NOTE

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THE PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION
OF THE GERMAN MAIN CLAUSE STRUCTURE

0. Introduction

In this paper I will examine some well-known issues of German grammar related to the so-called *Besetzung des Vorfeldes* (occupation of the prefield) (s. Olsen, (1982) and Reis, (1985)) and show how this particular construction can be assigned the interpretation of unmarked main clause despite the fact that there are many reasons to believe that it is, in fact, a topicalised structure.

The concept of “prefield” is borrowed from a particular kind of descriptive grammar of German that divides the German sentence structure into “fields”. The prefield is what comes at the beginning of the sentence in front of the verb in second position (V/2); it is mainly constituted by one single constituent (but s. Beneš (1971) for a list of exceptions and Lenerz (1984), Van de Velde (1978) for their treatment in the framework of generative grammar). The middle field lies between the V/2 and the rest of the verbal chunk (if there is any); and the post-field (*Nachfeld*) contains extraposed elements adjoined to the right side of the clause.

The aim of this paper is to take the case of German topicalisation as a sample case in determining the relationship between syntax and pragmatics, while keeping the two components as separate from each other and as internally articulate as possible. None of the syntactic theories I am familiar with has ever tried to develop a consistent approach to the relation between sentence structure and sentence usage. The approach I will propose here is still in a preliminary stage of development and, as such, it needs further research and empirical support. Suggestions concerning some of the ideas developed here were found in Calabrese (1984), Gueron (1982), who reports some suggestion of Safir’s (1982), and Akmajian (1984).

0.1 The approach to syntax that will be assumed here is that developed in recent studies of generative grammar of German\(^1\), but I do not think that the choice of a specific theory of syntax is crucial here, since every theory of syntax has to differentiate itself from and at the same time be accessible to pragmatic interpretation.

Nevertheless a theory that takes SVO as the underlying word order for German would require a set of rules totally different from those proposed here.
How is it possible to correlate the output structures of a syntactic component to some rule of pragmatic interpretation? What parts of a structure must be accessible to this rule, assuming that pragmatic interpretation takes place at surface structure, more precisely after PF, since pragmatic interpretation must have access to phonological representations at least at the level of intonation assignment? 2

In answering these questions, I will focus on the illocutionary act of stating in declarative clauses in German and show that the rule of pragmatic interpretation that correlates a surface structure to the illocutionary act of stating is and must be different from the corresponding rule for English. This can lead us to conclude that, even if some illocutionary acts such as stating, ordering and questioning seem to be very widespread in very different languages and should perhaps be considered universal, the rules of pragmatic interpretation that correlate them to a certain output structure of the syntax are language-specific.

0.2 The relationship and the interaction between the rules of pragmatic interpretation and the syntactic structures given by the output of the left side of the syntactic component can be characterized as follows: the rules of pragmatic interpretation have their raison d'être in the existence of a given syntactic structure; at the same time the pragmatic rules give to a certain syntactic structure the status of unmarked form for a particular illocutionary act.

From this point of view, the theory of markedness becomes crucial to the study of the set of rules of pragmatic interpretation. A marked structure will be a structure deviating from the requirements imposed by a certain illocutionary rule on the output of the syntax. For example, let us suppose that the interpretive rule for questioning in English has the form (1). A sentence like (2) will satisfy the rule and will be correctly correlated to the illocutionary act of questioning, but a sentence like (3) will deviate from the required structure and will not be given the same interpretation:

(1) QUESTIONING: [COMP AUX]
(2) [CP why [did] [IP you study for so many years]]
(3) [why] [study for so many years]

Only (2) can be correlated to the direct illocutionary act of questioning, but the fact that (2) and (3) can both represent the same indirect illocutionary act, shows that unmarked forms can convey an indirect illocutionary meaning too. Consequently the rule assigning an indirect illocutionary act interpretation will have to be able to assign the same interpretation to more than one structure, as Akmajian (1984).
claims. The present discussion will conclude that, on the other hand, the rules assigning direct illocutionary act interpretation like (1) state a one-to-one relationship between a syntactic structure paired with a certain intonational pattern and the illocutionary act performed by uttering this syntactic-intonational pair.

1. The main clause structure in German

The syntactic phenomenon of V/2 in German gives to this language a great freedom in word order. In fact the prefield can contain all kinds of constituents under very few restrictions.

Let us now consider the account given by generative grammar to the V/2 phenomenon.

1.1. Thiersch (1978) reviews many arguments for the assumption of an underlying SOV word order in German and proposes to derive the V/2 phenomenon with the application of two independent fronting rules: \( R_1 \) (V-fronting) and \( R_2 \) (X-fronting).

The application of \( R_1 \) alone generates yes/no-questions, imperatives and conditional sentences:

\[ (4) \textit{hast du Hans gesehen?} \]
\[ \text{have you H. seen?} \]

\[ (5) \textit{machen Sie bitte das Fenster zu} \]
\[ \text{close you please the window} \]

\[ (6) \textit{wäre er gekommen, hätten wir mit dem Auto gehen können} \]
\[ \text{had he come, we could have gone by car} \]

Main clauses and questions are generated by the application of \( R_1 \) and \( R_2 \):

\[ (7) \textit{ich habe Hans gesehen} \]
\[ \text{I have Hans seen} \]

\[ (8) \textit{Hans habe ich gesehen} \]
\[ \text{Hans have I seen} \]

\[ (9) \textit{wen hast du gesehen?} \]
\[ \text{whom have you seen?} \]
The application of R2 alone generates relative clauses and indirect questions:

(10)a. der Mann, den ich gesehen habe, heißt Johann
the man whom I seen have is named J.
(10)b. ich weiß nicht wen du gesehen hast
I don’t know whom you seen have

Assuming that these two rules are instances of movement to COMP
the doubly-filled COMP Filter rules out the possible overgenerations in embedded clauses:

(11)a. der Mann, den habe ich gesehen, heißt Johann
b. ich weiß nicht, wer hast du gesehen

Recent work in GB theory assumes that COMP structure consists of two positions. Let us call C1 the head of CP and C2 its determiner. CP will correspond to S’ and IP to S:

(12)

This structure corresponds to that assumed by Thiersch (1978) for
German, in which C1 is the landing site for elements moved by R1
and C2 the landing site for elements moved by R2.

But the elements that can be moved by R2 are quite heterogeneous and if it seems reasonable that R2 moves wh-elements into C2
(where operators are supposed to land in other languages as well), the
assumption that R2 is always an instance of movement into COMP
does not seem to be consistent with the theory of empty categories.
NP-movement, in fact, cannot land into COMP for various reasons,
but mainly because an NP-trace has different characteristics from a
wh-trace, e.g. it does not get Case in its D-Structure position and its
antecedent is in an argument position.

Some consequences of Thiersch’s approach then would be either
that we consider NP-fronting in German as wh-movement, but this
would lead us to the loss of the notion of “wh-element”, i.e. an
element that functions as an operator in Logic Form, subsumes interroga
tive and relative pronouns and must be moved to CP in the un-
marked case; or to revise our theory of empty categories, generalising
between NP-traces and wh-traces. Either move would obviously
have incalculable and undesirable consequences for the entire the-
oretical framework.
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1.2. Koster (1978) notices that in some cases it is possible in Dutch (and correspondingly in German) to have a d-pronoun between the NP and the fronted V as in (13):

(13) a. Johann, den liebe ich (German)
    John I love
   b. Maria, die haat ik (Dutch)
    Maria I hate

These are cases of left dislocation and could easily be treated as having the left dislocated element outside the structure and the resumptive pronoun taking the place of the fronted NP, wherever it was in the corresponding structure without left dislocation:

(14) a. [CP[Johann] [c-[[liebe] [ip[ich ...]]]]
   b. [CP[den] [c-[[liebe] [ip[ich ...]]]]

The left dislocation phenomenon does not yet provide enough evidence, in the case of (14a), for the placement of the fronted NP “somewhere else” outside the structure, in the unmarked form.

A more striking piece of evidence is provided by another fact, also discussed in Koster (1978) in relation to Dutch. The Dutch and German analogues of English topicalised sentences have different word order from their English counterpart and have the same word orders as unmarked main clauses:

(15) a. John I LIKE
   b. Johann LIEBE ich

This fact leads one to believe that the structure of unmarked main clauses is the same as that for the English topicalised sentences, a point that Cardinaletti (1984) develops in her thesis.

I think that there are two more facts that support this assumption. It is not possible for a weak pronoun with a non-nominative Case to appear in the pref field, either in German or in Dutch. Dutch is more clear about this than German, since in Dutch several personal pronouns have both a strong and a weak form. In German only er, the 3rd person sg. nt., is weak; however (16) shows a clear parallelism between German and Dutch in this respect. In both languages a non-nominative pronoun must be “strong enough” to be able to appear in the pref field. This can be explained only if the pref field is considered to be a prominent position in some sense of “prominence” that includes both theme and rhyme:
(16) a. zij/ze hebben ons gezien
die/sie haben uns gesehen
they have us seen
b. hun/"ze hebben we gezien
die/"sie haben wir gesehen
them have we seen

A second piece of evidence for assuming that the prefield is a topic position and not a COMP position is the need for a "place holder" es/da in the prefield when no other element is a topic:

(17) a. da/es kommt ein Sturm
there comes a storm
b. es hungert mich
it hungers me
c. da/es wurde getanzt
it was danced
(18) a. da/es erschien ein neuer Gast
there appeared a new guest
b. da haben wir Gluck
there have we luck

The argument that will be developed here is theory-internal. If es in (17) or da in (18) were in COMP, they would have to be moved from a position inside the sentence, but there is no such position; in fact, if (17)-(18) are embedded we obtain a structure without prefield and es/da will not appear, showing that they are not present in the D-Structure of (17)-(18):

(19) a. weil (da) ein Sturm kommt
b. weil mich hungert
c. weil (da) getanzt wurde
(20) a. weil (da) ein neuer Gast erschien
b. weil (da) wir Gluck haben

Only an analysis in terms of base generation in TOP can explain how es/da can appear in the prefield and not in subject position. There is still a difficulty. How can these elements be assigned Case? An element base-generated in TOP, in fact, is analysed by Cardinaletti as receiving Case through a chain that contains the element itself, an empty operator in COMP coindexed with it, which binds a trace in an Argument position, thus receiving Case, as in (21):

(21) a. [[TOP NP] [[C2 φ] [IP ... τ]]
b. [NP, φ, τ]

The chain (21b) has only one lexical element, one 9-role and one Case (borne by τ) and the empty operator serves as linking element
between NP₁ and t₁. Otherwise the chain would be impossible and 8-theory and Case theory violated.

In (17)-(18) such a chain does not exist, since we have assumed that there is no D-Structure position that licences NP₁, unlike (21a). Notice that assuming es/da to be in CP would not eliminate the problem, since for an element to be in COMP there must be a trace of its movement. Notice also that only es is a problem for Case theory, since da exists as an adverb and does not need to have Case.

The chain in (21b) permits NP₁ to receive any Case assigned to t₁. The operator 0₁ does not have to be empty, as examples (13) showed. The chain corresponding to (13a) would be (22):

(22) a. [[TOP NP] [[CD [-] [IP ... t₁]]]
   b. [Johann₁ den₁ t₁]

In these cases, when the operator is lexical, the NP can receive Case from the chain but does not have to. In fact, if it does not then it is not analysed as part of the chain (cf. Cardinaletti (1984)).

Substituting Johann with a common noun in (13), (22), we obtain two equally acceptable sentences:

(23) a. den Mann, den liebe ich
    the man (Acc.), that (Acc.) love I
   b. der Mann, den liebe ich
    the man (Nom.) that (Acc.) love I

The chains are different in (23a-b): in (23b) there are in fact two different chains:

(24) a. [den Mann₁ den₁ t₁]
   b. [der Mann₁] [den₁ t₁]

der Mann in (24b) does not receive Case through any chain and can bear only nominative Case:

(25) a. *den Mann, dem habe ich vertraut
    the man [Acc.] that [Dat.] have I trusted
   b. der/dem Mann, dem habe ich vertraut
    the man [Nom.]/[Dat.] that [Dat.] have I trusted

Now we have one Case, nominative, that can be assigned to the place holder without its being part of a chain, thus without being coindexed with an empty category.

Even if there is no way to test if es in (17) is actually a nominative, we have already seen that weak pronouns can appear in TOP only
when they bear nominative Case. There is then no contradiction in my proposal. We can then conclude that es is in TOP position and not in COMP.

2. An analysis of the prefield from a “communicative” point of view

If we assume, as now seems reasonable, on the grounds of indirect empirical evidence and for theory-internal reasons, that the main clause word order in German is generated by application of a verb movement rule and a topicalisation rule, how can we justify the fact that a simple sentence like (26) must be analysed in this theory as having such a complex apparatus of structure and movement rules behind it?

(26) ich komme
"I come"

As pointed out in the introduction, every theory of syntax that aims to empirical adequacy must be accessible to pragmatic interpretation. Therefore there must be more than purely syntactic reasons to assume that a sentence like (26) has an output structure like (27):

(27) \([[[\text{TOP} \text{ ich}] \ [\text{CP}_{C2} \ O_p} \ [\text{C1} \ komme}] \ [\text{IP} \ t, t_j]]]\)

The autonomy of syntax as a component should not encourage the syntactician to ignore the fact that language is an instrument of communication and not an abstract system unrelated to language use.

In 2.1 I will review some empirical facts about the occupation of the prefield discussed by Beneš (1971) from a communicative perspective. These facts will turn out to support an analysis of the prefield in terms of topic position, that is to say that the prefield has in most cases the discourse function of topic. There is a wide range of variation in the communicative values of the prefield, from non-referential (es), to known, given, etc. It will be a task of pragmatics to analyse and distinguish between them. What is pertinent to syntax is the fact that pragmatic interpretation corresponds to the structural analysis given in 1., for independent reasons, to the German declarative clause word order.

In 2.2 I will discuss the possibility of extending the syntactic analysis with the base generation of the prefield in TOP to those main clauses with a focused element in the prefield. If this is correct, it will
turn out to be evidence for the autonomy of syntax.

2.1 Beneš (1971) defines the unmarked form for German declaratives as theme-rheme word order. This means that in (28a) the speaker informs the hearer about the fact that somebody, who happens to be a man, comes into a restaurant; while in (28b) he or she says about the fact that a man (and not a woman, or a boy, etc.) comes into some restaurant. The same with (29):

(28) a. ein Mann kommt in ein Gasthaus
    "a man comes into a restaurant"
b. in ein Gasthaus kommt ein Mann
    "in a restaurant comes a man"
(29) a. Herr Meier wartet draußen
    "Mr. M. is-waiting outside"
b. Draußen wartet Herr Meier
    "outside is-waiting Mr. M."

Other context-free environments are answers to questions like “was gibt es Neues?” (“what’s new?”) as (30), definitions as (31), laws as (32), or proverbs as (33):

(30) a. Fräulein Müller hat sich verlobt
    "Miss M. got engaged"
b. Morgen habe ich Geburtstag
    "tomorrow is my birthday"
c. Im Stadttheater wird heute der “Fidelio” gegeben
    "in the city-theater is today the “Fidelio” performed"
(31) In einem abgeschlossenen System bleibt die Summe der Bewegungsgröße erhalten
    "In a closed system the sum of the energy is maintained"
(32) Alle Bürger sind vor dem Gesetz gleichberechtigt
    "all citizens are equal before the law"
(33) Durch Schaden wird man klug
    "through damage one becomes clever"

In these kinds of context-free sentences the function of a theme (or topic) in the prefield is to create “tension, expectation” for some more information about it.

In context-bound sentences the prefield is always a way to connect the new sentence with the preceding ones. In these cases the prefield can have a wide range of communicative value, from “very small” (the referent is the same as the previous sentence, only expressed with different words, as in (34)) to “some more” communicative value (it adds some more information about the already given referent, as (35)). It may have no communicative value at all (in the case of a place holder, as in (36)) or can contain a “high communicative value” when it contains a rHEME, as in (37):
(34) ... der Parthenon. Dieser Tempel war der Göttin Athene geweiht. Der gewaltige Bau bestand aus weißen Marmor.
    "... the Parthenon. This temple was dedicated to the goddess Athena. The powerful structure consisted of white marble".
(35) Diese Reformbewegung griff bald auf die anderen Länder über. In Deutschland schlossen sich die Äbte und Mönche von etwa 15 Kloster der Reform an.
    "This reform movement soon spread into other lands. In Germany abbots and monks of about 15 monasteries embraced the Reform".
(36) Ja, es sind viele gestorben, im Krieg ... (Böll)
    "Yes, there were many killed in the war ..."
(37) einsam auf dem kleinen Bahnhof im Moor blieb der lächelnde Junge zurück. (Böll)
    "lonely in the small train station in the moor the smiling young man remained behind".

The communicative value of sentences with a resumptive pronoun in the prefield can also vary. It is very common in the spoken language and it is used in literary prose to recall every-day speech (38); it may be used to put in relief the theme (39); or to put in relief the theme when this is in the prefield (40):

(38) 'n junges Mädchen, die darf nicht drei Tage 'rumlaufen mit
    ′m großen Loch im Ärmel. (Hauptmann)
    "a young lady, she should not go around for three days with a hole in her sleeve".
(39) Esel, die die Schule schwänzen, deren gibt es eine Menge
    in Irland ... (Böll)
    "asses that play hooky, of them there is a great number in Ireland".
(40) die rührenden Augen, die hat sie.
    "the touching eyes, those she has".

2.2 From the last examples we many deduce that the d-pronoun is in C₂ not only because it is an operator, but because it is focused.

Lambrecht (personal communication) claims, in fact, that in French the topical element is outside the sentence structure, in our terms in TOP, while focus movement is into COMP, in our terms in C₂. Empirical evidence for this is that topicalised structures are not incompatible with wh-movement, while focus structures are:

(41) a. 

        "this apple"
        "qui veut l'avoir?"
        "where is it?"
        "to whom did you give it?"
        "òù est-ce qu'elle est?"
    \{ à qui l'as-tu donnée?
    "who wants to have it"
b. SOIF il a.
   "thirst he has"
\& SOIF pourquoi il a?
   "thirst why does he have"
\} (faim non)
   "hunger, not"

Sentences like (42) may suggest that this happens in German too:

(42) a. den Hans, wer hat ihn gesehen?
     b. *den HANS, wer hat (ihn) gesehen

However, an analysis of this kind is not compatible with the recent developments of GB theory assumed here, for the same reasons that Thiersch's analysis is not.

One can view the examples in (41)-(42) from a different point of view, considering that focus interpretation (and intonation) can be assigned in C₂ in German. Sadock and Zwicky (1985) suggest, for example, that interrogative elements (like who, where etc.) bear some focus features too. Calabrese (1984) also shows that a close relationship holds between focus assignment and the position of wh-elements, so that in Italian, in which only one focus is assigned to a sentence, in a parallel fashion only one wh-element is possible in each sentence:

(43) a. *chi ha scritto che cosa?
     "who wrote what?"
 b. *MARIO ha scritto una LETTERA, CARLO una CARTOLINA e
     MARIA un REPORTAGE
     "Mario wrote a letter, Carlo a postcard, and Maria a reportage"

It seems possible that in German focus is assigned into C₂ and successively "spread" to the element with the focused operator in C₂. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the operator in C₂ may be focused when the element in TOP is not but not the other way around, as (44) shows;

(44) a. der HANS, DEN habe ich gesehen
     b. der Hans, DEN habe ich gesehen
     c. *der/den HANS, den habe ich gesehen
     d. den HANS habe ich gesehen

As for (44d), there are two analyses possible under our minimal hypothesis: (a) der HANS is in C₂ or (b) a null operator is in C₂, which is assigned focused features that must be "spread" onto TOP since focus features need to be phonetically realized.

Issues of focus interpretation assignment go beyond our purposes. I will leave this topic for further research. I will assume that focus is assigned in C₂ and that C₂ can be filled only by operators.
3. Some theoretical proposals

In this section I discuss some theoretical issues that are at stake if we accept the hypothesis of the existence of pragmatic rules of interpretation.

3.1. In the introduction I have tried to sketch an approach to the relationship between the output of the syntax and its pragmatic interpretation; I also said that I would limit myself to the analysis of rules that interpret direct illocutionary acts, and that these presumably correlate only one output structure of the syntactic component to only one direct illocutionary act. This is not in contrast with Akmajian's claim that "one-to-one form-function fit (in natural language) seems to be the rare case". It seems quite reasonable, in fact, to assume that in normal speech direct illocutionary acts do not constitute the major number of possible structures.

Sadock and Zwicky (1985) suggest that German declaratives differentiate themselves from declaratives in other languages in that they do not resemble subordinate structures in the same language.

It is perhaps misleading to define a declarative clause as "marked" or "unmarked", as Sadock and Zwicky do, since its declarative status makes such a sentence automatically one of the most frequent and therefore unmarked structures in a language, (under a certain conception of "unmarked"). In what sense, then, are German declaratives "marked"?

In section 1. and 2. I gave some theory-internal reasons and empirical evidence that declarative clause word order in German is generated in the syntax through a movement rule of the verb and a topicalisation rule in the prefield.

If this is true, the pragmatic rule of interpretation for declarative sentences in German must have access to the "marked" characteristics of this construction.

I proposed that pragmatic interpretation rules need to check only part of the syntactic structures. It seems reasonable to assume that they have access to the two positions of CP. For declaratives they will check that $C_2$ be filled by a $d$- or a $\emptyset$ pronoun; for wh-questions that $C_2$ be filled with a $w$-pronom; for yes/no-questions that $C_1$ be filled by the inflected part of the verb and $C_3$ be empty; finally for imperatives that $C_2$ be empty and that $C_1$ be filled by a verb morphologically marked as imperative:

\begin{align*}
(45) \text{a. DECLARATIVE} & \quad [C_2 \text{ d-/} \emptyset] [C_1 \text{ V}] \\
\text{b. WH-INTERROGATIVE} & \quad [C_2 \text{ w-}] [C_1 \text{ V}] 
\end{align*}
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c. YES/NO-INTERROGATIVE
   \[ C_2 \] \[ C_1 \] V

 d. IMPERATIVE
   \[ C_2 \] \[ C_1 \] V [imp]

One may wonder if it is reasonable to assume that a non-overt element like \( \emptyset \) in (42a) must contrast crucially with an empty position as in (42b-c) after the PF component, which is assumed here to be the input of pragmatic interpretation. This is a substantial problem that will remain unsolved here. Notice, however, that giving access to TOP to the rule, while solving our conceptual problem, would cause the rules to lose their descriptive power, since a TOP position is always permitted (but not obligatory) in (45b-d), as (46b-d) show:

(46)

a. Hans, (den) habe ich gesehen
   b. (Hans), wer hat ihn gesehen?
       who has seen him?
   c. (Hans), hast du den gesehen?
       have you seen him?
   d. (Hans), ruf den sofort mal an!
       call him immediately

The examples in (46) show clearly that the element in \( C_2 \) plays a crucial role in determining the interpretation of the structures representing the (most common) direct illocutionary acts in German.

Sadock and Zwicky (1985) in their typological study of the relationship between grammatical form and illocutionary acts also note that wh-questions apparently resemble more declaratives than yes/no-questions, in that they have the verb in second position, while yes/no-questions, like imperatives, have the verb in first position. This would be very surprising if grammar were determined by pragmatic functions and not vice versa. Since we are assuming that pragmatic interpretation of certain grammatical structures arises after the existence of the given structure in the grammar of the language, the present theory can account for this fact. Furthermore, since \( C_2 \) is the position into which (focused and non-focused) operators must move, it must be filled by the \( w \)-operator in wh-question, making the position of the verb appear as second in the sentence, while the verb is actually situated in the same position in all cases for grammatical reasons.

3.2 Another issue that I will only mention here is the role of intonation in determining pragmatic interpretation. Recent developments of phonological theory have opened new avenues of research concerning the relationship between syntax and phonology, highlighting more complex connections between the internal modules of the phonological component and its interaction with the syntactic one.
For example, Paul Kiparsky has proposed in several articles a (pre-syntactic) lexical phonological component which provides a phonological analysis at the word level; and a postlexical component in which rules apply at a level broader than the word boundary.

Another proposal to correlate phonology to syntax has been made by Elisabeth Selkirk, who postulates in several recent studies a component of postlexical phonological rules that reanalyses syntactic structures in order to make them accessible to phonological rules, erasing syntactic information. In harmony with this proposal Vogel and Nespor (1982) analyse the influence that syntactic structure has on the application of Raddoppiamento Sintattico, an Italian external sandhi rule, as being evidence for a set of rules that decode syntactic structures and make them relevant to phonological analysis, since only syntactic structures would not be able to account for the possible variation in grouping phrases belonging to the same syntactic structure.

The lowest common denominator to these proposals is the assumption that the syntactic component, while retaining its autonomy, loses its predominance in linguistic analysis. Since the intonation pattern plays a crucial role in the interpretation of any kind of speech act to the point that the same syntactic structure can express different speech acts, at least that part of phonology that concerns intonation assignment must be accessible to our rules of pragmatic interpretation.

There are several ways of implementing this intuition. One would be to assume that a form-intonation pair is assigned a certain illocutionary meaning. This is somewhat difficult to formalise since the intonation pattern pervades the whole sentence while we assumed that the relevant syntactic information is in the first maximal category of the sentence structure, namely CP.

A different way could be to build the pragmatic component in the modular fashion which has proven to be adequate for discussion of morpho-phonological interaction:

\(47\)

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{PRAGMATICS 1} \\
\text{PRAGMATICS 2}
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{PHONOLOGY 1} \\
\text{PHONOLOGY 2}
\end{array}\]

\[\text{SYNTAX}\]

\[\text{LF}\]

The complexity of the interaction between different components the functioning of which is far from being understood makes figure (47) appealing as well as very problematic to defend.

The discussion of a full theory of pragmatic interpretation of syntactic-phonological pairing goes far beyond the purposes of this pa-
per. Figure (47) shows, however, the urgency of future study of this
necessary side of formal grammar.

3.3. Let us now turn to another problem mentioned above, namely
the markedness issue. According to the strategy operative in Grice’s
cooperative principle, the more “marked” (in the sense of unusual)
the syntactic-phonological pairing is, the more “indirect” the illocu-
tionary act will be. The notion of markedness appears therefore to be
projected from one component of the grammar to the other.

3.3.1. Synchronously, structures different from the unmarked ones
are possible, as long as they do not violate principles of the grammar.
Marked structures can convey an indirect speech act or not:

(48) ich weiß nicht, wen einzuladen ich dir empfehlen würde
  I don’t know whom to invite I to-you recommend would
(49) ich weiß nicht, warum so lange studieren
  I don’t know why so long study

Both (48) and (49) are marked structures in German; they are, in other
words, compatible with the rules of the grammar of German, as op-
posed to (50), which is ruled out by a general principle that prevents
the CP of a German infinitival to be filled:

(50) *ich weiß nicht, warum so lange zu studieren
  I don’t know why so long to study

But they are not generated by the core grammar of German. In (45)
the infinitival clause is pied-piped into the CP of the finite, immedi-
ately higher clause, while in (46) zu is deleted, neutralizing the pro-
hibition of CP insertion, as shown in Giusti (1986).

The syntax is unable to distinguish between pragmatically marked
structures and syntactically marked (non-core) structures. The no-
tion of markedness must therefore be mapped in the appropriate way
from one component to the other. Furthermore we have noticed
above that much pragmatic markedness is conveyed by a deviating
pairing of syntactic structure and phonological pattern.

We must again leave the question open in order to keep our dis-
cussion within reasonable limits.

3.3.2. The fact that the rules of pragmatic interpretation recognize a
structure as the unmarked one to convey a given illocutionary act,
has desirable consequences in the diachronic study of a language as
well. By means of these rules it is possible to explain some linguistic
change avoiding inconsistency in the syntax.
According to Lenerz (1984) and other work mentioned there, Indo-European had a SOV word order without a V/2 rule. It is not clear when and why the V/2 phenomenon appeared in the Germanic languages, but it seems to have taken place in all languages at the same time.

Lenerz proposes to analyse the V/2 as initially moved by a stylistic rule of adjunction to S. The subsequent generation would have interpreted the rule not as stylistic but as part of core grammar, creating a new piece of structure. (51a-b) show the reanalysis process:

(51)  

\[ \text{If we assume an extended version of X'-theory as in Chomsky (1986) which assigns a two-bar projection to every constituent, including CP, we do not need to assume the creation of a new piece of structure in CP; on the contrary, it would be a problem to stipulate that some languages have a one-bar projection of CP.} \]

In terms of a theory of syntax accessible to pragmatic interpretation, like the one proposed here, the V/2 phenomenon can simply be explained with the assumption that at a certain point in the history of the language the frequent usage of V-movement to the head of CP made the structure with V/2 the unmarked form to convey the illocutionary act of stating, changing the pragmatic rule for stating into the one we have proposed in (44a).

3.3.3. The assumption that syntax is autonomous from these rules but not the other way around, namely that rules of pragmatic interpretation are directly dependent on syntactic structures, predicts that the acquisition of the pragmatic rules must follow the acquisition of the corresponding syntactic structure.

Clahsen's (1982) study of acquisition of the German sentence structure makes the following observations:

(52)  

i. At the beginning (until the 29th month) verbal elements appear in second and first position but the end position is preferred. Composite verbal elements are not separated.

ii. Thereafter, all the composite verbal elements appear at the end of the sentence. From the 29th month on, they cannot appear in the second position of the sentence any longer. Simple verbs, on the other hand, appear in this phase in the second position as before.
iii. Finally, after the 37th month all the verbs appear regularly in the second position of the sentence, and composite verbal elements are separated. At this point the children master the correct position of the verb in the German main clause. (my translation)

In phase (i) and (ii) the children seem to be busy in learning various possible positions for the verb in German regardless of the illocutionary acts performed. In the third phase, when they master the syntax of verb placement, they can derive through their everyday experience the illocutionary force of their utterances.

4. Summary

I have proposed in this paper an approach to syntax that takes into account the pragmatic interpretation of certain basic syntactic structures that have been supposed to correspond to basic illocutionary acts. This approach to syntax takes syntax as autonomous from other components of the grammar, but accessible to pragmatic interpretation.

The declarative clause structure for German, corresponding to the illocutionary act of stating, has been analysed as a topicalised structure, in contrast to the declarative clause structure for other well-studied languages as English. This leads to the conclusion that the pragmatic rules of interpretation are language specific.

The assumption of rules of pragmatic interpretation is not a redundancy in the grammar since they are responsible for syntactic-phonological pairing and for the different interpretation of various kinds of markedness, namely markedness in the syntactic-phonological pairing, syntactic markedness to be analysed as pragmatic markedness and syntactic markedness that is immune from illocutionary interpretation.

Some advantages of this approach have been considered in section 3.3. In the synchronic study of language (3.3.1.) certain syntactically marked structures can be assigned indirect illocutionary force. From the diachronic point of view (3.3.2.) the syntax need not be complicated by the assumption of structure changing rules to explain some instances of change in word order. From the point of view of language acquisition (3.3.3.) this approach seems to predict correctly that the acquisition of pragmatic rules follows the acquisition of the corresponding structures.

Further research is needed to develop the configuration of the component of the pragmatic interpretation that has been assumed here in a modular fashion.
Footnotes

4. Cf. Chomsky (1986). Notice that the existence of a two-position CP is independent from V-fronting if we assume that C₁ is the position of complementizers and C₂ the position of operators.
6. For example, indirect vs. direct speech acts; cf. the observation made above that (2) can receive both a direct and an indirect illocutionary act according to which intonation it is associated with.

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