the prosodic account of Zubizarreta (1998), it is also compatible with a syntactic account.
- ▶ Both constructions might involve movement into a dedicated low focus positions, similar to what was proposed in Belletti (2004) for the clause.
- ▶ Potential evidence comes from the pattern in (5) from Hoot (2012: 302) (with considerable speaker variation) or other data discussed in Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann (2010).

(5) Q: *How many police officers arrested the suspect?*

A: Arrestaron al sospechoso **cuatro** poliCÍAS.
arrested the suspect four police.officers
'Four police officers arrested the suspect.'

German – IS on the clausal level

- ▶ In German, new-information focus is expressed via prosody, sometimes in combination with syntactic reordering.
 - ▶ (6-a) has the focus on the IO with unmarked word order, whereas in (6-b), the IO in focus also surfaces in the rightmost position of the VP (ignoring the participle) (Büring 2009: (42)).
- (6)
- a. Er hat **dem PiLOten** die Passagiere gezeigt.
he has the.DAT pilot the.ACC passengers shown
'He showed the passengers to the pilot.'
 - b. Er hat die Passagiere **dem PiLOten** gezeigt.
he has the.ACC passengers the.DAT pilot shown
'He showed the passengers to the pilot.'
- ▶ Note that (6-b) is usually not analysed as the focus moving into a dedicated position but the other element(s) moving to higher positions.

German – IS on the DP level

- ▶ In the DP in German, similar to many other languages, the rather fixed adjective ordering can be changed when a lower adjective is focused (7).
- ▶ This has been taken as evidence for a high syntactic focus position (Scott 2002; Svenonius 2008; and many others), but see Cinque (2010) for discussion.

- (7)
- a. der große rote Ballon
the big red balloon
 - b. der **ROTE** große Ballon
the red big balloon
'the big red balloon'
- (Roehrs 2020b: (21))

German

- ▶ Other clear cases of focus effects on the DP syntax in German are difficult to find.
 - ▶ Roehrs (2020a) proposes a generalized left-peripheral position in the German DP (following Giusti and Iovino 2016 for Latin) which can host topical as well as focused elements.
- (8)
- a. von der **Stadt** die Zerstörung
of the city the destruction
'the destruction of the city'
 - b. aus **Italien** der Wein
from Italy the wine
'the wine from Italy'
- (Roehrs 2020a: (40))
- ▶ Note the parallel here to the left-peripheral position in the German clause (*Vorfeld*).

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Focus projections in the DP?

- ▶ Many West African languages mark information-structure morphologically by the use of designated topic and focus particles.
- ▶ Aboh (2004) presents an idea of topic and focus projections in the DP, mirroring the structure of clauses.
- ▶ In Gungbe, there are different articles following the noun:

$$Top^0 = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{▶ } \mathbf{b}': [+specific, +definite] \\ \text{▶ } \mathbf{d}\acute{e}: [+specific, -definite] \\ \text{▶ } \mathbf{d}\check{e}: [\text{partitive}] \end{array} \right.$$

- ▶ Further, there is a question marker:

$$Foc^0 = \text{▶ } \mathbf{t}\acute{e} \text{ ('which')}$$

Focus projections in the DP?

- (9) a. * [Távò xóxó **lɔ̃/dě** **té**] wè Kòfí xɔ̃?
 table old DEF.SPEC/INDEF.SPEC Q FOC Kofi buy
 ‘Which old aforementioned table did Kofi buy?’
 (Aboh 2004: 8)
- b. [Távò xóxó **dě** **té** lé] wè Kòfí xɔ̃?
 table old PART Q NUMB FOC Kofi buy
 ‘Which one of the old tables did Kofi buy?’
 (Aboh 2004: 8)

- (10) [DP D [TopP távò_i xóxó **dě** [FocP t'_i' **té** [NumP t'_i' lé [FP t_i]]]]]
-

No focus in the DP

Below, we challenge Aboh's claim that focus is part of the DP evidenced by data from Mabia languages.

Focus marking in Mabia languages

- ▶ In Mabia (formerly Gur) languages, ex-situ, as well as in-situ focus is marked morphologically by independent particles.
- ▶ Dependent on the language, the in-situ particle can either
 - ▶ be in a fixed post-verbal / sentence-final position (e.g. Dagbani, Dagaare, Gurene, Buli, Kusaal / Sisaali)
 - ▶ **immediately follow the focused element** (e.g. **Likpakpaanl**, Kasem)

(11) Q: *Who did Konja beg a book from?*
A: Konja mee **Sam le** ki-gban.
Konja beg Sam FOC NC-book today
'Konja begged a book from SAM.'

(12) Q: *What did Konja beg from Sam?*
A: Konja mee Sam **ki-gban la**.
Konja beg Sam NC-book FOC
'Konja begged a BOOK from Sam.'

Morphological focus marking not allowed in DPs

- ▶ Both in Likpakpaanl and Kasem, the focus marker is not allowed to immediately follow a focused element inside a DP.
- ▶ Instead, the focus marker must be right-adjacent to the highest DP layer.¹

¹All data were elicited with the DFG-funded project "The VP-periphery in Mabia languages (<https://mabia-vp.com/>). We thank our associate researcher **Samuel O. Acheampong** for the Likpakpaanl data.

Focused possessors

(13) one level of embedding

Q: *Whose fowl did Mary slaughter?*

A: Mary kɔr [DP **Peter** (*le) aa-kɔla] *(la).
 Mary kill Peter FOC POSS-fowl FOC
 ‘Mary killed PETER’S fowl.’

(14) two levels of embedding

Q: *Whose sister’s fowl did Mary slaughter?*

A: Mari nan kɔr [DP [DP **Peter** (*le) aa-ninkpan]
 Mary PST slaughter Peter FOC POSS-sister
 aa-kɔla] *(la).
 POSS-fowl FOC
 ‘Mary slaughtered PETER’S sister’s fowl.’

In-situ focus inside a relative clause

(15) one level of embedding

Q: *Did you see the man who slaughtered the cow?*

A: Aayi, n nan kan [DP u-ja [Rel u nan kɔr u-kɔla (*le)
No I PST see NC-man REL PST slaughter NC-fowl FOC
na]] *(la).
REL.DEF FOC

‘No, I saw the man who slaughtered a FOWL.’

(16) two levels of embedding

Q: *Do you know the woman who saw the man who slaughtered a cow?*

A: Aayi, n nyi [DP u-pii [Rel u nan kan [DP u-ja [Rel
No 1SG know NC-woman REL PST see NC-man
u nan kɔr u-kɔla (*le) na]]]] *(la).
REL PST slaughter NC-fowl FOC REL.DEF FOC

‘No, I know the woman who saw the man who slaughtered a FOWL.’

In-situ focus inside a finite clause inside a relative clause

- ▶ The only exception to this rule is that if a DP embeds a finite clause, the focus marker can occur inside this DP.

(17) Q: *Did you see the man that said that Peter slaughtered a fowl?*

A: Aayi, n kan [DP u-ja [Rel u len [CP ke **John** *(le)
no I see NC-man REL say COMP John FOC
kɔr u-kɔla na]]] (*la).
slaughter NC-fowl REL.DEF FOC

‘No, I saw the man that said that JOHN slaughtered a fowl.’

No extraction out of DPs

- ▶ Ex-situ focus is formed by moving the focused constituent to the left periphery of the clause followed by the ex-situ focus particle (18).
- ▶ Fronting is impossible if the focused constituent is inside the DP (19).

(18) Q: *What did Konja beg from Sam?*

A: **Ki-gban_i le** Konja mee Sam *t_i*.
 NC-book FOC Konja beg Sam
 ‘Konja begged a BOOK from Sam.’

(19) Q: *Whose fowl did Mary slaughter?*

A: **Peter_i le** Mary kər [**DP** *u_i* / **t_i* aa-kɔla].
 Peter FOC Mary slaughter 3SG POSS-fowl
 Literally: ‘It is PETER that Mary slaughtered his fowl.’

No ex-situ focus inside DPs

- ▶ Embedded finite clauses provide an ex-situ focus position (20).
- ▶ DPs do not have such a position (21).

(20) Peter len [_{CP} ke u-kɔla_i le John kɔr t_i].
 Peter said COMP NC-fowl FOC John slaughter.PFV
 ‘Peter said that John slaughtered a FOWL.’

(21) Q: *John’s brother slaughtered a fowl.*
 A: *Aayi, [_{DP} aa-ninkpan_i le John t_i] kɔr u-kɔla.
 no POSS-sister FOC John slaughter NC-fowl
 Intended: ‘No, John’s SISTER slaughtered a fowl.’

No focus dependency across a DP

- ▶ The data suggest that the in-situ focus marker *le* must be licensed by an element inside a finite clause.
- ▶ Assuming that this is a focus head, the licensing dependency (agreement or movement) may not cross a DP boundary (22).
- ▶ If the DP contains a full finite clause, the focus head in this clause can license a focus marker (23).

(22) $[_{CP} \dots FOC_{[uFOC]} \dots [_{DP} \dots XP le_{[iFOC]} \dots] \dots]$

└─────────── * ───────────┘

(23) $[_{CP} \dots [_{DP} \dots [_{CP} FOC_{[uFOC]} \dots XP le_{[iFOC]} \dots] \dots] \dots]$

└─────────── ✓ ───────────┘

No focus projection in the DP

Two arguments:

- ▶ Ex-situ focus within the DP seems impossible in Likpakpaanl.
- ▶ Once we assume a focus projection in the DP, the impossibility of *le* within DPs becomes a mystery.

No focus in the DP

The Mabia data cannot corroborate Aboh's claim that the DP contains an elaborate structure similar to clauses.

Linearization as a repair?

- ▶ Linearizing the normally right-adjacent in-situ focus marker to the right of the highest DP-layer leads to ambiguity: Either the highest DP is in focus or any subconstituent inside of it can be focused. (The context disambiguates the structure.)

- (24)
- a. ... [DP ... **XP** ... YP ...] *le* ...
 - b. ... [DP ... XP ... **YP** ...] *le* ...
 - c. ... [**DP** ... **XP** ... **YP** ...] *le* ...

- ▶ The dependency between the in-situ focus marker *le* and the focused constituent cannot be based on Agree as this would cross the DP barrier, which we previously argued to be impossible.

Linearization as a repair?

- ▶ One way to solve this would be to use linearization as a repair. We speculate that:
 - ▶ *le* is first right-adjacent to the focused XP inside the DP.
 - ▶ In order to get licensed, *le* readjoins to the outermost DP barrier.

- (25)
- a. ... [DP ... **XP** <le> ... YP ...] le ...
 - b. ... [DP ... XP ... **YP** <le> ...] le ...
 - c. ... [**DP** ... **XP** ... **YP** ...] le ...

Conclusions

- ▶ We discussed parallels between focus marking on the clausal and the DP-level, respectively.
- ▶ For Spanish and Italian, and maybe to a lesser extent German, focus marking in the two domains is similar.
- ▶ Note that in these languages, the main marking strategy is **prosodic**.
- ▶ In the Mabi languages focus marking on the clausal level is **morphological** and impossible in the DP.
- ▶ This suggests some fundamental differences between the marking strategies and casts doubt on universal IS-projections inside the DP.

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