Caroline Féry
Frankfurt University

Focus as prosodic alignment

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Subject of this talk

•Focus universally tends to be aligned prosodically with the right or left edge of a prosodic domain. In alignment between a focused and a prosodic constituent, morpho-syntax is also involved, since edges of prosodic constituents often fall together with edges of syntactic constituents (Gussenhoven 1983, Chen 1987, Selkirk 1986, McCarthy & Prince 1993 among many others).

• Alignment can be fulfilled in many different ways, many of which we will see in a moment.

•Marking of focus with a special grammatical device is not necessarily obligatory. Languages often have several possibilities to mark a focus in grammar.

Subject of this talk

• Alignment must be separated from the notion of 'prominence' that has been proposed in the literature (Jackendoff 1972, Truckenbrodt 1995, Gussenhoven 2008, Zubizaretta 2008 Büring 2009). Prominence is difficult to demonstrate in a typological comparison, even when morphosyntactic reflexes are included in the list of 'prominent' markers.

• Prosodic prominence and alignment may be used together.

Content

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Background: Prosodic Phrasing

Prosodic hierarchy: Strict layer Hypothesis

(x) i-phrase
(x) (x) p-phrase
(x) (x) (x) p-words

(1) Sarah bought lobsters

Alternative: Recursive prosodic structure. Some utterances need more than only one layer of non-recursive p-phrases (Wagner 2005, Ito & Mester 2009, 2011, Selkirk 2009, Féry & Kentner 2010, Féry & Schubö 2010).

(2) $((((\text{Alan})_p$ $((\text{and Barbara})_p$ $(\text{and Claire})_p)_p$ $(\text{and Dennis})_p)_p$ $(\text{and Edward})_p)_p$ $\ldots)_i$

Background: Focus and givenness

Focus: 'Focus' is used rather traditionally as the part of the sentence which introduces alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions (Rooth 1985, 1992, Krifka 2008).

Givennes: A given constituent has already been introduced into the discourse by a previous utterance or question, or is somehow prominent in the common ground (shared context).

Topic: An 'aboutness topic' is a referent which the remainder of the sentence is about, possibly contrasting with other referents under dispute, and crucially followed by a focus constituent. The topic element has often, but not necessarily, been previously introduced into the discourse.

Background: A scale of focal strength

a. all-new sentence (broad information focus)
{What happens?} Tom is going to VIENNA.

b. informational narrow focus
{Who is going to Vienna?} TOM is going to Vienna.

c. exhaustive/identificational interpretation of a narrow focus
{Which of your sons is going to Vienna?} It is TOM who is going to Vienna.

d. association with focus (particles):
{Do both Alain and Tom go to Vienna?} Only TOM is going to Vienna.

e. contrastive focus: parallelism, right-node-raising, selection
{Where are your sons going to?} TOM is going to VIENNA, and ALAIN to BERLIN

f. corrective focus:
{Is Alain going to Vienna?} No, TOM is going to Vienna/No, it is TOM who is going to Vienna.

Background: A scale of focal strength

• The probability of marking focus increases with the kind of focus on the scale (Fanselow 2007, Féry 2007, Skopeteas & Fanselow 2009)

•Distinction between a *new focus*, which is just an information focus, elicited as the answer of a wh-question, and a *corrective focus*, in which a constituent in a question is replaced by another in the answer.

Background: Alignment

Generalized Alignment (McCarthy & Prince 1993)
The edge of a grammatical/prosodic category falls together with the edge of another grammatical/prosodic category.

Where Cat_1 and Cat_2 are prosodic, morphological, or syntactic categories and $Edge_1$, $Edge_2$ are {Right, Left}:
ALIGN (Cat_1, $Edge_1$; Cat_2, $Edge_1$) :
For each Cat_1, there is a Cat_2, such that $Edge_1$ of Cat_1 and $Edge_2$ of Cat_2 coincide.

ALIGN-FOCUS
Align a focused constituent with the edge of a higher prosodic domain.

Background: Parametrization of focus alignment

ALIGN-FOCUS
Align a focused constituent with the edge of a higher prosodic domain.

Two parameters: p-phrase or i-phrase, Right or Left

a. ALIGN-FOCUS R, I-PHRASE R:
   Align a focus with the right boundary of an intonation phrase
b. ALIGN-FOCUS L, I-PHRASE L:
   Align a focus with the left boundary of an intonation phrase
c. ALIGN-FOCUS R, P-PHRASE R:
   Align a focus with the right boundary of a prosodic phrase
d. ALIGN-FOCUS L, P-PHRASE L:
   Align a focus with the left boundary of a prosodic phrase

Content

Experiment

Task 'Anima' in the languages of the database of the SFB 632 in Potsdam (elicited with the questionnaire QUIS)

Procedure

•**Four pictures** presenting simple actions (involving an agent and a patient) are presented to the informant.

•The informant is instructed to observe the stimuli and **memorize the details** of the figures and the presented events. When s/he is ready, **the stimuli are taken away**.

•The informant replies to **four questions** relating to the presented stimuli. S/he is instructed to give full answers.

Datasets

•Small datasets obtained by **four** native speakers per language.

Method

Factors

Focused constituent: agent or patient

Focus type: new information focus (NI) or corrective focus (CR)

{2 further conditions were not considered systematically for this talk: selective, confirmative}

Thus asymmetries of the focus type and/or asymmetries of the focus domain: word order and/or prosodic properties

Stimulus: Picture of a man pushing a car in front of a well

Conditions:

NI/Sbj: 'In front of the well, who is pushing the car?'

NI/Obj: 'In front of the well, what is the man pushing?'

CR/Sbj: 'In front of the well, is a woman pushing a car?'

CR/Obj: 'In front of the well, is the man pushing a bicycle?'

Content

Right alignment in an i-phrase: Italian

Alignment to the right of an i-phrase: Italian (Samek-Lodovici 2005)

a. {What happened?} All-new, informational focus
(Gianni ha RISO_F),
'John has laughed.'

b. {Who has laughed?} Narrow focus on the subject, informational focus
(Ha riso GIANNI_F),
'John has laughed.'

c. {Who has laughed?}
$^{??}$[(GIANNI_F ha riso),
'John has laughed.'

Right alignment in an i-phrase: Italian

Alignment to the right of an i-phrase: Italian (Samek-Lodovici 2005)

{Where did you go with Mario?} Narrow focus, informational focus

a. (Sono andato con Mario)$_{\Phi}$ (a ROMA$_F$)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$
am gone with Mario to Rome
'I went to Rome with Mario.'

b. ((Sono andato a ROMA$_F$)$_{\iota}$, (con Mario)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$
am gone to Rome with Mario
'I went to Rome, with Mario.'

Right alignment in an i-phrase: Italian

Alignment to the right of an i-phrase: Italian (Samek-Lodovici 2005)

Alignment is not possible because of syntactic reason: numeral and noun cannot be discontinuous.

{How many cherries have you given to Mary?} Narrow focus on 'three'
a. ((Ho dato a Maria)$_{\Phi}$ (TRE$_F$ ciliege)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$
have.1sg given to Mary three cherries
'I have given three cherries to Mary'

b. *Ho dato a Maria ciliege TRE$_F$
have.1sg given to Mary cherries three

Right alignment in an i-phrase: Italian

CANONICALWORDORDER (CWO): Realize the canonical word order.
HEAD-ι-R: Align the right boundary of every intonation phrase with its head

T1 *Gianni ha riso* (Focus = Gianni)	ALIGN-FOC-ι-R	H-ι-R	CWO
a. ☞ (Ha riso GIANNI$_F$)$_{\iota}$			*
b. (GIANNI$_F$ ha riso)$_{\iota}$	*!	*	
c. (Gianni$_F$ ha RISO)$_{\iota}$	*!		

Alternative from Samek-Lodovici (2006), inspired by Truckenbrodt (1995):
Focus is prominent, accent is rightward.
Focus moves in order to be prominent.
Prominence is the consequence of the right-alignment of accent.

Right alignment in an i-phrase: French

French also right-aligns a focus but it cannot move ist constituents inside of an i-phrase. Solution: creation of a new i-phrase (= a new clause)

(1) {Does a woman push the car?}
Non, ((c'est un homme$_F$)$_{\iota}$ (qui pousse la voiture)$_{\iota}$)$_{\iota}$
no it-is a man who pushes the car
'No, a man pushes the car.' (no deaccenting)

(2) {Who pushes the man?}
((L'homme blanc)$_{\Phi}$ (est poussé par [l'homme noir]$_F$)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$
The man white is pushed by the man black
'The white man is pushed by the black man.'

Right alignment in an i-phrase: French

Word order in the experiment *Anima* for French (word order)

	SVO	Cleft	Passive
Agent new (n= 7)	2	**4**	**1**
Agent correction (n= 7)	–	**7**	
Patient new (n= 7)	7	–	
Patient correction (n= 8)	8	–	

In the majority of the cases of agent focus (12 of 14), the agent (subject) is i-phrase final.

In patient focus (object), canonical word order SVO is used: the object is aligned by default.

Italian and French are cases of subject/object asymmetry in the marking of focus.

Right alignment in an i-phrase: French

Hamlaoui (2009) explains cleft sentences with alignment in Francilian French, the colloquial spoken language in the Parisian region.

SUBJECT: Sentences have overt subjects in SpecIP

T2 *Un homme pousse la voiture* (Foc = un homme)	SUBJECT	ALIGN-FOC-ι-R	CWO
a. ☞ $((\text{C'est un homme}_F)_\Phi (\text{qui pousse la voiture})_\Phi)_\iota$			*
b. $((\text{Pousse la voiture})_\Phi (\text{un homme}_F)_\Phi)_\iota$	*!		*
c. $((\text{Un homme}_F)_\Phi (\text{pousse la voiture})_\Phi)_\iota$		*!	

Right alignment in an i-phrase

Cases of alignment with extraposition of given material and clitic doubling:

{To whom does Mary give a cake?}

$((\text{Marie})_\Phi$ (donne un gâteau)$_\Phi$ (à son frère$_F$)$_\Phi)_\iota$
Mary gives a cake to her brother
'Mary gives a cake to her brother.'

{What does Mary give to her brother?}

a. $((\text{Marie})_\Phi$ (lui donne un gâteau$_F$)$_\Phi)_\iota$
Mary him.DAT gives a cake
'Mary gives him a cake.'

b. $(((\text{Marie})_\Phi$ (lui donne un gâteau$_F$)$_\Phi)_{\iota'}$ (à son frère)$_\Phi)_\iota$

c. $(((\text{Marie})_\Phi$ (donne un gâteau$_F$)$_\Phi)_{\iota'}$ (à son frère)$_\Phi)_\iota$

Right alignment in an i-phrase

Recall the case of non-alignment of the numeral in Italian:

{How many cherries have you given to Mary?}
$((\text{Je lui en ai donné trois})_\Phi)_{\iota'}$ (de cerises)$_\Phi$ (à Marie)$_\Phi)_\iota$
I her of-them have given three, of cherries, to Mary
'I gave Mary three cherries.'

Both Italian and French align a focused constituent to the right of an i-phrase and change the syntax in doing so.

Right-Alignment in an i-phrase: 'Predicate Cleft'

Predicate cleft (PC): Copy the verb and prepose it.

• Trinidad dialectal English (Cozier 2006 in NLLT): PC expresses contrastive focus on the verb or verum focus.

Is WALK (that) Tim did *walk*.
'Tim WALKED (as opposed to running, skipping, etc.)'
'Tim really WALKED.'

• Haitian Creole (Piou 1982)
Se malad tifi a malad. (Haitian)
It's sick baby DET sick
'The baby is SICK.'

(Standard English can topicalize a verb:
'Everybody thought Mary walk, and walk she did.')

Left alignment in an i-phrase: Hungarian

Results of *Anima*: Immediately preverbal focus in all cases (no exception)

	SVO	SOV	OVS
Agent new (n = 8)	8		
Agent correction (n= 8)	8		
Patient new (n= 8)		4	4
Patient correction (n= 7)	–	6	1

Q: {Is a woman pushing the man?} (agent correction)
A: Nem, (egy férfi$_F$ löki el a férfit)$_t$
no a man is-pushing the man 'No, a man is pushing the man'

Q: {Did the man kick up a table?} (patient correction)
A: Nem, (egy SZEKET$_F$ rúgott fel a férfi)$_t$
No, a chair kicked up the man

Left alignment in an i-phrase: Hungarian

Focus Phrase in the cartographic analysis: Bródy (1990), Horváth (2007)
Syntax-semantics interface (due to an exhaustive reading of the focus): Szabolcsi (1981, 1994), É. Kiss (1998)
prosody-syntax interaction (focus is located at the left of an i-phrase): Szendrői (2003)
Preceded by topics and quantifier phrases (Horváth 2007 and É. Kiss 2010)

From Balogh (2009:131)
subscripted T stands for 'topic', subscripted Q for 'quantifier'
Amy$_T$ mindenkit$_Q$ Benhez$_F$ küldott.
Amy everyone.ACC Ben.ALLATIVE sent
'Amy sent everyone to BEN.'

Bent$_T$ Amy$_T$ mindig$_Q$ mindenkinekQ titokban$_F$ mutatta be.
Ben.ACC Amy always everyone.DAT secretly introduced prt
'Amy always SECRETLY introduced Ben to everyone.'

Left alignment in an i-phrase: Hungarian

Head-ı-L: Align the left boundary of every intonational phrase with its head

T4 *felrúgott a férfi egy szeket* (Foc = egy szeket)	ALIGN-FOC-ı-L	HEAD -ı-L	CWO
a. ☞ (EGY SZEKET$_F$ rúgott fel a férfi)$_t$			*
b. (egy szeket$_F$ RÚGOTT FEL a férfi)$_t$		*!	*
c. (a férfi felrúgott EGY SZEKET$_F$)$_t$	*!	*!	*
d. (FELRÚGOTTa férfi egy szeket$_F$)$_t$	*!		
e. (FELRÚGOTT egy szeket$_F$ a férfi)$_t$	*!		*

head of i-phrase is aligned to the left of an i-phrase as well.
Focus and prominence fall together, like in Italian.

Content

Right alignment in a p-phrase: Chichewa

Right alignment with a p-phrase: Chichewa
Penultimate lengthening
Kanerva (1990: 98)

a. {What happened?/What did he do?} (All-new sentence)
(([anaményá nyumbá ndí mwáála]$_F$)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
he-hit house with rock
'He hit the house with a rock.'

b. What did he hit with the rock? (Object NP focus)
((anaményá nyuúmba$_F$)$_\Phi$ (ndí mwáála)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$

c. What did he do to the house with the rock? (V focus)
([anaméenya$_F$)$_\Phi$ (nyuúmba)$_\Phi$ (ndí mwáála)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$

Right alignment in a p-phrase: Chichewa

Truckenbrodt's (1999) analysis of Chichewa: if WRAP cannot win because of higher-ranking ALIGN-FOC-Φ-R, ALIGN XP-R decides.
The result is more phrases than strictly needed for alignment of focus.

Wrap: an XP is contained into a p-phrase.

T5 *anaményá nyúmba ndí mwála* (Foc = anaményá)	ALIGN-FOC-Φ-R	WRAP	ALIGN XP-R
a. ☞(anaméenyá$_F$)$_\Phi$ (nyuúmba)$_\Phi$ (ndí mwáála)$_\Phi$		*	
b. (anaményá$_F$ nyumbá ndí mwáála)$_\Phi$	*!		*
c. (anaméenyá$_F$)$_\Phi$ (nyúmba ndí mwáála)$_\Phi$		*	*!

Again: if the result of inserting a p-phrase boundary is to achieve prominence, this is only indirect.

Right alignment in a p-phrase: Lekeitio Basque

Lekeitio Basque (Elordieta et al. 1999 and Elordieta 2005, Gussenhoven 2004).
Baltzá is an accented word and can trigger a p-phrase boundary to its right.
Txakur cannot because it is unaccented.

Word order between noun and adjective cannot be changed.
a. Is three-way ambiguous: dog, black, black dog can be focused:

{Did you see the black cat?}
a. ((Txakur BALTZÁ)$_\Phi$ (ikusi dot)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
dog black see AUX
'I saw the black DOG!'
b. * ((TXAKUR)$_\Phi$ (BALTZÁ)$_\Phi$ (ikusi dot)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
c. * ((TXAKUR baltzá)$_\Phi$ (ikusi dot)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$

Right alignment in a p-phrase: Lekeitio Basque

ALIGN-FOC-H*-R: Align the right edge of the XP containing the focus constituent with the nuclear H* (Gussenhoven 2002:180)

DEP(H*): No epenthesis of H* (Gussenhoven 2002:180)

T6 *txakur baltzá ikusi dot* (Foc = txakur)	DEP(H*)	CWO	ALIGN-FOC-H*-R	ALIGN-FOC-Φ-R
a. ☞ (Txakur$_F$ BALTZÁ)$_\Phi$ (ikusi dot)$_\Phi$				*
b. (TXAKÚR$_F$)$_\Phi$ (baltzá)$_\Phi$ (ikusi dot)$_\Phi$	*!			
c. (BALTZÁ txakur$_F$)$_\Phi$ (ikusi dot)$_\Phi$		*!	*!	

Right alignment in a p-phrase: Konkani

Konkani is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Goa (India)
Results of *Anima*

	SOV	OSV	SV	OV
Agent new (n = 6)	5	–	1	–
Agent correction (n= 6)	4	2	–	–
Patient new (n= 6)	5	–	–	1
Patient correction (n= 5)	5	–	–	–

SOV is the unmarked word order. V is always final (23/23)
Given element can be elided (2/23)
Reordering: OSV is licensed by Agent focus (2/12), probably because focus wants to be preverbal.

Right alignment in a p-phrase: Konkani

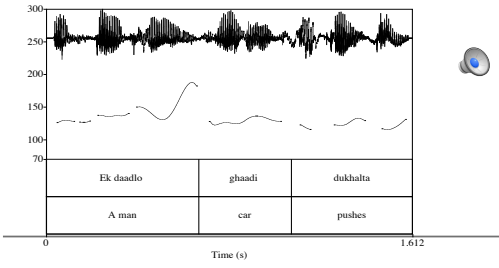
Agent focus (correction)
{Inside the house: Is a woman cutting the watermelon?}
Naa, (([ek daadlo]$_F$)$_\Phi$ (kaalingak torta)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
no, a man melon cuts
'No, a man is cutting the melon.'

Agent focus (new information)
{Who is pushing the car?}
(([Ek daadlo]$_F$)$_\Phi$ (ghaadi dukhalta)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
A man-M car-F push-3.S.PRS
'A man pushes a car.'

Phrasing is pervasive (as in most Indic languages). Initial low tone and final high tone in each prosodic phrase.

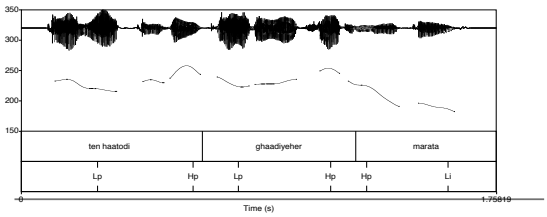
Right alignment in a p-phrase: Konkani

((Ek daadlo$_F$)$_\Phi$ (ghaadi dukhalta)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
A man-M car-F push-3.S.PRS
'A man pushes a car.'



Right alignment in a p-phrase: Konkani

Patient focus
{In front of the fence, what is the girl hitting?}
((ten haatodi)$_{\Phi}$ (ghaadiyeher$_{F}$)$_{\Phi}$ (marata)$_{\Phi}$)$_{I}$
she with-hammer car-OBL-LOC hits
'She is hitting the car with a hammer.'



Right alignment in a p-phrase: Konkani

Patient focus
{In front of the fence, what is the girl hitting?}
((ten haatodi)$_{\Phi}$ (ghaadiyeher]$_{F}$)$_{\Phi}$ (marata)$_{\Phi}$)$_{I}$
she with-hammer car-OBL-LOC hits
'She is hitting the car with a hammer.'

T7 *ten haatodi ghaadiyeher marata* (Foc = ghaadiyeher)	CWO	ALIGN-FOC-ι-L	ALIGN-FOC- Φ -L
a. ☞ ((ten haatodi)$_{\Phi}$ (ghaadiyeher$_{F}$)$_{\Phi}$ (marata))$_{I}$		*	
b. ((ten haatodi)$_{\Phi}$ (marata)$_{\Phi}$ (ghaadiyeher$_{F}$)$_{\Phi}$)$_{I}$	*!		

CWO forces verb-finality.

Left alignment in a p-phrase: Georgian

Focused constituent is generally preverbal (Aronson 1982/1990, Boeder 2005, Harris 2000, McGinnis, 1997a, 1997b, Nash, 1995 and Skopeteas and Fanselow 2010a,b)

In *Anima*
Focused agent is immediately preverbal
Focused patient is pre- and sometimes postverbal

Results of the experiment *Anima* for Georgian

	SVO	O**SV**	S**OV**	**OV**	**OV**S
Agent new (n = 7)	4	3	–	–	–
Agent correction (n= 7)	5	2	–	–	–
Patient new (n= 8)	3		3	1	1
Patient correction (n= 8)	–		7	1	–

Left alignment in a p-phrase: Georgian

Agent correction (OSV)
{In the scene with the blue sky: Is a man hitting the man?}
ara, ((k'atss)$_{\Phi}$ ([kali$_{F}$ urts'q'am)$_{\Phi}$)$_{I}$
no, man woman is-hitting.
'No a woman$_{F}$ is hitting the man.'

Patient new (SVO)
{In the scene in front of the fence, what is the girl hitting?}
((gogo u-rt'q'-am-s)$_{\Phi}$ (mankana-s$_{F}$)$_{\Phi}$)$_{I}$
girl-NOM hits car-DAT
'The girl is hitting a car$_{F}$.'

Phrasing in Georgian is prosodic: the pre-focal constituent has a high boundary tone

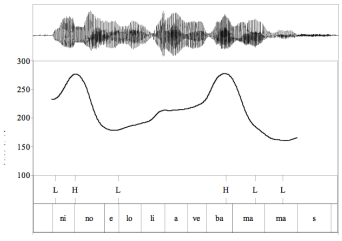
Left alignment in a p-phrase: Georgian

{About whom does Nino care?}

((nino eloliaveba)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$ (mama-s$_{F}$)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$

Nino.NOM cares.about father-DAT

'Nino cares about the father.'



Left alignment in a p-phrase:Georgian

Agent correction (SVO)

{In the scene in front of the well: Is a woman pushing a man?}

ara, ((k'atsi$_{F}$ ats'veba k'atss)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$

no, man is-pushing man

'No, a man$_{F}$ is pushing the man.'

VERBADJACENCY: Focus is adjacent to the verb.

TOPIC: Topic is initial in its domain.

T8 *k'atsi ats'veba k'atss* (Foc = k'atsi)	VERBADJ	AL-FOC-Φ-L	CWO	TOP
a. ☞ ((k'atss)$_{\Phi}$ (k'atsi ats'veba)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$			*	
b. ☞ ((k'atsi ats'veba k'atss)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$				*
c. ((k'atsi)$_{\Phi}$ (k'atss ats'veba)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$	*!			*
d. ((k'atss k'atsi ats'veba)$_{\Phi}$)$_{\iota}$		*!	*	*

Content

Marginal cases of alignment

Two further cases are marginal exemplifications of alignment

Deaccenting of post-focal material

Focus markers

Deaccenting as alignment: German

Results of *Anima*

Word order is not changed in such short sentences, but postnuclear deaccenting happens (compare with Italian and French)

	SVO	Cleft
Agent new (n= 8)	8	–
Agent correction (n= 8)	7	1
Patient new (n= 8)	8	–
Patient correction (n= 8)	8	–

In a larger sample: SO is 100% valid

Deaccenting as alignment: German

Agent correction
{[…] is a woman cutting the watermelon?}
Nein, ((ein MANN$_F$)$_\Phi$ (schneidet die Melone)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
no, a man cuts the melon
'No, a man is cutting the melon.'

Patient new
{[…] what is the man kicking?}
(Der MANN)$_\Phi$ (tritt einen STUHL$_F$)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
the man kicks a chair
'The man is kicking a chair.'

Deaccenting as alignment: German

x i-phrase
x x p-phrase
x x x word
((Der Mann)$_\Phi$ (tritt (einen STUHL$_F$)$_\Phi$)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$

x i-phrase
x p-phrase
x x x word
((ein Mann$_F$)$_\Phi$ (schneidet (die Melone)$_\Phi$))$_\Phi$)$_\iota$

Deaccenting as alignment: German

DESTRESS-GIVEN (DG)
A postnuclear given phrase is prosodically non-prominent.

T9 *ein Mann schneidet die Melone* (Focus = ein Mann)	CWO	DG	H-ι-R	ALIGN-FOC-ι-R
a. ☞ ((ein MANN)$_\Phi$(<schneidet die Melone>)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$			*	*
b. ((schneidet die Melone)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$ (ein MANN)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$	*!			
c. ((ein MANN)$_\Phi$ (schneidet die MELONE)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$		*!		*

Content

Focus marker to the right of focus: Fon

Fon (Kwa, Gbe), Schwarz & Fiedler (2007) and Fiedler et al. (2009) is a case of subject-object asymmetry. Object is right-aligned by default, but both subject and object can be placed in the sentence-initial position. The subject is then obligatorily followed by the focus marker wè, the object only optionally.

{Who ate the beans?}
(([nyɔ̀nú$_F$ ɔ́ wè)$_\Phi$ (dù àyìkún)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
woman DEF FM eat bean
'[the woman]$_F$ ate the beans.'

{What did the woman eat?}
((é dù àyìkún$_F$)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
3SG eat bean
'She ate [beans]$_F$'

(([àyìkún$_F$ (wè)])$_\Phi$ (é dù)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$
bean (FM) 3SG eat
'She ate [beans]$_F$' ~ 'It is [beans]$_F$ that she ate.'

Focus marker to the right of focus: Fon

Hypothesis: One of the roles of the particles is to create boundaries of prosodic phrases.
The absence of particle in final object focus is unexplainable if the particle has a purely pragmatic role, as often assumed in the literature (see Aboh 2010 for instance).

DEP-FM: No epenthesis of focus markers

T10 nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún (Foc = àyìkúń)	CWO	ALIGN FOC-ι-R	ALIGN FOC-Φ-R	DEP-FM
a. ☞ ((nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún$_F$)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$				
b. ((nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún$_F$ wɛ)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$				*

Focus marker to the right of focus: Fon

T10 nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún (Foc = àyìkúń)	CWO	ALIGN FOC-ι-R	ALIGN FOC-Φ-R	DEP-FM
a. ☞ ((nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún$_F$)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$				
b. ((nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún$_F$ wɛ)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$				*

T11 nyɔ̀nú ɔ́ dù àyìkún (Foc = nyɔ̀nú ɔ́)	CWO	ALIGN FOC-ι-R	ALIGN FOC-Φ-R	DEP
a. ☞ ((nyɔ̀nu$_F$ ɔ́ wɛ)$_\Phi$ (dù àyìkún)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$		*		*
b. ((dù àyìkún nyɔ̀nu$_F$ ɔ́)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$	*!			
c. ((nyɔ̀nu$_F$ ɔ́ dù àyìkún)$_\Phi$)$_\iota$		*	*!	

Focus marker to the right of focus: Ditammari

Ditammari (Gur) (Reineke 2006, Fiedler et al. 2009)
Focus marker *nya* or *è*, which also indicates gender agreement, follows the focus in-situ, also if the object is right-aligned.

{What did the woman eat?}
((ò dī yātǔràF ǹyā)Φ)ι
3SG eat PL.bean.PL FM.CL
'She ate [beans]F.'

{What did the child buy?}
((bíígə̄ nū̄ndə̀ bànānāF è)Φ)ι
child buy.PF banana FM
'The child bought [bananas]F.'

Focus marker to the right of focus: Ditammari

But if the focus is not right-aligned, a second morpheme *ma* appears at the end of the i-phrase. A possible analysis: *mà* ensures right-alignment with the i-phrase, *nya* is responsible for right-alignment to the p-phrase.

((yātǔràF ǹyā)Φ (ò dī mà)Φ)ι
PL.bean.PL FM.CL 3SG eat MA
'She ate [beans]F.' ~ 'It is [beans]F that she ate.'

Focus marker to the left of focus: Hausa

Hausa (Chadic)
The choice between left-dislocating an object or leaving it in situ can have a pragmatic effect: a. is the answer to an informational question and b. is corrective.
Moreover the dislocated object is followed by a focus marker.

a.{What is Kande cooking?}
((Kandé tá-naa dáfa kíifiiF)Φ)ι
Kande 3SG.F-IPF cooking fish
'Kande is cooking (a) [fish]F.'

b.{Kande is cooking meat.}
((KíifiiF nee)Φ (Kandé tá-kee dáfaawáa)Φ)ι
fish FM.M Kande 3SG.F-IPF.REL cooking
'It is (a) [fish]F that Kande is cooking.'

Content

Discussion: Conspiracy

Languages achieve fulfillment of the align focus constraint in different ways (conspiracy).
Reordering of the constituents: Italian, Spanish, Georgian, Hungarian.
More radical change in the syntax (cleft): French, Chinese.
Insertion or enhancement of prosodic boundaries: Chichewa, Konkani (also Japanese).

Deaccenting of postnuclear material: German, (same results for Dutch, English, Greek).
Additions of morphemes: Fon, Ditammari, Bole, Guruntum.

The need for prosodic alignment can be countered by constraints in syntax: illustrated with Italian and Basque, but ubiquitous.

Discussion: puzzles solved

1.Why do so many languages have only one position for focus?
If this position satisfies alignment, there can only be one.

2. The pre-/postnuclear asymmetry: deaccenting only takes place in the postnuclear position. If alignment of focus is rightward in German and English, prenuclear deaccenting is not necessary.

3. Subject/object asymmetry in so many languages

Discussion

Alternative proposal by Büring (2009:178ff) inspired by Truckenbrodt (1995)

FocusProminence
Focus needs to be maximally prominent.

Prominence is defined as abstract metrical position which renders the model difficult to falsify:
"By definition, the head of any constituent […] is more prominent than any of its sisters (any other element within that constituent)."

Pitch accents are not present in all languages.
Alignment may or may not accompanied by a pitch accent

Alignment is simple and universal.

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