The Syntax of Phrasal Stress “Exceptions”

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1. Introduction

Since SPE, syntactic hierarchy (and not linearization) is the input to PS assignment.

The following holds:

- The apparent problem of “exceptions” is the result of: (i) the proper kind of phrasal stress theory, and (ii) the appropriate syntactic representations.

3.2 Reflexive Anaphors

In a very similar way, reflexive anaphors are shown to undergo movement to a position outside of VP and within the phrase (Ahn 2012, 2013, In Progress).

However, this anaphor movement only takes place when the anaphor is bound by the subject:

Thus when bound by a non-subject, the movement doesn’t take place and the anaphor bears PS.

These two derivations are given below:

\[ (3) \]

\[ (4) \]

- The locus of phrasal stress is in fact a signal about the structure.
- We now have the evidence that this structure is too simple.

Conclusion To Be Made

- PS always distributes to the most deeply embedded constituent in the Spell-Out Domain.
- Providing evidence for richer clausal structure.
- Simplifying the interfaces and learning problem.

2. Model of PS Assignment

- Contemporary theories of phrasal stress generally agree that syntactic hierarchy (and not linearization) is the input to PS assignment.
- Depth of embedding: What matters.
- In (1), the object is as deeply embedded as the other syntactic object, Y. Provided that no copy of Y commands all copies of X. PS assignment, as well as any IP operation, does not apply to entire sentence-structures at once.
- Instead, it operates on Spell-Out Domains (e.g. Legate 2006, Aigner 2006).
- This opens the following definition for the PS assignment operation:

(4) Syntactic Depth Nucleus Stress Rule

The most deeply embedded constituent in a Spell-Out Domain receives the phrasal stress.

- Given this definition, some movements/finalized NSR and some don’t (Legate 2006):

(1) When both copies of X are sent to Spell-Out with Y.

(2) When the higher copy of X is not sent to Spell-Out.

3.3 Indefinites and N-D

English words like someone, everything and anybody are formed by N-D movement.

- The result of N-D movement does not bear PS.

(1) What did Lisa do?

(a) She asked something.
(b) She cooked some food.
(c) She cooked something.

- So let us consider the syntax, as is what we have seen to affect PS:

It is standard to assume that cook something (involving N-D movement) and cook some food have the following structures:

(2) cook

(3) cook some food

- However, the two cases: in cook something and cook some food are not the same D:

It is thus possible that the two Ds occur in different positions.

4. Conclusions

- Each of (1a-d) has a different analysis, which explains why the exact conditions on when one is extrametrical varies across different words.

- Syntactic hierarchy (as has already argued) but the interfaces are simpler.

- Prosodically motivated movement (m-movement) is unnecessary: a grammatical operation.

- The interface is more transparent; detectable cues in the prosody can inform the learner about the syntactic structure.

In Progress: Giving reflexivity a voice: Twin reflexives in English. Doctoral Dissertation, UCLA.


References