

1. Introduction: Based on original fieldwork, this paper shows that narrow focus structures in Thompson Salish neatly split the clause *syntactically* into its two focus *semantic* components, the Background and the Focus (e.g. von Stechow 1990, Krifka 1992). The near perfection of this focus syntax-semantics interface is compromised in the case of narrow focus within complex NPs, which are subject to the well-known Complex NP Island Constraint (Ross 1973, Krifka 2006). However, perhaps surprisingly, a *phonological* operation (rightward extraposition) rescues the semantic Background/Focus split in the surface linear order.

(1) a. [cu-t-Ø-és e Péter e káh-s]_{FOCUS}
 fĭx-TRANS-3OBJ-3SUBJ DET Peter DET car-his
 ‘Peter fixed his car.’
 b. Background/Focus structure <B, F>: <Ø, fix(Peter)(his.car)>

- (2) a. Focus: generate the focus as the matrix predicate.
b. Background: generate backgrounded information as an argument.

(3) a. [sqáqxa]_{FOCUS} [e pún-m-Ø-ne t_x]_{BACKGROUND}
 dog COMP find-TRANS-3OBJ-1SG.SUBJ t_x
 ‘[I found]_{BG} [a dog]_{FOCUS}.’ (more literally ‘[That I found]_{BG} was [a dog]_{FOCUS}.’)
 b. Background/Focus structure <B, F>: <λ_x.I found x, dog>

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- (4) a. $\acute{c}e$ [e B́ill]_{FOCUS} [e $\eta\acute{u}pi-t-\emptyset$ -mus t_x e śta $\eta\acute{x}áns-c$]_{BACKGROUND}.
 CLEFT DET Bill COMP eat-TRANS-3OBJ-SUBJ.GAP t_x DET food-his
 ‘It was [Bill]_{FOCUS} [that ate his food]_{BACKGROUND}.’
 b. Background/Focus structure <B, F>: $\langle \lambda x.x \text{ ate his food, Bill} \rangle$

3. Imperfection in the Focus syntax-semantics interface: When narrow focus falls on just a portion of a complex NP, the entire complex NP must be clefted. This is due to a very general syntactic constraint that prevents the trace in the background clause from corresponding to just a single element within a complex NP, as complex NPs are islands for extraction (Ross 1967; Krifka 2006 on the same constraint applying to association with Focus).

- (5) * $[ke\eta\acute{t}és]$ _{FOCUS} [k pún-m- \emptyset -s [e $[t_x]$ $[qemút-s]$]_{BACKGROUND}.
 three COMP find-TRANS-3OBJ-3SUBJ DET t_x hat-her
 intended: *‘What she looked for t_x hats was three.’

Instead, the entire NP containing the narrow focus is made into the initial predicate:

- (6) $[[ke\eta\acute{t}és]$ _{FOCUS} tk $qemút-s]$ [k pún-m- \emptyset -s $t_x]$ _{BACKGROUND}.
 three LINK hat-her COMP find-TRANS-3OBJ-3SUBJ t_x
 ‘What she looked for t_x was $[three]$ _{FOCUS} hats.’

A general rightward extraposition strategy (attested independent of focus) can remove the backgrounded *qemuts* ‘her hats’ from the initial predicate/focus position, and place it after the background clause. Thus, the surface *phonological* string maintains the Background/Focus split, even though the underlying *syntax* does not. This structure makes it easy for a listener to identify the *semantic* categories Focus and Background based on surface string order.

- (7) a. $[[ke\eta\acute{t}és]$ _{FOCUS} t_i [k pún-m- \emptyset -s $t_x]$ _{BACKGROUND} [tk $qemút-s_i$]_{BACKGROUND}.
 three t_i COMP find-TRANS-3OBJ-3SUBJ t_x LINK hat-her
 ‘What she looked for t_x was three hats.’
 b. Background/Focus structure <B, F>: $\langle \lambda x.she \text{ looked for } x \text{ hats, three} \rangle$

This extraposition process targeting backgrounded information occurs in nominal predicates like (7a), clefted relative clauses (where an unfocused relative clause head can be extraposed), and wh-questions (e.g. *which dog*, where unfocused *dog* can be extraposed). Implications for the syntax-semantics interface are discussed, as well as problems for the (non-focus) compositional semantics (e.g. both ‘dog’ and the background clause in (3) are of type $\langle e, t \rangle$).

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