

Focus and Bulgarian Clause Structure

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This dissertation examines several properties of the Bulgarian clause from a recent perspective on focus and intonation (Cinque 1993, Zubizarreta 1998, Kiss 1998, among others) and the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995 and later). Word orders are argued to be determined in two components of the grammar: one conditioned by the computational system and hosting also uninterpretable focus features, and one, where intonation and focus interact.

Semantically, focus is claimed to be a predication function with two manifestations. In one, the function of subject of predication or topic (Reinhart 1995) needs to be identified; in the other, a presuppositional assertion containing a variable or a set of alternatives needs to be properly saturated. These two types of foci, respectively labeled *predication focus* and *argument focus*, are shown to have various manifestations in Bulgarian clause structures.

Discourse operators in the CP-part of the clause can host topics (=“subjects of predication”) realized as subjects, objects, and prepositional phrases, while the clause ‘proper’ (VP (IP)) contains the clitics (argument variables). The domain of *predication focus* is the VP (IP). Based on work by Baker 1996 and Jelinek 1984 for Amerindian languages, and incorporating ideas from Iatridou 1991 and Rudin 1997, my analysis for Bulgarian assumes that predication is thus realized at two levels: the CP-part of the clause containing several unordered ‘subjects of predication’ and the predication focus domain, containing either nominals and full pronouns or clitic variables.

Argument focus is shown to have two manifestations: information focus and contrastive focus. Information focus occurs when a

presuppositional assertion contains a variable, and contrastive focus (cf. Kiss's 1998 'identificational focus') when the assertion includes a set of alternatives, restricted or otherwise. Information focus is obtained by the interaction of the Nuclear stress rule with the hierarchical order of arguments, and through the Focus Prosody rule. Instances of P(rosodic)-movement are shown to fix mismatches between the Nuclear stress rule and the Focus Prosody rule deriving subject-final orders and PP-DP restructurings.

Contrastive focus is given an account in comparison with the split CP analysis for the Italian clause, described by Rizzi 1997. For Bulgarian declaratives and wh-questions, it is proposed that a formal focus feature triggers movement to the highest functional projection in the IP field - T/Agr or a Mood Phrase (Rivero 1994). It is also shown that dislocated topics are never found below focused items spreading in Bulgarian 'upwards' rather than 'downwards'.

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