

Focus interpretation is relational (but not stochastic)

M. Assmann D. Büring I. Jordanoska M. Prüller

University of Vienna
FWF Project P 29180-G23 “Unalternative Constraints Cross-Linguistically”,
Vienna
`unalternatives.project@univie.ac.at`

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FWF

Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

Accent based theories

Introduction

- ▶ For Selkirk (1995), Schwarzschild (1999): Accent = non-givenness (\approx focus)
- ▶ Problematic:
 - ▶ ornamental accents, i.e. pitch accents preceding the focus.
 - ▶ Second Occurrence Focus: Material is focused but not accented

Problem 1: Ornamental accents

(1) What did you buy?

- a. ✓I bought TOfu.
- b. ✓I BOUGHT TOfu.
- c. ✓I BOUGHT TOfu.

- ▶ Same focus possibilities.
- ▶ Accent-based theories can't account for that (since all accented words must be part of the focus).

Problem 2: Second Occurrence Focus

- (2)
- a. John only ate a BIT of the rice.
 - b. Even the KIDS only ate a BIT of the rice.

Second Occurrence Foci like (10-b) are only realized by stress if post-nuclear. (Féry and Ishihara 2009, Beaver et al. 2007)

Summary

Accent-based theories fail to predict:

- ▶ accents without focus (ornamental accents)
- ▶ focus without accents (second occurrence focus)

But then how should we do this?!

Focus → Stress

The solution: Focus influences the metric structure, and the metric structure influences what accent patterns are possible.

Relational Theories

Relational Theories

- ▶ We build on relational theories, as put forward by Truckenbrodt (1995), Ladd (1996) and Calhoun (2010)
- ▶ Calhoun: Interpretation depends on statistic expectation of the speaker, so
 - ▶ it differs from person to person
 - ▶ whether a focus is broad or narrow is a matter of probabilities
 - ▶ constraints can't be “listed or ranked”
- ▶ We disagree and formalize the account.

Focus → Stress

Focus influences the metric structure, and the metric structure influences what accent patterns are possible:

Assign stress beats according to strength relations:

- (3) METRICAL TREE TO STRESS GRID: An assignment of degrees of stress to the terminals of a metrically annotated phrase marker T is legitimate iff for any branching node N in T , N 's *s*(trong) daughter dominates a terminal with a higher degree of stress than that of any terminal dominated by a *w*(eak) daughter of N .

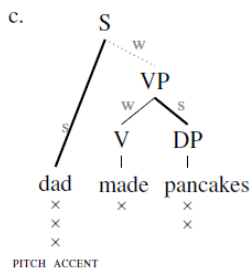
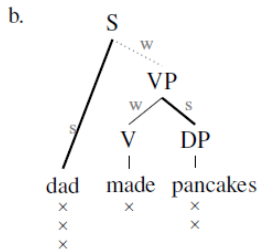
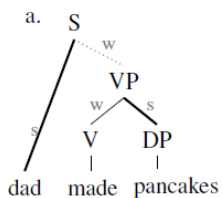
Stress → Accents

Add pitch accents, but:

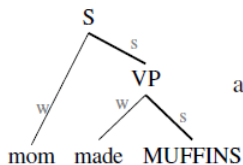
- ▶ Always put an accent on the most prominent syllable.
- ▶ Don't put an accent after the most prominent syllable.
- ▶ You can't put an accent on a column of stress beats if you don't also put an accent on all bigger columns.

(4) **STRESS-ACCENT ASSOCIATION:** An association of pitch accents (PAs) to a metrical grid G is legitimate only if (a) no PA is associated with a column to the right of the highest column of G , and, as far as compatible with that (b) if a column of height n is associated with a PA, every column of height n or higher is associated with a PA.

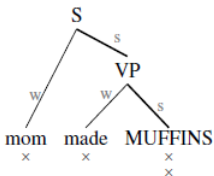
Narrow Focus



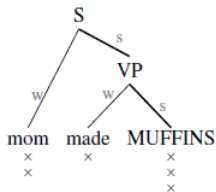
Broad Focus



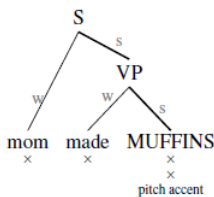
a.



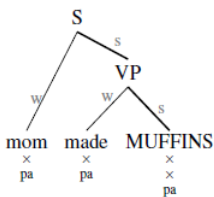
b.



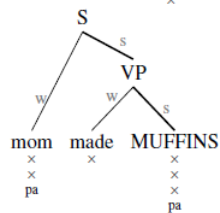
c.



d.



e.

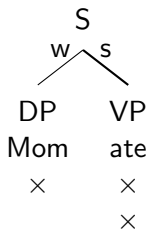


Defaults

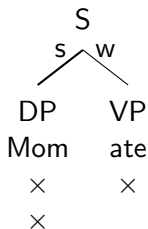
Whether a focus is interpreted as narrow or broad depends on whether it aligns with the default metrical relation between the sisters:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--------------|
| (5) | MOM made pancakes. | Narrow Focus |
| (6) | Mom made PANcakes. | Broad Focus |

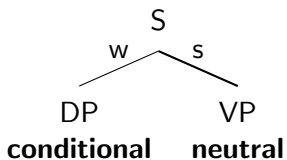
Default:



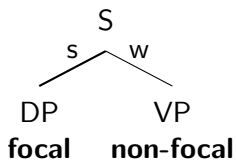
Reversed:



Default:



Reversed:



Defaults (highest to lowest)

WEAK	STRONG
functional	lexical
head	complement
left projection	right projection

Table: Defaults

- (7) Kim should...
- EAT potatoes.
 - EAT something.

Ornamental Focus and SOF Revisited

- (9) What did you buy?
- a. I bought TOfu.
 - b. I BOUGHT TOfu.
 - c. I BOUGHT TOfu.
- (10)
- a. John only ate a BIT of the rice.
 - b. Even the KIDS only ate a BIT of the rice.

Conclusion

- ▶ We pointed out problems in Accent Based Theories and showed that Relation Theories solve those.
- ▶ Focus interpretation depends on metrical defaults.
- ▶ Focus interpretation is non-stochastic.

Thank you!



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