

# Syntactic Relations and Discourse Configurationality

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## 1. Basic Assumptions

*Syntactic Relations*: The syntactically encoded relationships between a sentence predicate and its arguments (resp. between the arguments).

- (1) a. The police (NOM) are (3<sup>rd</sup> pl) coming. (→ *abstract* case; agreement)  
 b. The police (NOM) put a linguist (ACC) into jail.  
 c. The police (NOM) gave him (DAT) a hard time (ACC).

*Discourse Configuration*: The systematic arrangement of the selection and the structuring of information and its integration in a larger (linguistic) context.

- (2) *Referential Linking* (Reinhart 1980; after Frey 2007: 239)

Two sentences are referentially linked only if there is an aboutness topic or a scene setting expression in the second sentence which is referentially controlled by an element of the first sentence.

- (3) *Topic* (Reinhart 1981; after Frey 2007: 231)

A topic is an expression whose referent the sentence is about.

- (4) *Scene Setting Expression* (cf. Reinhart 1980: 173)

The part of the sentence that specifies the spatial or temporal framework for the event reported in the sentence, or the particular world about the state of affairs in which the sentence asserts something.

- (5) a. Gustav hat die ganze Nacht nicht geschlafen. Studenten sind ja ununterbrochen am Arbeiten.  
*G. – has – the – whole – night – not – slept | students – are – PTC – uninterruptedly – at – work-INF*  
 b. Gustav geht gleich an die Uni. In der Mensa gibt es heute Glühwein.  
*G. – goes – shortly – to – the – University | in – the – refectory – gives – it – today – mulled-wine*

- (6) *Familiarity* (Reinhart 1981; cf. Frey 2000: 138)

Topics are expressions the referents of which have been introduced in the discourse or are present to the discourse participants for other reasons.

⇒ There are obviously two competing kinds of principles of sentence construction: inherent (*syntactic*) principles of structure building, and principles facilitating the linking of utterances in a *discourse*.

- (7) a. Fido is chewing a bone. (categorical)  
 b. A dog came into the room. (thetic)
- (8) a. Fido [<sub>VP</sub> rág egy csontot] (categorical) (Hungarian; É.Kiss 1995: 7f)  
*F. – chews – a – bone*  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> Van egy kutya a szobában ] (thetic)  
*came – a – dog – the – room-into*
- (9) a. \*Egy kutya [<sub>VP</sub> van a szobában ] (É.Kiss 1995: 8)  
 b. ✓ A szobában [<sub>VP</sub> van egy kutya ]

⇒ If languages can be classified along the axes *discourse configurational* vs. (*sit mihi venia verbi*) *relation configurational* – why is it that there are not exactly two classes of languages?

⇒ The existence of different syntactic types offers the possibility of capturing the interaction of the systems *syntax* and *discourse* in a comparative and systematic way, where 3 potential aspects should be taken into account:

1. Is phrase structure universal, so that only the distribution of elements (like subject vs. topic) varies?
2. Is there a constraint that forces prominence of either the subject or the topic? Are all languages configurational in at least one of these respects?
3. Are the information structural categories universal or is there pre-linguistic variation already in the cognitive computation of information structure?

## 2. Discourse Configurationality: A Short History

In the 1970ies' mainstream typological work on comparative syntax, it was common practice to divide languages into the types 'topic prominent' and 'subject prominent'.

(There are languages in which) 'the basic syntactic constructions manifest a topic-comment relation rather than a subject-predicate relation.' (Li&Thompson 1976: 459)

- Some characteristics of topic-prominent languages (abstracted from Li & Thompson 1976: 466f; Gundel 1988: 222)
  - (10) a. *canonical* topic positions (sentence initial ?)
  - b. 'double subjects': aboutness topics not selected by the predicate
  - c. predominantly SOV
  - (11) a. *neì-chang huǒ xìngkuì xīaofang-duì láí de kuài* (Mandarin; cf. Li & Thompson 1976: 462)  
DEM-CLASS – *fire* – *fortunat* – *fire-brigade* – *come* – AdvPTC – *quick*  
'That fire, fortunately the fire brigade came quickly.'
  - b. *neì-xie shùmu shù-shēn dà* (Mandarin; cf. Li & Thompson 1976: 468)  
DEM-CLASS – *tree* – *tree-trunk* – *big*  
'Those trees, the trunks are big.'
  - (12) *sakana wa tai ga oisii* (Japanese; cf. Li & Thompson 1976: 468)  
*Fisch* – TOP – *Tai* – NOM – *delicious*
- Some characteristics of subject-prominent languages (abstracted from Li & Thompson 1976: 466f)
  - (13) a. a *canonical* subject position
  - b. formal subjects without any semantic role
  - c. regular diathesis (active/passive)
  - (14) a. It is raining.
  - b. Mary is given a book.
- Classification according to Li & Thompson (1976: 460; 483)
  - (15) a. *subject-prominent*: Indo-European, Sinitic, Finno-Ugric ...
  - b. *topic-prominent*: Mandarin, Lahu (Burmese), Lisu (Burmese), ...
  - c. *subject- and topic-prominent*: Japanese, Korean, ...
  - d. *neither subject- nor topic-prominent*: Tagalog (Philippine), ...
  - (16) a. **Mag**-salis **ang** babae ng bigas sa sako para sa bata. (cf. Schachter 1976: 495)  
AG-*take-out*-(FUT) – TOP – *woman* – TH – *rice* – SOURCE – *sack* – BEN – *child*  
'A/the woman will take the rice out of a/the sack for a/the child.'
  - b. Aalisin ng babae **ang** bigas sa sako para sa bata.  
*take-out*-(FUT)-TH – AG – *woman* – TOP – *rice* – SOURCE – *sack* – BEN – *child*
  - c. Aalisan ng babae ng bigas **ang** sako para sa bata.  
*take-out*-(FUT)-SOURCE – AG – *woman* – TH – *rice* – TOP – *sack* – BEN – *child*
  - d. **Ipag**-salis ng babae ng bigas sa sako **ang** bata.  
BEN-*take-out*-(FUT) – AG – *woman* – TH – *rice* – SOURCE – *sack* – TOP – *child*

*Free word order*: Tagalog does not have a canonical subject position, either (Schachter 1976: 495).<sup>1</sup>

⇒ The syntactic configuration, rather than morphological marking, is criterial for the classification into *subject-prominent* and *topic-prominent* languages already in Li & Thompson 1976.

- More recent work on this matter (cf. É.Kiss 1995; 2003a) broadened this spectrum to a more general division into *discourse configurationality* and the *prominence of grammatical relations*.

We call a language discourse configurational if it links either or both of the discourse-semantic functions topic and focus to particular structural positions. (...) Most of the (... [discourse configurational]) languages are both topic- and focus prominent. (É.Kiss 2003a: 1442)

⇒ Can languages be classified according to the options of structurally marking *syntactic* and/or *discourse-semantic* functions?

(17) *Canonical Structural Positions*

	Subject	Topic
yes	English, French, . . . , German? Japanese? Hungarian? Italian?	Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Hungarian, German? Italian?
no	Tagalog, . . . Mandarin?	English, French, Tagalog

(18) *Languages where there has been found evidence for discourse configurationality* (cf. É.Kiss 2003a)

German, Italian, Catalan, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Greek, Nepali, Hindi, Hungarian, Finnish, Arabic, . . .

⇒ There seems to be an endless list of 'mixed languages'.

### 3. The EPP and the canonical subject position in Generative Grammar

The EPP is another principle regulating syntactic structure which applies at all levels of syntactic representation: sentences must have subject positions, [Spec, IP] positions, at all syntactic levels. It is important to point out here that the EPP imposes that the [Spec, IP] position be generated. The EPP does not impose that this position be filled by overt elements (. . .) (or) by arguments. (HAEGEMAN 1994: 339f)

- (19) a. Gianni a detto che [<sub>IP</sub> *pro* [<sub>I'</sub> ha [<sub>VP</sub> parlato ] ] ]  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> *pro* sembra [<sub>CP</sub> che Gianni sia ammalato ] ]  
*seems – that – G. – is-SBJ – ill*  
 c. [<sub>IP</sub> It [ seems that [<sub>IP</sub> there [<sub>I'</sub> are [ three students in this room ] ] ] ] ] ]  
 d. . . . dass heute nacht [<sub>IP</sub> *pro* [ getanzt werden ] soll ]  
 e. . . . dass [<sub>IP</sub> (es) [ sich darüber trefflich streiten ] lässt ]

Independently of the argument structure of the main predicate, it is a general property of sentences that they must have subjects. This property is stated in the extended projection principle. (HAEGEMAN 1994: 73)

- Motivation of the EPP by means of a *formal feature* in the *Minimalist Program*:

(. . .) I suggest that the strong feature in this instance is a "EPP feature" residing in Agr, hence the same feature that drives overt subject rising, the modern technical implementation of the Extended Projection Principle of Chomsky (1981). (LASNIK 2001: 81)

! Note that this development obscures a functional parallel that was part of the original motivation:

The Projection Principle and the requirement that clauses have subjects are conceptually quite closely related. In fact, we may stipulate that a lexical element that  $\Theta$ -marks its subject position (. . .) does so if and only if the position is filled. (. . .) I will henceforth refer to the projection principle along with the requirement that clauses have subjects as the *Extended Projection Principle*. (CHOMSKY 1982: 10)

<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that Tagalog is analysed as an ergative language by Aldridge (2004).

In general, specifiers are optional but the choice of complements is determined by the Projection Principle. Assume here that the specifier of IP (...) is required by the Extended Projection Principle. (ibd. 4)

(20)  $I'' = [ \text{NP} [_{\text{I}'} [_{\text{VP}} \text{V} \dots ] ] ]$  (CHOMSKY 1986: 3)

Perhaps derived from the theory of predication in the sense of Williams 1980, along lines suggested in Rothstein 1983. (ibd. fn.5)

(21) **Extended Projection Principle** (ROTHSTEIN 1983, 69)

For a sentence of L to be well-formed, both syntactic and lexical functions must be appropriately saturated: i.e., the Projection Principle and the Predicate-linking rule must be satisfied.

(22) **Predicate Linking Rule** (adapted) (cf. ROTHSTEIN 1983, 11, 25)

Every non- $\Theta$ -marked XP must be linked at S-structure to an argument c-commanding it. X is subject of Y if and only if Y is linked to X. Predicate-linkings which are not to be interpreted as semantic representations must be 'broken' by mapping to LF.

⇒ Subjects (including *non-designated* subjects of ergative verbs, expletives and  $\emptyset$ -subjects) serve for the saturation of the function of predicate-linking.

! Note that this generalisation does not yet exclude arguments that are not the grammatical subject from being the subject of predication.

## 4. Topicality: Configurational Accounts

### 4.1. EPP-Variation

É.Kiss (1995: 6f, 14): *notional vs. grammatical subject*.

- Obligatory SPEC-head-agreement in IP corresponds to positional licensing of the grammatical subject resp. a *canonical subject position*. The EPP is satisfied by the grammatical subject.

(23) A guest has telephoned.

- Information structuring is a restricted, secondary option (→ *intonation, permutation*).

(24) a. The students know /SYNTAX WELL\.

b. /SYNTAX, the students know WELL\.

- In topic-prominent languages, *syntactic predication* corresponds to the *semantic predication* over the *notional subject*<sup>2</sup>.

(25) *Semantic Predication* (cf. Jacobs 2001: 647)

In  $P = (X \dots Y)$ , X is the *semantic subject* and Y the *semantic predicate* iff

a. X specifies a variable in the semantic valency of Y

b. there is no Z such that (i) Z specifies a variable in the semantic valency of an element in Y and (ii) Z is hierarchically higher in semantic form than X

(26) a. Der Poli/ZEI miss\TRAUT er. (Jacobs 2001: 648)

*the – police-(DAT) – mistrusts – he*

b. [THE-POLICE(y) & [HE(x) & MISTRUST(x,y)]]

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. auch Sasse (1987): Eine Sprache sei topikprominent, wenn *kategorische Urteile* als die primären Prädikationsstrukturen ausgedrückt werden, *thetische Urteile* jedoch als reine Prädikationsphrasen strukturiert sind. In einer subjektprominenten Sprache sei der Unterschied zwischen den beiden Arten von Urteilen verschleiert, da beide Arten von Subjekten prinzipiell in der gleichen strukturellen Relation zum Verb stünden. Diese Ansicht weist É.Kiss (2003a: 1447f) jedoch als Übergeneralisierung zurück.

- (27) a. He mis/TRUSTS the POLICE\  
 b. The police, he mistrust.

- Languages without obligatory SPEC-head-agreement in IP do not have a canonical subject position. Phrases moved to higher positions to fulfill discourse-semantic functions satisfy the EPP.

- (28) [<sub>VP</sub> telefonált [<sub>DP</sub> egy vendég] ] (É.Kiss 2003b: 109)  
*telephoned – a – guest*

- (29) a. [<sub>TOPP</sub> a diákok szerintem [ jól [<sub>VP</sub> tudják a szintaxist ] ] ]  
*the – students-NOM – in-my-opinion – well – know – the – syntax-ACC*  
 b. [<sub>TOPP</sub> a szintaxist szerintem [ jól [<sub>VP</sub> tudják a diákok ] ] ]  
*the – syntax-NOM – in-my-opinion – well – know – the – students-ACC*

! Note that this is satisfaction of the EPP also in the sense of Rothstein (1983).

## 4.2. Cartographic Approaches

Cartographic approaches try to relate topic positions to specific *functional projections* in a *structural hierarchy*.

- É.Kiss (2003b) for Hungarian:

- (30) a. TopP>QP>FocP>VP  
 b. Szerintem [<sub>QP</sub> minden diák [<sub>FocP</sub> a szintaxist [<sub>VP</sub> szereti legjobban] ] ]  
*in-my-opinion – every – student – the – syntax – likes – best*  
 c. [<sub>TOPP</sub> A diákok [ szerintem [<sub>VP</sub> jól [<sub>VP</sub> tudják a szintaxist] ] ] ]  
*the – students – in-my-opinion – well – know – the – syntax*

⇒ Quantified and focalised expressions precede the verb but follow the sentence adverbials.

⇒ Topics precede the sentence adverbials.

- Frey (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007) for German:

- (31) a. CP>ContrP>FinP>TopP (Frey 2004: 29)  
 b. [<sub>ContrP</sub> Mit dem Hammer [<sub>FinP</sub> [<sub>Fin'</sub> hat [<sub>TOPP</sub> Otto das Fenster eingeschlagen ] ] ] ] ]  
*with – the – hammer – has – Otto – the – window – smashed*  
 c. [<sub>CP</sub> Den Otto [<sub>FinP</sub> den<sub>1</sub> [<sub>Fin'</sub> mag [<sub>TOPP</sub> t'<sub>1</sub> jeder t<sub>1</sub> t<sub>2</sub> ] ] ] ] ]  
*the – Otto – him – likes – everyone*  
 d. Jeder glaubt, [<sub>CP</sub> den Hans<sub>1</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> dass [<sub>FinP</sub> [<sub>TOPP</sub> den<sub>1</sub> jeder t<sub>1</sub> mag ] ] ] ] ] ]  
*everybody – thinks – the – John – that – everyone – him – likes*

- (32) *Designated Topic Position* (Frey 2007: 232)

In the middle field of the German clause, directly above the base position of sentential adverbials (SADVs), there is a designated position for topics (in the aboutness sense): all topics occurring in the middle field, and only them, occur in this position.

- (33) a. Weil er müde war, hat *ein Student* leider während der Vorlesung geschlafen. (vgl. Frey 2007: 333)  
*because – he – tired – was – has – a – student – unfortunately – during – the – lecture – slept*  
 b. \*Weil er müde war, hat leider *ein Student* während der Vorlesung geschlafen.

## 4.3. How to distribute multiple topics?

- (34) János (Top) Marit (Top) tavaly vitte el Páris-ba. (É.Kiss 1994: 14; cf. Jacobs 2001: 650)  
*John – Mary – last-year – took – away – Paris-to*

Topics that can occur together:

- Subject of predication + other addressants

(35) a. **In der /Küche** hat **Peter** Ge\SCHIRR gespült. (cf. Jacobs 2001: 649)

*in – the – kitchen – has – Peter – the-dishes – washed*

'In the kitchen, Peter did the dishes.'

b. [IN-THE-KITCHEN(s) & PETER(x) & [THE-DISHES(y) & HAS-WASHED(x,y)]

(36) It was just last year that **John** took **Mary** to **Paris**.

- Frame setting + subject of predication

(37) a. **Im Falle eines Sieges** wird **die Mannschaft** eine Belobigung durch den Staatspräsidenten erhalten.

*in-the – case – of-a – win – will – the – team – a – commendation – by – the – president-of-state – receive*

b. sùnglihal kyòngu-e-nùn tim-i taetonglyòng-ekesò pyochang-ùl pan-ùl kòsita. (cf. Jacobs 2001: 655)

*win – case-in-TOP ...*

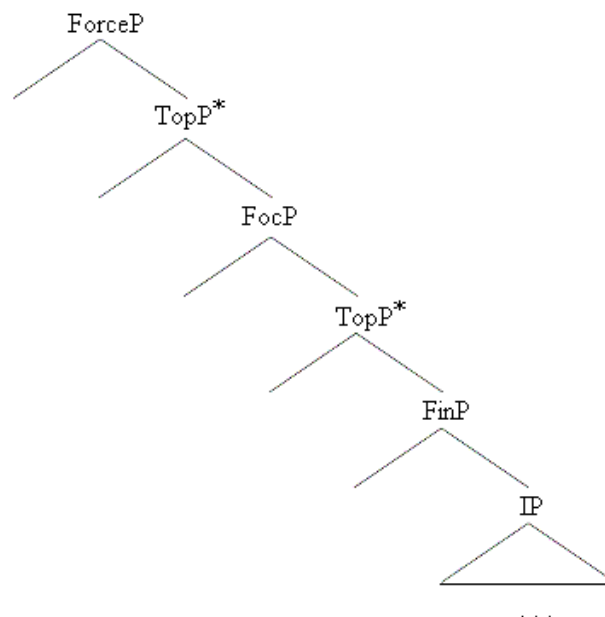
- Addressation and frame setting

(38) **In meinem /TRAUM**, da war **Peter** ein KrokodIL.

*in – my – dream – there – was – P. – a – crocodile*

(cf. Jacobs 2001: 662)

(39) \*Split CP' (Rizzi 1997)



(40) Credo [<sub>ForceP</sub> **che** [<sub>TopP</sub> a Gianni [<sub>FocP</sub> QUESTO [<sub>TopP</sub> domani [<sub>FinP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> gli dovremmo dire ]...]]] (cf. Rizzi 1997: 295)

*think-1<sup>st</sup>sg – that – to – G. – THIS – tomorrow – ObjCl – must-FUT-1<sup>st</sup>pl – say*

- Evidence for more functional heads, with topic positions between all of them:

(41) a. \*Credo, a Gianni, **che** avrebbero dovuto dirgli la verità. (Italian; cf. Rizzi 2001: 289)

*think-1<sup>st</sup>sg – DAT – G. – that – AUX-PQP-SUBJ-3.pl – must-PII – say-INF – DET – truth*

'I think **that** they should have told the truth to John.'

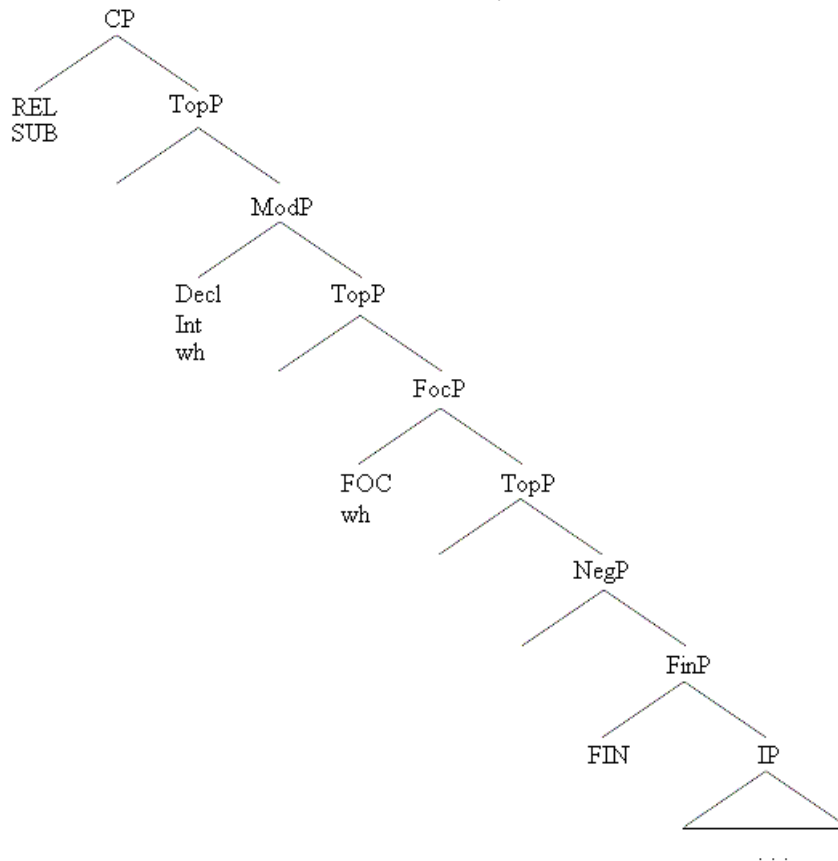
b. Non so, [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> a Gianni [<sub>ModP</sub> **se** [<sub>IP</sub> avrebbero potuto dirgli la verità ]...]]] (cf. Rizzi 2001: 289)

*NEG – know-1<sup>st</sup>sg – DAT – G. – if – AUX-PQP-SUBJ-3<sup>rd</sup>pl – can-PII – say-INF – DET – truth*

'I do not know **if** they could have told the truth to John'.

- (42) a. *Ami nije-ke jiggEsh kori* [<sub>CP</sub> **je** [<sub>TopP</sub> chele-TA [<sub>ModP</sub> **ki** [<sub>FinP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> lingwistiks pORe ]...]](Bengali; cf. Öhl 2004b: 165)  
*ich – mir – Frage – tue – SUB – Junge-DEF – Q – Linguistik – studiert*  
 'I wonder whether the boy studies linguistics.'
- b. *Ik vraag me af* [<sub>CP</sub> **wie** [<sub>ModP</sub> **of** [<sub>FinP</sub> **dat** [<sub>IP</sub> taalkunde studeert ]]]]  
*I – ask – me – of – who – if – that – linguistics – studies*  
 'I wonder who studies linguistics.'
- c. *ū porsīd* [<sub>CP</sub> **ke** [<sub>ModP</sub> **āyā** [<sub>IP</sub> man zabānšenāsī xānde būdam] ] ] (Persian; cf. Öhl 2004b: 165)  
*he/she – asked – SUB – INT – I – linguistics – studied-had*  
 'He asked if I had studied linguistics.'
- d. *man nemīdānam* [<sub>CP</sub> **ke** [<sub>ModP</sub> **āyā** [<sub>FocP</sub> **či-o**<sub>i</sub> [<sub>FinP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ū t<sub>i</sub> mīxānad ]...]]] (cf. Ahmad R. Lotfi, p.c.)  
*I – NEG-know – SUB – INT – what-ACC – he/she – studies*
- e. *Nomízo* [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> (ta míla) [<sub>ModP</sub> **óti** [<sub>TopP</sub> (ta míla) [<sub>NegP</sub> den [<sub>FinP</sub> **tha** to [<sub>IP</sub> fai o Pétrós ]...]]]]] (cf. Roussou 2000: 79ff)  
*think-1.sg – DET – apples – COMP – NEG – FUT – ObjCl – eat-3<sup>rd</sup>sg – DET – Peter*  
 'I do not think Peter will eat those apples.'
- (43) a. *\*xarika* [ to petros [<sub>CP</sub> **pu** [<sub>IP</sub> efevye ]...]]  
*happy-PRET-1<sup>st</sup>sg – DET – Peter – COMP – leave-IMPERF*
- b. *xarika* [<sub>CP</sub> **pu** [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>ModP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> efevye to petros ]...]]] (cf. Nicholas 1998: 60)  
 'I was happy that Peter was leaving'.

(44) (cf. Öhl&Grewendorf 2006; adapted from Rizzi 1997)



(45) **Sublayers of the C-Domain** (Beninca&Poletto 2004: ex. 58)

[<sub>ForceP</sub> [hanging topic [scene setter [left dislocation [list interpr. [contr.foc1 [contr.foc2 [inform. foc [<sub>FinP</sub> ... ]

- ⇒ Can the criterial semantic and pragmatic restrictions on the linearisation be properly identified?
- ⇒ Can't we then just assume instead the adjunction of topics above functional phrases?

## 5. Arguments against 'canonical topic positions'

### 5.1. Syntax does not treat all topics alike

Languages like Japanese and Korean are said to have morphological topic marking and fronting.<sup>3</sup>

! Not all topics are marked by *wa*.

- (46) A: What did John do with the book?  
B: John gave the book to Mary.

- (47) a. John-**wa** sono hon-**o** doo sita no? (Japanese)  
*John-TOP – this – book-ACC – how – did – Q*  
b. John-**wa** sono hon-**o** Mary-ni ageta (yo).  
*John-TOP – this – book-ACC – Mary-DAT – gave – PTC*

- (48) a. John-**i** ku'-chaek-**uĭ** kasiko muo's-uĭ ha-i-ss-ni (Korean)  
*John-NOM – the-book-AKK – with – what-AKK – do-int.voc-PAST-Q*  
b. John-**uĭn** ku'-chaek-**uĭ** Mary-**eke** su-o'ss-ta  
*John-TOP – the-book-ACC – Mary-DAT – give-PAST-DECL*

! As soon as 'wa' and 'nuĭn' occur more than one time, these constituents are interpreted as contrastive. Contrasted constituents tend to be stressed.

- (49) a. John **wa** sono neko **wa** pettosyopu **de** kat ta. (Japanese)  
*John – TOP – this – cat – WA – petshop – LOC – buy – PST*  
'It was this cat what John bought in the petshop.'  
b. John **wa** sono neko **o** pettosyopu **de wa** kat ta.  
*John – TOP – this – cat – ACC – petshop – LOC – CONTR – buy – PST*  
'It was in a petshop where John bought the cat.'

⇒ The morphological marking by **wa/ nuĭn** seems to fulfil different discourse-semantic functions (contrastivity; singling out the *subject of predication* . . . ?).

! The phrases marked as 'topic' can also stay in base position.

- (50) a. tasikani dare-**ni**-mo matigai-**wa** okoriuru. (Japanese)  
*surely – everyone-DAT – mistake-TOP – happen-can*  
b. sikasi sonoyouna hito-**ni-wa** sonoyouna matigai-**wa** okora-nai daroo.  
*but – such – person-DAT-CONTR – such – mistake-TOP – happen-NEG – guess*
- (51) a. Sesang-**e** oĭjena nukunga-**eke** silsu-**ga** saengki-nuĭn ko's-i maj-da (Korean)  
*world-LOC – always – someone-DAT – mistake-NOM – occur-ADNM – FN-NOM – stimmen-DECL*  
b. ku'rae hajiman kuĭnuĭ silsu-**nuĭn** kuĭnuĭ saram-**eke-nuĭn** iloĭna-so'-nuĭn andoi-n-da  
*yes – but – such – mistake-TOP – such – man-DAT-CONTR – happen-PTC-TOP – NEG-PRES-DECL*

• *Syntactic movement* fulfils diverse purposes of 'perspectivation'.

- (52) A: Do you know what will happen today?  
B: To my pleasure, a student will probably record the whole lecture.

- (53) kyo nani-ga okotta ka sitteiru? (Japanese)  
*today – what-NOM – happen – COMP – know?*

<sup>3</sup> I thank Yuko-Shige Tamura and Jiro Inaba for the Japanese data, Ki-Hyun Yoon for the Korean data.



- (54) a. kyoo-wa uresii-koto-ni osoraku **aru gakusei-ga** zenbu-no jugyoo-no nooto-o totte-kureru daroo.  
*today-TOP – to-my-pleasure-DAT – probably – some – student-NOM – all-GEN – class-GEN – note-ACC – take – PTC*
- b. kyoo-wa uresii-koto-ni **aru gakusei-ga** osoraku zenbu-no jugyoo-no nooto-o totte-kureru daroo.  
*today-TOP – to-my-pleasure-DAT – some – student-NOM – probably – all-GEN – class-GEN – note-ACC – take – PTC*
- c. kyoo-wa **aru gakusei-ga** uresii-koto-ni osoraku zenbu-no jugyoo-no nooto-o totte-kureru daroo.  
*today-TOP – some – student-NOM – to-my-pleasure-DAT – probably – all-GEN – class-GEN – note-ACC – take – PTC*

- (55) noŋ+nuŋ onuŋ muoŋ-i iloŋa+l-ji a-ni (Korean)  
*you-TOP – today – what-NOM – happen-FUT-COMP-PTC – know-Q*

- (56) a. onuŋ kippuŋkedo ama **han hansaeng-i** kanguŋ joŋche-luŋ nokuŋmha-l koŋ ida  
*today – to-my-pleasure – probably – a – student-NOM – lecture – whole-ACC – record-FUT – COMP – copula*
- b. onuŋ kippuŋkedo **han hansaeng-i** ama kanguŋ joŋche-luŋ nokuŋmha-l koŋ ida  
*today – to-my-pleasure – a – student-NOM – probably – lecture – whole-ACC – record-FUT – COMP – copula*
- c. onuŋ **han hansaeng-i** kippuŋkedo ama kanguŋ joŋche-luŋ nokuŋmha-l koŋ ida  
*today – a – student-NOM – to-my-pleasure – probably – lecture – whole-ACC – record-FUT – COMP – copula*
- d. onuŋ kippuŋkedo ama kanguŋ joŋche-luŋ **han hansaeng-i** nokuŋmha-l koŋ ida  
*today – to-my-pleasure – probably – lecture – whole-ACC – a – student-NOM – record-FUT – COMP – copula*

! Both the Japanese and the Korean informants prefer sentences b.

## 5.2. What are the options of 'perspectivation'?

The speaker may choose very different 'perspectives' under which the entire information to be verbalised is put into sequential order. (Stutterheim&Klein 2002: 66)

What is really in language and what is the effect of speaker's choices of topics, expression or relevance marking? (Graumann&Kallmeyer 2002: 4)

What are the options the speaker has to mark what he finds relevant (or assume that the hearer does)?

- Marking of *topicality* and *relevance*: structural means and formal restrictions

- (57) a. Caesar conquered Gaul in 52 BC.  
 b. Gaul was conquered (by Caesar) in 52 BC.
- (58) a. Several people ate some hamburgers at McDonalds.  
 b. \*Some hamburgers at McDonalds were eaten by several people.

Structural restriction on sentence adverbials in English: two 'subject positions' (cf. É.Kiss 1996: 128ff).

- (59) a. Boys will in most cases know the novels of Karl May.  
 b. \*Boys will in most cases be born.  
 c. In most cases, boys will be born.  
 d. \*The novels of Karl May will in most cases boys know.

⇒ Note that this is also evidence against one single canonical subject position in English.

- the 'point of view' (empathy; cf. Chafe 1976)

(60) A: Karl ist ja als geizig verschriehen. (Karl is said to be greedy.)

B: Aber Otto gegenüber ist er manchmal großzügig. (He is generous to Otto, however)

A: Du meinst die Geschichte, als sein neues Buch herauskam? (You mean the story when he published his new book?)

- (61) a. Weil ihm Karl das Buch angeblich geschénkt hat?  
*because – him – Karl – the – book – allegedly – given-as-present – has*
- b. Weil ihm Karl angeblich das Buch geschénkt hat?
- c. Weil Karl ihm das Buch angeblich geschénkt hat?
- d. Weil Karl ihm angeblich das Buch geschénkt hat?
- e. Weil Karl das Buch ihm angeblich geschénkt hat?
- f. Weil das Buch Karl ihm angeblich geschénkt hat?
- g. Weil das Buch ihm Karl angeblich geschénkt hat?
- h. %Weil Karl das Buch angeblich ihm geschénkt hat?
- i. %Weil ihm angeblich Karl das Buch geschénkt hat?
- j. \*Weil das Buch ihm angeblich Karl geschénkt hat?
- k. \*Weil ihm angeblich das Buch Karl geschénkt hat?

⇒ The higher a topical element is in the semantic hierarchy, the lower is the acceptance if other elements precede it.

- specificity vs. unspecificity

(62) What did he say?

- (63) a. Auf der Welt sei wahrscheinlich **in genau einem Land** alles besser als hier. (Scheint'n Pessimist zu sein, hmm?)  
*on – the – world – be – probably – in – exactly – one – land – everything – better – than – here*
- b. Auf der Welt sei **in genau einem Land** wahrscheinlich alles besser als hier. (Wahrscheinlich meinte er Taka-Tuka-Land, haha.)

- perfectivity vs. imperfectivity (Meinunger 2000: 94)

- (64) a. weil ich oft die Bibel gelesen habe.  
*because – I – often – the – Bible – read – have*
- b. weil ich die Bibel oft gelesen habe.

- Indefinite NPs must not be scrambled (Lenerz 2000: 266).

- (65) A: Wem hast du ein Buch geschickt?  
*who – did – you – send – a – book*
- B: \*Ich habe ein Buch dem VerLAG geschickt.  
*I – have – a-ACC – book – the-DAT – publishers – sent*

- Some but not all topical elements may precede the 'Wackernagel'-pronouns:

- (66) a. Manchmal wurde dem Sherpa die Last doch zu schwer.  
*sometimes – became – DET-def-dat – Sherpa – the – burdon – too – heavy*
- b. Manchmal wurde sie ihm doch zu schwer.
- c. Manchmal wurde die Last ihm doch zu schwer.
- d. \*Manchmal wurde dem Sherpa sie doch zu schwer.

(67) Besonders weil in der Nähe des Heimatdorfs des Sherpas<sub>i</sub> er<sub>i</sub> eigentlich keine Lasten mehr schleppen mag.  
*especially – because – in – the – near – of-the – home-village – of-the – Sherpa – he – actually – no – burdon – anymore – carry – likes*

(68) a. In diesem Fall hätten den Heimaturlaub sie dem Sherpa besser nicht verweigert.  
*in – this – case – had-irr – DET-def – home-leave – they – DET-def-dat – Sherpa – better – not – refused*  
 b. ??In diesem Fall hätten dem Sherpa sie den Heimaturlaub besser nicht verweigert..

⇒ The positions above the WP seem to be restricted to scene setters and arguments with structural case.

What determines the relative order of *topics* and *sentence adverbials*? Do sentence adverbials in fact have a common *base-position*?

- multiple sentence adverbials occurring with non-topics:

(69) Du freust dich so – was erwartest du denn? (You look so glad – what do you expect)?

(70) a. Heute wird erfreulicher Weise wahrscheinlich *ein Student* die ganze Vorlesung aufzeichnen.  
*today – will – fortunately – probably – a – student – the – whole – lecture – record*  
 b. Heute wird erfreulicher Weise *ein Student* wahrscheinlich die ganze Vorlesung aufzeichnen.  
 c. Heute wird *ein Student* erfreulicher Weise wahrscheinlich die ganze Vorlesung aufzeichnen.

- multiple topics occurring with one sentence adverbial:

(71) a. Weil sie ihn interessierte, hat *ein Student eine Vorlesung* überraschender Weise ganz aufgezeichnet.  
*because – it – him – interested – has – a – student – a – lecture – surprisingly – totally – recorded*  
 b. Weil sie ihn interessierte, hat *ein Student* überraschender Weise *eine Vorlesung* ganz aufgezeichnet.

⇒ Topics tend to move out of the scope of sentence adverbials. However it seems that

- they do not have to.
- not all fronted constituents are topics.

⇒ Precedence rules (or rather c-command restrictions) based on various criteria may account better for the data than any attempt to use a cartographic approach for German.

(72) *Perspectivation: tendencies and restrictions*

- Speakers tend to mark relevance by precedence.
- Quantification interferes with perspectivation.
- Topics tend to leave the scope of sentence adverbials.
- Specific (resp. definite) expressions tend to leave the scope of sentence adverbials.
- The higher an argument is in the thematic hierarchy, the higher is the probability of rhematic interpretation if it is not fronted.
- Topic positions above the WP are structurally restricted (→ how and why?).
- ...

## 6. On the way to an adequate model of partitions in the ‘middle field’

### 6.1. German does not have a canonical subject position

- VP-internal subjects (→ nominative assignment without movement to SPEC/IP):

(73) a. [<sub>VP</sub> Bäume ausgerissen] wurden hier heute noch nicht. (passive)  
*trees – drawn-out – AUX – here – today – still – not*  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> Zuhörer eingeschlafen] sind uns aber, Gott sei Dank, auch nicht. (ergative verbs)  
*listeners – slept-in – are – us-DAT – but – god-DAT – be – thank – also – not*

- (74) a. [ein Zug angekommen] ist hier noch nie  $t_i$   
*a – train – arrived – is – here – still – never*
- b. [einem Außenseiter ein Zufallstreffer geglückt]<sub>i</sub> ist hier noch nie  $t_i$   
 DET(indef) – *outsider* – DET(indef) – *lucky-strike* – *succeeded* – *is* – *here* – *still* – *never*
- c. [Syntaktikern (DAT) Fehler (NOM) unterlaufen]<sub>i</sub> sind immer wieder  $t_i$   
*syntacticians* – *mistakes* – *occurred* – *are* – *always* – *again*

- A base generated VP in the *prefield* contains a subject position:

- (75) [<sub>VP</sub> Polizeiautos aufgefallen ] sind mir bisher noch keine.  
*police-cars – come-to-view – are* – PRON(DAT) – *still* – *yet* – *none*

- 'double subjects':

- (76) a. %Bäume stehen dort nur (noch) Tannen.<sup>4</sup>  
 b. %Rotwein schmeckt mir (eigentlich) nur Bordeaux.<sup>5</sup>

- 'nominativus pendens'

- (77) a. Fritz, ich war gestern bei ihm. (cf. Sasse 1982: 282)  
 b. Langer Samstag, da sind die Leute wie verrückt.

⇒ *Nominative* case is not assigned in a specific position (resp. I° does not have a strong EPP-feature).

- sentences without subjects

- (78) a. Mir (DAT) graut vor aller Theorie.  
 b. Mich (AKK) dürstet nach Wissen.

- 'dative-subjects'/ *quirky subjects* (?)

- (79) a. Schon immer schmeckten Kindern süße Soßen.  
*already – always – tasted-good – children-DAT – sweet – sauces-NOM*
- b. Hier ist noch nie einem Außenseiter (DAT) ein Zufallstreffer (NOM) geglückt.
- c. Immer wieder unterlaufen Syntaktikern (DAT) Fehler (NOM).

- (80) watasitati **ni wa** [ Yumi ga ut-teiru no ] **ga** kikoeru (Japanese)  
*we – DAT – TOP – Yumi – NOM – sing-PRG – SUB – NOM – can-hear*
- 'Wir können hören, dass Yumi gerade singt.'

⇒ The arguments get their case *in situ* (cf. Abraham 2007: 186f, 201; Haider 1997a+b).

⇒ The subject of predication can be a base-generated non-nominative that is topmost in the thematic hierarchy of a predicate.

- Licensing of Arguments: In a right-headed VP, V' can inherit the selectional properties of V° which licenses multiple complements. Thus, free word order correlates to the OV-property. In left headed phrases, one head can license only one complement. Thus there is a need for VP-shells (vP, VP) and SPEC-positions where Konstituents are positionally licensed (Haider 1997a+b; → free word order, scrambling, no hierarchical case assignment . . . ).

<sup>4</sup> I thank Peter Gallmann for this example.

<sup>5</sup> This sentence is adapted from Nolda (2007: 263):  
 (i) Rotwein habe ich nur Bordeaux.

## 6.2. Middle field partitions interacting with discourse-semantic functions

The base VP contains the sentence focus. *Normal order* and *normal stress* license 'maximal focus projection' (cf. Höhle 1982)<sup>6</sup>.

(81) a. Was hat er gesagt? (What did he say?)

- b. . . . dass [<sub>VP</sub> in Wuppertal [<sub>VP</sub> eine Olympiade stattfinden ] soll  
 . . . *that – in – Wuppertal – an – Olympic-game – take-place – shall*

(82) a. . . . dass [<sub>VP</sub> schon zwei Mal [<sub>VP</sub> in Wuppertal [<sub>VP</sub> eine Olympiade ausgetragen worden ] ] ist ]

- b. [<sub>VP</sub> schon zwei Mal [<sub>VP</sub> in Wuppertal [<sub>VP</sub> eine Olympiade ausgetragen worden ] ] ist seiner Ansicht nach.

⇒ VP-fronting may be taken as a test for *maximal focus projection*.

- Elements that are discourse-semantically marked tend to leave the sentence focus.

(83) Was hat er gesagt? (What did he say?)

(84) a. . . . dass [<sub>VP</sub> schon zwei Mal [<sub>VP</sub> eine Olympiade an Wuppertal vergeben worden ] ] ist ]

*that – already – two – times – an – Olympic-game – to – Wuppertal – given – AUX-pass – AUX-perf*

- b. ? . . . dass [<sub>VP</sub> schon zwei Mal [<sub>VP</sub> die Olympiade an Wuppertal vergeben worden ] ist (definiteness effect)

c. . . . dass die Olympiade [<sub>VP</sub> schon zwei Mal [<sub>VP</sub> an Wuppertal vergeben worden ] ist

d. ?[<sub>VP</sub> Die Olympiade an Wuppertal vergeben worden] ist seiner Ansicht nach schon zwei Mal

e. [<sub>VP</sub> schon zwei Mal [<sub>VP</sub> an Wuppertal vergeben worden ] ist die Olympiade

⇒ Sentence adverbials, frame setters, topical expressions, specific expressions (a.o.) and occuoy positions outside of VP.

(85) A: Was weißt Du über Wuppertal? (What do you know about Wuppertal?)

B: Ich weiß, dass . . . (I know that . . .)

(86) a. . . . angeblich in Wuppertal schon zwei Mal eine Olympiade stattgefunden hat.

b. . . . anlässlich der Schwebebahnerweiterung in Wuppertal eine Olympiade stattgefunden hat.

c. . . . in Wuppertal schon zwei Mal eine Olympiade stattgefunden hat.

d. . . . in Wuppertal [éin bedeutendes Sportereignis] schon einmal stättgefunden hat. Und zwar die Olympiade.

e. . . . angeblich schon zwei Mal in Wuppertal eine Olympiade stattgefunden hat.

f. . . . eine Olympiade in Wuppertal noch nicht stattgefunden hat. (Sie haben aber schon mal ein Schwéebahnrennen gemacht.)

## 6.3. What does limit VP-fronting (i.e. the lowest partition)?

- Fronted VPs must not contain traces.

(87) a. [<sub>VP</sub> gerne Kindern Märchen erzählt]<sub>i</sub> haben Großeltern schon immer <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>

*gladly – to-children – fairy-tales – told – have – grandparents – yet – always*

b. \* [<sub>VP</sub> gerne [<sub>VP</sub> Kindern <sub>t<sub>k</sub></sub> erzählt]<sub>i</sub> haben Großeltern Märchen<sub>k</sub> schon immer <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>

(88) \* [<sub>VP</sub> Syntaktikern <sub>t<sub>k</sub></sub> unterlaufen]<sub>i</sub> sind Fehler<sub>k</sub> immer wieder <sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub>

⇒ VPs and segments of VP, but not V' can be fronted.

<sup>6</sup> I.e. base order and sentence stress on the constituent left to the predicate.

- (89) a. [<sub>VP</sub> Kindern Märchen erzählt] haben Großeltern schon immer [<sub>VP</sub> gerne *t* ]  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> Märchen erzählt] haben Großeltern Kindern schon immer [<sub>VP</sub> gerne *t* ]

⇒ Elements cannot be moved from positions in VP to structurally higher positions in functional phrases.

- (90) \*<sub>[VP t<sub>k</sub> Fehler unterlaufen]<sub>i</sub> sind [<sub>TOPP</sub> Syntaktikern<sub>k</sub> [ immer wieder *t<sub>i</sub> ] ]*</sub>  
*mistakes – happened – are – to-syntacticans – again-and-again*

⇒ There must be at least one base generated layer interacting with discourse semantics (cf. Abraham 2007: 197). In our view, these are partitions of VP (i.e. extensions of the base projection of V) where Elements are inserted in perspectived order (cf. Haider 1993; 1997a+b).

#### 6.4. Perspectivation can take place in either domain

- Elements may also be perspectived within the VP (may be subject to specific restrictions).

(91) Was hat er gesagt? (What did he say?)

- (92) a. ... dass [<sub>VP</sub> eine Olympiade in Wuppertal stattfinden ] soll  
 b. ... dass [<sub>VP</sub> in Wuppertal eine Olympiade stattfinden ] soll

- (93) a. [Studenten einen Professor über den Haufen gerannt] haben laut Zeitungsberichten nicht nur in Wuppertal.  
 b. [Einen Professor Studenten über den Haufen gerannt] haben laut Zeitungsberichten nicht nur in Wuppertal.

- (94) a. [ Fehler Syntaktikern unterlaufen]<sub>i</sub> sind immer wieder *t<sub>i</sub>*  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> Märchen Kindern erzählt]<sub>i</sub> haben Großeltern schon immer [<sub>VP</sub> gerne *t<sub>i</sub>* ]

⇒ 'Scrambling' may take place within the VP (order of insertion).

#### 6.5. Open question: The categorial status of the higher partition(s).

- Again: movement to SPEC/IP is not to be empirically motivated.

- (95) a. ... dass unglücklicher Weise immer wieder [<sub>VP</sub> Syntaktikern solche Fehler unterlaufen ]  
 b. ?... dass unglücklicher Weise immer wieder [<sub>IP</sub> solche Fehler [<sub>VP</sub> Syntaktikern ] unterlaufen ]  
 c. ... dass unglücklicher Weise [solche Fehler]<sub>i</sub> immer wieder [<sub>VP</sub> Syntaktikern *t<sub>i</sub>* unterlaufen ]  
 d. ... dass [solche Fehler]<sub>i</sub> unglücklicher Weise immer wieder [<sub>VP</sub> Syntaktikern *t<sub>i</sub>* unterlaufen ]

(96) Aus bekannten Gründen kann so etwas Pragmatikern Gott sei dank nicht passieren.

- Minimalist help: 'phases' as partitions?
  - vP as sentence focus (cf. Drubig 2007: 40).
  - Phases are sent to PF (Chomsky 2001): may the lower partition just be a parametrised 'German phase'?

## 7. Conclusion

- Interface conditions that are variable w.r.t. the interaction between *syntax*, *semantics* and *pragmatics* allow a high number of parametrically deducible types of syntax.
- Dividing languages into 'discourse configurational', 'relation configurational', or 'mixed' types does not yield a proper classification. The systems *information structure* and *argument structure / case licensing* are subject to principles that are independent in the first place. Therefore, the parameters of these systems are not, in fact, complementary.

- The functional projections assumed in Generative Grammar are not universal. Restricted word order implies the presence of many FPs in the syntax of a language. Free word order implies variation by means of adjunction.
- Languages can be classified according to the existence of a *canonical subject position* SPEC/IP.
- Whether there are *canonical topic positions* in terms of functional projections is not really clear.

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## 9. Appendices

### 9.1. Dimensions of Topic-Comment (Jacobs 2001)

(97) *Four Dimensions of Topic-Comment* (cf. Jacobs 2001: 645 ff)

- a. Informational separation
- b. Semantic predication
- c. Addressation
- d. Frame setting

(98) *Informational Separation*

In (X Y), X is *informationally separated* from Y iff the semantic processing of utterances of (X Y) involves two steps, one for X and one for Y.

(99) *Semantic Predication* (cf. Jacobs 2001: 647)

In P = (X ... Y), X is the *semantic subject* and Y das *semantic predicate* iff

- c. X specifies a variable in the semantic valency of Y
- d. there is no Z such that (i) Z specifies a variable in the semantic valency of an element in Y and (ii) Z is hierarchically higher in semantic form than X

(100) a. Der Poli/ZEI miss\TRAUT er. (Jacobs 2001: 647)  
*the – police-(DAT) – mistrusts – he*

'He mistrusts the police.'

- b. [THE-POLICE(y) & [HE(x) & MISTRUST(x,y)]]

(101) Die Poli\ZEI kommt. (→ Thetic sentences do not show *informational separation*.)

'The police are coming.'

(102) *Adressation* (Jacobs 2001: 650).

In (X Y), X is the *address* for Y iff X marks the point in the speaker-hearer knowledge where the information carried by Y has to be stored at the moment of the utterance of (X Y).

(103) *Frame Setting*

In (X Y), X is the *frame* for Y iff X specifies a domain of (possible) reality to which the proposition expressed by Y is restricted.

### 9.2. Is there a functional relation between topics and grammatical subjects?

- Attempts of explaining the notion of *subject* pragmatically, as prominence of a 'proto-topic' in a hierarchy of grammatical relations (cf. Sasse 1982; 1995).

Subjects are essentially topics that have become integrated into the case frame of a verb. (Sasse 1995: 1067)

In einem relational gerichteten System, gleichgültig ob es ergativisch oder akkusativisch funktioniert, enthält die TOPIC-anzeigende primäre grammatische Relation (PGR) eindeutige Implikationen semantischer Rollen und kann daher als Mittel zu ihrer Bezeichnung eingesetzt werden. (Sasse 1982: 276)

⇒ 'Das als Subjekt bezeichnete Satzglied hat eine doppelte Funktion, und zwar eine teils pragmatische (das TOPIC des Satzes zu kennzeichnen) und teils semantische; diese doppelte Funktion schlägt sich in seinem syntaktischen Verhalten nieder.' (Sasse 1982: 270)

! **Problematic:** Neither of these two functions is criterial for 'grammatical subjects':

- 'anti-topic constructions' in German (cf. Jacobs 2001: 674)

- (104) a. Die POLIzEI kommt. (thetic sentences)  
'The police are coming.'
- b. Kommt ein Mann zum /ARZT ... (narrative V1-sentences)  
'A man comes to the doctor.'
- c. Es geschah ein \Unfall. (initial expletive)  
'There was an accident.'

- Subjects can even be unsuitable as topics.

- (105)a. Damals wurde *ein Knabe* geboren. (non-presupposable indefinite subject; cf. É.Kiss 1996: 120ff)  
b. *Damit* hatte *niemand* gerechnet. (negative quantifier)

- Temporal and local adverbials are generally quite suitable topics, however. (→ *scene setting; predication over the event variable*).

- (106)a. In Bethlehem wurde damals ein KNABE | /CHRISTUS geboren.  
b. Es<sup>7</sup> wurde damals ein KNABE | ?/CHRISTUS geboren.  
c. Es war damals ein KNABE | ??/CHRISTUS in der Krippe.

- So are frame adverbials.

- (107)a. **Im Falle eines Sieges** wird die Mannschaft eine Belobigung durch den Staatspräsidenten erhalten.  
*in-the – case – of-a – win – will – the – team – a – commendation – by – the – president-of-state – receive*
- b. sùnglihal kyòngu-e-nùn tim-i taetonglyòng-ekesò pyochang-ül pan-ül kòsita. (Jacobs 2001: 655)  
*win - case-in-TOP ...*

- Why do topic-prominent languages have subjects, after all?
- The subject is not defined by a prominent semantic role, either:

- (108)a. Vorhin klopfte es an der Tür. (formal subject)  
b. Offensichtlich ist einem Linguisten *ein Fehler* unterlaufen. (theme-subject of an 'ergative' verb)  
c. Der Mannschaft wurde *ein Preis* verliehen. (theme-subject of a passivised verb)

⇒ The grammatical subject is defined through formal properties rather than through (potential) functions.

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. auch Mohr (2005), die im generativistischen Rahmen zu zeigen versucht, dass das Vorfeld-*es* die nicht prädierte Ereignisvariable repräsentiert.