

Incorporation, focus and the phonology of ellipsis in Irish

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This paper analyzes a certain class of misalignments found in contemporary Irish in the relation between syntactic and phonological representations. The mismatches analyzed turn on the phonological requirements of focus (verum focus in particular) and of ellipsis and on how the two sets of requirements interact. It argues that the phonological mechanisms of ellipsis can be over-ridden when the phonological requirements of F-marking need to be satisfied and the analysis requires a theoretical framework in which the post-syntactic computation is characterized by parallel and simultaneous optimization. In particular, it is argued that certain facets of ellipsis, morphophonology, and prosody are computed in parallel, as in classic Optimality Theory. The analysis also relies crucially on a kind of head movement (from specifier to a commanding head position) whose existence is predicted by current conceptions of phrase structure but which seems to be little documented.

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1 PURPOSES

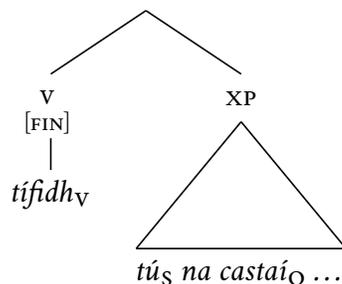
- Explore the interaction between:
 - Head movement,
 - the phonology of focus,
 - and ellipsis in Irish.
- Lessons:
 - Focus prosody, ellipsis, and head movement interact in a way which suggests they are computed at least partially in parallel.
 - Ellipsis is fundamentally a phonological phenomenon, with syntactic roots.
- Empirical core of the paper: the morpho-syntax and phonology of **subject pronouns** in Irish, and an unusual interplay between focus prosody and ellipsis.

2 BACKGROUND

OUR MAIN CONCERN: the special status of subject pronouns in finite, verb-initial clauses (VSOX):

- (1) Má bhriseann tú an fhaocha, [tífidh tú na castáí] atá ina leath deiridh.
if break.PRES you the periwinkle [see.FUT you the twists] C-be.PRES in-its half rear.GEN
'If you break open a periwinkle, you will see the twists that are in its hind parts.'

(2)



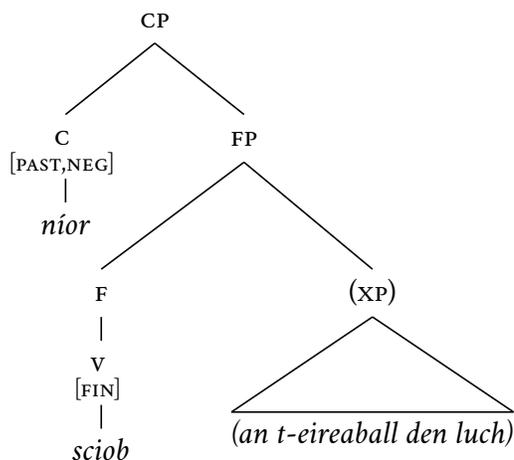
And their interaction with ‘responsive’ ellipsis:

- (3) a. A-r sciob an cat an t-eireaball den luch?
Q.PAST cut.PAST the cat the tail off-the mouse
 ‘Did the cat cut the tail off the mouse?’
- b. (i) Sciob.
cut.PAST
 ‘Yes’
- (ii) Ní-or sciob.
NEG-PAST cut.PAST
 ‘No.’

The isolated verbs in (3b) reflect **elision of the large postverbal constituent** (XP) of structures like (2) (McCloskey (2017a) and references cited there).

- (4) a. Dúirt siad go dtiocfadh siad, ach [ní tháinig ____] ariamh.
say.PAST they C come.COND they but NEG-FIN come.PAST ever
 ‘They said that they would come but they never did.’ COORDINATION
- b. Beidh muid connáilte, [nach mbeidh ____]?
be.FUT we frozen NEGQ be.FUT
 ‘We’ll be frozen, won’t we?’ TAG QUESTION
- c. le heagla go gceapfá [go bhfuil ____], ... ní aon cheann de leabhra móra ...
for fear C think.COND.S2 C be.PRES is-not any one of books great
 léite agam fós
read.PERF-PASS by-me yet
 ‘Lest you think I have, I have not yet read any of the great books...’ BACKWARD ELLIPSIS
GLL 61
- d. tráth a raibh an Contae sin daonmhar ar chaoi [nach bhfuil ____] inniu
time C be.PAST the county DEMON populous on way NEG-C be.PRES today
 ‘at a time when that County was populous, in a way that it is not today’ ACD
CE 183

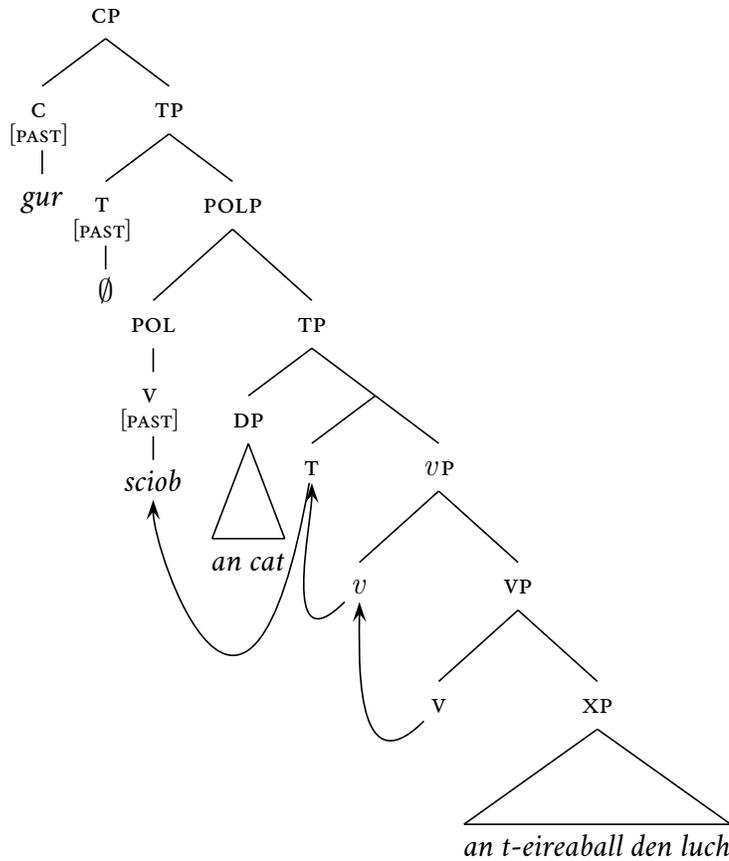
(5) Ellipsis in (3b)



F of (5) is then a functional head which licences Responsive Ellipsis of its complement (XP of (5)).

- We identify F of (5) as the expression of **sentential polarity** POL (McCloskey (2017a), Acquaviva (2014)).

(6)



SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL IN (6):

- Word order differences between finite clauses (VSO) and non-finite clauses ((S)OV).
- The complex morphology of finite verbs (Acquaviva (2014), Oda (2012), Ostrove (2015, 2017))
- Sentential prosody (Elfner (2012, 2015), Bennett et al. (2013))
- Provides a basis for understanding Responsive Ellipsis.

3 SUBJECT PRONOUN INCORPORATION

- (7) a. Chonaic mé fear mór ar an bhealach mhór.
 saw I man big on the way great
 'I saw a large man in the roadway.'
- b. (chonaic mé) (fear mór) (ar an bhealach mhór)
- c. (xanik^jmə) (f^har mo:r) (er^j ə valax wo:r)

The (unstressed) subject pronoun of (7) is **enclitic** /mə/ on the finite verb /xanik^j/.

(Quiggin (1906: p. 155, §486), de Bhaldraithe (1966: p. 65, §339), Greene (1973: 128), Lucas (1979: p. 120, §461), Chung & McCloskey (1987: 226–228), Doherty (1996: 23–25), Ó Baoill (1996: 90, §6.3.2), Ó Sé (2000: 156))

Call the process which leads to this outcome *Subject Pronoun Incorporation* (SPI).

Some evidence for incorporation as a **morpho-syntactic** operation: (simple) subject pronouns enter into a range of allomorphic interactions with finite verbs.

4 ALLOMORPHIC INTERACTIONS

Two kinds of cases:

- Form of an inflected verb is affected by a subject pronoun
- Form of a subject pronoun is determined by the presence of certain inflectional endings

See Wagner (1959: 95–96) for a comprehensive overview for one variety.

TYPE ONE

In the dialects of Munster, the future tense ending spelled *-f(a)idh* is normally realized as /hig^j/. But before a simple pronoun, it is realized as /hⁱ/ (see Ó Sé (2000: 23, 252, 258, 273, 285, 299) and especially Ó Sé (2005) and references cited there):

- (8) a. *cuirfidh Meáig*: [kir^jhⁱg^j m^jɑ:g^j] ('Meg will put'), but:
 b. *cuirfidh mé*: [kir^jhⁱ mə] ('I will put')

TYPE SIX

s-initial nominative pronouns all have initial palatal /j/. However, in the Irish of Cléire and other coastal Munster varieties, the conditional ending /-həx/ and the past habitual ending /-əx/ cause the initial /j/ to be de-palatalized to /s/ (Ó Buachalla (1962: 105), Ua Súilleabháin (1994: 485–6), Ó Sé (2002: 470) Ó Buachalla (2003a: 11)):

- (9) a. *do chuirfeadh sí*: [də xir^jhəx si] ('she would put')
 b. *do bhíodh sé* [də v^ji:əx sə] ('he used to be'), but:
 c. *do bhíodh Séamas* [də v^ji:əx s_e:məs] ('Séamas used to be')

4.1 IMPLICATIONS

- These interactions are instances of **suppletion**.
- The mechanisms behind them must respect **locality** constraints on suppletive allomorphy. (Embick (2012), Bobaljik (2012), Arregi & Nevins (2013), Merchant (2013a), Bobaljik & Harley (2013), Bobaljik (2015))
- Adjacency is not sufficient – a closer structural relationship is needed. (see Bobaljik (2012), Svenonius (2012), Merchant (2013a: 19, fn. 18 and passim))
- SPI puts the simple subject pronoun and the relevant inflectional endings **inside the same morphological word**, thereby guaranteeing the necessary locality

4.2 UNDERSTANDING SUBJECT PRONOUN INCORPORATION

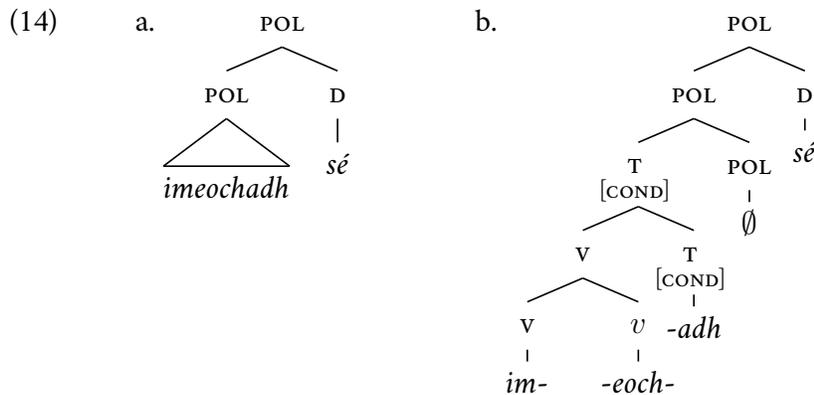
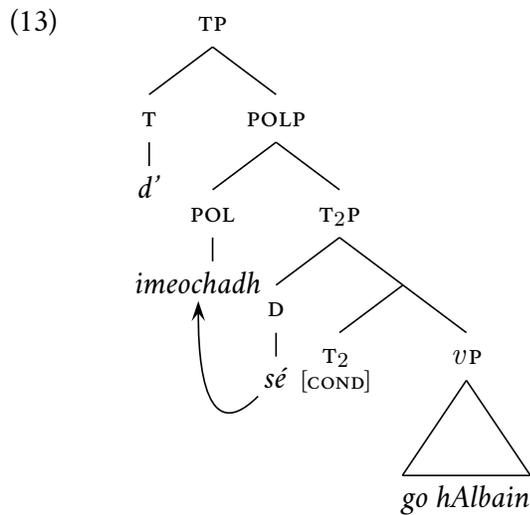
SPI is *not* prosodic incorporation: **object pronouns** are prosodically enclitic too, but show no comparable patterns of allomorphy when verb-adjacent.

- (10) gu-r stóráladh_V [∅]_{SUB} iad_{OBJ} i mboscaí.
 C.PAST store.PAST-IMPERS them in boxes
 ‘that they were stored in boxes.’
 (stóráladh_V iad_{OBJ})

The only existing proposal about the nature of SPI we are aware of:

- (11) SUBJECT PRONOUN INCORPORATION:
 Doherty (1996): a species of head-movement – which raises the simple pronoun from subject position and right-adjoins it to the finite verb, creating, in effect, a compound.

- (12) D’ imeochadh sé go hAlbain.
 PAST- leave.COND he to Scotland
 ‘He would go to Scotland.’



OUR TAKE: this proposal is correct, and in a contemporary theoretical context, less anomalous than it might seem.

Assume Bare Phrase Structure (Chomsky (1995).

- Simple subject pronoun *sé* is **both minimal and maximal**.
- Although not part of the extended projection of the clause...
- ...it is the head which is most **immediately commanded** by the attracting head (POL) (and commands all other heads which the polarity head commands).
- And only subject pronouns incorporate...
- ...because of command-based locality – only the highest accessible D in the command domain of POL can raise to adjoin to the polarity head.

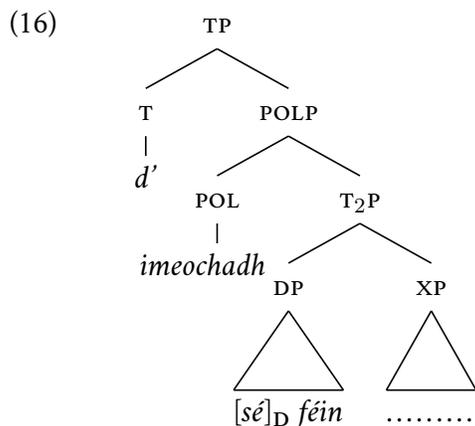
Assuming that null exponents are ignored in calculations of adjacency (Embick (2012: 28–29), Merchant (2013a: §2)), the patterns of verb-pronoun allomorphy sketched above are expected and routine.

Some supporting evidence: only ‘simple’ pronouns incorporate in this way.

- Some pronouns are augmented with suffixes or function words (contrastive, demonstrative, reflexive) to their right (McCloskey & Hale (1984), Koopman (1999), Doyle (2002), McCloskey (2004), Kane (2014))

- (15) a. DEMONSTRATIVE: *é sin*: ‘that guy, that one’ (cf. *é* ‘him’)
 b. CONTRASTIVE: *siad-san* ‘they’ (as opposed to others) (cf. *siad* ‘they’)
 c. REFLEXIVE: *sinn féin* ‘ourselves’ (cf. *sinn* ‘we, us’)

- Complex pronouns do not undergo SPI:
 - Prosodically independent.
 - No trace of allomorphic interactions sketched above.
- Follows from basic structural considerations: subject pronoun is not in the right position to undergo head movement to POL in (16) (it is contained in a specifier).



5 A CURIOUS PHENOMENON

Simple pronouns **may not bear focus**. A complex pronoun must be used instead.

- (17) Chuaigh **si-se** i dtreo na gcnoc, agus chuaigh **mi-se** i dtreo na farraige.
GO.PAST she-CONTR towards the hills and GO.PAST I-CONTR towards the sea
 ‘SHE went towards the hills and I went towards the sea.’

And yet: simple pronouns are **prosodically** ‘focused’ in some contexts.

- (18) A: Cuir síos é. B: Ní rachaidh sé síos.
send down it NEG-FIN GO.FUT it down
 ‘Drive it down.’ ‘It won’t GO down.’ (VERB FOCUS)

David Greene (1973:128):

...“normally enclitic pronouns may be stressed in emphatic replies ... equally with the verb (it should be noted that in this construction it is the action which is stressed, not the agent)”

- (19) a. A: An ngéillfidh siad? B: Caithfidh SIAD.
Q yield.FUT they must they
 ‘Will they yield (on this)?’ ‘They HAVE to.’ (VERUM FOCUS)
- b. Níl sé furasta a leithéid a dhéanamh.
NEG-FIN-be.PRES it easy its like do.NON-FIN
 ‘It’s NOT easy to do such a thing.’ RNG 03-09-2014 (VERUM FOCUS)

Brian Ó Curnáin (2007:Volume One, p. 391, §383):

“the ... common use of double stress or stress shift used to emphasize the truth or propositional meaning of an utterance”

Call this the *Special Focus Construction* (SFC).

- Strong stress, or focal accent, on a simple subject pronoun...
- ... although simple pronouns *may not in general be focused*, and do not carry the *semantic focus*.
 (See Greene (1973: 128), Wagner (1959: 98-99), Lucas (1979: 94, §360), Ó Baoill (1996: 89, §6.3.1), de Búrca (1970: 77, §383), de Bhaldraithe (1966: 65, §340), Ó Curnáin (2007: Volume One, 391, §1.383), Ó Sé (2000: 156, §336, 50, §56). Jason Ostrove points out that the phenomenon is also found in Scots Gaelic.)

spi is involved here: allomorphy conditioned by incorporation is *obligatory* in the SFC.
 (Wagner (1959: p. 98–99, §276), and original fieldwork).

- (20) ach tiocfaidh sé /'tʲukə 'je:/ (Munster, TYPE ONE)
 but come.FUT he
 ‘but he WILL (come)’ (Ó Sé, 2000: 50, §56)

The syntax of focus: our assumptions.

- A [FOCUS] feature can be applied to elements of the syntactic representation. (Jackendoff (1972), Rochemont (1986), Selkirk (1996b) and much subsequent work)
- That feature may appear on POL (**verum focus**; Höhle (1992), Samko (2014)), or on the verbal root *v* (**verb focus**), among other possibilities.
- Verb-raising + SPI will result in **[FOC] and subject pronouns being co-present in the morphologically complex verb.**

But how will structures like (19) be interpreted by the morphology and the phonology?

6 THE PHONOLOGY OF SPECIAL FOCUS

The prosody of focus in Donegal Irish (O'Reilly et al. 2010, Dorn & Ní Chasaide 2011):

- Broad focus utterances (all words equally discourse-new and unfocused): content words *may* bear a rising L*H pitch accent (technically a 'phrase accent'; see Grice et al. 2000, Elfner 2015).

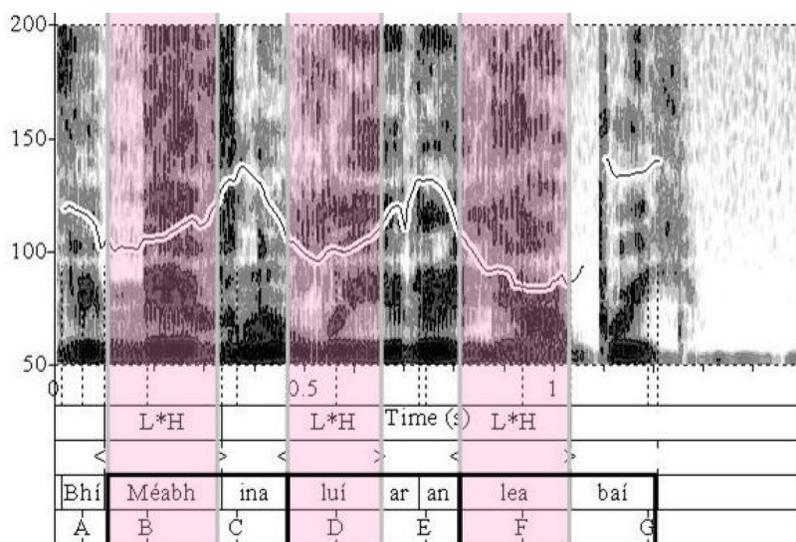


Figure 1: *Bhí Méabh ina luí ar an leabaí* 'Méabh was lying on the bed' (O'Reilly et al. 2010)

- Phonetic correlates of focus (both narrow/informational and contrastive):
 - (i) No special *melody* indicating focus, just regular L*H tune.
 - (ii) Increased duration for the focused element.
 - (iii) Increased pitch range and larger pitch excursions on the focused element (particularly in utterance-medial position).
 - (iv) Frequent deaccentuation and/or pitch compression of post-focal material.

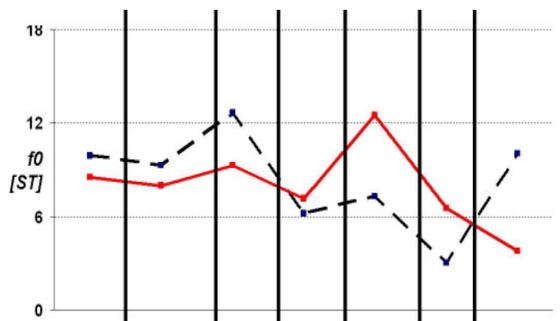
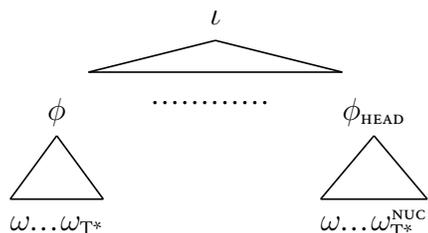


Figure 2: Intonational consequences of focus: *Bhí Méabh ina luí ar an leabaí* ‘Méabh was LYING on the bed’ (O’Reilly et al., 2010)

The phonological analysis of focus: ι -phrase headedness.

- In discourse neutral contexts, the strongest (‘nuclear’) accent in Irish is typically the final accent of the clause or utterance.
- INTERPRETATION: **rightmost** ϕ -phrase (\approx XP) within ι -phrase (\approx clause) functions as its **head**.
 - Accent associated with rightmost ϕ -phrase is thus the strongest accent, in both phonetic and phonological terms (21) (e.g. Liberman & Prince 1977, Selkirk 1984, 2005, etc.).

(21) Nuclear accents as ϕ -phrase edge-marking and ι -phrase headedness (T* = phrase-final tonal accent)



(22) HD-R(ι)
 Assign one violation for each ϕ -phrase which (i) is the head of a dominating ι -phrase, and (ii) is not right-aligned within that dominating ι -phrase (e.g. McCarthy & Prince 1993, Truckenbrodt 1995, Féry 2013 and references there).

(23) Broad focus prosody

/ Bhí Méabh ina luí /	HD-R(ι)
a. $\left(\phi \text{ Bhí Méabh}^* \right) \left(\phi \text{ ina luí}^* \right)_{\text{HD}}$	
b. $\left(\phi \text{ Bhí Méabh}^* \right)_{\text{HD}} \left(\phi \text{ ina luí}^* \right)$	*! W

Bhí Méabh ina luí ‘Méabh was lying down.’ (after Dorn & Ní Chasaide 2011)

The phonetic effects of focus are **strongly attenuated in final position**.

“broad focus [may not be] truly different from narrow focus in the case where the nucleus falls on the last accented element” (O’Reilly et al., 2010, Dorn & Ní Chasaide, 2011).

INTERPRETATION: **focal pitch accents are heads of ι -phrase**

- Same phonetic and phonological status as the nuclear pitch accents found in utterance final position under broad focus (see also Myrberg 2013:82 on Stockholm Swedish).

An important phonological difference between focal and non-focal elements:

- Pitch accents seem to be obligatory on focused constituents.¹
- Non-focused material may or may not bear a pitch accent depending on its context.
 - For Connemara Irish: pitch accents are assigned only to lexical words located at **the edge of a ϕ -phrase** (\approx_{XP}), depending on some higher structural properties (Elfner (2012, 2015); likely true of other varieties too, Quiggin 1906:154-6, Joseph Windsor, p.c.)

(24) FOCUS-TO-PROMINENCE(ι P) (=FOC-PROM(ι))
 Assign one violation for every constituent $C_{[F]}$ which is semantically focused and which does not contain the strongest intonational prominence of a dominating ι -phrase (e.g. Selkirk 2005, Féry & Samek-Lodovici 2006).

(25) Focus prosody: FOC-PROM(ι) \gg HD-R(ι)²

/ Bhí Méabh _[F] ina luí /	FOC-PROM(ι)	HD-R(ι)
a. (ϕ Bhí Méabh _[F] [*]) (ϕ ina luí [*]) _{HD}	*! W	L
b.  (ϕ Bhí Méabh _[F] [*]) _{HD} (ϕ ina luí [*])		*

Bhí MÉABH ina luí ‘Méabh (and not someone else) was lying down.’ (after Dorn & Ní Chasaide 2011)

¹Blankenhorn 1981: 260: *a syllable which the speaker wishes to emphasize will receive both stress and pitch-prominence*; see also Quiggin 1906: 155-6.

²We have not yet accounted for the post-focal deaccenting reported by O’Reilly et al. (2010), Dorn & Ní Chasaide (2011) for Donegal prosody. One possibility is that FOC-PROM(ι) and HD-R(ι) jointly dominate syntax-prosody mapping constraints like MATCH(XP, ϕ) (Selkirk, 2011, Elfner, 2015). As a consequence of this ranking, the winning output in (25) would instead be (i), which merges the focal ϕ -phrase with the following ϕ -phrase in order to satisfy HD-R(ι) (cf. (25b)). This will have the effect of eliminating all ϕ -phrases (and thus all pitch accents) following the focused word.

(i) (ϕ Bhí Méabh_[F]^{*} ina luí)_{HD}

This analysis presumes that intonational pitch accents may be exceptionally assigned to ϕ -medial words under focus. Determining if this approach is tractable will depend (among other things) on finding independent diagnostics, beyond the assignment of intonational pitch accents, for the location of ϕ -phrase boundaries in Irish. See Ishihara (2011, 2016), Myrberg (2013) for discussion and references.

Can this core analysis be extended to the Special Focus Construction (both *verum* and verbal focus)?
 Observation: the accentual pattern observed in the SFC is very reminiscent of the patterns found in **compound words**.

- Under SFC, the incorporated pronoun – always in its strong form – bears its own stress and accent and is more or less equally stressed with the first syllable of the verb.

- (26) a. Amharc orm.
 look.IMPERV ON-me
 ‘Look at me.’
 b. Eh? Amharc ort? Nach bhfuil MÉ?
 look on-YOU NEGQ be.PRES I?
 ‘Eh? Look at you? I AM. (Am I NOT?)’

RNG 26-5-2008

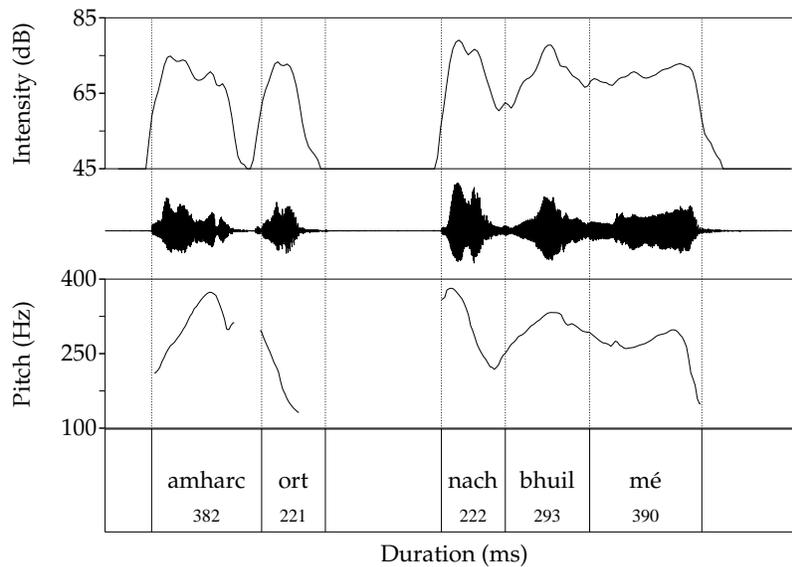


Figure 3: Pitch and intensity traces for example (26)

This is essentially how stress is distributed in compounds:³

“Compound words that are felt to be such—loose compounds—have double stress about equal on their component parts.”

(Mhac an Fhailigh, 1968: 62, §267)

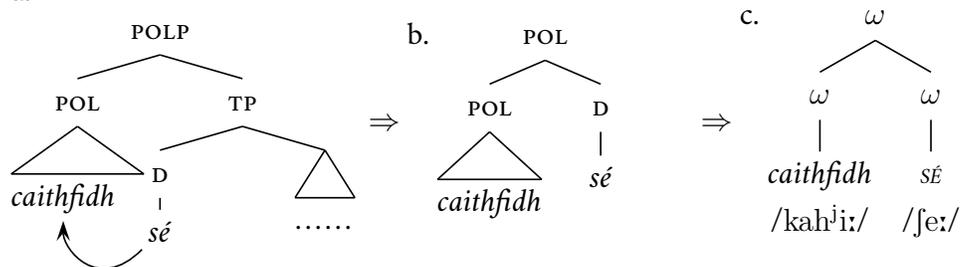
- (27) a. *droch-chladach* [ˈd̪r̪ox-ˈxl̪ad̪əx] ‘bad shore’
 b. *marbh-fáisg* [ˈmarə-ˈfaːʃgʲ] ‘winding-sheets’

This is very reminiscent of how the SFC is characterized in the same descriptive tradition.

³As is often observed in the dialect handbooks, in well-established or conventionalized compounds like *seanbhean* (old woman) the second element is either unstressed or only weakly stressed.

Taking this connection seriously, we suggest the prosodic structure of special focus is (28) (cf. (18))

(28) EXAMPLE (18):
a.



- Recursive prosodic word
- Each constituent word bears a single stress.
- Expected that incorporated subject pronouns will be realized with ‘focal accents’ under Verum/verbal focus.

– In both types of focus, F-marked terminal node is in the verb+pronoun complex:

- (29) a. VERUM FOCUS: $\{ \{ V \ v \ F \ \text{POL} \} \ D \}$
 b. VERBAL FOCUS: $\{ \{ \text{POL} \ V \ v \ F \} \ D \}$

- FOC-PROM(ι) requires that the inflected verb bear an accent (i.e. fall at right edge of ϕ).
- Incorporated **pronoun is the final prosodic word** appearing in the **complex head containing F** – it will be the host of the pitch accent.

(30) The Special Focus Construction (SFC)

/ [Bhí sí] _[F] ina luí/	FOC-PROM(ι)	HD-R(ι)
a. (ϕ [Bhí sí*] _[F]) (ϕ ina luí*) _{HD}	*! W	L
b. (ϕ [Bhí sí*] _[F]) _{HD} (ϕ ina luí*)		*

Bhí sí ina luí ‘She was lying down.’

- ‘Focal accent’ on pronouns in the SFC is thus an epiphenomenon – a regular, ϕ -final pitch accent.⁴

⁴Identifying the precise pitch pattern associated with the SFC is a delicate matter. Many examples involve two distinct pitch accents, one on the verb, and another, stronger accent on the incorporated pronoun. In other cases, it seems to us that the entire verbal complex is realized with just a single pitch accent on the subject pronoun. Recall Brian Ó Curnáin’s description cited earlier, in which he speaks of *double stress or stress shift used to emphasize the truth ... of an utterance* (Ó Curnáin, 2007: Volume One, p. 391, §383). This variation, if real, may indicate that there is some flexibility in accent assignment within compound prosodic word structures. Perhaps the two-accent pattern occurs when pitch accents are assigned to each of the lower ω s in (28), and the one-accent pattern occurs when pitch accent is assigned only to the topmost ω . Another possibility is that the one-accent pattern occurs when the two-accent pattern is phonetically truncated or undershot under time pressure (see Jun 1998, Arvaniti & Ladd 2009 for examples). Alternatively, the entire verb-pronoun complex may be promoted to a ϕ -phrase in the SFC, such that the pitch accent on the verb marks the left

A final aspect of the prosody of the Special Focus Construction: **pronoun form**.

		ORTHOGRAPHY	STRONG FORM (bimoraic)	WEAK FORM (monomoraic, reduced)
(31)	3rd sg masc subj	sé	[ʃe:]	[ʃə]
	3rd sg fem subj	sí	[ʃi:]	[ʃi]
	3rd pl subj	siad	[ʃiad]/[ʃiəd]	[ʃəd]
	...			

- **Only strong pronouns** are observed in the SFC.

- ANALYSIS: this reflects a **binarity condition on focus**.

(see Zec & Inkelas 1990, Frascarelli 2000:Ch. 2, Prieto 2006; on binarity and strong positions more generally, see Drescher & van der Hulst 1998, Elordieta 2007, Bennett 2012, 2013; on binarity in Irish phrasal phonology, see Elfner 2012, 2015, Bennett et al. 2013, 2015)

(32) BINARY-FOCUS (BIN-FOC)

Assign one violation for every constituent $C_{[F]}$ which is semantically focused and does not contain at least two prosodic words.

(33) Strong pronouns required in the SFC

	/ [caithfidh sé] _[F] /	BIN-FOC	FOC-PROM(<i>l</i>)	HD-R(<i>l</i>)
	STRONG PRONOUN /ʃe:/ _ω :			
a. 	$(\phi \{ \omega \text{ caithfidh } \omega \text{ sé}^* \}_{[F]})_{HD}$			
	WEAK PRONOUN /ʃə/:			
b.	$(\phi \{ \omega \text{ caithfidh } \text{ sé}^* \}_{[F]})_{HD}$!* W		

caithfidh sé 'He HAD to.'

Outside the SFC, both weak and strong subject pronouns typically possible (Bennett et al., 2013, 2015)

(34) *léim sé* [lʲe:mʲ ʃə/ʃe:] 'he jumped'

- Consistent with the view that binarity is a property of focus constructions specifically.

Supporting evidence that focus is sensitive to prosodic weight: **synthetic verb forms**.

- Synthetic verbs have inflectional endings reflecting person/number features of the subject.

- (35) a. *chuirfeadh sé* 'he would put'
 b. *chuirfínn* (**mé*) 'I would put'

edge of the ϕ -phrase, while the pitch accent on the pronoun marks the right edge of the ϕ -phrase (see Elfner 2015). In any case, both pitch patterns are consistent with our claim that the 'focal' accent on subject pronouns in the SFC is simply a regular, nuclear accent falling at the right edge of ϕ .

- Under Verum/verbal focus, the final syllable of a synthetic ending may be accented (like a subject pronoun)...
- ...but *only* if it is bimoraic (two syllables or has a long vowel).
(de Bhaldraithe 1953: 69, §166, Ó Sé 2000: 50, §55, 52, §60, and de Búrca 1970: 77, §383)

- (36) a. An rabhadar ann? BhíODAR. (bisyllabic *-(a)dar*)
Q be.PAST.P3 in-it be.PAST.P3
'Were they present? They certainly were.'
- b. An mbeinn buartha dá ndéanfainn a leithéid? BheifeÁ. (long vowel *-f(e)á*)
Q be.COND.S1 regretful if do.COND.S1 its like be.COND.S2
'Would I regret it if I did such a thing? You certainly would.'

Conclusion: preference for binary focal constituents can trigger the promotion of an inflectional verbal suffix to a full prosodic word—provided it is bimoraic, and thus large enough to satisfy binarity requirements at the ω -level.⁵

7 SPECIAL FOCUS AND ELLIPSIS

In the general case, subject pronouns do not survive ellipsis:

- (37) a. An bhfuil sé breoite?
Q be.PRES he ill
'Is he ill?'
- b. Tá (*sé).
be.PRES he
'He is.'

BUT: In the context of **special focus**, the accented simple **pronoun survives ellipsis**.

An exchange extracted from a radio interview broadcast on November 3rd 2016:

- (38) a. Siud é an chéad chuid den fheachtas seo – an agóidíocht seo a tá sibh
DEMON it the first piece of-the campaign DEMON the protest DEMON C be.PRES you.PL
ag dul a dhéanamh. Ar oibrigh sé?
PROG GO do.NON-FIN Q work.PAST it?
'This was the first phase of this campaign – this protest that you are mounting. Did it work?'
- b. D'oibrigh. D'oibrigh sé.
work.PAST work.PAST it
'It did. It absolutely did.'

RNG 03112016

⁵It is not generally true of Irish that prosodic words must be bimoraic, as monomoraic content words like *te* [tʲe] 'hot' are permitted (Green, 1997). The requirement that pronouns be realized in their strong form, and that accented inflectional endings be minimally bimoraic in the SFC, is thus an instance of the EMERGENCE OF THE UNMARKED (McCarthy & Prince, 1994), facilitated by the fact that pronouns have both weak and strong realizations (see again Bennett et al. 2015, as well as Mascaró 2007, Bennett 2017). We also note that these bimoraic inflectional suffixes are not normally stressed in the language, not even in those southern varieties of the language which permit non-initial stress (e.g. Ó Sé 1989).

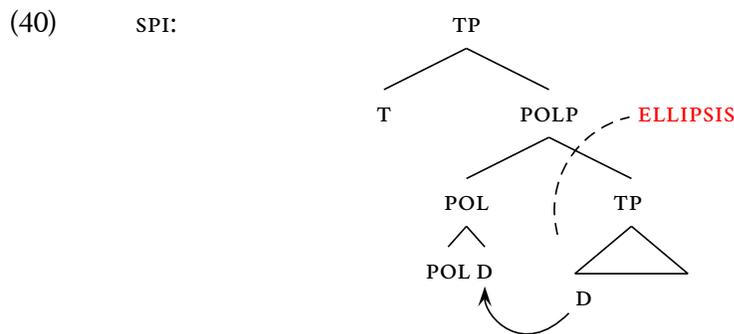
Under *verum focus*, SFC is frequently accompanied by Responsive Ellipsis (see also (26)):

- (39) a. Ar shíl tú ariamh go mbeadh sé i nDáil Éireann?
Q.PAST think.PAST you ever C be.COND he in Parliament
 ‘Did you ever think that he’d be in Parliament?’
- b. Níor shíl, leoga; níor shíl MÉ.
NEG-PAST think.PAST indeed NEG-PAST think .PAST I
 ‘Indeed I didn’t. I did not.’

RNG 29-11-2010

7.1 CONSTRUCTING AN UNDERSTANDING ONE, PART ONE

In adjoining a subject pronoun to the inflected verb, SPI lifts it out of the (potential) ellipsis site:



GENERALIZATION A: Despite being obligatory in general, SPI does not apply in the context of Responsive Ellipsis.

- Pronoun is missing/unpronounced.
- No allomorphy: Under ellipsis, it is the elsewhere form – (41b) – that is required:

- (41) a. An gcuirfeadh sé fearg ort?
Q put.COND it anger on-you
 ‘Would it make you angry?’
- b. Chuirfeadh.
/xir^jhu/ * /xir^jhit^j/
 ‘It would.’

GENERALIZATION B: SPI may apply out of an ellipsis site under *verum/verbal focus* – precisely when the subject pronoun is *destined to bear a focal accent*.

- Obligatory allomorphic forms confirm that SPI has applied in these cases:

- (42) a. chuirfeadh Seán ... (‘John would put’)
/xir^jhu ʃa:n/
- b. chuirfeadh sé ... (‘he would put’)
/xir^jhit^jʃe:/

Intuition: subject pronouns survive ellipsis under verum/verbal focus to **satisfy the binarity condition on focus** (32). Hence ellipsis applies unless the pronoun will host the focal accent.

A **lookahead** problem: how does the syntax/morphology know what the phonology has in store?

7.2 CONSTRUCTING AN UNDERSTANDING, PART TWO

OUR STARTING POINT (drawing especially on Merchant (2001, 2004)):

(43) **Ellipsis:** POL can **mark the terminal nodes** of its complement for **non-pronunciation** in the phonology (see also Postal 1970, Wasow 1972).

We use the notation $x_{[\emptyset]}$ to indicate such ‘doomed’ terminals.

AND CRUCIALLY:

- The post-syntactic derivation allows **parallel and simultaneous optimization** of certain facets of ellipsis, morphophonology, and prosody.⁶
- SPI is driven by a property of the pronoun, a **morphological subcategorization feature** in the spirit of Rizzi & Roberts (1989).

(44) $\begin{matrix} \text{D} \\ \text{NOM} \\ \phi \end{matrix} : \quad [\text{POL} - \quad]$

- **Trivially satisfied** when the pronoun undergoes ellipsis (only pronounced affixes can count as ‘stray’).

(45) $\text{ELIDE}(x_{[\emptyset]})$
Assign one violation mark for each $[\emptyset]$ -marked node which is realized with phonological content in the output.

(46) $\text{FAITH}(s \Rightarrow M, X^0) (F(s \Rightarrow M))$
Assign one violation mark for each pair of nodes X^0, Y^0 such that there is no domination relation between X^0 and Y^0 in the input, but there is such a domination relation between X^0 and Y^0 in the output.

(47) Subject pronoun incorporation

	$[\text{POLP } x_{ir^j} \text{hu}_{[V,E]} \quad [\text{TP } fe:_{[D,NOM,PRO,\emptyset]} \dots]]$	$\text{ELIDE}(X_{[\emptyset]})$	SC(SPI)	$F(s \Rightarrow M)$
a.	$x_{ir^j} \text{hu} \quad fe:$			
b.	$x_{ir^j} \text{hu} \quad fe:_{[\emptyset]}$	*! W	*! W	
c.	$[x_{ir^j} \text{hit}^j + fe:]$			*! W

Donegal *chuirfeadh sé* / x_{ir^j} -hu f_{\emptyset} / ‘He would (put)’ (ellipsis applies, SPI does not)

⁶Prince & Smolensky 1993/2004, and see Haugen 2008, Teeple 2008, Henderson & Tucker (2010), Bennett (2012, 2017) and references there for related arguments and proposals.

What about the interaction of ellipsis, SPI, and focus marking?

- Focus phonology overrules preference to delete as much material as possible:
 BINARY-FOCUS \gg ELIDE($X_{[\emptyset]}$)

(48) BIN-FOC \gg {ELIDE($X_{[\emptyset]}$), FAITH($s \Rightarrow M, X^0$)}

[POLP xir ^j hu _[V,E,F] [TP fe: _[D,NOM,PRO,∅] ...]]	BIN-FOC	EL($X_{[\emptyset]}$)	SC(SPI)	F($s \Rightarrow M$)
a. ϕ { ω xir ^j hit ^j ω fe: _[\emptyset] } _[F]		*		*
b. ϕ { ω xir ^j hu} _[F] fe: _[\emptyset]	*! W	L		L
c. ϕ { ω xir ^j hu} _[F] { ω fe: _[\emptyset] }	*! W	*	* W	L

Donegal *chuirfeadh sé* /'xir^j-hit^j 'fɛ:/ 'He WOULD (put)' (SPI applies under focal accent, ellipsis does not apply to the subject pronoun)

8 LARGER CONCLUSIONS

- Ellipsis of discourse-given material can be subordinated to other grammatical requirements, including those having to do with phonological well-formedness.
- This means that the mechanism behind ellipsis, whatever its form, must be understood as imposing violable rather than absolute conditions on the non-expression of elidable material.
- Our proposals depend on the assumption that ellipsis involves the non-pronunciation of material which is in fact present in the underlying syntax.
 - We see no way to analyze the interaction between ellipsis and focus marking in the sFC without this assumption – particularly, the fact that conditions on focus prosody can trigger the exceptional pronunciation of subject pronouns under ellipsis...
 - ...but *not* other material which might conceivably satisfy the prosodic requirements of focus, were it pronounced.
- It is taken as a given in much work on ellipsis that focused material may not be elided (see Heim 1997: 209, Merchant 2001: 26, Takahashi & Fox 2005: 230, for example).
 - When there is no misalignment between the phonological and the interpretive aspects of focus, it is very difficult to know whether the basis for that exclusion is semantic or phonological.
 - For the interactions in Irish that we have examined here it seems clear that the exclusion of F-marked material from ellipsis sites has a phonological basis.

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