COMPLEMENTIZER CHOICE, FOCUS MOVEMENT, CONTRASTIVITY AND PRESUPPOSITIONALITY

GOAL: I will argue for an articulated theory of the syntax-semantics interface that captures in a natural way the interpretive differences of contrastive and non-contrastive foci by relating them to differences in the complementizer system involved in each type of construction. I will also argue that the focal movements observed in languages like Basque depend directly on the choice of the complementizer system.

BACKGROUND: There is a general debate concerning the nature and semantic import of focus. This debate is articulated along two main axes of disagreement (*cf*. Krifka (2004) *a.o.*):

(i) The presuppositionality / non-presuppositionality of focus.
(ii) The informative / contrastive nature of focus.

Jackendoff (1972) presents the debate about focus-presuppositionality proposing that a sentence like (1) doesn't give rise to a focal presupposition (an existential quantification over a variable like (2)), but to an object with no existential compromise like (3), thus capturing the possibility of data like (4), a priori contradictory with an existential quantification analysis.

(1) John bought $[\text{POTATOES}]_F$
(2) $\exists x$ [John bought x]
(3) λx [John bought x]
(4) John bought $[\text{NOTHING}]_F$

However, recently, this position has been claimed to be too strict, arguing that it generalizes over the worst case, and doesn't allow for presupposition accommodation (*cf*. Herburger (2000), Geurts & van der Sandt (2004)). On the other hand, despite some claims for the existence of different types of foci in the literature, most of the semantic analyses of focus take it to be inherently contrastive (*cf*. Rooth (1985), Krifka (2001)), or inherently noncontrastive (*cf*. Herburger (2000)). The key issue in this talk is that in a language like Basque, the syntactic configuration of the clause has interpretive effects on focus (cf. (5) and (6)).

(5) $[\text{Jonek patatak erosi ditu}]_F$. **In-Situ, Non-Contrastive & No Focal Presupposition**
Jon potatoes buy aux
'$[\text{Jon bought potatoes}]_F$'

(6) $[\text{Patatak}]_F$ erosi ditu Jonek. (= (1)) **Focus Movement, Contrastive & Focal "Presupposition"**
Potatoes buy aux Jon
'Jon bought $[\text{potatoes}]_F$'

PROPOSAL: Herburger (2000), following a neodavidsonian tradition, proposes that at logical form, an existential quantifier over events takes all the nonfocal material as the restrictor and all the material (with the focal one) as the scope ((7), for (1)).

(7) $\exists e$ [Buy(e) & Past(e) & Agent(e, John)] Theme(e, potatoes) & Buy(e) & Past(e) & Agent(e, John)]

I will propose, adapting ideas of Herburger (2000), that at LF, the focal phrase falls into the scope of a quantification over events, and that the variation in the two axes in (i) & (ii) is derivative of the choice of the quantifier involved. Furthermore, and adapting ideas of Hegarty (1992), I will show that it is the different nature of the quantifiers of *out-of-the-blue utterances* (OOTB) and *contextualized utterances* (CU) the responsible of focal movements in languages like Basque in the latter type of construction, but not in the former one (*cf*. (5) vs. (6), and Elordieta (2001)). The argumentation will be based on these three points:

i-In OOTBs, all the material is focused, there's no presupposition (no restriction of the quantifier) and the focus has a non-contrastive interpretation.

ii-In CUs, just some material is focused, there's focal presupposition, and the focus has a contrastive interpretation.

iii-OOTBs are both syntactically and semantically simpler than CUs.

Thus, I will propose that in OOTBs, at LF we have an existential quantifier over events that takes as scope the whole clause ((8), for (5)).

(8) ∃e [Buy(e) & Past(e) & Agent(e, John) & Theme(e, potatoes)]

On the other hand, in CUs, we have an δ-quantifier (a definite quantifier over events that will pick up a file card in a file change semantics (*cf*. Hegarty (1992)). This δ quantifier takes all the nonfocal material as its restriction, and the focal phrase as well as all the nonfocal material as its scope ((9) for (6)).

(9) δe [Buy(e) & Past(e) & Agent(e, John)] Theme(e, potatoes) & Buy(e) & Past(e) & Agent(e, John)

This analysis has welcome results: the binarity and "presuppositionality"/familiarity of the δ-quantifier is to be expected, since the δ-quantifier is a *bona fide* strong quantifier, a definite description. Furthermore, the contrastiveness of CU foci will derive from the *uniqueness* requirement of the definite description (*cf*. Russell (1905), Löbner (1985) among others). The unary existential quantifier of OOTBs won't have any restriction or presupposition, and the reading will be inherently noncontrastive. On the other hand, and adapting ideas of Irurtzun (2005), I will argue that the quantifier over events is inserted in the Finº head, within a split CP (ForceP – TopP – FocP – FinP, *cf*. Rizzi (1997)), and, depending on the nature of the quantifier, the derivation will involve focal movements (in CUs) or not (in OOTBs) in a language like Basque:

- The ∃ will select a completely focal sister (an OOTB phrase) and this will yield an 'everything in situ' sentence (5) and a transparent LF mapping as in (8). Thus, the focus is non-contrastive.
- The complementizer system of a CU will be more articulated. The δ will be selected by a Focº, that will attract the focal XP to its specifier in a language like Basque (6) (*cf*. Ortiz de Urbina (1989), (1999), Elordieta (2001)). For the syntax-semantics interface of these constructions I will adapt Irurtzun's (2005) dynamic model: I will argue that in order for this δ-quantifier in Finº to get its 'external argument' at LF (*cf*. Larson & Segal (1995)) it will undergo a QR operation pied-piping its restriction to SpecTop and then Reproject (*cf*. Hornstein & Uriagereka (2002)), turning the former {TopP,{FinP, Top'}} phrase into a {FinP,{FinP, ToP}} phrase –a quantificational phrase that gives us in a straightforward mapping the logical form of (9). In these structures, it will follow that the focus has a contrastive interpretation.

In consequence, the interpretive differences of clauses with focus movement and focus in situ derive directly from the complementizer system of each type of construction.

References:

Elordieta, A. 2001, *Verb Movement and Constituent Permutation in Basque*, PhD. Dissertation, Leiden University.

Geurts, B. & R. van der Sandt, 2004, "Interpreting Focus", in *Theoretical Linguistics* 30, pp. 1-44.

Hegarty, M., 1992, *Adjunct Extraction and Chain Configurations*, PhD. Dissertation: MIT.

Herburger, E., 2000, *What Counts: Focus & Quantification*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.

Hornstein, N. & J. Uriagereka, 2002, "Reprojections", in S. Epstein & T. D. Seely (eds.), *Derivation and Explanation in the Minimalist Program*, Blackwell, pp. 107-132.

Irurtzun, A., 2005, "Focus & Clause Structuration in the Minimalist Program". URL: http://ling.auf.net/lingBuzz/000201

Jackendoff, R., 1972, *Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar*, Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press.

Krifka, M., 2001, "For a Structured Meaning Account of Questions & Answers", in C. Féry & W. Sternefeld (eds.), *Audiatur Vox Sapientiae*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Krifka, M. (ed.), 2004, *Theoretical Linguistics* 30.

Löbner, S. 1985, "Definites", in *Journal of Semantics* 4, pp. 279-326.

Ortiz de Urbina, J., 1989, *Some Parameters in the Grammar of Basque*, Dordrecht: Foris.

Ortiz de Urbina, J., 1999, "Focus in Basque", in Rebuschi & Tuller (eds.), *The Grammar of Focus*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rizzi, L., 1997, "The fine structure of the left periphery"., in L. Haegeman (ed.), *Elements of Grammar*, Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 281-337.

Russell, B., 1905, "On Denoting", in *Mind* 14, pp. 479-493.