

Anaphoric destressing and scrambling in Dutch and English

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1 A conflict of interests

Goal: To account for the difference between Dutch and English sentential stress and word order in non-focus contexts

- ⑩ Lack of stress on a direct object correlates with discourse-familiarity/givenness
- ¶ Languages assign default maximal prominence to most deeply embedded constituents (here, direct objects)

When ⑩ and ¶ conflict, different languages resolve the conflict differently:

- English ‘retracts’ stress onto the verb
- Dutch scrambles the object out of the VP

Re-ranking of constraints captures the difference between English-like languages and Dutch-like ones.

2 Background

Default stress (following Selkirk 1984, 1995, Cinque 1993)

- (1) ‘Nuclear Stress Rule’ (NSR) =def
Main sentential pitch accent falls on the most deeply embedded (lexical) constituent.

(‘NSR’ should be understood as a cover term for the system of ALIGN(XP, fi) or other constraints that are actually responsible for deriving this result; see Truckenbrodt 1995)

- (2) Q: What happened (to YOU)? (context requires IP-focus)

A1: I saw a GHOST. #I SAW a ghost.
A2: Ik heb een GEEST gezien. #Ik heb een geest GEZIEN.

- Discourse-familiar elements are deaccented

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Neeleman & Reinhart 1996 propose a version of (3); cf. also Williams 1995, DROPTOPIC of Grimshaw & Samek-Lodovici 1995, and GIVENNESS/AVOIDF of Schwarzschild 1996.

- (3) AVOIDSTRESS: (Anaphoric destressing)

A DP *x* is destressed iff *x* is linked to an accessible discourse entity.

(where ‘accessible discourse entity’ is as in Ariel 1990; cf. Pesetsky 1987’s ‘D-linking’ inter alios)

This accounts for the contrast between (2) and (4):

- (4) Q: How’s it going with your review of Monk’s biography of Wittgenstein?

A1: Well, I’ve finally READ it/the damn thing/the book.

#Well, I’ve finally read IT/the damn THING/the BOOK.


A2: Ik heb het/het boek GELEZEN.

#Ik heb HET/het BOEK gelezen.


I have it the book read

- (5) AVOIDSTRESS >> NSR

With definites:

		AVOID STRESS	NSR
a. 	I [READ the book] _{VP}		*
b.	I [read the BOOK] _{VP}	*!	

With indefinites:

		AVOID STRESS	NSR
a.	I [SAW a ghost] _{VP}	*!	*
b. 	I [saw a GHOST] _{VP}		

In Dutch, the definite in the context in (4) must scramble:

- (6) A2: Ik heb het/het boek eindelijk GELEZEN.
 #Ik heb eindelijk het/het boek GELEZEN.
 #Ik heb eindelijk HET/het BOEK gelezen.
 I have finally it the book read

But (unfocused) indefinites cannot (Kiparsky 1966, de Hoop 1992, Choi 1996, et multi alii):


- (7) [in the context of (2)]
 A: Ik heb gisteren een GEEST gezien.
 #Ik heb een geest gisteren GEZIEN.
 #Ik heb een GEEST gisteren gezien.
 I have a ghost yesterday seen

3 The account: STAY moves

- DP scrambling is possible in Dutch because STAY is outranked

(In these tableaux, *obj_{old}* indicates an object that is discourse-old, *adv* is a VP-adjoined adverbial, and *x* indicates that stress falls on the constituent *x*).


- (8) Dutch: scrambling satisfies anaphoric destressing requirement; ex. (6).

		AVOID STRESS	NSR	STAY
a.	adv [óbj _{old} v]VP	*!		
b. 	obj _{old} adv [t v!]VP			*
c.	adv [obj _{old} v!]VP		*!	

- In English, STAY outranks NSR, so scrambling does not occur.

- (9) [in the context in (4)]
 a. #I read the BOOK finally.
 b. #I READ finally the book.
 c. I READ the book finally.


- (10) English: NSR violated to satisfy anaphoric destressing requirement; ex. (9).

		STAY	AVOID STRESS	NSR
a.	[v óbj _{old}]VP adv		*!	
b.	[v! t]VP adv obj _{old}	*!		
c. 	[v! obj _{old}]VP adv			*


Compare the case when the object is discourse new:

- In both languages, the unmoved indefinite will be optimal, incurring no violations.

(11) Dutch: ex. (7)

		AVOID STRESS	NSR	STAY
a. 	adv [obj _{new} v]VP			
b.	obj _{new} adv [t v!]VP	*!		*
c.	adv [obj _{new} v!]VP	*!	*	

(12) English: ex. (2)

		STAY	AVOID STRESS	NSR
a. 	[v obj _{new}]VP adv			
b.	[v! t]VP adv obj _{new}	*!	*	
c.	[v! obj _{new}]VP adv		*!	*

4 Extensions

4.1 German

- Definites scramble, indefinites stay
(Kiparsky 1966, Lenerz 1977, Uszkoreit 1987, data from Cinque 1993)

(13) Der Arzt wird den Patienten₁ [VP t₁ unterSUCHen].
the doctor will the patient examine

(14) Der Arzt wird [VP einen PATIENTEN untersuchen].

Such contrasts are often taken to be driven by constraints directly requiring movement of certain semantic classes (Diesing 1992, de Hoop 1992, Woolford 1995's Exclusion Principles, Choi 1996).

Here: ⑨ We pursue the idea that such movement is mediated by *phonological* well-formedness
(AVOIDSTRESS does the work; parallels in Truckenbrodt 1995, Neeleman and Reinhart 1996, Cinque 1993, Schwarzschild 1996, et al.)

Diesing 1996 offers the following data, without indicating accent or context.

- (15) a. *?...weil ich selten die Katze streichle.
b. ...weil ich die Katze selten streichle.
because I the cat seldom pet

Her commentary: (a) is acceptable only if *die Katze* receives a contrastive reading (see especially Choi 1996 for a more insightful exploration of this fact).

- (16) ...weil ich selten die KATZE streichle, nicht den HUND.
because I seldom the cat pet not the dog

“definite objects must move out of VP or else be subject to a focused or contrastive interpretation” Diesing 1996: 72.

- Compare pronouns, which require scrambling:

- (17) *...weil ich selten SIE streichle.
...weil ich sie selten streichle.
because I her seldom pet

- Definiteness *per se* is not the key: Noncontrastive attributive definites need not scramble:

- (18) ...weil ich selten DIE KLEINSTE KATZE streichle.
because I seldom the smallest cat pet

4.2 Icelandic

- Received wisdom: Full DP object shift is “optional”, pronominal object shift is obligatory

In fact:

Optionality is only apparent.
The situation is as in German.

- Non-given DPs must not shift

- (19) Q: What did Jon do when he was young?
A: Hann las [ekki bækur]. *unshifted*
#Hann las bækur₂ [ekki t₂]. *shifted*
he read books not
'He didn't read books.'

- Given DPs must shift

- (20) Q: What did Jon do with the book?
A: #Hann las [ekki oft bókina]. *unshifted*
Hann las bókina₂ [ekki oft t₂]. *shifted*
he read book-the not often

- Again, contrastiveness (focus) allows a definite object to remain in situ:

- (21) Hann las [ekki oft TESSA BÓK]. *unshifted*
he read not often this book

4.3 Turkish

- Subjects show the same effects (cf. Diesing 1992 for German)
Turkish has no definite article; definiteness marked by position and stress.

(All Turkish data from Dede 1986)

(22) Yer-de çocuk yat-ıyor-du.
ground-loc child lie-prog-past
'On the ground a child was lying.'

(23) Çocuk yer-de yat-ıyor-du.
child ground-loc lie-prog-past
'The child was lying on the ground.'

- Contrastive focus again allows in situ:

(24) Yer-de ÇOCUK yat-ıyor-du, ANNE-SI deg*il.
ground-loc child lie-prog-past, mother-his not
'It was the child who was lying on the ground, not his mother.'

⑨ Accent alone indicates anaphoricity (as in Russian)

- Indefiniteness:

(25) Q: Bu ses ne? Ne ol-uyor?
that sound what what happen-prog
'What is that sound? What is happening?'

A: SAAT çal-ıyor.
clock strike-prog
'A clock is chiming.'

- Definiteness:

(26) Saat ÇAL-IYOR. Bozuk deg*il-mis.
clock strike-prog. wrong not-rep.past
'The clock is chiming. (I see that) there was nothing wrong with it.'

5 Conclusions

- Dutch and English neutral stress assignment is identical; no language-specific directionality is involved.

- Low-ranking of STAY in Dutch permits scrambling; high-ranking STAY in English prevents it. Phonological well-formedness constraints drive syntactic movement.
- ④ The same mechanism that drives scrambling of definite DPs in Dutch drives ‘stress retraction’ in the same contexts in English.
- A uniform account of the phenomena in both scrambling and non-scrambling languages can be given without recourse to special constraints that directly stipulate ordering or interpretational requirements on semantic type.

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