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

 DPR Lack of stress on a direct object correlates with discourse-familiarity/givenness

 AJ Languages assign default maximal prominence to most deeply embedded constituents (here, direct objects)

When DPR and AJ 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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(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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVOID STRESS</th>
<th>NSR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>I [READ the book]$_{VP}$</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>I [read the BOOK]$_{VP}$</td>
<td>*!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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With indefinites:

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<td>a.</td>
<td>I [SAW a ghost]$_{VP}$</td>
<td>*!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>I [saw a GHOST]$_{VP}$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

(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

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

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{AVOID STRESS} & \text{NSR} & \text{STAY} \\
\hline
a. & \text{adv} [\text{obj}_{\text{old}} \text{v}]_{\text{VP}} & *! & \text{ grill }
\\
b. & \text{obj}_{\text{old}} \text{adv} [\text{t} \text{v}]_{\text{VP}} & * & \\
c. & \text{adv} [\text{obj}_{\text{old}} \text{v}]_{\text{VP}} & *! & \\
\end{array}
\]

• 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).

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{STAY} & \text{AVOID STRESS} & \text{NSR} \\
\hline
a. & [v \text{obj}_{\text{old}}]_{\text{VP}} \text{adv} & *! & \\
b. & [v! \text{t}]_{\text{VP}} \text{adv} \text{obj}_{\text{old}} & *! & \\
c. & [v! \text{obj}_{\text{old}}]_{\text{VP}} \text{adv} & & *
\end{array}
\]

Compare the case when the object is discourse new:

• In both languages, the unmoved indefinite will be optimal, incurring no violations.
Merchant -- H-OT poster

(11) Dutch: ex. (7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVOID STRESS</th>
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<th>STAY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [obj]_new adv v</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [obj]_new adv [t v]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [obj]_new adv [v]</td>
<td>*</td>
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</table>

(12) English: ex. (2)

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>STAY</th>
<th>AVOID STRESS</th>
<th>NSR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [v obj]_new v</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [v! t]_new v</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [v! obj]_new v</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

4 Extensions

4.1 German

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

(13) Der Arzt wird den Patienten [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: ➈ We pursue the idea that such movement is mediated by phonological well-formedness

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 constrastive reading (see especially Choi 1996 for a more insightful exploration of this fact).
...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-iyor-du.
    ground-loc child lie-prog-past
    ‘On the ground a child was lying.’

(23) Çocuk yer-de yat-iyor-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-iyor-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-iyor.
    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 \textit{STAY} in Dutch permits scrambling; high-ranking \textit{STAY} in English prevents it. Phonological well-formedness constraints drive syntactic movement.

The same mechanism that drives scrambling of definite DPs in Dutch drives ‘stress retraction’ in the same con-texts 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.

\section*{References}


Krifka, Manfred. 1996. “Scope inversion under the rise-fall pattern in German.” To appear in \textit{LI}.


