

CONSEQUENCES OF A SYNTACTIC, PREDICATIVE FOCUS-MARKING SYSTEM*

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Using original data from Ntəʔkepmxcín (Thompson River Salish; Thompson and Thompson 1992, 1996) to illustrate, this paper explores some semantic and syntactic consequences of a purely predicative syntactic focus-marking strategy. If focus is marked on the clausal predicate, and never on argument positions, then there are necessary consequences for other areas of the grammar. I discuss two such consequences in this paper. First, focus sensitive expressions like *only* must be purely adverbial, and never adnominal. Secondly, since there is one predicate per clause, there can only be one focus per clause. I outline several strategies to deal with discourse contexts which, at least in English, involve multiple foci. Finally, I conclude by suggesting some further potential consequences of a predicative focus-marking system.

1. Background: Focus and How it is Expressed

FOCUS is an information structure category that typically corresponds to new, contrastive or important information in a discourse. More formally, however, FOCUS is a syntactic feature that triggers a semantic object, discourse alternatives, which are used for the interpretation of a linguistic expression (Jackendoff 1972, Rochemont 1986; Rooth 1985, 1992 for Alternative Semantics approach to FOCUS; von Stechow 1990, Krifka 1992, 2006 for Structured Meaning approach). This more formal definition means that FOCUS can be marked on material that is old to the discourse, consistent with what we actually observe in natural language.

In English, FOCUS is marked primarily through prosodic prominence (indicated by ALL CAPS in (1)). While the ordinary meaning of (1) is just the proposition that Chris spotted the whale, FOCUS triggers additional meaning, namely a set of alternative propositions whereby CHRIS is replaced by alternate whale-spotters.

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- (1) [CHRIS]_{FOCUS} spotted the whale.
 ordinary semantic meaning: SPOT(CHRIS)(WHALE)
 focus semantic meaning:
 { SPOT(CHRIS)(WHALE), SPOT(NINA)(WHALE), SPOT(MO)(WHALE) ... }

However, FOCUS, like other linguistic categories, can be marked through other grammatical strategies, like a designated morphological focus marker (e.g. Gùrùntùm *á* in (2)), or a syntactic construction (the Niuean cleft in (3)).

- (2) Á Håfsá bà pán má-i.
 FOC Hafsa PROG carry water-DEF
 ‘[HAFSA]_{FOCUS} is carrying the water.’
 (Hartmann and Zimmermann 2009:1342)
- (3) Ko Pule ne matakutaku ai e tama mukemuke.
 PRED Pule NFT frightened pronoun ABS child infant
 ‘It’s [PULE]_{FOCUS} who the baby is afraid of.’ (Seiter 1980:102)

The Salishan languages, which are predicate-initial in word order, employ a syntactic strategy: focused information is made (part of) the initial predicate (Kroeber 1997, 1999; Koch 2008a; Beck 1997, 2009; Davis & Saunders 1978; Jelinek 2000; Davis 2012; among others). Backgrounded information, on the other hand, is typically removed from this initial predicate position: argument positions are background positions. Depending on what is focused, one of three syntactic strategies is employed (Koch 2008a, Koch and Zimmermann 2010). If the verb or its extended projection is focused, nothing special happens: a standard auxiliary/verb initial utterance is employed. This is seen in (4), where the *wh*-question targets a VP focus. In the answer, the focused predicate is in its standard initial position (preceded only by functional material, the imperfective auxiliary and 2nd position clitics). The backgrounded 3rd person pronoun translated as ‘she’ in the English has no phonological exponent at all (it is a null pronoun *pro*, which I do not mark).

- (4) Q: stéʔ=meʔ k=ex s-zéytn-s ʔéyʔ e=Moník.¹
 what=CNSQ C=IMPF NOM-do-3POSS now DET=Monique
 ‘What is Monique doing now?’

¹ Data are presented in the orthography developed in Thompson and Thompson (1992, 1996), and Kroeber (1997). I use acute accent ´ on vowels to indicate word-level stress. The phonemic key to the orthography is as follows; symbols not listed have the standard IPA interpretation: *c* = [tʃ], *c* = [ts], *c*´ = [ts´], *e* = [e, æ, a, ə, ε], *ə* = [ʌ], *i* = [i, ei, ai], *o* = [o, ɔ], *s* = [ʃ], *s* = [s], *u* = [u, o, ɔ], *x* = [χ], *y* = [j, i]. See Thompson and Thompson (1992) in particular for the phonetic realizations of phonemic vowels across contexts.

A: ʔéx=xéʔ=ncíʔ n-łém'-es e=spáq^w n=łe=k'^wáx^we.
 IMPF=DEM=LOC.there LOC-enter-TR.3O.3S D=book in=DET=box²
 'She's [putting the book in a box]_{FOC}.'

If focus falls on a noun phrase, a nominal predicate construction (Davis et al. 2004) is used. Bare nouns can appear in initial predicate position without the use of an auxiliary (see Kroeber 1999 for pan-Salish discussion; Gerdtz 1988 on pseudoclefts in Halkomelem). In (5), the *wh*-question targets focus on the object NP, and in the answer, the bare noun *sc'ał'tán* 'rattlesnake' is in the initial predicate position. This is followed by the 2nd position clitic *xéʔ*, and then a background clause *e wikts e Simon neʔe* 'what Simon saw there.' This construction thus maintains both the focus-initial and the predicate-initial structure of the language.

(5) Q: stéʔ=meł=xéʔ e=Uncle Símon k=wík-t-s u-cíʔe,
 what=CNSQ=DEM DET=Uncle Simon COMP=see-TR-3O.3S to-there
 'What did Uncle Simon see there,'

k=xáł-m=us u-cíʔe u=łe=s-q'^wút.
 COMP=climb-MDL=3CnCl to-there to=DET=side
 'when he was climbing up the other side (of the river)?'

A: sc'ał'tán'=xeʔ e=wík-t-s e=Símon neʔe.
 rattlesnake=DEM COMP=see-TR-3O.3S DET=Simon there.
 w=e=xw'él.
 on=DET=road.
 'What Simon saw there was [a rattlesnake]_{FOC}. On the path.'

² See Thompson and Thompson (1992, 1996) for further details on glosses. '- ' marks an affix, and '=' a clitic. Abbreviations used in glosses are: 1,2,3 = 1st, 2nd, 3rd person, AUG = augmentative reduplicant, AUT = autonomous (intransitive), CAUS = causative, CLEFT = cleft predicate, CnCl = conjunctive subject clitic, CNSQ = consequential, C(OMP) = complementizer, CP = complementizer phrase, DEM = demonstrative, D(ET) = determiner, DP = determiner phrase, DRV = directive transitivizer, EMPH = emphatic, EVID = evidential, FOC = focus, FUT = future, IM = immediate (intransitive), IMP = imperative, IMPF = imperfective, InCl = indicative subject clitic, INTR(ANS) = intransitive, IRL = irrealis, LINK = link marker, LOC = locative, MDL = middle (intransitive), NEG = negation, NOM = nominalizer, NP = noun phrase, O(BJ) = object, OBL = oblique, PL = plural, PoCl = possessive subject clitic, POSS = possessive affix, Q = yes/no question, RC = relative clause, REFL = reflexive, RFM = reaffirmative, REL = relational, RPT = repetitive, SG = singular, STAT = stative, S(UBJ) = subject, SUBJ.EXTR = subject extraction suffix, TP = tense phrase, TR(ANS) = transitive, VP = verb phrase.

Finally, when focus falls on a DP, a cleft is used. The *wh*-question in (6) targets an object DP focus. Since DPs are referential and do not make good predicates, they do not surface in predicate position. In the answer, a cleft predicate, *c'e* in (6), is used to create a cleft-VP in the initial predicate position. The cleft-VP contains *c'e* and the focused DP *e štákn* 'his socks' (the cleft predicate is, as always, followed by 2nd position clitics, *ne?* 'there' in (6), but these are positioned prosodically and are not syntactically a constituent of the cleft-VP). The cleft construction thus also maintains the focus-initial and the predicate-initial generalizations of the language.

- (6) Q: sté?=meɬ=xe? k=ex q^w'íc'-es.
 what=CNSQ=DEM COMP=IMPF launder-TR.3O.3S
 'What did he wash?'
- A: c'é=ne? e=štákn-s e=q^w'íc'-es,
 CLEFT=there DET=sock-3POSS COMP=launder-TR.3O.3S,
 ?eɬ e=sqéyus-c.
 and DET=pants-3POSS
 'It's [his socks]_{FOC} that he washed, and [his pants]_{FOC}.'

In some cases, focus on an object is not marked via a nominal predicate construction or cleft, but simply with a standard auxiliary/verb-initial form (Koch 2008a, 2011a). In (7), the question again targets an object focus (in this case the oblique marked object of a formally intransitive verb *m'ən* 'give'), and the answer is VP-initial. Cross-linguistically, the conflation in V(P) focus marking and object focus marking is extremely common (e.g. see Hartmann and Zimmermann 2009:1346-47 on Gürüntüm), and can be understood as focus projection of the focus marking on the object to the entire initial VP that contains the object (see Selkirk 1995, Büring 2006 for English). Once again, the focus-initial and the predicate-initial structure of the language is maintained (note that subject focus is not marked with a verb-initial structure, since subjects are not part of the VP and therefore cannot project focus to the VP).

- (7) Q: sté?=meɬ=xe?e e=Şúw k=s-m'ón-s.
 what=CNSQ=DEM DET=Sue COMP=NOM-give-3POSS
 'What did Sue give (the elder)?'
- A: m'ón=xe? te=s?es-k^wlí? te=?éplş.
 give=DEM OBL=STAT-green LINK=apple
 'She gave her [a green apple]_{FOC}.'

Using an auxiliary/verb initial utterance to mark focus on a constituent of the VP also applies to preposition phrases contained in the VP. The question in (8) calls for focus on the object of the preposition phrase *on X*, contained in the VP *standing on X*, and this is answered using a standard auxiliary/VP-initial utterance.

- (8) Q: k'éməł sté? e=ne?=us=?es-tét-ix ?éx e=Bill.
 but what C=there=3CnCl=STAT-stand-AUT IMPF DET=Bill
 'But what is Bill standing on?'
- A: ?éx=xé?=ne? ?es-tét-ix e=Bill
 IMPF=DEM=there STAT-stand-AUT DET=Bill
 n=e=?es-céq^w te=k'^wáx^we.
 in=DET=STAT-red LINK=box
 'Bill is standing on [a red box]_{FOC}.'

The syntactic focus-marking strategies outlined above distinguishes Salishan from many more commonly studied stress languages, where the discourse categories of focus and background are typically expressed via prosodic marking (a boost or reduction in prominence). In the next sections, I explore some necessary consequences for a grammar that employs such a syntactic, predicative focus marking strategy.

2. Consequence 1: Focus Sensitive Expressions are Strictly Adverbial

Certain expressions depend on the location of focus marking for their semantic interpretation. A classic example is *only* or *just*, a marker of exclusivity. Consider the English cases in (9). *Only* must associate with the focus-marked material for its semantic interpretation (the association of *only* is shown via subscript numerals). Shifting the focus (through prosody) changes the truth conditions. Thus, (9a) is true if the sole contextually relevant relationship between Mish and her dog is one of chasing; it is still true if Mish chased other things, like the cat. On the other hand, (9b) is true if Mish chased the dog, but nothing else; (9b) is still true if Mish did other things with her dog, like catch it, wash it, and feed it.

- (9) a. Mish only₁ [CHASED]_{FOC,1} the dog.
 b. Mish only₁ chased [the DOG]_{FOC,1}.

A standard account for this truth conditional behaviour is to propose that the semantic denotation of a focus sensitive expression like *only* lexically stipulates reference to focus alternatives in some sense (e.g. Horn 1969, Rooth

1992, 1996, Krifka 2006, Beaver and Clark 2008). Beaver and Clark (2008) term such expressions conventionally focus sensitive.

Note that in English, *only/just* can be either adverbial (e.g. 9a, 10a) or adnominal in its interpretation (9b, 10b). This is consistent with the prosodic focus marking system employed by a language like English, which allows the flexibility of marking any constituent as focused, predicates as well as arguments.

- (10) a. Adverbial *only*:
Stephane *only*₁ [SKIS]_{FOC,1}. (He does not pursue any other sports.)
- b. Adnominal *only*:
*Only*₁ [StePHANE]_{FOC,1} skis. (Nobody else skis.)

Now consider a predicative focus marking system like that found in Ntɛʔkepmxcín. If focus is always marked on the predicate, then it follows that conventionally focus sensitive expressions are purely adverbial, and never adnominal, since in situ nominals are never focus-marked (Koch and Zimmermann 2010). This predicts that focus sensitive expressions like *only/just* can only ever be semantically interpreted with the V(P) in a verb-initial utterance, and never with an in-situ nominal like a subject. This is shown in (11), where a speaker marks contrastive focus on *nx^wesit* ‘walk’ as opposed to the prior *ʔaq’t* ‘cross the river.’ The second clause here, containing *ʔu?* ‘only/just,’ can only receive the interpretation in (11-i), where *ʔu?* ‘only/just’ associates with the VP *nx^wesit* ‘walk’ for its interpretation; the interpretation in (11-ii), where it associates with the subject *kn* ‘I,’ is not possible.

- (11) V-initial utterance: *ʔu?* ‘only/just’ can only associate with initial VP
- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| teté? | k=n=s=ʔáq’-t | né?e. |
| NEG | COMP=1SG.PoCl=NOM=cross-IM | there |
- ‘I didn’t cross (the river by canoe).’

[n-x^wesít]_{FOC,1}=kn=ʔu?₁.
LOC-walk=1SG.InCl=only

(i) ‘I just₁ [walked]_{FOC,1}.’

(ii) NOT *‘Just₁ [I]_{FOC,1} walked.’

[e.g. not felicitous in context: *Bill didn’t walk, ...*]

In order to have *ʔu?* ‘only/just’ be able to interpret with a nominal expression, we predict that the nominal must surface in one of the predicative constructions used to focus nominals: a nominal predicate construction, or a cleft. This is indeed the case. In the second sentence of (12), the speaker focuses

sxic ‘stick’ in contrast with the preceding *smeyx* ‘snake’ by using *sxic* as a bare nominal predicate. *ʃu?* ‘only/just’ must associate with initial *sxic* for its semantic interpretation (12-i); interpretation (12-ii) is not possible.

- (12) Nominal predicate construction: *ʃu?* ‘only/just’ associates with initial NP
 cú-ne k=k’wét-ne=us k=sméyx,
 think-TR.3OBJ.1SG.S COMP=step-TR.3OBJ.1SG.SUBJ=3CnCl IRL=snake
 ‘I thought I stepped on a snake.’

k’émel [sxic]_{FOC,1}=ʃu?₁=xe?=te? nífm’.
 but stick=only=DEM=DEM see

- (i) ‘But it was only [a stick]_{FOC,1}.’
 (ii) NOT *‘Only₁ [(the thing that I stepped on)]_{FOC,1} was a stick.’

The second sentence in (13) shows a focused DP, *e sk^wúk^wpi? kt e Tom* ‘our boss Tom,’ in a DP cleft. *ʃu?* ‘only/just’ must be interpreted with the initial cleft VP for semantic interpretation (assuming functional material, like the ‘only’ cleft predicate *cuk^w*, is ignored for focus interpretation, this leaves the DP ‘our boss Tom’ as the only lexical material inside the initial VP for focus interpretation).

- (13) Cleft: *ʃu?* ‘only/just’ can only associate with clefted constituent
 teté? k=ex=s=xzén-t-m=ne?
 NEG COMP=IMPF=NOM=count-TR-3OBJ.1PL.SUBJ=there
 e=?éplş nəmímł.
 DET=apple 1PL.EMPH
 ‘We don’t count the apples.’

[cúk^w=ʃu?₁ e=sk^wúk^wpi?-kt e=Tóm]_{FOC,1}
 CLEFT=only DET=boss-1PL.POSS DET=Tom
 e=xzén-t-mus=xe?e e=?éplş ?éx ʃe?km’ix.
 COMP=count-TR-3OBJ.SUBJ.EXTR=DEM DET=apple IMPF always

- (i) ‘It’s only₁ [our boss Tom]_{FOC,1} that always counts the apples.’
 (ii) NOT *‘It’s our boss Tom that only₁ counts [the apples]_{FOC,1}.’

In this section, we have seen that a grammar that marks focus using a purely syntactic, predicative strategy has focus sensitive expressions that are purely adverbial, and not adnominal. In *Nłe?kepmxcín*, *ʃu?* ‘only/just’ is such an expression, and we saw that it can only associate with the initial predicate for its semantic interpretation. It is important to note that this prediction holds for conventionally focus sensitive expressions, e.g. those whose lexical entries make some reference to focus alternatives. Focus sensitive expressions that associate

- iii. * e=s=cúk^w=s=λu? [e=sk'ətk'ətwéyus]_{SOF}
 C=NOM=CLEFT=3PoCl=only DET=cut.off.pants
 e=?es-łúm-st-s.
 C=STAT-wear-TR-3OBJ-3SUBJ
 intended: '... that it is only [shorts]_{SOF} that he is wearing.'
- iv. √ e=s-łúm-st-mus e=sk'ətk'ətwéyus.
 COMP=STAT-wear-TR-3O.SUBJ.GAP DET=cut.off.pants
 '... that is wearing shorts.'

While cases of second occurrence focus, being semantically complex, are generally difficult to process (Krifka 2004), that is not the trouble here. We expect that, once a second clause is introduced, a second predicate and thus a second focus position becomes available. Consistent with this prediction, consultants have no trouble producing even more complex syntactic structures that include a second occurrence focus, so long as the second focus is embedded in a second clause. (15) shows a case where the first focus *Tom* is clefted in the initial position, while the second focus *sqeytn* 'fish,' is clefted in an embedded clause under the embedding verb 'know.'

- (15) ?é=ek^wu=?ełλu?₁ [e=Tóm]_{FOC,1} k=xək-s-t-émus
 CLEFT=EVID=even DET=Tom COMP=know-CAUS-TR-3OBJ.SUBJ.GAP
 k=s=cúk^w=s=λu?₂ [e=sqyéytn]_{SOF,2}
 COMP=NOM=CLEFT=3PoCl=only DET=salmon
 k=ex=?úpi-s=xé?e e=Monik.
 COMP=IMPF=eat-TR.3OBJ.3SUBJ=DEM DET=Monique
 'Even [Tom]_{FOC} knows that Monique eats only [fish]_{SOF}.'
 (more literally: 'It is even₁ [Tom]_{FOC,1} that knows that it is
 only₂ [fish]_{SOF,2} that Monique eats.')

In this section, we have seen that focus is restricted to one occurrence per clause, which I have indicated as a consequence of an information structure system which marks focus on the predicate. It is possible, however, that this is a consequence not of a predicative focus marking system per se, but partly due to the syntactic position of the focus sensitive operators, like *λu?* 'only/just,' which I have been using as a diagnostic for a second focus position in this section. In Nłe?kepmxcín, *λu?* 'only/just' is a second position clitic, and analyzed as occurring in a high clausal position in the CP domain (Koch and Zimmermann 2010). There is only one such position in the clause, and so only one case of association with focus is possible.

German has also been analyzed as having an adverbial focus sensitive particles (Büring and Hartmann 2001), yet allows multiple foci. Assuming that

focus sensitive operators in German can be inserted in the syntax at various points along the verbal projection (e.g. VP, vP, TP, CP), then multiple foci and multiple association with these foci may be possible. In Ntɛʔkepmxcín, on the other hand, there is just one position available for focus sensitive operators, so multiple foci are restricted. More research is needed to determine the range syntactic positions available to focus sensitive operators in predicative focus marking systems, including other Salishan systems (e.g. St'át'imcets, see Davis 2012).

4. Cases of Multiple Foci

In addition to the second occurrence focus cases seen in the previous section, the question arises as to how the grammar handles cases of multiple foci more generally (focus pairs in the sense of Krifka 2006). In the absence of embedded clauses, speakers resort to a range of strategies to deal with multiple foci.

The first strategy is, strikingly, no grammatical marking of one of the expected foci (e.g. *e sk'atk'atweyus* 'shorts' in 14-iv above; *Flora* in 16).

(16) Context and English form: *I didn't like it, but* [FLORA]_{FOC} *is* [SMILING]_{FOC}.

k'émeɬ [ʔes-q^wiɬ]_{FOC}=xeʔ=ne? e=Flóra.
 but STAT-smile=DEM=there DET=Flora
 'But Flora is [smiling]_{FOC}.'

Secondly, the second focus may be marked by using a left-hanging contrastive topic position ((17), (18); Koch 2011c on Ntɛʔkepmxcín, Gardiner 1998 on Secwepemcetsín). This is not unexpected under theories where such contrastive topics are proposed to contain a focus marking (Jackendoff 1972 on A and B accent; Büring 1997, Krifka 2007, among others). In (17), the expected focus *Sam* is in a left-hanging topic position, while the second focus on 'one' in the NP 'one dog' is marked using a nominal predicate construction, which positions 'one' inside the predicate in the main clause.

(17) Context and English form: *Sue has two dogs, and* [SAM]_{FOC} *has* [ONE]_{FOC}.

k'émeɬ [e=Sám]_{C-TOPIC},
 but DET=Sam,
 [piʔéyeʔ]_{FOC,1}=ɬuʔ₁=xeʔ tk=sqáqɣaʔ e=wʔexstés.
 one =only=DEM LINK=dog C=have
 'But [Sam]_{C-TOPIC}, what he has is only₁ [one]_{FOC,1} dog.'

A third strategy is to use an emphatic pronoun (Thompson and Thompson 1992) to mark one of the foci. The examples below illustrate using the 1sg emphatic form, *nce?* or *ncewe?*. This emphatic pronoun may appear in the left-hanging topic position (18), but it can also surface elsewhere in the clause in non-predicative positions, for example clause-finally after the subject DP in (19). Since this is not a predicate position, it is not a focus position formally marked by FOCUS (e.g. cannot be targeted by focus sensitive expressions like ‘only’), and I have left it unmarked; I assume that this is a case of pragmatic emphasis, but not formally marked as FOCUS in the grammar. In (20), the emphatic pronoun occurs between the imperfective auxiliary and the verb ‘drink’ (possibly in what Gardiner 1998 calls an “internal topic position” -- again a non-predicative position).

(18) Context and English form:

A: *My shoes are white.*

B: [MY]_{FOC} shoes are [RED]_{FOC}.

B: [ncé?]_{C-TOPIC}, [ʔes-céq^w]_{FOC} e=n-sítɕ’uʔ.
 1SG.EMPH, STAT-red DET=1SG.POSS-shoe
 ‘[Me]_{C-TOPIC}, my shoes are [red]_{FOC}.’

(19) Context and English form:

A: *I’m wearing red shoes. What kind of shoes are you wearing?*

B: [I]_{FOC}’m wearing [WHITE]_{FOC} shoes.

B: [ʔes-tpéq^w]_{FOC}=xeʔ=neʔ e=n-sítɕ’uʔ nceweʔ.
 STAT-white=DEM=there DET=1SG.POSS-shoe 1SG.EMPH
 ‘My shoes are [WHITE]_{FOC}.’

(20) Context and English form:

You’re watching the stew, but [I]_{FOC} am [drinking TEA]_{FOC}.

k’émeɬ ʔéx=kn nceʔ ʔúq^weʔ te=tíy.
 but IMPF=1SG.InCl 1SG.EMPH drink OBL=tea
 ‘But I am [drinking tea]_{FOC}.’

5. Conclusion

Using novel Ntɛʔkepmxcín fieldwork to illustrate, I have argued that, for a strictly predicative focus marking system, there are consequences for other areas of the grammar. First, such a system will necessarily have strictly adverbial focus sensitive expressions, like *ʔu?* ‘only/just,’ which lexically encode

reference to contextual alternatives (conventionally focus sensitive, á la Beaver and Clark 2008). Second, such systems will have maximally one focus per clause. Nevertheless, to deal with pragmatic contexts which in English typically have two foci, the grammar does leave a variety of options open: speakers may simply leave one focus unmarked, may use the contrastive topic position for one focus, may mark focus pragmatically with an emphatic pronoun, or may use an embedded clause to make available a second predicate position (and thus a second focus position).

There are potentially further consequences for grammars which mark focus in a strictly syntactic, predicative way (Koch 2008a, Davis 2007, 2012), which are beyond the scope of the current discussion but merit further investigation. First, cleft structures in strictly predicative focus-marking languages are expected to have a different semantics than clefts in English. English clefts are interpreted uniquely/exhaustively (e.g. Halvorsen 1978, and many others). Salish clefts, on the other hand, have been shown to be commonly used in non-exhaustive contexts ((23); Koch 2007, 2008b, 2012 on Nłeʔkepmxcín; Davis et al. 2004 on St'átimcets). This makes sense: since DP focus is obligatorily marked using a cleft structure, this structure should be non-exhaustive. Otherwise, speakers would always have to give exhaustive answers to DP-focus questions.

Secondly, since focus is marked syntactically, prosodic marking as in English and many other Indo-European languages may not be required. Indeed, although Salishan languages are stress languages, there is a striking absence of prosodic marking on the information structure categories focus and background/given (Koch 2008a, 2011a on Nłeʔkepmxcín; Caldecott 2009 on St'átimcets prosody; Benner 2006 on Sencóthen). However, it is unclear that this is a necessary consequence of a syntactic, predicative focus-marking strategy. Natural language is full of redundancies, and I see no reason why focus could not be marked syntactically as well as prosodically (as is the case, for example, in English cleft structures).

Thirdly, the Salishan languages are well-known for their predicate-argument flexibility.³ Any open class category (Noun/Verb/Adjective) can be the predicate without the use of a copula, and any Verb/Adjective can be combined with a determiner to form an argument without an overt Noun. From the perspective of the focus marking system, this makes sense: the predicate is

³ This morpho-syntactic behaviour gave rise to a well-known claim that Salishan languages lacked a distinction between Nouns, Verbs and Adjectives, which has since been refuted. For the original arguments against a N/V/A distinction, see Kuipers 1968, Kinkade 1983, Jelinek and Demers 1994, Jelinek 1995. For arguments for a N/V/A distinction, see van Eijk and Hess 1986, Beck 1995, Demirdache and Matthewson 1995, Matthewson and Davis 1995, Davis and Matthewson 1999, Montler 2003. For recent overviews see Davis and Matthewson 2009, Koch and Matthewson 2009, Davis 2012.

the focus position, so it is useful for any category to be able to appear in this position. On the other hand, arguments are a non-focus position, so it makes sense for things like verbs to be able to appear with determiners too (Davis 2007, 2012; see also Koch 2008a, Beck 2009). Again, I do not see this as a necessary consequence of a strictly syntactic, predicative focus marking system: why not use copulas as part of the syntactic marking of focus (e.g. DP-clefts employ a cleft predicate)? On the other hand, there does appear to be a strong correlation between predicative focus marking and predicate/argument flexibility, at least in Salishan, and it would be worthwhile to explore this correlation more fully, including in other verb-initial systems.

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