

**WHEN SUBJECTS BEHAVE LIKE OBJECTS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE MERGING OF S AND O IN SENTENCE-
FOCUS CONSTRUCTIONS ACROSS LANGUAGES**

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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with the cross-linguistic expression of a universal information-structure category called the ‘thetic’ or ‘sentence-focus’ (SF) category. The SF category differs from the unmarked ‘predicate-focus’ (PF) or ‘categorical’ category by the absence of a topic-comment relation between the subject and the predicate and it differs from the marked ‘argument-focus’ (AF) category by the absence of a focus-presupposition relation between an argument and an open proposition. The theoretical issue explored here is the question of the relationship between the form and the function of SF constructions, i.e. the question of motivation in grammar. I argue that the form of SF constructions is motivated by the need to distinguish them minimally from corresponding PF constructions. The form and interpretation of a given SF sentence is thus determined not only by the syntagmatic relations among its constituents but also by the paradigmatic relation between the SF sentence as a whole and the corresponding PF sentence, i.e. in terms of a systemic opposition. Since the distinctive property of SF sentences is the absence of a topic-comment relation between the subject and the predicate, SF marking entails the marking of the subject as a non-topic. I show that across languages this non-topic marking of SF subjects tends to be done via those morphosyntactic, prosodic, or behavioral features which are normally associated with the focal objects of PF constructions.

The analysis confirms the necessity to treat the pragmatic relations topic and focus on a par with the grammatical relations subject and object and the semantic roles agent and patient. In seeking to explain the form-function fit in SF constructions in terms of the structuralist notion of paradigmatic opposition the analysis challenges both functional and formal generative approaches to grammar.

1. The category 'sentence-focus construction'

In previous work (Lambrecht 1986, 1994) I have argued that the pragmatic structuring of propositions into presupposed and non-presupposed portions is done cross-linguistically in terms of a small number of types of focus articulation or FOCUS CATEGORIES, which correspond to different types of communicative situations and which are consistently coded in distinct formal types across languages. I distinguish three major focus categories: the PREDICATE-FOCUS (PF), the SENTENCE-FOCUS (SF), and the ARGUMENT-FOCUS (AF) category.¹

In the PF category — also referred to in the literature as the 'subject-predicate', 'topic-comment', or 'categorical' type — the predicate is in focus and an argument (typically the subject) is within the presupposition. In the AF category — also referred to as the 'focus-presupposition', 'identificational', or 'contrastive' type — an argument is in focus and the predicate (or rather the open proposition minus the focus argument) is within the presupposition. In the SF category — also referred to as the 'all-new', 'presentational', 'neutral-description', or 'thetic' type — both the predicate and the subject are in focus, i.e. the proposition lacks a focus-presupposition articulation. Phrased differently, in the PF type the assertion adds a new predicate to a given argument (a comment to a given topic); in the AF type, it adds a new argument to a given predicate (it provides a missing entity in a given situation); and in the SF type, it introduces a new argument and a new predicate (it presents a new referent or a new situation in the discourse).

The concept of focus used here is that developed in Lambrecht (1994, Chapter 5), where 'focus' is defined as that element of a pragmatically structured proposition whose occurrence makes it possible for the sentence to express a 'pragmatic assertion', i.e. to convey new information to an addressee. Somewhat more technically, the focus is that element whereby the presupposition and the assertion differ from each other. A focus denotatum is by definition a communicatively unpredictable element of a proposition. While 'focus' is a purely pragmatic notion, 'focus category' refers to a pragmatic type with specific formal manifestations in a grammar.

Concerning the notion of presupposition in the above definitions, I distinguish (following Lambrecht 1994) different kinds of pragmatic presupposition or speaker-assumption, depending on whether the speaker's concern is with the hearer's state of KNOWLEDGE, of FAMILIARITY, of CONSCIOUSNESS,

or of INTEREST with respect to some entity or situation at a given point in a discourse. The four kinds of presupposition are defined as follows:

- (i) **Knowledge presupposition:** a proposition is knowledge-presupposed if the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or believes it or is ready to take it for granted at the time the sentence is uttered.
- (ii) **Identifiability presupposition:** an entity is presupposed to be identifiable if the speaker assumes that a representation of it is already stored in the hearer's long-term memory at the time of an utterance.
- (iii) **Consciousness presupposition:** an entity or proposition is consciousness-presupposed if the speaker assumes its mental representation is activated in the hearer's short-term memory at the time of an utterance.
- (iv) **Topicality presupposition:** an entity or proposition is presupposed to be topical if the speaker assumes that the hearer considers it a center of current interest in the discourse and hence a potential locus of predication.

Presupposition (iii) logically entails (ii): to be conscious of something one must have a representation of it in one's mind. All four kinds of presupposition have formal correlates in the lexico-grammatical structure of sentences. For the present paper, the most relevant type is the topicality presupposition. It is the presence or absence of such a presupposition that distinguishes the PF category from the SF category. Since the distinction between the different presupposition types is not of primary importance for the present analysis, I will generally ignore it in the following analyses (cf. Note 4).

The concept of topicality is naturally related to that of topic and its complement comment, for which I adopt the definitions proposed in Gundel (1988):

An entity, E, is the topic of a sentence, S, iff in using S the speaker intends to increase the addressee's knowledge about, request information about, or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E. A predication, P, is the comment of a sentence, S, iff in using S the speaker intends P to be assessed relative to the topic of S. (Gundel 1988: 210)

Gundel's topic definition mentions only entities. It is necessary, however, to apply it also to situations or states of affairs, expressed in knowledge-presupposed propositions. Unlike a focus denotatum, a topic denotatum is by definition a relatively predictable element of a proposition. Following Lambrecht & Michaelis (1998), a denotatum whose topic role in a predication is considered predictable to the point of being taken for granted by the

hearer will be called a RATIFIED TOPIC. Ratified topics are expressed in unaccented (or phonologically null) constituents.

Let us now return to the three focus categories mentioned at the beginning. The three types are illustrated in this simple set of question-answer pairs:

- (1) (Why didn't Mary come to work today?)
- a. *She had an ACCIDENT.* Predicate Focus
 - b. *Her HUSBAND is to blame.* Argument Focus
 - c. *Her HUSBAND is sick.* Sentence Focus

In the PF sentence (1a), the focus is the predicate, expressed in the verb phrase. This predicate represents a comment for the topic 'Mary', expressed in the subject *she* (a ratified-topic expression). While the occurrence of this topic as an argument in the proposition is treated as relatively predictable, or communicatively presupposed, the occurrence of the predicate for this given argument is taken to be unpredictable, i.e. the predicate denotatum is focal. In the AF sentence (1b), it is the 'predicate' portion whose occurrence is relatively predictable, or presupposed (hence its coding in unaccented form), since the notion that someone or something is responsible for the woman's absence from work is implied by the question.² The focus of the proposition is the subject *her husband*. Finally in the SF sentence (1c), neither the occurrence of the argument nor that of the predicate in the proposition is in any way predictable or contextually presupposed. The proposition is in some sense 'all-new'.

It is possible for different focus categories to be combined in a single sentence construction. For example, a proposition with SF articulation can serve as a comment about a given topic, as in *Speaking of Mary, her HUSBAND is sick*, where the event of the husband's sickness is predicated as relevant to the referent of the dislocated topic *Mary*, resulting in a combination of a PF construction (Left-Dislocation) with a SF construction (the Accented-Subject type in (1c)). It is also possible for certain SF constructions to contain PF subjects, as in *THERE he IS*, where the subject referent introduced into the discourse setting via the deictic *There*-construction (a type of SF construction) is at the same time an already established topic in another discourse world, motivating use of the ratified-topic expression *he* (cf. the analysis in Lambrecht 1999). The possibility of focus-structure combinations or blends is not directly relevant to the analysis at

hand and I will not discuss it any further here.

The defining features of the three focus categories are summarized in (2):

(2) **The three focus categories**

	Argument in Focus	Predicate in Focus
Predicate Focus	–	+
Argument Focus	+	–
Sentence Focus	+	+

As (2) shows, the AF category is a reversal of the PF category. The SF category differs from the two other categories in that it lacks a bipartition of the proposition into a focal and a non-focal, or presupposed, portion. This absence of a bipartite articulation of the SF proposition is taken as criterial within approaches to the PF-SF contrast which rely on the distinction between the ‘thetic’ (SF) and the ‘categorical’ (PF) judgment type (cf. Kuroda 1972; Sasse 1987; Lambrecht 1987a; Ladusaw 1995; Matras & Sasse 1995 and papers therein). I will not be concerned with the AF articulation in this paper, except inasmuch as it constitutes the necessary background for the analysis of the SF type, which is the main topic of this paper. To avoid misunderstandings, the reader should keep in mind that in many languages, including English, AF sentences can be formally indistinguishable from SF sentences (as in the subject-accented sentences in (1b, c)). As I have argued elsewhere (Lambrecht 1994: 318 ff.), this formal identity is a case of functionally motivated homophony (see also Section 3.1 below).

The category ‘predicate-focus construction’ is defined in (3). The term ‘focus domain’ refers to the syntactic constituent denoting the focus of the pragmatically structured proposition:

(3) **Predicate-focus construction**

Sentence construction expressing a pragmatically structured proposition in which the subject is a topic (hence within the presupposition) and in which the predicate expresses new information about this topic. The focus domain is the predicate phrase (or part of it).

The term ‘subject’ in (3) is to be understood in a semantic sense: it refers either to the single argument of an intransitive predicate (an ‘S’ argument in the terminology of Dixon 1972) or to the more agentive of the two arguments of a transitive predicate (an ‘A’ argument in Dixon’s terms). (3)

allows thus for non-nominative case-marking of a subject argument. For example, in the German sentence *Mich friert* 'I'm cold' (lit. 'me-ACC is cold'), the single accusative argument *mich* would count as a subject (an S) for the purpose of (3), i.e. this sentence is of the PF type. There are no thematic role restrictions on the possible subject of a PF sentence. As we will see, this fact crucially distinguishes the PF from the SF category.

It is important to acknowledge that (3) defines a **construction**, i.e. a grammatical object mapping a given form with a given function. As mentioned earlier, the focus categories discussed here are taken to be formal categories of grammar, not only pragmatic categories of discourse. A given sentence can have more than one focus reading even though it belongs to a single formal focus category. This is possible because certain focus constructions are unmarked for their pragmatic interpretation. Focus construal and focus construction must therefore be distinguished.

The basic information structure of the PF category is represented in (4), using the response in (1a) as an example:³

- (4) **Information structure of a predicate-focus sentence**
- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Sentence: | <i>She had an ACCIDENT.</i> |
| Context sentence: | 'Why didn't Mary come to work today?' |
| Presuppositions: | |
| (i) of knowledge: | _____ |
| (ii) of consciousness: | 'referent of <i>she</i> is active in hearer's short-term memory' |
| (iii) of topicality: | 'referent of <i>she</i> is ratified topic for comment c' |
| Assertion: | 'c = had an accident' |
| Focus: | 'had an accident' |
| Focus domain: | VP |

In English (as in many other languages), a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for PF construal is the presence of a point of prosodic prominence within the predicate portion of the sentence. If the sentence is intransitive, the main sentence accent will fall on the verb (or some postverbal adjunct) by default. If the sentence is transitive, the accent will by necessity fall on the object (unless the object is a ratified topic or is non-referential or referentially vague). The O is thus the unmarked focus argument. Notice that while a focal object NP always requires an accent, a focal predicate expres-

sion may remain unaccented (as e.g. the verb *had* in (1a)). The possibility for a focal predicate expression to remain unaccented is provided by a general accentuation principle, called the ‘Principle of Accent Projection’ in Lambrecht & Michaelis (1998), according to which the accent on an argument expression may project its value onto an unaccented predicate expression (see also Schmerling 1976; Höhle 1982; Fuchs 1984; Selkirk 1984; Lambrecht 1994). I will return to this principle in Section 3.

The category ‘sentence-focus construction’ is defined in (5):

(5) **Sentence-focus construction**

Sentence construction formally marked as expressing a pragmatically structured proposition in which both the subject and the predicate are in focus. The focus domain is the sentence, minus any topical non-subject arguments.

The proviso “minus any topical non-subject arguments” will be justified later on (Section 3.6). The subject of a SF construction is an S rather than an A argument, i.e. SF sentences are intransitive (with certain exceptions to be discussed below). Moreover the class of intransitive predicates permitting SF construal is restricted to those with non-agentive subjects (again, with certain apparent exceptions, cf. Lambrecht 1995 and Notes 16 and 24 below). While all predicates permit PF construal, only a subset of predicates permit SF construal. Compared to the PF category, the SF category is thus distributionally marked. (Herein, the SF category differs also from the AF category, to which this distributional restriction does not apply.) In English, and in other languages relying on prosodic focus marking, a SF construction is minimally characterized by the presence of a pitch accent on the subject and by the absence of prosodic prominence on the predicate portion of the sentence. This formal property of SF sentences will be discussed in detail in Section 3.1.

Alternative labels for ‘sentence-focus construction’ found in the literature (including those mentioned earlier) are: ‘news sentence’ (Schmerling 1976), ‘neutral description’ (Kuno 1972), ‘all-new utterance’ (Allerton & Cruttenden 1979; Fuchs 1980), ‘thetic sentence’ (Kuroda 1972; Sasse 1987; Lambrecht 1987a), ‘event-reporting sentence’ (Lambrecht 1988a). A subtype of SF construction is the so-called ‘existential sentence’ involving verbs of existence, especially the verb *be*. Another subtype, which has been the focus of much attention in recent linguistic theorizing, is the one referred to as

'Locative Inversion' (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989; Hoekstra & Mulder 1990; Bresnan 1994; Polinsky 1993, 1994, 1995).

The basic information structure of the SF category is represented in (6), using (1c) as an example:

(6) **Information structure of a sentence-focus sentence**

Sentence:	<i>Her HUSBAND is sick.</i>
Context sentence:	'Why didn't Mary come to work today?'
Presuppositions:	
(i) of knowledge:	_____
(ii) of topicality:	_____
Assertion:	'her husband is sick'
Focus:	'her husband is sick'
Focus domain:	S(entence)

The pragmatic feature crucially distinguishing (6) from the PF sentence in (4) is the absence of a topicality presupposition attached to the subject and the resulting identity of assertion and focus.⁴

An important constraint on SF sentences is that their subject argument must be coded lexically, i.e. that it cannot appear in pronominal or null form (see Fuchs 1980; Lambrecht 1987a). Compare sentence (1c), repeated below for easy comparison, with its variant in (7), whose subject is an accented pronoun:

- (1) c. *Her HUSBAND is sick.* (SF or AF)
 (7) *HE is sick.* (AF, *SF)

The predicate of (7) is necessarily construed as knowledge-presupposed, resulting in AF construal of the proposition. This constraint against pronominal subjects in SF sentences cannot be due to incompatibility between focus status and pronoun coding, since (7) is a grammatical sentence. Rather it follows from the discourse function of the SF category: since the referents of pronouns are necessarily activated or 'discourse-old' (Prince 1992), the information status of pronominal subjects is incompatible with the 'all-new' status of the proposition expressed by a SF sentence, hence the absence of a SF reading for (7) (cf. Section 2 below).

The constraint against pronominal or null subjects in SF constructions entails that the class of sentences which has been most widely acknowledged in the literature as expressing a logically non-binary, orthetic, proposition,

i.e. the class involving weather verbs (with or without dummy subjects), does **not** count as belonging to the formal category ‘SF construction’ as defined in (5). Compare the Russian sentence in (8a) with its English counterpart in (8b):

- (8) a. *DOZHD’ idet*
rain goes
b. *It’s RAINING.*
c. *It’s LEAKING.*

While (8a), which involves a full referential subject NP, qualifies as an instance of a SF construction, (8b), which lacks such an NP, does not, even though presumably both sentences express the same logically non-binary proposition. From a strictly grammatical point of view, (8b) has the structure of a PF sentence, as seen in the fact that it is formally indistinguishable from the PF sentence in (8c), in which the pronominal subject is referential (referring e.g. to a leaky faucet). Homophony of (8b) and (8c) is possible because in English, as in many languages, PF constructions are pragmatically unmarked, i.e. their grammatical form is compatible with alternative focus construals (cf. the discussion below). As we will see later on, the lexicality requirement for SF subjects has important implications for the relationship between SF articulation and syntactic argument structure. Notice that (8b) is excluded from SF status also on notional grounds: having a zero-place predicate, (8b) does not fit the definition in (5), which makes crucial mention of a (semantic) subject argument.⁵

Thetic or non-binary structure of the underlying proposition is thus only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for grammatical SF status of a sentence. All SF constructions express thetic propositions, but not all thetic propositions are expressed in special SF constructions. Moreover, the choice of a SF vs. a PF construction for the expression of a given state of affairs under given pragmatic circumstances may be determined by the lexical and grammatical resources of a given language. To take an example discussed in detail in Lambrecht (1995), the English SF sentence *My FOOT hurts* corresponds in Italian to the SF sentence *Mi fa male il piede* (cf. Section 3.2.1 on Subject–Verb Inversion) but in French to the canonical PF sentence *J’ai mal au pied* (lit. ‘I have pain at the foot’). It is important to keep in mind that the definition in (5), like that in (3), is not intended to capture a universal **semantic** category (such as the category ‘proposition expressing a thetic

judgment') but a universal **grammatical** category with necessary correlates in sentence structure.

A more serious problem of categorization is posed by certain transitive sentences involving a pitch accent on both the subject and the object argument. For example, in the context originally provided for the SF sentence (1c), we could quite naturally imagine a reply such as that in (9):

- (9) *(Why didn't Mary come to work today?)*
Her HUSBAND had an ACCIDENT.

Since the theta role of the transitive subject in (9) is not that of an agent, the sentence cannot be excluded from SF status on semantic grounds. (9) also qualifies pragmatically for SF status since in the given context the husband does not have a topic role in the discourse (sentence (9) is uttered in reply to an inquiry about Mary, not her husband). Moreover, the utterance has a certain 'eventive' flavor often associated withthetic sentences (cf. Faber 1987; Lambrecht 1988a). Nevertheless, sentences like (9) will be excluded from the set of SF constructions, for the following reasons.

The first reason has to do with the fact that (9) is compatible also with a discourse situation calling for a PF construction, i.e. one in which the subject *her husband* does function as a topic. For example, (9) could be uttered in reply to a question inquiring about various members of Mary's family:

- (10) A: *How is Mary's family?*
 B: *Well, her HUSBAND just had an ACCIDENT, and her CHILDREN are both SICK.*

The accent on *husband* in (10B) does not signal focus status of the subject (the husband is not an unpredictable argument in the proposition). Rather it indicates that the subject entity is selected as a topic among several potential candidates for topic status in the proposition (this type of accent is called 'activation accent' in Lambrecht 1994 and 'topic-ratifying accent' in Lambrecht & Michaelis 1998). The two-accent sentence in (9) can thus receive either SF or PF construal, depending on the context. Rather than analyzing (9) and the relevant part of (10B) as instances of two different focus constructions, thereby introducing unmotivated constructional homophony into the grammar, it is theoretically advantageous to categorize them as PF sentences, whose pragmatically unmarked status allows for alternative SF construal.⁶

A second, related, reason not to categorize (9) as a SF construct has to

do with the categorial nature of pitch accents falling within predicate constituents. Consider the two sentence pairs in (11) and (12), each of which contains one single-accented and one double-accented sentence:

- (11) (*Why didn't she come to work today?*)
 a. *Her husband had an ACCIDENT.* (PF)
 b. *Her HUSBAND had an ACCIDENT.* (PF) (= (9))
- (12) (*Why didn't she come to work today?*)
 a. *Her HUSBAND is sick.* (SF) (= (1c))
 b. *Her HUSBAND is SICK.* (PF, *SF)

Intuitively, the prosodic difference in (11) between the two-accent sentence in (b) and its single-accent counterpart in (a) does not have the same categorial impact as the prosodic difference between the two sentences in (12). In the first case, the difference in accentuation does not signal different focus categories but different instantiations of the same PF category, one with a ratified, the other a non-ratified topic referent. In the second case, the difference is categorial. While (12a) is interpreted as athetic or event-reporting sentence (ignoring again the possible AF reading of the same structure), (12b) is necessarily construed as a topic-comment sentence with a non-active or non-ratified topic referent. (12b) can **not** be construed as a SF sentence with a non-active or non-ratified predicate. In other words, while both versions in (11) have predicate focus, the versions in (12) do not both have sentence focus. This is so because in PF constructions the category-defining feature is the focus accent on the predicate, allowing for a cooccurring activation accent on the subject. In the SF construction illustrated in (12a), on the other hand, the category-defining feature is both the **presence** of a focus accent on the subject and the **absence** of any accent on the predicate. In sum, in predicate-accented sentences, the occurrence of an additional accent on the subject does not have the same category-altering effect as the occurrence of an additional accent on the predicate in subject-accented sentences. Since (12a) has SF articulation, the corresponding two-accent sentence is necessarily interpreted as having a focus articulation **other** than SF. SF construal of the two-accent sentence is preempted by the inherent SF structure of the existing single-accent alternative.⁷

A third argument against SF categorization of double-accent sentences like (9) is provided by cross-linguistic evidence (to be discussed in detail in Section 3). In certain languages with syntactic rather than prosodic SF

marking, SVO sentences like (9) cannot receive SF construal for syntactic reasons, because in such languages lexical objects may not cooccur with SF subjects in a single clause (cf. the discussion of spoken French in Section 3.7.1). As a corollary, when sentences with two lexical NPs do occur in such languages, they necessarily receive PF construal, i.e. one of the NPs is necessarily construed as a topic (cf. also the Cushitic facts discussed in Section 3.6.).

Given the arguments just cited, I conclude that English two-accent sentences like (9) are instances of the PF construction. The fact that they may be used in circumstances calling for SF articulation is a consequence of the pragmatically unmarked status of the PF category, which allows for alternative focus construals of a given sentence (whether SF or AF). The grammar of English, like that of many languages, simply does not provide for unambiguous prosodic SF marking of a transitive sentence with two lexical arguments (but cf. Note 6).

The facts described in this section confirm the existence of a separate, prosodically marked, grammatical construction in English, whose function is to express a pragmatically structured proposition with sentence-focus articulation. As shown in detail in Sasse (1987), this construction is an instance of a universal grammatical type, the category 'sentence-focus construction' (called 'thetic sentence' by Sasse). In the remainder of this paper I will compare various formal manifestations of the SF category across languages. I will argue that in spite of considerable cross-linguistic diversity, the form of SF sentences is motivated by a single overriding functional principle: the principle of PARADIGMATIC CONTRAST. SF constructions have the form they do because they are to be minimally distinct from corresponding PF constructions in the same language. They are marked reversals of the unmarked state of affairs.

2. A universal tendency in sentence-focus marking

Once we acknowledge the existence of a grammatical category 'SF construction', three distinct, though interrelated, theoretical questions arise:

- (i) The question of **form**: what is the morphosyntactic, prosodic, and lexical structure of SF constructions?
- (ii) The question of **function**: what is the communicative function of SF constructions in discourse?

- (iii) The question of **motivation**: what is the relationship between form and function in SF constructions?

Concerning the first two questions, I will have little to say here and I will rely on much previous work by other linguists and by myself (Chafe 1974; Schmerling 1976; Gundel 1978; Fuchs 1980; Wehr 1984; Faber 1987; Bresnan 1994; Polinsky 1993 and 1994; Lambrecht 1987a, 1988a, 1994, 1995, among others).

One vexing aspect of the first question concerns the lexical constraints on the predicates of SF sentences: why do some predicates permit SF construal while others do not? The answer to this question involves a number of factors: the lexical meaning of the predicate, the number of arguments associated with it, and the morphological, semantic, and pragmatic properties of these arguments. As a general rule, we can say that the semantic role of a SF subject cannot be that of AGENT (cf. Maling 1988; Välimaa-Blum 1988). There is no doubt a relationship between the class of predicates permitting SF construal and the so-called class of 'unaccusative' (Perlmutter 1978) or 'ergative' (Burzio 1986) predicates, but the two are not coextensive (see Lambrecht 1995; Polinsky 1995; Maling 1988; Vilkuna 1989: 161ff). There is also a connection between theticity and the set of predicates referred to as 'stage-level' predicates in the semantic literature ('be sick', 'be drunk', 'be open' etc., cf. Ladusaw 1995). Finally I should point out that the class of predicates found in SF constructions is much larger than has been assumed by most linguists who have dealt with the focus structure of such sentences (see the summaries in Lambrecht 1994: 311 ff.). In fact, it seems to be an open class. For illuminating discussion of this issue the reader is referred to the analyses in Fuchs 1987 (see also Note 16 below).

Concerning the second question, that of the discourse function of SF constructions, I have argued elsewhere (Lambrecht 1987a, 1988a) that the overriding function of the SF category is presentational: SF constructions serve either to introduce a DISCOURSE-NEW REFERENT or to introduce an EVENT which involves a referent which is discourse-new or contextually construed as such. The two subtypes are aptly designated by Sasse (1987) with the terms ENTITY-CENTRAL and EVENT-CENTRAL thetic sentence. It is the presentational function of SF constructions that explains the above-mentioned constraint against pronominal subjects (item (8) and discussion). It also accounts for the constraint against subjects with agentive case roles. In a SF sentence, the subject referent is not conceptualized as actively involved in

some situation but as appearing on the 'scene' of the discourse. For the purpose of the present discussion, the function of the SF category is best defined negatively, i.e. in terms of the absence of predicate focus, i.e. of the lack of a topic-comment relation between the subject and the predicate.

It is the third question, concerning the relationship between the form and the function of SF constructions, that I am primarily concerned with in this paper. I will propose an account of the PF-SF contrast which differs from most current approaches, whether formal or functional, in that it takes the interpretation of SF sentences to be determined not only on the basis of the syntagmatic relations among the constituents of such sentences but also, and crucially, in terms of the paradigmatic (or associative) relation between given SF sentences and their PF counterparts, i.e. in terms of a systemic opposition. I will refer to the relevant principle as the 'Principle of Paradigmatic Contrast':

(13) **The Principle of Paradigmatic Contrast**

SF constructions have the form they do because they are to be minimally distinct from corresponding PF constructions in the same language.

According to the focus-structure definitions in Section 1, the difference between PF and SF constructions crucially involves the presence vs. absence of a topical subject and hence of a topic-comment, or aboutness, relation between the subject referent and the proposition. For a sentence to be interpreted as having SF articulation it is therefore logically necessary that the relevant constituent be marked in such a way that it will **not** be construed as a topic expression. I therefore propose, as a first step in my argument, that SF marking crucially involves 'detopicalization' of the subject constituent, i.e. cancellation of those grammatical features that are conventionally associated with the subject as the topic of a sentence. This notion of feature cancellation is captured in the principle in (14):

(14) **The Principle of Detopicalization**

SF marking involves cancellation of those prosodic and/or morphosyntactic subject properties which are associated with the role of subjects as topic expressions in PF sentences.

It should go without saying that the dynamic terms 'detopicalization' and 'cancellation' in (14) are not meant to suggest a synchronic derivational

relationship between a PF and a corresponding SF construction. The relevant explanatory concept is the Saussurean notion of MOTIVATION, as discussed and developed in much work by Haiman (e.g. 1980, 1985). What I am trying to capture here are natural paths of grammaticalization, not rules of sentence formation. Accordingly, the principles I am postulating have limited predictive power, since motivations can compete with each other (DuBois 1985) and are counteracted by the tendency toward economy and simplification (Haiman 1985) (but see the preliminary typology in Lambrecht & Polinsky 1998, which tries to link language type with type of SF construction).

The principle in (14) is formulated negatively, i.e. it merely states which formal features will **not** be associated with the subjects of SF constructions. A perhaps more interesting question is the following, posed in positive terms: how is the detopicalization of a PF subject implemented, i.e. how can a subject argument be coded in such a way that it will not be interpreted as a topic? One natural way of achieving non-topic construal (though not the only logically possible one) is to endow the subject constituent with grammatical properties which are conventionally associated with focus arguments. Since in a PF construction the unmarked focus argument is the object, topic construal can be cancelled by coding the subject with grammatical features normally found on the object of a PF sentence.

I will propose then, as the second step in my argument, that detopicalization of the SF subject is implemented cross-linguistically by marking the subject constituent with some or all of the formal and or behavioral features which are associated with the FOCAL OBJECT in a PF sentence. Among the most common grammatical features of focal objects found across languages are the following:

- (i) prosodic prominence,
- (ii) specific linear position relative to the verb,
- (iii) cooccurrence with 'focus particles',
- (iv) absence of grammatical agreement with the verb,
- (v) non-nominative case marking,
- (vi) single constituent status of the verb-object sequence,
- (vii) constraints on null anaphora.

In Section 3, I will try to demonstrate that these are precisely the features which play a role in the marking of the subjects of SF constructions across languages.

I propose the principle in (15) as a universal tendency for the formal expression of the SF category, which I will call the ‘Principle of Subject–Object Neutralization’ in SF constructions (or PSON). This principle complements the definition of ‘SF construction’ in (5):

(15) **The Principle of Subject–Object Neutralization (PSON)**

In a SF construction, the subject tends to be grammatically coded with some or all of the prosodic and/or morphosyntactic features associated with the focal object in the corresponding PF construction.⁸

Recall that in the present context ‘subject’ designates a semantic rather than syntactic category (see item (3) and discussion). The PSON therefore extends to those SF constructions which do not have a nominative subject, as e.g. in Czech (see example (25) below), or in which the semantic subject is syntactically manifested as an argument of two separate predicates, as in spoken French, Chinese, or sometimes English (cf. Section 3.7 below).⁹

The claim made in the PSON may be too strong. Further investigation may reveal that the overarching feature of SF constructions is not the marking of the S argument with O properties but the more general feature of detopicalization stated in Principle (14), O-marking being only one of several possible detopicalizing strategies. An example of a language in which the tendency expressed in Principle (15) does not seem to hold is Japanese. It is well known that in Japanese the difference between PF and SF is marked via a different ‘case’ particle after the subject NP: *wa* is used for the topical subjects (as well as topical non-subject arguments) of PF sentences, *ga* is used for the focal subjects of SF (as well as AF) sentences (and as a kind of default case marker in non-assertoric syntactic environments). Japanese thus satisfies the condition of detopicalization of the PF subject but not that of its marking with object features.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the number of languages in which the PSON holds is sufficiently high to make the hypothesis in (15) plausible enough to pursue. One factor that speaks in favor of (15) is ECONOMY OF CODING: inasmuch as the grammatical features used to mark SF subjects are independently needed for objects, the effect of the PSON does not increase the number of formal devices used in a grammar.

The fact that the subject of a SF sentence looks and behaves in certain ways like an object has important implications for the argument structure of SF sentences. Since grammatical relations are in principle ‘unique’, i.e. can

be instantiated only once per clause, the coding of the subject with object features entails constraints on the cooccurrence of object constituents in clauses containing SF subjects. SF constructions will therefore tend to lack a formal opposition between a subject and an object constituent. This in turn entails that such constructions will tend to lack a syntactic NP-VP bipartition, since this kind of bipartite sentence structure is motivated only to the extent that the subject functions as an external argument which contrasts with the object as an internal argument of the predicate phrase. This neutralization of the subject-object opposition is perhaps the most important grammatical feature of SF constructions across languages. It is formally manifested in a number of constraints imposed on SF sentences which I will discuss in detail in the next section.

To avoid misunderstandings concerning the theoretical claim being made here it is important to keep in mind that the detopicalization and objectivization of the subject in SF constructions is a pragmatically driven phenomenon, involving primarily the expression of the pragmatic relations of topic and focus. In saying that the subject of a SF construction takes on properties normally associated with objects I am not claiming that this constituent must undergo a change in grammatical relation. Rather, the claim is that the SF subject will tend to lack those grammatical properties which are associated with the role of the subject as the topic of a PF sentence. Only in such extreme cases of restructuring as found in the above-mentioned French bi-clausal SF construction does the pragmatic-relation change involve a change in semantic and grammatical relations.

By the same token, any restrictions on cooccurring object constituents in SF constructions will apply only inasmuch as these constituents exhibit those grammatical properties which are associated with the object as the prototypical focus constituent, the most important of which being prosodic prominence and full lexical coding. For example, while in many languages no accented lexical objects may cooccur with SF subjects (cf. the discussion of (11b) above), this cooccurrence constraint can be relaxed for unaccented pronominal objects, which are not focus expressions (cf. the examples in (50) below). The issue of cooccurring objects in SF sentences will be discussed in Section 3.6.

The fundamental criterion for SF status of a construction is that the relevant NP is non-topical, hence that the proposition expressed by the sentence is not pragmatically construed as being about the referent of this NP.

It is not the absence of any topical element that defines a SF construction but the absence of a topic-comment relation between the proposition and that argument which in the unmarked case functions as the topic of a sentence, i.e. typically the subject. The formal contrast between PF and SF constructions therefore crucially involves reference to the notion 'subject NP', or, in languages in which 'subject' does not have the status of a formal category (as e.g. in Chinese, LaPolla 1995), to that NP which codes the subject argument at the semantic level of the proposition.

Before going on to the analysis of SF constructions in various languages, it will be useful to address one possible objection to the approach taken here. As indicated in the feature representation in (2), unambiguous sentence-focus marking would not only require a formal distinction between the SF and the PF pattern, but also between the SF and the AF (argument-focus) pattern, in those cases where the focus argument is the subject (as in our model sentence (1b)). Such formal disambiguation between SF and AF would require that the predicate portion of the SF proposition be marked as being asserted rather than presupposed. One might ask, then, why the principle of paradigmatic contrast postulated for the SF/PF distinction does not apply also to the distinction between SF and AF sentences. Although some languages mark the SF/AF contrast systematically (e.g. Boni, cf. ex. (63) below), most do not seem to require such a formal distinction, or rather do not require it in all environments. Thus in addition to the SF/AF homophony found with prosodic focus marking, as in English or German, we also find focus homophony with syntactic marking, as e.g. in the Subject-Verb Inversion constructions of Italian or Spanish, or with morphological marking, as in the use of *ga* in Japanese for both SF and AF sentences (cf. e.g. Kuno 1972).¹¹

It appears that cross-linguistically focus ambiguity is tolerated much more readily between SF and AF than between SF and PF. This is no doubt related to the fact that the SF and the AF category have one crucial pragmatic feature in common, which sets both of them off against the PF category: the non-topic status of the subject. Since it is the pragmatic role of the subject which systematically distinguishes the marked cases (SF, AF) from the unmarked case (PF), SF/AF homophony is functionally tolerable. From the point of view of the grammatical system, such homophony has the advantage that it allows for greater coding economy. It should also be noted that focus ambiguity arises only in those cases where the predicate belongs to the set which is semantically compatible with SF construal.

In the case of prosodic focus marking, there is another reason why SF/AF homophony is not relevant in the context of the present analysis. This is the fact that focus ambiguity is a systematic feature of **all** prosodically marked AF sentences. Indeed any sentence, whether SF or PF, whose pragmatic focus extends beyond the denotatum of the constituent bearing the focus accent, i.e. any sentence involving some form of focus projection (Höhle 1982), is in principle capable of receiving an alternative, ‘narrow’, focus construal. This is so because focus projection does not apply obligatorily. Now if focus ambiguity is a systematic property of AF sentences in general, we do not expect this property to be absent in the case of subject-accented sentences. I conclude that the issue of SF/AF ambiguity is not a relevant factor within the present analysis.

3. The cross-linguistic expression of sentence focus

3.1 *The SF subject as locus of the sentence accent: Prosodic Inversion*

In Lambrecht 1994 (Chapter 5) I argue that most previous analyses of the prosodic expression of SF are flawed in that they attempt to account for the pragmatic construal of subject-accented SF sentences such as those in (5) with the same rules or principles of interpretation that account for prosodic focus-marking in general (Bolinger 1954, 1987 etc., Chafe 1976, 1987 etc., Chomsky 1970; Jackendoff 1972; Culicover & Rochemont 1983; Halliday 1967; Ladd 1978; Selkirk 1984; Gussenhoven 1983, and others). All these analyses fail to explain the most striking property of English SF sentences, i.e. the obligatory lack of prosodic prominence on the predicate portion of the sentence despite the fact that the predicate conveys new information, just as in PF sentences. This property was illustrated in the minimal pair in (12).¹²

Against these approaches, I argue that the apparent idiosyncrasy of the prosodic SF pattern finds a natural explanation if we allow for more than one principle of interpretation for focus prosody, i.e. if we allow for the possibility that the interpretation of prosodic accents is not done in a uniform manner. While, *mutatis mutandis*, and within limits, most sentence accents are interpreted iconically, the prominent constituent signalling in some sense the ‘most important’ element in the proposition, some accent patterns are interpreted via an entirely different cognitive mechanism: the interpreter’s

knowledge of a paradigmatic contrast between a given prosodic structure and an alternative but unused structure provided by the grammar.¹³

The existence of two different principles for the interpretation of sentence accents can be demonstrated with a simple example. It has often been observed that the semantic difference between a regular modification construction involving the sequence Adj + N and a noun compound formation involving the same sequence is marked prosodically in English (as well as other languages). Consider the contrasts in (16) (the subjects and the verbs are in parentheses because their prosodic status is irrelevant for the point at hand):

- (16) a. (*I saw*) a *black BIRD*.
 b. (*I saw*) a *BLACK bird*.
 c. (*I saw*) a *BLACKBIRD*

While the NPs in (16) (a) and (b) refer to members of the category 'bird' which happen to be black, the one in (c) designates a member of a different category, the category 'blackbird'.

The scope of the single accent on the NP *a black BIRD* in (16a) is 'broad', to use Ladd's (1978) terminology, i.e. it extends over the entire NP denotatum. This possibility is provided for by the earlier-mentioned Principle of Accent Projection (item (4) and discussion), according to which predicating expressions can be construed as focal even if they are unaccented.¹⁴ Thus (16a) does not require a situation in which it is knowledge-presupposed that the speaker saw a black thing (although the sentence is compatible with such a situation). While the accent on the noun in (16a) can include the denotatum of the adjective in its focal scope, the reverse is not true: the scope of the accent on the adjective cannot extend over the denotatum of the noun. Therefore in (16b), where only the modifier *black* is accented, the scope of the accent is necessarily narrow, i.e. it cannot extend over the entire NP denotatum. Sentence (16b) is appropriate only in a context in which the category membership of the animal in question is already ratified in the context and the point of the utterance is to assert that the given bird the speaker saw was a black one.

Now notice that the adjectival modification pattern in (16b) is prosodically similar if not identical to that of the compound formation in (16c). It seems uncontroversial that this prosodic similarity cannot be the expression of a similarity in semantic or pragmatic interpretation. Rather it is the fortuitous result of the application of two different interpretive principles.

While the accent on the adjective in (16b) can be said to be motivated iconically, the modifying element in the sequence being in some sense the communicatively more important one, that on the first member of the compound formation in (16c) is not so motivated. Rather it is due to the functional need to mark the referent of the NP in (c) as belonging to a different semantic and syntactic category from that in (a). The accent position in (c) is motivated via the principle of paradigmatic contrast. The formal similarity between the narrow modification reading in (b) and the broad compound reading in (c) is thus an instance of prosodic homophony, created by two different sorts of motivation.

Returning to the issue of the prosodic expression of sentence focus, I argue that the accent-assignment principle which accounts for the difference in semantic interpretation between modification and compounding in (16) is the same as that which accounts for the difference in pragmatic interpretation between PF and SF sentences. In both cases, the different accent position marks a difference of category. The parallel between the two cases is represented in (17):

(17)	Adj + Noun	Noun + Verb
a.	<i>black BIRD</i> (broad scope)	<i>Her husband is SICK.</i> (PF)
b.	<i>BLACK bird</i> (narrow scope)	<i>Her HUSBAND is sick.</i> (AF)
c.	<i>BLACKbird</i> (compound)	<i>Her HUSBAND is sick.</i> (SF)

Both in the adjective-noun column and in the noun-verb column the categorical difference between (a) and (c) is marked by the fact that that element which is necessarily accented in (a) is necessarily unaccented in (c). The pattern in (c) is motivated in both columns by the fact that any other pattern would result in a different, unwanted, construal, i.e. the construal in (a). Moreover in both columns the formal similarity between the narrow pattern in (b) and the broad pattern in (c) is due to homophony: the same form has two meanings because two different interpretive mechanisms apply to it. I conclude that the position of the accent on the subject noun in the SF construction is motivated by the need to indicate a paradigmatic opposition.

There is a revealing parallel between the prosodic coding of the PF-SF contrast in English and its syntactic coding in languages like Italian (see Section 3.2.1 below). In both cases, that element in the SF construction which codes the contrast with the PF category appears in a non-canonical position, i.e. in a position which is not that of the corresponding element in

the unmarked PF construction. In Italian, this element is a syntactic constituent; in English, it is a suprasegmental feature. Symbolizing the subject with the letter 'S' and the predicate with the letter 'P', and indicating prosodic prominence with bold face, the system of contrasts in the two languages can be represented as in (18):

- (18) a. PF
Her husband is SICK. (S-P)
Il suo marito e malato. (S-P)
- b. SF
Her HUSBAND is sick. (S-P)
E malato il suo marito. (P-S)

Both languages resort to the system of permutation traditionally referred to as inversion, where the position of an element is interpreted in terms of its departure from what is taken to be the norm, i.e. the canonical sequence found in the unmarked case. In both languages, the SF pattern is a reversal of the unmarked PF pattern. The only difference is that in Italian the syntactic sequence is inverted and the accent stays put, while in English the accentual sequence is inverted and the syntax stays put. In analogy to the syntactic inversion pattern of Italian, I refer to the formal pattern of the English SF construction as PROSODIC INVERSION. Both types of inversion, syntactic and prosodic, are formally highly distinctive indicators of a contrast between the marked and the unmarked member of a pair.

Let us take a closer look at the way in which the PSON in (15) is manifested in the case of Prosodic Inversion. As Chafe (1974) has observed, SF subjects and PF objects have in common the fact that they are the locus of the main accent in the sentence. Consider the set of English examples in (19):

- (19) SF PF
- a. *My PLATE broke.* (I) *broke my PLATE.*
- b. *The BUTTER melted.* (I) *melted the BUTTER.* (Chafe 1974)
- c. *JOHN called.* (I) *called JOHN.*
- d. *His HAIR is long.* (He) *has long HAIR.*

Except for (d), the members of the sentence pairs in (19) do not have the same meaning, therefore these pairs are not examples of corresponding SF and PF constructions. What these semantically related sentence pairs are meant to illustrate is the basic prosodic similarity between the SV sequence

in the SF column and the VO sequence in the PF column. If we ignore the unaccented topical subject pronouns in the PF column, the SF-PF pairs are prosodic mirror images of each other: in all cases, an accented noun contrasts with a non-accented verb, the only difference being the syntactic position of the accented element.¹⁵

The contrasting pairs in (19) clearly confirm the PSON: the English SF construction involving Prosodic Inversion is a structure in which the subject NP exhibits the prosodic properties of the object in a corresponding transitive PF sentence. The prosodic form of the SF construction can be said to be **motivated** by the principle in (15).

It may be worth pointing out that the SF construction involving Prosodic Inversion contradicts an often-heard claim, according to which the unifying principle governing the structure of presentational sentences across languages is the functional need to bring the constituent coding the ‘presented’ referent as close to the end of the sentence as possible, thereby diminishing the distance between this constituent and subsequent mentions of the referent as a continuing topic. This claim, which is based on a narrow iconic view of the PF-SF contrast, is made perhaps in most explicit form in Hetzron (1975), who postulates a universal ‘Presentative Movement’ for SF sentences. It is clear that any universality claim concerning this presentative movement is disconfirmed by the English Prosodic Inversion construction, in which the newly introduced referent is not coded sentence-finally but in sentence-initial subject position. It seems that the overarching principle which accounts for the structure of prosodically marked SF sentences in English is not (imagic) iconicity but the principle of paradigmatic contrast.

3.2 *Occurrence of the S in O position: syntactic inversion*

Perhaps the clearest cases of subject–object neutralization in SF constructions are those in which the SF subject appears in the position occupied by the PF object. Constructions exhibiting this word order phenomenon have been traditionally referred to as SUBJECT–VERB INVERSION constructions. Such constructions are found in a great number of languages. The following quote from Jespersen’s *Philosophy of Grammar* may serve as an introduction. Regarding the most common inversion construction in English, the presentational *there*-construction, Jespersen writes (emphasis added, KL):

Sentences corresponding to English sentences with *there is* or *there are*, in which the existence of something is asserted or denied — if we want a term for them, we may call them existential sentences — present some striking peculiarities in many languages. Whether or not a word like *there* is used to introduce them, the **verb precedes the subject**, and the latter is **hardly treated grammatically like a real subject**. In Danish it has **the same form as an object**, though the verb is *is*: *der er dem som tror*, even with the passive *der gives dem*. (Jespersen 1924: 155)

(Translations of the Danish examples in the above quote are provided in items (35) and (39) below.) As we will see, Jespersen's remarks hold not only for the so-called existential type, but for most types of Subject–Verb Inversion.

3.2.1 VS order in SV(O) languages

Consider the Italian sentence pairs in (20) (from Lambrecht 1994):

- (20) a. *Si è rotta la macchina.* (SF)
 'The CAR broke down.'
Ho rotto la macchina. (PF)
 'I broke the CAR.'
- b. *Ha telefonato Giovanni.* (SF)
 'JOHN called.'
Ho telefonato a Giovanni. (PF)
 'I called JOHN.'

As with the English examples in (19), the sentence pairs in (20) are not examples of semantically equivalent SF and PF constructions. (The PF constructions corresponding to the SF constructions on the left hand side in (20) would be *La macchina si è rotta* and *Giovanni a telefonato*.) What these sentence pairs illustrate is the syntactic similarity between the sentence construction in the SF category and the predicate (or VP) construction in the PF sentence. In both members of the pairs in (20), the unique NP argument follows the verb. It is therefore justified to say that the focal subject in the Italian SF construction exhibits the same positional property as the focal object in a PF construction. The Italian SF construction thus confirms the PSON.

The use of Subject–Verb Inversion for the expression of sentence focus can be observed also in so-called free word-order languages. (21) and (22) are examples from Latin and Russian (Lambrecht & Polinsky 1997).¹⁶ Notice that Russian permits both types of inversion, syntactic (22b) and prosodic (22c):

- (21) a. *Taurus mugit.* (PF)
 bull:NOM:SG bellow:3SG:PRES:IND
 ‘The bull is BELLOWING.’
- b. *Mugit taurus.* (SF)
 ‘There is a BULL bellowing. / The BULL is bellowing.’
- (22) a. *pticy pojut.* (PF)
 birds:NOM:PL sing:PRES:PL
 ‘The birds are SINGING.’
- b. *Pojut PTICY.* (SF)
 ‘There are BIRDS singing.’
- c. *PTICY pojut.* (SF)
 ‘The BIRDS are singing.’

In addition to the SV/VS opposition, the Russian and Latin examples illustrate a semantic phenomenon which has often been discussed in analyses of SF constructions (cf. Kuno 1973 and Kuroda 1972 for Japanese, Krámský 1968 for Czech, Li & Thompson 1981 for Chinese, Vilkuna 1989 for Finnish, etc.): in languages which lack a morphological category of DEFINITENESS (or, more accurately, a category for expressing identifiability presuppositions), Subject–Verb Inversion is one way of marking an NP as indefinite (or, more accurately, of marking the referent of the NP as unidentifiable for the addressee). In this respect, (21b) and (22b) are reminiscent of the English existential *there*-construction (used in the translations of these sentences), which is often claimed to be subject to a so-called ‘indefiniteness effect’. It must be noted, however, that in many languages the postverbal SF subject does not have to be interpreted as indefinite. For example, (21b) can also mean ‘The BULL is bellowing’. Strong empirical evidence against the existence of a definiteness requirement in English is presented in Ward & Birner (1995). As I have argued elsewhere (Lambrecht 1994, Chapter 3), it is not the inverted but rather the non-inverted (preverbal) subject NP that is pragmatically constrained. Due to the association of preverbal position and topic status, this NP can only be interpreted as having an identifiable referent.¹⁷ Interestingly, the two types of inversion in Russian diverge with respect to the (non-)identifiability constraint: the VS construction in (22b) is limited to NPs with unidentifiable referents, while the Prosodic Inversion construction in (21c) is preferred for identifiable referents.

The sentences in (23) (discussed in Polinsky 1993) illustrate the PF/SF contrast in Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language with strict SVO order. The Kinyarwanda Subject–Verb Inversion construction is shown in (23b):

- (23) a. *aba-shyitsi ba-ra-rirũmbir-a mu gisagára* (PF)
 CL2-guest CL2-PRES-sing-IMPF in village (CL7)
 ‘The guests are singing in the village.’
 b. *ha-ra-rirũmbir-a aba-shyitsi mu gisagára* (SF)
 CL16-PRES-sing-IMPF CL2-guest in village (CL7)
 ‘There are guests singing in the village.’

The subject NP *aba-shyitsi* precedes the verb in (a), but follows it in (b). As in the Latin example (22), the most natural interpretation of the inverted subject in (23b) is that of an indefinite NP. (23b) also illustrates another commonly observed property of SF constructions, i.e. the lack of subject–verb agreement, which will be discussed in Section 3.4.

The French example in (24a) illustrates a particular type of Subject–Verb Inversion (which can also be analyzed as a kind of Extraposition construction), in which the verb is preceded by the so-called ‘impersonal’ *il* (the non-referential counterpart of the 3rd person singular pronoun *il* shown in (24b)), which acts as an obligatory placeholder for the inverted semantic subject. As (24a) shows, this construction is subject to the identifiability constraint:

- (24) a. *Il tombe une / *la goutte.* (SF)
 it falls a:FEM the:FEM drop:FEM
 ‘A (*The) DROP is falling.’
 b. *Il verse une / la goutte.* (PF)
 he pours a:FEM the:FEM drop:FEM
 ‘He is pouring a (the) DROP.’

The striking formal similarity between the postverbal subject in the SF construction in (24a) and the postverbal object in the PF construction in (24b) needs no further comment. That the postverbal NP is indeed a subject in (24a), but an object in (24b), can be shown by replacing it with a preverbal (case-marked) pronoun, as in (24’), where the feminine *la* is to be understood as replacing the feminine *goutte* in (24):¹⁸

- (24’) a. **Il la tombe.*
 it it:FEM:DO falls
 ‘It falls it.’

- b. *Il la verse.*
 he it:FEM:DO pours
 'He pours it.'

While in (b) pronoun substitution is possible, in (a) it leads to ungrammaticality. The construction type illustrated in (24a) exists also in German, which resorts to the neuter pronoun *es* (see ex. (48) below), as well as in Swedish and Icelandic (Maling 1988).

A special type of Subject–Verb Inversion is illustrated in the Czech example in (25) (Mirjam Fried, personal communication):

- (25) a. *V za'dech mě bolí.* (PF)
 in back:LOC I:ACC hurt:3SG
 'My back HURTS'
 b. *Bolí mě v za'dech.* (SF)
 hurt:3SG I:ACC in back:LOC
 'My BACK hurts'

As suggested by the English glosses, the contrast between (25a) and (25b) is that between a PF construction and its SF counterpart. However, the contrasting pair in (25) differs from its English analog in that neither sentence contains a constituent which is morphologically marked as a subject. What corresponds to the body-part subject in English appears in Czech as a locative NP (the place 'at which' it hurts). (25b) can be subsumed under the PSON if we take the body part to be semantically the subject of the proposition (of the two arguments, the patient/experiencer is clearly less agentive, hence less subject-like, than the locus of the pain).¹⁹

3.2.2 *Locative Inversion*

In many languages the position occupied by the topical subject in the PF construction is filled by a LOCATIVE expression in the corresponding SF construction. This locative expression, which serves as a topical reference point for the entity being introduced via the presentational inversion construction, often takes on some or most of the grammatical properties of the PF subject (see e.g. the discussion of the Chicheŵa Locative-Inversion construction in Kanerva & Bresnan 1989 and Bresnan 1994, where the inverted subject is analyzed as the grammatical object and the locative as the subject).

A familiar example from English is the earlier-mentioned presentational *there*-construction, whether of the deictic or the existential subtype. English

(especially written English) also has an inversion construction involving a locative expression other than *there* (see Birner 1994 for a recent pragmatic analysis of English Locative Inversion, and Birner & Ward 1993 for an analysis of the functional difference between Locative Inversion and *there*-insertion). Consider (26) and (27):

- (26) a. *There's a SHARK.* (SF)
 b. *I see a SHARK.* (PF)
- (27) a. *In a little white house lived two RABBITS.* (SF)
 (Birner 94: 234)
 b. *In the little white house I found two RABBITS.* (PF)

The Locative-Inversion construction illustrated in (27) is common also in Finnish (Välilmaa-Blum 1988: 31ff) and in French (where it is reserved to certain written genres, Borillo 1999). The formal relationship between the members of the pairs in (26) and (27) is essentially the same as that between the sentence pairs in (19) and (20). The subject NPs *a shark* and *two rabbits* in the SF constructions in (a) appear in the same position (and with the same prosodic prominence) as the object NPs in the PF constructions in (b). As in the above-mentioned Chicheŵa Locative-Inversion construction, the initial locative expression in the English existential *there*-construction acts in several respects like a subject (see e.g. the appearance of *there* in tag-question formation), so much so that the postverbal NP is no longer considered a subject by many linguists. I will return to the English *there*-construction at the end of the paper (Section 3.9.1).

3.2.3 Sentence focus in VS languages

In verb-initial languages, two theoretical possibilities exist for the position of the SF subject, both of which are attested. Either the subject is inverted, resulting in SV(O) instead of VS(O) order, or else it occurs in the postverbal focus position of the O constituent. The latter possibility will be dealt with in Section 3.8 on syntactic cohesion between V and S.

The option of VS-to-SV inversion is severely constrained because in most verb-initial languages the preverbal position is regularly used for preposed topical subjects, i.e. for PF sentences (cf. Keenan 1978; DuBois 1985). VS order for SF coding seems to occur only in those verb-initial languages which do not permit such preverbal subjects, as e.g. Irish (McCloskey 1996). As examples of SV inversion in SF constructions, Wehr

(1984: 36) quotes the following sentences from Biblical Hebrew and Old Irish (MacCana 1973: 107):

- (28) a. *Iš haja.*
 man there-was
 ‘There was a man.’
- b. *Rí amra ro boí for Laignib.*
 king wonderful PART be:3SG:PRET over Leinstermen
 ‘There reigned a wonderful king over the Leinstermen.’
 (Fingal Rónáin)

The examples in (28) cannot be taken to directly confirm the PSON since the inverted preverbal subject does not appear in the position of the object, which is postverbal in these languages. These examples are nevertheless revealing in that they confirm Principles (13) and (14): the SV construction is interpreted in terms of a systemic contrast between two word orders, and the non-topical subject appears in non-topic position, which in this case is preverbal. The examples also further disconfirm the universality of the ‘presentative movement’ which I mentioned earlier.

3.3 Cooccurrence of SF subjects with ‘object particles’

In some languages the object-like character of the inverted subject of SF constructions is manifested in the compatibility of the subject with certain particles which normally cooccur with object NPs and which cannot cooccur with PF subjects. Consider the French data in (29), which involve the two-part particle *ne ... que* ‘only’:

- (29) a. *Je n’ai vu qu’un seul monstre.* (PF)
 ‘I saw only a single monster’
- b. **Un seul monstre n’a été vu que.*
 ‘Only a single monster was seen.’
- c. *Il n’a été vu qu’un seul monstre.* (SF)
 ‘Only a single monster was seen.’

As the contrast between (a) and (b) in (29) reveals, *ne ... que* can be used with objects but not with (preverbal) subjects. Formally, this constraint is explained by the fact that *que* is a proclitic, hence banned from sentence-final position. Functionally, the constraint is consistent with the semantic nature of

‘only’ as a so-called ‘focus particle’ (also called ‘rhematizing particle’) which is inherently incompatible with the topic role of PF subjects. As expected, *ne ... que* may cooccur with the postverbal subject of a SF construction, as shown in (29c), an instance of the Impersonal-*il* construction which we saw in (24a). Use of this construction, which is subject to severe lexical constraints, is possible in (29c) because the sentence is in the passive voice, eliminating the O argument, thus making its subject an S rather than an A.

An analogous phenomenon involving ‘only’ can be observed in Kinyarwanda (Polinsky 1993, 1995). Kinyarwanda has two words for ‘only’, as shown in the underlined forms in (30a) (*nyíne*) and (30c) (*gusa*):

- (30) a. *aba-shiytsi b́oo-nyíne ba-ra-siinziir-a muri iyi inzu*
 CL2-guests CL2-only CL2-PROGR-sleep-IMPf in this house
 ‘Only the guests are sleeping in this house’
 b. **aba-shiytsi gusa ba-ra-siinziir-a muri iyi inzu*
 c. *muri iyi inzu ha-ra-siinziir-a aba-shiytsi gusa*
 in this house CL16-PROGR-sleep-IMPf CL2-guest only
 ‘In this house are sleeping only guests.’
 d. **muri iyi inzu ha-ra-siinziir-a aba-shiytsi b́oo-nyíne*

In the SV construction in (30a), the particle *-nyíne* agrees with the classifier of the preverbal subject NP. In the inversion construction in (c), the word *gusa* is used, which does not show agreement with the noun it has in its scope. As Polinsky observes, the form *gusa* is the form normally used with objects.

The Kinyarwanda facts in (30) have an interesting parallel in French. To translate (30a) literally, standard French has to use the (somewhat bookish) *seul*, as in (31a), while the Kinyarwanda SF version in (30c) requires in French the adverbial form *seulement* shown in (31b) (a Locative-Inversion construction).²⁰ (31c) shows that this adverbial form is also the form used for PF objects:

- (31) a. *Seuls (*Seulement) les invités dorment dans cette maison.*
 ‘Only the guests are sleeping in this house.’ (cf. (30a))
 b. *Dans cette maison dorment seulement (*seuls) des invités.*
 ‘In this house (are) sleep(ing) only guests.’ (cf. (30c))
 c. *Dans cette maison, on accepte seulement (*seuls) des invités.*
 ‘In this house one accepts only guests.’

Like its Kinyarwanda counterpart *nyíne* in (30a), the word *seul* in (31a) agrees with the preverbal subject (*seuls* is the masculine plural form). And as with Kinyarwanda *gusa* in (30c), the form *seulement* in (31b) shows no agreement (the *-ment* suffix marks the word as an adverb). The minimal pairs in (31) show that *seul* and *seulement* are in complementary distribution, the former being used for preverbal subjects and the latter for both SF subjects and PF objects. Thus in French, as in Kinyarwanda, the S of the SF construction and the O of the PF construction pattern alike with respect to the behavior of the word ‘only’.

Similarity in patterning is manifested also in the scope phenomena in (32), involving the French two-part negation *ne ... pas* ‘not’. (32c) is again an instance of the Impersonal-*il* construction:

- (32) a. *Un seul objet d’art n’a pas été vendu.* (PF)
 ‘A single piece of art hasn’t been sold.’
 b. *Je n’ai pas vendu un seul objet d’art.* (PF)
 ‘I haven’t sold a single piece of art’
 c. *Il n’a pas été vendu un seul objet d’art.* (SF)
 ‘Not a single piece of art has been sold.’

While (32a) asserts that all but one piece of art was sold, (b) and (c) assert that none were sold. Semantically, the SF subject in (c) patterns with the PF object in (b), and both contrast with the PF subject in (a).

A related phenomenon, which has received a perhaps undue amount of attention in generative theorizing, is the behavior of the Italian bound pronoun *ne* (e.g. Burzio 1981) and its French counterpart *en*. Consider the French examples in (33):

- (33) a. *J’en ai mangé trois.* (PF)
 I of-them have eaten three
 ‘I ate three (of them).’
 b. **Trois en ont été mangé(e)s.* (PF)
 ‘Three (of them) were eaten.’
 c. *Il en a été mangé trois.* (SF)
 ‘Three (of them) were eaten.’

The occurrence of *en* is grammatical in association with the object, as in (a), and with the postverbal subject, as in the Impersonal-*il* construction in (c), but not with the preverbal subject (b). With respect to the use of this

pronoun, the PF object and the SF subject pattern together, both contrasting with the PF subject.

3.4 *Suspended subject–verb agreement*

The next syntactic SF property which I would like to discuss is the well-known cross-linguistic phenomenon of SUSPENDED SUBJECT–VERB AGREEMENT in SF constructions. Again, Jespersen’s observations are to the point (the passage below is the continuation of that cited at the beginning of Section 3.2):

In Danish the verb was here put in the singular before a plural word, even at a time when the distinction between SG *er* and PL *ere* was generally observed; in English, there is the same tendency to use *there’s* before plurals (...); in Italian, too, one finds *v’è* instead of *vi sono*. In Russian (...) the form *jest’* ‘there is’, originally a third person singular, is used even before a plural word, and even before pronouns of the other persons (...), and finally we may mention the curious form *načxalo gostej* ‘there came driving (NEUT:SG) some guests’. (Jespersen 1924: 155)

Item (34) illustrates the colloquial English construction mentioned by Jespersen:

- (34) a. *The three women are (*is) in the ROOM.* (PF)
 b. *There’s (are) three WOMEN in the room.* (SF)

(35) and (36) illustrate lack of agreement in SF contexts in Danish (Jespersen 1924: 155) and German (from Grimm’s *Märchen*, 1, 208):

- (35) *Der er (*ere) dem som tror...* (SF)
 ‘There is (are) those who believe...’
 (36) *Es war (??waren) einmal ein Hühnchen und ein Hähnchen, die wollten zusammen eine Reise machen.*
 ‘There was (were) once a chicken and a rooster who wanted to go on a journey together.’

Item (37b) shows agreement cancellation in the French Impersonal-*il* inversion construction, of which we saw several examples before:

- (37) a. *Les trois femmes sont (*est) venues.* (PF)
 the three women are (is) come:PP:FEM:PL.
 'The three women CAME.'
- b. *Il est (*sont) venu trois femmes.* (SF)
 it is (*are) come:PP:MASC:SG three women
 'There came three WOMEN.'

As the contrast between (37a) and (37b) reveals, PF and SF are in complementary distribution with respect to subject–verb agreement.

A contrast similar to that in (37) is reported for the Italian Conegliano dialect (Saccon 1993):

- (38) a. *La Maria la è rivada (*el e rivà).* (PF)
 the Maria she is arrived (*it is arrived)
 'Maria ARRIVED.'
- b. *El e rivà (*la è rivada) la Maria.* (SF)
 it is arrived (*she is arrived) the Maria
 'MARIA arrived.'

The syntactic contrast in (38) is attested also in the Fiorentino (Saccon 1993) and Genoese (Calabrese 1986) dialects. Agreement cancellation exists also in standard Italian SF constructions, as observed by Alisova (1972: 146). Further examples involving lack of subject–verb agreement in Romance SF constructions can be found in Wehr (1984: 37f.). The phenomenon is common also in Finnish (Välímää-Blum 1988: 32, Vilkuña 1989: 157). Moravcsik (1978: 341) observes that in Modern Arabic indefinite feminine subjects must agree in gender with the verb when they precede but not when they follow the verb.

As we saw in example (23), lack of agreement in a SF construction is also found in Kinyarwanda. (23) is repeated here for convenience, with the (dis)agreement elements underlined for easy recognition:

- (23) a. *aba-shyitsi* *ba-ra-rirũmbir-a* *mu gisagára* (PF)
 CL2-guest CL2-PRES-sing-IMPF in village
 'The guests are singing in the VILLAGE.'
- b. *ha-ra-rirũmbir-a* *aba-shyitsi* *mu gisagára* (SF)
 CL16-PRES-sing-IMPF CL2-guest in village
 'There are GUESTS singing in the village.'

In the PF sentence in (23a), the classifier on the verb agrees with that on the subject. No such agreement is found in the SF construction in (23b), which has generalized locative class agreement. Lack of agreement of the inverted SF subject with the verb is found also in Chicheŵa (Bresnan 1994:93). In this language it is the preverbal locative (a kind of NP) that agrees with the verb in noun class.

In these various languages, the verb must agree in number (Danish, Italian, Russian, etc.), gender (Arabic, French, Italian), or nouns class (Chicheŵa) with the subject in PF constructions, but it cannot (as in Danish, Finnish, French, Italian, Kinyarwanda), or need not (as in Arabic, English, or German), agree with the postverbal focus subject in corresponding SF constructions. This agreement-cancellation phenomenon is in accord with the diachronic origin of subject–verb agreement. It is well-known that verb-agreement typically arises via grammaticalization of a coreference relation between an extra-clausal ('left-dislocated') topic constituent and an intra-clausal anaphoric pronoun associated with the verb (cf. in particular Givón 1976). Since the SF subject does not have a topic role, there is no functional motivation for the presence of an anaphoric element marked on the verb.

In conclusion, since across languages verb agreement is a typical feature of subjects, in particular topical subjects, but an atypical (though by no means non-existent) feature of objects, in particular focal objects (cf. e.g. Bresnan and Mchombo 1987), the fact that subject–verb agreement is often suspended in SF constructions is further evidence for the validity of the hypothesis that SF marking typically entails detopicalization and 'objectivization' of a PF subject.

3.5 *Non-nominative case marking*

As a corollary of its object-like status, the SF subject is often case-marked as an accusative (i.e. object) rather than nominative (i.e. subject) argument, especially in SF constructions of the existential subtype. For example, as mentioned by Jespersen (1924) in the passage quoted at the beginning of Section 3.2, in Danish the subject of an existential construction appears in the object case, even though the verb is BE:

- (39) *der er dem som tror* (= (35))
 there is them:OBJ who believe
 'There are those who believe.'

The need for object-like coding of the SF subject motivates no doubt the fact that in certain languages the existential predicate corresponding to English BE is a syntactically transitive predicate taking a direct object, in particular the verb HAVE. The use of such transitive existential verbs has the double advantage of allowing both for non-nominative case marking and for postverbal, i.e. non-canonical, position of the SF subject, without requiring subject-inversion in the strict sense. Let us again quote Jespersen:

Many languages have expressions containing the word 'has', followed by what was originally its object, but is now not always distinct from the subject-case, thus Fr. *il y a*, Sp. *hay* (from *ha* 'it has' *y* 'there'), It. *v'ha* (in *v'hanno molti* 'there are many' *molti* is treated as subject), South German *es hat*, Serbian and Bulgarian *ima*, Mod. Gr. *ekhei*.
(Jespersen 1924: 156)

Item (40) contains an example of the well-known French *il y a* construction:

- (40) *(Il) y avait une bagarre.*
(it) there had a fight
'There was a fight.'

The dummy subject *il* in *il y a* is regularly omitted in the spoken language (hence the parentheses in (40)), making *y-a* the exact mirror image of Spanish *ha-y*.²¹ A variety of examples from Romansh dialects involving presentational use of HAVE are discussed in Stimm (1980). As Melander (1921) observes, the use of HAVE as an existential verb is attested as early as Vulgar Latin. (41) is a Latin example (from Flav. Vopisc. Tacitus 8,1):

- (41) *Habebat in bibliotheca Ulpia librum*
have:3SG:IMPF in library:ABL:SG Ulpia book:ACC:SG
elephantinum.
of-ivory:ACC:SG
'There was an ivory book in the Ulpia library.'

As mentioned by Jespersen in the above quote, existential HAVE is found also in Southern dialects of German. (42) is an example:

- (42) *Da hatte es einen Streit.*
there had:3SG it a:ACC:SG fight
'There was a fight.'

In Lambrecht (1988a: 152), I argue that the use of HAVE as a presentational verb is semantically motivated by the thematic structure of this predicate, whose subject has a locative rather than an agentive case role and whose object is a theme rather than a patient (see also Clark 1970; Foley & Van Valin 1984). The verb HAVE thus has the advantage of allowing the logical SF subject, whose role is non-agentive, to occur in postverbal position without requiring syntactic inversion proper. The use of HAVE-type predicates is therefore especially motivated in languages like modern French, which do not permit verbs in sentence-initial position.

Another transitive predicate used in a presentational function is the verb GIVE. Existential GIVE is found e.g. in (standard) German and in Danish, as shown in (43a, b).

- (43) a. *Es gab einen Streit.*
 it gave a:ACC fight
 'There was a fight.'
- b. *der gives dem ...*
 there is-given them:OBJ
 'There exist (lit. exists) those...'

The Danish construction in (43b) is particularly striking in that it uses the object case for the subject of a verb in the passive voice (Jespersen 1924).

In addition to HAVE and GIVE, we find the transitive verb SEE in the function of a (deictic) presentational verb, as in the French example in (44) (counting Fr. *voilà* as a frozen form of the imperative of *voir* 'to see', meaning literally 'see there'):

- (44) a. *Voilà mon ami.*
 see-there my friend:DO
 'There's my friend.'
- b. *Le voilà.*
 he:DO see-there
 'There he is.'

That the argument of *voilà* in (44a) is formally an object rather than a subject can be demonstrated with the pronoun substitution test (cf. ex. (24') above): the preverbal pronoun in (44b) is in the direct object form. (Further examples of presentational use of *voir* are discussed in Chapter 6 of Lambrecht 1986.)

To sum up, the various presentational verbs discussed in this Section have in common that they allow the SF subject to appear with the case marking and the syntactic position of an object. Some languages make use of syntactically transitive verbs to express existential or presentational BE, confirming the tendency toward object-like marking of the SF subject. Structures like the French *voilà*-construction in (44) or the *avoir*-construction in (40), as well as its Spanish *hay*-counterpart, are of particular interest. Not only do the focal subjects in these constructions appear in object position and bear an object relation to their predicates, but these object NPs in fact occur INSTEAD of lexical subjects. They thus represent striking evidence in favor of the PERSON because the objectivization of the focus NP has resulted here in total elimination of a grammatical subject from the clause.

3.6 *Cooccurrence restrictions on object constituents.*

As I observed in Section 2, the marking of the subject NP with object features and the resulting neutralization of the subject–object contrast in SF constructions entails potential constraints on the cooccurrence of object NPs in SF sentences. Any constraint found in a language against the cooccurrence of object NPs with SF subjects may therefore count as *prima facie* evidence supporting the claim instantiated in the PERSON. Recall, however, that the prediction made by the PERSON applies only to FOCAL objects, allowing in principle for the possibility of cooccurring objects with a topic relation to the proposition.

The cooccurrence constraint in question is common in those Romance languages which permit VS syntax (Wandruszka 1982: 37ff).²² In his extensive study of VS order in Italian, Wandruszka shows that in Italian an object may cooccur in a clause with an inverted subject NP only when it is ‘thematic’ (i.e. topical) and unaccented. Typically, such a cooccurring object is pronominal and occurs preverbally, resulting in OVS sentence order. This OVS pattern is especially common with existential or presentational predicates like *mi resta X* ‘I still have X’ (lit. ‘there remains for me X’) or *mi manca X* ‘I lack X’ (lit. ‘to me lacks X’) or psychological predicates like *mi piace X* ‘I like X’ (lit. ‘to me pleases X’) or *mi colpisce X* ‘X strikes me’ (lit. ‘me strikes X’) (cf. also Stimm 1983). VSO order does not seem to occur at all in Italian, and VOS order occurs only with what Wandruszka calls “complex psychological predicates”, in which the object forms a semantic

unit with the verb, hence is neither topical nor focal (e.g. *mi fa paura X* 'X scares me', lit. 'to me causes fear X').

Italian examples of OVS order in SF sentences involving unstressed topical object pronouns are given in (45):

- (45) a. *Mi si è rotta la macchina.*
 me:DAT itself is broken:FEM the car
 'My CAR broke down.'
- b. *L' ha lasciata il marito.*
 her:DO has left:FEM:SG the husband
 'Her HUSBAND left her.'

The presence of the topical dative (*mi*) or accusative (*l'*) pronouns in (45) does not preclude SF status of the two sentences. This freedom of cooccurrence is due to the fact that the object constituent has no prosodic nor syntactic focus properties, hence does not compete with the inverted subject for focus status.

Notice that the cooccurrence constraint does not apply to VS constructions in which the object is focal but in which the postverbal subject itself is non-focal and unaccented. This is the case for example in the (somewhat bookish) Spanish VSO sentence in (46) (from Wandruszka 1982: 54):

- (46) *Conoce el mundo esta heroica y trágica historia.*
 knows the world that heroic and tragic story
 'The world knows this heroic and tragic story.' (P. Neruda)

In (46) an unaccented subject NP (*el mundo*) occurs between the verb and its focal object NP. This sentence is not an instance of a SF construction, hence does not constitute counterevidence against the PSON. Rather it is a PF construction in which the subject happens to appear postverbally. According to Wandruszka (1982: 53), in Italian this type of VOS sentence was common until the 19th century. Topical postverbal subject NPs occur commonly in V2 languages, such as German, when the preverbal slot is occupied by an adjunct or adverbial constituent, forcing the subject to appear after the verb.

The constraint against cooccurrence of focal S and O is clearly manifested also in the French Impersonal-*il* construction. Consider (47):

- (47) a. *Il mange beaucoup de linguistes dans ce restaurant.*
 'There eat many LINGUISTS in this restaurant / Many LINGUISTS eat in this restaurant.'

- b. **Il mange beaucoup de linguistes des couscous dans ce restaurant.*
 ‘There eat many linguists couscous in this restaurant.’

The ungrammaticality of (47b) is due to the presence of the direct object NP *des couscous*. Notice that the locative adjunct *dans ce restaurant* may freely cooccur with the inverted subject.²³ German has a SF construction involving non-referential use of the neuter pronoun *es* which is similar to the French Impersonal-*il* construction, except for the fact that the verb agrees here with the postverbal focus subject. As expected, the constraint on S-O cooccurrence holds for this German construction:

- (48) a. *Es ritten drei Jäger in den Wald hinein.*
 it rode three hunters in the:ACC forest into
 ‘There rode three hunters into the forest’
 b. **Es ritten drei Jäger einen Schimmel.*
 it rode three riders a:ACC white-horse
 ‘There rode three hunters white horses’

As in the French construction in (47b), it is the presence of a direct object in (48b) that renders the sentence ungrammatical. The syntactic facts of Subject–Verb Inversion in Romance or German and the resulting restrictions on subject–object cooccurrence are clearly consistent with the hypothesis expressed in the PSON, according to which SF marking involves objectivization of the subject.

Notice that the cooccurrence constraint illustrated in (48b) does not hold for German sentences in which the sentence-initial constituent is a referential element. Compare (48) with (48’), in which the dummy *es* is replaced by the adverbial *da* ‘there’:

- (48’) a. *Da ritten drei Jäger in den Wald hinein.*
 there rode three hunters in the:ACC forest into
 ‘There, three hunters rode into the forest’
 b. *Da ritten drei Jäger einen Schimmel.*
 there rode three riders a:ACC white-horse
 ‘There, three hunters rode white horses.’

The examples in (48’) are PF rather than SF sentences. Their function is not to assert the presence of three individuals in the discourse but simply to state that three individuals were engaged in a riding activity in a certain place.²⁴

Interestingly, the constraint against cooccurrence of full lexical object NPs with SF subjects is observable also in the English Prosodic Inversion construction discussed in Section 3.1. A distinction must be drawn here between focal (hence necessarily accented) and non-focal (hence not necessarily accented) cooccurring object nouns. Concerning the cooccurrence of focal object NPs with accented subjects, as illustrated in example (9) (*Her HUSBAND had an ACCIDENT*), I argued that this bi-accentual pattern does not formally constitute a SF construction but a PF construction with contextually induced sentence-focus construal. More relevant here is the question of whether unaccented topical object NPs may cooccur with accented SF subjects. Since such object nouns are not focal, the PSON does not necessarily preclude their occurrence. The facts indicate, however, that unaccented object NPs may not occur in Prosodic-Inversion sentences. Thus in (49) the right-hand sentences, in which the verb is followed by a complement, do not have SF but only AF readings, i.e. they can only be uttered felicitously if the open propositions ‘X called his mother’, ‘X hurts my feet’, and ‘X died of cancer’ are consciousness-presupposed in the discourse context:

- (49) a. *Your FRIEND called.* (SF)
 a'. *Your FRIEND called his mother.* (AF)
 b. *These SHOES hurt.* (SF)
 b'. *These SHOES hurt my feet.* (AF)
 c. *Her HUSBAND died.* (SF)
 c'. *Her HUSBAND died of cancer.* (AF)

As (49c') shows, the cooccurrence constraint extends also to certain (non-locative) oblique objects.

While unaccented lexical object NPs may not cooccur with SF subjects, sentences in which the topical object is an unaccented pronoun do permit SF construal. This is illustrated in the sentences in (50) ((50c) parallels the Italian OVS sentence (45b)):

- (50) a. *Well, my BROTHER finally called me.* (SF)
 b. *These SHOES are hurting me.* (SF)
 c. *Her HUSBAND left her.* (SF)

I suggest the following explanation for the different behavior of lexical and pronominal topical object constituents. Since the primary (though by no means the only) pragmatic function of objects is to introduce referential

material into a discourse, there is a strong discourse tendency across languages for objects to be lexical rather than pronominal (cf. Lambrecht 1986: Chapter 6; DuBois 1987). Lexical content is thus a salient feature of focal objects. Since the PSON concerns only those features of objects which correlate with their focus function, and since (referential) unaccented pronouns are topical by definition (Lambrecht 1994), unaccented object pronouns may cooccur with SF subjects because they are the least focus-like manifestation of the grammatical relation object.

It should be noted that the pronoun facts illustrated with (50) make it impossible to explain the cooccurrence restriction on objects in English SF constructions in purely syntactic terms. Since generally speaking personal pronouns and lexical NPs have the same distributional properties in English (unlike French or Italian), the contrast between (50) and the right-hand examples in (49) can only be explained pragmatically, i.e. in terms of the difference in information value between nouns and pronouns.²⁵

The constraint against cooccurring lexical objects and the tolerance for cooccurring (unaccented) object pronouns in SF constructions is not restricted to the genetically related and typologically more or less similar languages mentioned before (English, German, Romance). For example, Sasse (1987: 548) observes that in the Cushitic language Boni the verbs ofthetic (i.e. SF) sentences must be “intransitive or transitive with a pronominal object. If one noun is incorporated in a sentence in which more than one full noun occurs, the other one automatically becomes the predication base (i.e. the topic, K.L.), and the result is a categorical statement” (Sasse 1987, p. 548). Sasse gives the following example (the tilde indicates incorporation):

- (51) Q: (*máa háa-kalée?*)
 what hither-came-in
 ‘What’s new?’
 A: *šuweel hiléekée~no-oolii*
 leopard friend-my~with-fought
 ‘A LEOPARD attacked my FRIEND.’

Given the presence of two nominal expressions in (51A), the noun ‘leopard’ cannot be marked as a SF subject via incorporation (cf. the incorporation example (63a) below). The Boni situation is analogous to that in English, where a sentence containing more than one pitch accent formally instantiates a PF construction, even if the subject is not topical in the context and the

proposition expresses an unexpected event (cf. ex. (9) and discussion).

It is necessary to mention one apparent exception to the cooccurrence constraint on lexical complements in SF constructions. This constraint does not apply to certain objects which are ‘semantically incorporated’, i.e. which form single predicative concepts with their verbs (cf. Wandruszka’s category of “complex psychological predicates” in Italian mentioned at the beginning of this section). Consider the observed German utterance in (52) (from Fuchs 1980):

- (52) *Der FERNSEHER macht so’n komisches Geräusch.* (SF or AF)
 ‘The TV is making a weird noise.’

Although the NP *(ei)n komisches Geräusch* in (52) is a full lexical direct object, the sentence permits SF construal. Notice that the subject of ‘make a noise’ is not an agent. The object is therefore not an affected entity. Rather it forms a conceptual unit with the verb. (In traditional terms, the object is not an ‘accusativus affectus’ but an ‘accusativus effectus’; in recent linguistic terminology, verbs which appear in such V-N combinations have been referred to as ‘light verbs’.) The special status of the verb-object sequence is manifested e.g. in the fact that (52) has no passive counterpart (**Ein komisches Geräusch wird von dem Fernseher gemacht.* ‘A weird noise is made by the TV’). SF construal would be impossible if the subject were human and the noise the result of a willful act, as in (53):

- (53) *HANS macht so’n komisches Geräusch.* (AF, *SF)
 ‘JOHN’s making a funny noise’

(53) only has an AF reading, i.e. it is appropriate only in a situation in which the proposition that someone is making a funny noise is already ‘on the floor’.²⁶ Sentences such as (52) do thus not constitute evidence against the validity of the PERSON.

3.7 *Dual coding of the SF subject*

A particularly clear case of cooccurrence restrictions on O constituents in SF constructions is provided by languages in which the semantic subject of a SF construction must be coded in a short presentational clause of its own, while any additional argument or adjunct must appear in a second clause or clause-like structure immediately following it, in which the

presented referent is now coded as an anaphoric pronominal or null subject. Often the subject referent has a topic role in the second clause, but this is not necessarily the case. This construction type has been referred to as ‘zweigliedrige Strukturen’ (Wehr 1984), ‘split structures’ (Sasse 1987), and ‘presentational cleft constructions’ (Lambrecht 1988a). Such constructions are found in French, English, Chinese, Egyptian Arabic, Welsh, Romansch, Boni, and no doubt many other languages.

These bi-clausal constructions may be subdivided into two types, CLEFT constructions (involving two clauses, of which the second is a relative-like structure) and SERIAL-VERB constructions (involving two finite verbs sharing the same argument).

3.7.1 Presentational Cleft constructions

The Presentational Cleft type is illustrated in (54), which contains examples from spoken French involving the presentational *avoir*-construction (cf. ex. (40) above). The pronominal element preceding *avoir* may be either the adverbial *y* ‘there’ (cf. Note 21) or a subject pronoun, typically in the first or second person:

- (54) a. *Y a Jean qui a téléphoné.*
 there has Jean who has called
 ‘JEAN called.’
- b. *Y a le téléphone qui sonne.*
 there has the phone which rings
 The PHONE is ringing.
- c. *J’ai ma voiture qui est en panne.*
 I have my car that is in breakdown
 ‘My CAR broke down.’

A detailed data-oriented study of this construction is presented in Lambrecht (1988a). In the examples in (54), the semantic subject first occurs as the object of *avoir* in the initial existential clause (cf. Section 3.5), then is repeated in pronominal form as the subject of the appended relative clause. As demonstrated in Lambrecht (1988a), the bi-clausal structure illustrated in (54) is semantically interpreted as expressing a single proposition. Thus in (54) it is possible to express the propositional content of the bi-clausal structures via the mono-clausal sentences *Jean a téléphoné*, *Le téléphone sonne*, and *Ma voiture est en panne* without a concomitant change in truth

conditions. The short initial clauses headed by the predicate *avoir* have an exclusively pragmatic function, that of introducing the NP referent into the discourse without expressing any propositional content of their own. Sentence (55B) illustrates the Boni (Eastern Cushitic) Presentational Cleft described by Sasse (1987):

(55) (People crowding together:)

A: *máa šírí*

‘What’s the matter?’

B: *moróor-a, hiléekée ki-d’ifidi*

elephant-COP friend-my LOC-hit

‘It’s an elephant, (he) hit my friend.’ = ‘An ELEPHANT hit my FRIEND.’

Unlike the Boni PF structure in (51) above, in the split structure in (55) the semantic SF subject is coded as the predicative complement of a copula, followed by a second clause whose subject corefers with the preceding lexical NP.

3.7.2 *Serial-Verb constructions*

In some languages, the subject argument of the proposition underlying a SF sentence is coded as an NP which simultaneously bears an object or complement relation to one verb and a subject relation to another, resulting in a special type of Serial-Verb construction (called ‘realis descriptive clause sentences’ in Li & Thompson 1981). In the examples below, the presentational verb is either HAVE or BE. (56) is from Mandarin Chinese (Li & Thompson 1981: 131) and (57) from colloquial English (Lambrecht 1988b; the examples are attested):

(56) *Yòu rén gěi nǐ dǎ-diànhuà.*

have person to you hit-telephone

‘Someone called you.’

(57) a. There was a BALL of FIRE shot up through the seats in FRONT of me.

b. We had a FRIEND of mine from NORWAY was staying here.

(An insightful discussion of the Chinese construction in (56) is found in LaPolla (1990: 111–120); the English construction in (57) is analyzed in detail in Lambrecht (1988b), where it is somewhat misleadingly referred to

as ‘presentational amalgam construction’.) Both in (56) and in (57) an NP coding a discourse-new entity functions simultaneously as the complement of a presentational verb and as the subject of a regular predication.

While syntactically these Serial-Verb constructions differ from the Presentational-Cleft constructions discussed in the previous subsection, semantically they are similar to clefts in that the two-predicate construction expresses a single proposition. Thus sentence (57a) could also be expressed as *A BALL of FIRE shot up through the seats in FRONT of me* and (57b) as *A FRIEND of mine from NORWAY was staying here*. The construction in (57) blends or amalgamates two major SF-coding strategies: syntactic inversion (the SF subject follows the presentational verb) and prosodic inversion (the accented SF subject precedes an unaccented predicate).²⁷

It is easy to see how Presentational Clefts and Serial-Verb constructions fall under the PSON. The focus NP, which corresponds to a subject at the semantic level of the underlying single proposition, and which would be a topical subject NP in the corresponding PF construction, bears an object or complement relation to the presentational predicate of which it is an argument, while its referent functions at the same time as the subject of the following clause which expresses the propositional content proper of the complex construction. We might say that the clefting or serial-verb strategy is one which allows a grammar to ‘have its cake and eat it too’ by marking the SF subject both as a kind of object and as a regular subject.

Regarding the issue of the cooccurrence restriction on lexical objects in SF constructions, it should be noted that while no object argument may cooccur with the SF subject in the initial presentational clause, there is no restriction whatsoever on the occurrence of additional arguments in the second clause of the bi-clausal construction. This is shown for example in the Boni sentence (55B), whose second clause contains a transitive verb with a lexical direct-object NP (‘hit my friend’). As expected, this Boni sentence translates quite naturally into a French Presentational-Cleft construction (*Ya un éléphant qui a frappé mon ami*). This fact is of theoretical interest as it shows that the cooccurrence constraint in question is not manifested at the semantic level of the proposition. Indeed it seems easy enough to conceptualize a proposition like ‘An elephant hit my friend’. Rather the constraint operates at the cognitive level at which a PRAGMATICALLY STRUCTURED proposition gets mapped with an available sentence form.

3.8 *Syntactic cohesion between S and V*

It is a well-known fact that the syntactic relationship between a verb and its object tends to be tighter than that between the subject and the verb. This phenomenon of syntactic cohesion between verb and object has been referred to as ‘Adjacency’ in recent generative terminology. To the extent that the subject of a SF construction behaves syntactically like an object, we would expect to find an Adjacency effect between the verb and its subject in SF sentences. We will see that this expectation is strongly confirmed across languages.

3.8.1 *Adjacency of S and V*

An example of syntactic cohesion between the subject and the verb of a SF construction is provided by Polinsky for Kinyarwanda. In the Kinyarwanda inversion construction “the inverted nominal has to form a single tonal phrase with the verb it follows” (Polinsky 1995:366). Polinsky gives the following example (her ex. (12); parentheses indicate tonal phrases):

- (58) a. (*hararirũmba abashyitsi*)
 guests are singing
 ‘There are GUESTS singing.’
 b. *(*hararirũmba*) (*abashyitsi*)

The ill-formedness of (58b) shows that the inverted subject cannot form a tonal phrase of its own. This phonological constraint has the syntactic consequence that the verb and the inverted subject may not be separated by intervening material in Kinyarwanda (cf. Polinsky 1993:6). Consider the following examples (Polinsky’s ex. (14)):

- (59) a. *aba-shyitsi ba-ra-rirũmbir-a mu gisagára*
 CL2-guest CL2-PRES-sing-IMPF in village
 ‘The guests are singing in the village.’
 b. *ha-ra-rirũmbir-a aba-shyitsi mu gisagára*
 CL16-PRES-sing-IMPF CL2-guest in village
 ‘There are guests singing in the village.’
 c. **ha-ra-rirũmbir-a mu gisagára aba-shyitsi*
 CL16-PRES-sing-IMPF in village CL2-guest
 ‘There are guests singing in the village.’

As the contrast between (59a) and (59c) demonstrates, the locative phrase *mu gisagára* 'in the village' may directly follow the verb only in the non-inverted PF construction. (The ill-formedness of (59c) may be comparable to that of the corresponding English sentence **There are in the village guests singing.*) As Polinsky observes, in Kinyarwanda the SF subject forms a single constituent with the verb. Similar observations have been made by Bresnan & Kanerva (1989: 5–9) for Chichewa.²⁸

The effect of this syntactic Adjacency constraint can be observed also in the prosodically marked SF construction I have referred to as 'Prosodic Inversion' (Section 3.1). Consider the sentences in (60) (examples (60a/b) are from Schmerling 1976):

- (60) a. *Truman DIED.*
 a'. *Truman, after a long illness, DIED.* (PF)
 b. *JOHNSON died.*
 b'. **JOHNSON, after a short illness, died.* (SF)
 c. *The disease killed JOHNSON.*
 c'. **The disease killed, after a short illness, JOHNSON.*

The separation of the subject from the verb leads to much more severe unacceptability in the SF construction in (b) than in the PF construction in (a) (sentence (60a') might be stylistically improved if the verb were made phonologically 'heavier'). The unacceptability of (b') parallels that of (c'), where the adjunct phrase separates a transitive verb from its direct object, leading to an Adjacency violation. The facts in (60) strongly suggest that in Prosodic-Inversion sentences the subject and the verb form a single constituent, as they do in Kinyarwanda. This entails that such sentences would lack a verb-phrase constituent.

There is an interesting parallel between the syntactic observations made here concerning single-constituent status of the verb-subject sequence in SF constructions and an observation made twenty-five years ago by Chafe concerning English subject-accented sentences of the SF type. Chafe (1974: 115) observes that in sentences like *The BUTTER melted* etc. the verb and the noun form what he calls a 'semantic unity', which is not found in the corresponding predicate-accented sentences. (Chafe's notion of semantic unity is clearly related to Fuchs' (1976, 1980) concept of 'integration' (cf. Notes 8 and 13 above); cf. also Vilkuna's (1989: 156) notion of 'semantic bonding' between subject and verb in Finnish SF sentences). Chafe's semantic intuition fits in

nically with my earlier observations concerning the similarity between SF constructions and compound nouns like *blackbird* (see examples (16/17) and discussion). Both in SF constructions and in compound nouns the predicate and the argument constitute tighter semantic units than in the corresponding modification or predication structures. This tighter semantic unit is then expressed syntactically in the Adjacency constraint. In the case of compounds, this constraint is formally reflected in the failure of the adjective to take its own modifier (**very BLACKbird*) or to be separated from the noun (**black-as-soot-bird*) (cf. Lambrecht & Polinsky 1998).

Adjacency effects between the SF subject and the verb can also be observed in languages in which the SF/PF contrast is expressed neither by word order nor by prosody, as in those verb-initial languages in which the SF subject must occur in canonical postverbal position because use of SV order is preempted by the possibility of preposing topical PF subjects (cf. Section 3.2.3). Consider the following Malagasy examples (from Lambrecht & Polinsky 1998):

- (61) a. *tonga ny ankizy* (PF / SF)
 arrive ART children
 'The children ARRIVED / The CHILDREN arrived /
 There arrived CHILDREN.'
- b. *ny ankizy (dia) tonga* (PF / *SF)
 ART children PART arrive
 'The children ARRIVED / *The CHILDREN arrived /
 *There arrived CHILDREN'

As in the case of Prosodic Inversion, where SF and PF sentences are syntactically identical (though clearly distinct prosodically), (61a) is a case of constructional homophony. As (61b) shows, SV order cannot be used for SF construal. However, as for Prosodic Inversion, the two focus types differ behaviorally:

- (62) a. *tonga ny ankizy tao an-tsekoly* (SF)
 arrive ART children in OBL-school
 'There arrived (some) CHILDREN at school.'
- b. *tonga tao an-tsekoly ny ankizy* (PF / *SF)
 'The children arrived at SCHOOL. /
 *There arrived CHILDREN at school.'

As shown by (62b), under the SF reading, the subject cannot be separated from the verb by intervening lexical material, while no such constraint is found under PF construal. For Malagasy, there is ample evidence that in the SF construction the verb and the following element form a single constituent (Keenan 1996; Pearson 1996). Postverbal SF subject position in verb-initial languages represents thus the case of the SF subject forming a single constituent with the verb. Note that this is fully consistent with the single-constituent interpretation of Prosodic-Inversion constructions in English.

The observations made in this section concerning single-constituent status of the verb-subject sequence in SF constructions are clearly related to claims made in connection with the so-called ‘unaccusativity’ hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978) regarding the special status of a subset of intransitive verbs. Within Relational Grammar and other derivational theories of syntax (especially the Government and Binding theory, cf. Burzio 1981) the subjects of unaccusative verbs are said to occupy OBJECT position within the VP at an earlier stage of the sentence derivation. For languages like Italian, the unaccusativity hypothesis has led naturally to the claim that the inverted subjects of SF sentences differ from the non-inverted subjects of PF sentences in that they are VP-internal (cf. the useful summary in Saccon 1993). There is no incompatibility of principle between the unaccusativity approach and the kind of functional approach followed in the present paper. I will return to the issue of unaccusativity at the end of this paper.

3.8.2 *S incorporation*

Perhaps the most striking expression of syntactic cohesion between the SF subject and its verb is found in languages in which the SF subject is morphologically **incorporated** in the verb. In his detailed study of the manifestations of theticity across languages, Sasse (1987: 544ff) notes for Boni that subject nouns resemble object nouns in that they may be incorporated into the verb. Subject incorporation occurs precisely under those pragmatic circumstances which call for SF articulation (or for ‘thetic statements’, in Sasse’s terminology).

Example (63) (=Sasse’s (89)) illustrates the three major focus-construction types in Boni. Although Sasse does not use the same terminology, these three types are clearly the same as those established at the beginning of the present study, namely argument focus, predicate focus, and sentence focus. In (63a) the tilde indicates clitic juncture, which is the mark of noun incorpo-

ration in Boni; in the gloss of (63b) NF stands for ‘nominal focus marker’ (our ‘AF’), and in that of (63c) VF stands for ‘verbal focus marker’ (our ‘PF’):

- (63) a. *áddigée~juudi.* (SF)
 father.my~died
 ‘My FATHER died.’
- b. *áddigée-é juudi.* (AF)
 father.my-NF died
 ‘My FATHER died, It’s my FATHER that died.’
- c. *áddigée á-juudi.* (PF)
 father.my VF-died
 ‘My father DIED, My FATHER DIED.’

In the (b) and (c) sentences, the focal portion of the proposition is indicated by the presence of the underlined NF and VF marker (*-é* and *-á* respectively). This marker is attached to the argument (‘my father’) in the AF construction and to the predicate (‘died’) in the PF construction. However, the SF construction in (63a), which is marked by subject incorporation, contains no focus marker. The presence of a focus marker in Boni is thus a morphological signal that the focus articulation of the sentence is binary, i.e. that the proposition is pragmatically structured into an asserted and a presupposed portion. By contrast, the absence of a focus marker indicates that the focus articulation is non-binary, i.e. that the assertion extends over the entire proposition (cf. the feature representation in item (2) above).

Within Sasse’s argument, which is aimed at establishing the universal category ‘thetic sentence’, it is this lack of binary structure that is relevant. Sasse goes on to show (1987: 549ff) that the phenomenon of subject incorporation as a way of expressing theticity is observable in a number of other languages, e.g. in Iroquoian. (See also Polinsky 1993, who emphasizes the similarity between intransitive-subject incorporation in languages like Chukchee and Alutor and subject-verb inversion in Kinyarwanda.) For the argument advanced in the present study, in which the existence of a universal category ‘SF construction’ is taken for granted, the main fact of interest is the very existence of subject incorporation as used for the formal expression of pragmatic SF articulation. It is a well-known cross-linguistic fact that noun incorporation typically occurs with object nominals. Incorporation is an iconic reflex of the fact that a predicate and its object argument form a semantic and pragmatic unit, which contrasts with the subject as the other

unit in the sentence. To the extent that incorporation applies mainly to objects, we can say that subject incorporation is a phenomenon whereby subject nouns are treated grammatically like objects. Subject incorporation in SF constructions thus confirms the PSON.

3.9 *Control of null arguments across clause boundaries*

3.9.1 *Control of null subjects in coordinate structures*

It is well known that in English (as in many languages) the possibility of null anaphora in conjoined coordinate structures is restricted to subjects. A subject argument may be left unexpressed in the second conjunct of a coordinate structure if the referent is interpreted as being the same as that of the subject of the first conjunct. Compare (64a) with (64b):

- (64) a. *John was sitting at the table and \emptyset was reading a book.*
 b. *John was sitting at the table and he was reading a book.*

However, null instantiation is not possible in English coordinate structures if the null argument is controlled by the object of the first conjunct, as shown in the contrast between (65a) and (65b).

- (65) a. **I saw Cliffhanger and didn't like \emptyset*
 b. *I saw Cliffhanger and didn't like it.*

Now consider the contrast between the two conjoined structures in (66), in which the first conjunct has SF and the second PF construal:

- (66) a. **There's JOHN and \emptyset is reading a BOOK.*
 b. *There's JOHN and he is reading a BOOK.*

The contrast in (66) would seem unproblematic for syntactic theories in which existential or deictic *there* is analysed as the subject of its clause and the postverbal NP as its object (cf. the remarks to that effect in Section 3.2.2 on Locative Inversion). Assuming subject status for *there*, the ungrammaticality of (66a) could be said to follow from the fact that the second conjunct would be equally ungrammatical if the anaphoric subject were overtly expressed. Thus (66a) is bad for the same reason that (66a') is:

- (66) a'. **There is John and there is reading a book.*

Since the second conjunct is ill-formed with *there* as its overt subject, it is necessarily also ill-formed under null anaphora.

However, if we adopt this approach, it becomes difficult to account for the contrast between the two sentences in (67):

- (67) a. *There were many students at the party and there were also a few professors.*
 b. **There were many students at the party and \emptyset were also a few professors.*

If *there* were the subject in (67a) we would predict (67b) to be grammatical. Given that the sentence with overt ‘anaphoric’ *there* in (67a) is well-formed, null anaphora ought to be possible, as it is in (67a). But (67b) is patently ungrammatical.

Let us assume, then, following the approach of the present study, that *John* is indeed the subject of the SF sentence in (66). In this case, the ungrammaticality of (66a) is elegantly explained in terms of the PSON. Since *John* is a SF subject in (66a), the principle predicts that this subject will behave (in relevant respects) like the focal object of a PF sentence. In English, the relevant focal features of the object are prosodic prominence and postverbal position. Since the subject NP of the *there*-clause has these two properties, the ungrammaticality of (66a) is predictable since null instantiation is permitted only for the non-focal subjects of PF sentences.

The proposed account of the contrast in (66) is tantamount to the claim that null anaphora in conjoined coordinate structures is restricted to topical subjects, i.e. to PF subjects which have not been detopicalized like those of SF sentences. Such a claim is functionally quite plausible, given the cognitive salience of topic referents in sentence processing. A referent which is cognitively salient can be more easily ‘taken for granted’, hence left unexpressed.²⁹ The constraint against null anaphora with objects is then the predictable consequence of the status of lexical objects as unmarked focus expressions, used to introduce new discourse referents or other pragmatically non-recoverable elements. Since new referents are not cognitively established in a discourse they cannot be instantiated in null form.

Unfortunately, the suggested explanation for the facts illustrated in (65) and (66) cannot be maintained in this general form. Indeed, it seems to make wrong predictions in the case of SF constructions in which the detopicalization and objectivization of the subject involves only the prosodic status of

Nevertheless, I do not think that the PERSON is invalidated by the data illustrated in the preceding examples. The explanation for the contrasts can be maintained with one simple restriction. Since the PERSON is a statement of grammatical tendencies rather than blind rules, it is possible, and I think reasonable, to argue that the constraint on null instantiation holds most strongly for those SF constructions in which the focus subject exhibits both the prosodic and the syntactic properties of the PF object, while it may be relaxed in constructions involving prosody alone. With this proviso, the principle does apply naturally to the data at hand.

The relevance of the PERSON for the explanation of restrictions on null anaphora in syntactically marked SF constructions is confirmed by the following facts from Dutch, reported in Kirsner 1976 (p.412, Note 8). Sentences (71c, d) are instances of the ‘impersonal-subject’ construction illustrated in (47) and (48) for French and German:

- (71) a. *Een meisje_i kwam binnen en [Ø_i] ging zitten.* (PF + PF)
 ‘A girl came in and sat down.’
 b. *Een meisje_i kwam binnen en ze_i ging zitten.* (PF + PF)
 ‘A girl came in and she sat down.’
 c. *Er kwam een meisje_i binnen en ze_i ging zitten.* (SF + PF)
 ‘There came a girl in and she sat down’
 d. *Er kwam een meisje_i binnen en [Ø_i] ging zitten.* (SF + PF)
 ‘There came a girl in and sat down’

Kirsner reports that informants who were asked to judge the sentences in (71) found (a) better than (b), but (c) better than (d). In other words, null anaphora was preferred in the PF + PF sequence but dispreferred in a SF + PF sequence. This is of course what we would expect, given the effect of the PERSON.

Strikingly similar results concerning the constraints on null anaphora across conjoined coordinate clauses involving SF constructions are reported by Polinsky (1993, 1995) for Kinyarwanda. Consider the two examples in (72):

- (72) a. *aba-shiytsi_i ba-ra-sínzûr-a* *muri iyi inzu* *Ø_i*
 CL2-guest CL2-PROGR-sleep-IMPF in this house
ba-ra-na-hiigiz-a (PF + PF)
 CL2-PROGR-and-snore-IMPF
 ‘The guests are sleeping in this house and Ø are snoring.’

- b. **muri iyi inzu ha-ra-sínzûr-a aba-shiytsi_i*
 in this house CL16-PROGR-sleep-IMPF CL2-guest
ha-ra-na-hiigiz-a Ø_i (SF + PF)
 CL16-PROGR-and-snore-IMPF
 ‘In this house GUESTS are sleeping and Ø are snoring.’

In the PF + PF sequence in (72a), the first conjunct shows the characteristic classifier agreement between the verb and the preverbal subject (see example (23) above). The subject of the second conjunct may be omitted here because the verb classifier is the same as in the preceding PF conjunct, indicating that the missing subject is a preverbal topic. In (72b), however, the classifiers on the verb and the inverted SF subject do not agree in the first conjunct. The two-clause sequence is ungrammatical because a null subject cannot be controlled by the subject of a SF sentence.³⁰

3.9.2 Control of null subjects in purpose clauses

Related to the issue discussed in the previous section is the constraint on null anaphora in **purpose clauses** following SF clauses. Polinsky (1993, 1995) reports the following facts from Kinyarwanda:

- (73) a. *aba-shiytsi_i ba-ra-sínzûr-a muri iyi inzu*
 CL2-guest CL2-PROGR-sleep-IMPF in this house
 [*Ø_i ku-ruhuuka mbere yo gu-kora*]
 INF-rest before of INF-work
 ‘The guests are sleeping in this house to get some rest before work.’
- b. **muri iyi inzu ha-ra-sínzûr-a aba-shiytsi_i*
 in this house CL16-PROGR-sleep-IMPF CL2-guest
 [*Ø_i ku-ruhuuka mbere yo gu-kora*]
 INF-rest before of INF-work
 ‘In this house, GUESTS are sleeping to get some rest before work.’

As (73a) shows, the null subject of an infinitival purpose clause can be controlled by the preverbal subject of a matrix PF construction. Such a control relation is impossible, however, if the controller of the null argument is a postverbal SF subject, as in (73b). Since the SF subject has the postverbal position of a focal object, it does not license an anaphoric null argument. As Polinsky reports, null subjects in purpose clauses cannot be

controlled by matrix clause objects. The ungrammaticality of (73b) is thus predicted by, or at least consistent with, the PSON.

The constraint on control of null subjects in purpose clauses can be observed also in the French impersonal-*il* construction, of which we saw several examples before:

- (74) a. *Les ouvriers_i sont venus afin de Ø_i peindre la maison.*
 ‘The workers came to paint the house.’ (PF + PF)
 b. *??Il est venu des ouvriers_i afin de Ø_i peindre la maison.*
 it is come-of-the workers for paint-INF the house
 ‘Some workers came to paint the house.’ (SF + PF)

While null anaphora is natural if the controller is a PF subject, as in (a), it is much less acceptable if the controller is the subject of a SF clause, as in (b). As expected, the situation is similar in English. (75) contains the English equivalents of the Kinyarwanda sentences in item (73):

- (75) a. *The guests are SLEEPING to get some REST.* (PF + PF)
 b. *Shht! The GUESTS are sleeping!*
 c. *??Shht! The GUESTS are sleeping to get some REST.*
 (SF + PF)

Since in (75) the PF-SF contrast is expressed by prosody alone, intuitions may be less clearcut than in the case of syntactic inversion. Nevertheless (75c) seems odd.

The claim that the constraint illustrated in the previous examples can be attributed to the workings of the PSON is somewhat weakened in English and French by the fact that control of null subjects in purpose clauses is not altogether impossible in these languages. The sentences in (76), though proscribed by normative grammar, are (at least marginally) acceptable for many speakers:³¹

- (76) a. *They sent workers in order to paint the house.*
 b. *Ils ont envoyé des ouvriers afin de peindre la maison.*

The facts in (73)–(75) concerning null subjects in purpose clauses are consistent with the semantic constraint on the role of SF subjects. As we saw repeatedly, SF subjects are necessarily construed as having a non-agentive and non-volitional semantic role. Since purpose clauses by their nature express the desired result of goal-oriented behavior of the matrix subject

referent, control of a null argument from a SF matrix results in a functional clash, making the sentence less than fully acceptable.

4. Summary and Conclusion

Building on Sasse's (1987) pioneering work on the universality of the thetic-categorical distinction in human language, this paper has argued for the existence of a universal strategy for the formal expression of thetic propositions. In accordance with the information-structure framework of Lambrecht (1994), I have equated the thetic-categorical contrast with the contrast between the predicate-focus (PF) and the sentence-focus (SF) category. In PF (or categorical) sentences, the proposition is pragmatically structured into a topic and a comment portion, while in SF (or thetic) sentences the proposition lacks such a pragmatic bipartition.

I have argued that the marked SF type can be formally characterized in terms of its departure from the unmarked PF type. Since the PF category is defined by the topic relation of the subject to the proposition, SF coding entails marking of the subject as a non-topic. I have called this marking strategy 'detopicalization'. Since in the PF category the unmarked focus argument is the object, the detopicalization of the subject is naturally realized by 'objectivizing' it, i.e. by marking it with features normally associated with the focal object constituent in a PF sentence. SF constructions thus exhibit one formal constant across languages: they are structures in which the subject constituent tends to bear some or all of the morphosyntactic, prosodic, or behavioral features normally found with the focal object in a corresponding PF construction. The form of a given SF construction is determined by the principle of **paradigmatic contrast**, i.e. it is motivated in terms of a systemic opposition between two formal types.

I have shown that the detopicalization and objectivization of the SF subject is realized cross-linguistically in a limited number of formal strategies. It is realized in the **linear ordering** of prosodic or syntactic sentence elements with respect to one another: position of the focus accent on the subject rather than the predicate (Prosodic Inversion), or inverted position of the subject in relation to the verb (Syntactic Inversion); it is realized in **morphology**, in non-nominative or other special case marking on the subject or in incorporation of the subject in the verb; it is manifested in **phrase-**

structure, with single-constituent status of the subject–verb sequence; or it is manifested **behaviorally**, in constraints on null anaphora, in the cooccurrence of the SF subject with ‘object particles’, in the lack of subject–verb agreement, and in restrictions on cooccurring object NPs. These various strategies can occur alone or in combination with one another, depending on the language.

In seeking to explain the form-function fit in SF constructions against the background of possible alternative structures provided by the grammar of a given language, this paper raises the fundamental issue of the **motivation** of grammatical form. With its claim that the structure of SF sentences is universally motivated by the principle of paradigmatic contrast, which is structuralist in nature, it constitutes a challenge to both strictly functional and strictly formal approaches to grammar. On the functional level, it is incompatible with a narrow iconic view of the relationship between form and function in grammar. Indeed, to say that a given structure is interpreted against the background of possible alternative structures is tantamount to saying that it is interpreted system-internally. It can therefore not simultaneously be interpreted system-externally, by its iconic relation to some extralinguistic reality. The principle of paradigmatic contrast contradicts or weakens the notion of a universal ‘presentative movement’ (Hetzron 1975), according to which sentence-final position of discourse-new elements is motivated by the need to code the element closer to its subsequent anaphoric mention in the discourse. For example in Prosodic Inversion, or in Subject-Fronting in verb-initial languages, the discourse-new element does not appear sentence-finally but in sentence-initial position. The principle of paradigmatic contrast also partially contradicts the iconic notion of ‘semantic weight’, expressed most forcefully in much work by Bolinger (e.g. Bolinger 1985, 1987), according to which the position of a sentence accent is determined by the relative communicative importance of the accented constituent. In Prosodic Inversion, only the subject can be accented, even though its denotatum is often communicatively no more ‘important’ than the denotatum of the unaccented predicate.

According to the present analysis, the driving force in the expression of sentence focus is not iconicity but **non-canonicity**. The SF subject is coded via a non-canonical pattern. For example, in Subject–Verb Inversion it appears in object position, which contrasts with its position in the normal sentence order. The notion of non-canonicity accords with the intuitive idea

behind the traditional term of ‘inversion’: an inverted constituent is one which is not found in its habitual place (see the definition in Marouzeau 1961).³² Inversion always presupposes the existence of a non-inverted canonical counterpart.

Let me emphasize that the claim I am making here is not to be taken as a denial of the importance of iconicity in grammar. For example in the domain of information structure I believe in the basic validity of another, well-documented, iconic principle, according to which “old information comes first in the sentence”. My goal is not to challenge the functionalist view of a more or less direct relationship between the form of sentences and their communicative functions in discourse. I am merely arguing that general functional principles or constraints can be overridden by competing motivations, such as the need for a paradigmatic contrast. The idea that formal motivations may compete or conflict with one another in a grammar is akin to the notion of constraint ordering found in much recent work within Optimality Theory.

On the level of semantic interpretation, the notion of paradigmatic contrast is in conflict with another important principle: the principle of ‘strict compositionality’. To the extent that a given structure is interpreted by virtue of its deviation from some other possible structure provided by the grammar, its meaning cannot be the predictable result of the combination of its parts. The correct functional interpretation of a SF sentence does not, or not primarily, appeal to knowledge of semantic rules of composition on the part of the speaker-hearer. Rather it requires the ability to compare and distinguish ready-made structural templates. In Saussurean terms, it requires the establishment of associative relations between different constructions in the memory of the language user.

Here too, I wish to emphasize that I am not arguing against the validity of formal approaches to semantics in general nor against the idea of compositionality in particular. The existence of associative relations between fully generated structures is not per se incompatible with formal approaches to grammar. Recognition of such relations is unproblematic within non-derivational generative theories, such as Construction Grammar or HPSG, in which the fundamental unit of analysis is taken to be the linguistic sign or the grammatical construction.

Of crucial theoretical importance for the present study is the idea of the interplay between information structure and the other components of grammar:

prosody, morpho-syntax, semantics. Inasmuch as formal differences between given PF and SF constructions are uniquely motivated by the need to distinguish between two types of information structure, the phenomena analysed in this paper demonstrate the necessity to treat the pragmatic relations topic and focus on a par with the grammatical relations subject and object and the semantic roles agent and patient.

For example, the integration of information structure categories into formal grammar permits an elegant alternative to the derivational account of inversion based on the Unaccusativity Hypothesis. If information structure is treated as a grammatical component on a par with morphosyntax, it is unnecessary to postulate a special grammatical relation for the postverbal subjects of unaccusative verbs in order to account for their object-like behavior. The special syntactic behavior of the subject of an unaccusative verb follows naturally if we acknowledge that it is not the grammatical relation of the argument that varies but only the pragmatic relation of its referent to the proposition. The Subject–Verb Inversion construction is used when the referent of the subject NP has a focus relation to the proposition. When the subject referent has a topic relation to the proposition, the canonical pattern occurs. In both patterns, the NP is a subject. The object-like appearance of the inverted subject follows from the fact that it shares a crucial pragmatic feature with the PF object: its focus relation to the proposition. This information-structure-based approach to Subject–Verb Inversion has the further advantage that it does not require recourse to a relation-changing operation in order to account for those sentences in which the unaccusative subject does not behave like an object, i.e. when it appears in canonical preverbal position. Derivational accounts of subject inversion have tended to neglect the fact that postverbal subject position is never a syntactic requirement for any predicate. Subject–Verb Inversion of the types described in this paper is always a pragmatically driven phenomenon.

The Principle of Subject–Object Neutralization for sentence-focus constructions postulated in this paper allows us to capture similarities among seemingly heterogenous non-canonical structures in related and unrelated languages. By acknowledging that the form of sentence-focus constructions is motivated across languages by the same interpretive principle, the Principle of Paradigmatic Contrast, we are able to recognize the heterogenous set of Sentence-Focus constructions as a natural grammatical class.

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NOTES

1. An analogous tripartition is found in Andrews (1985:77ff), who refers to the three categories as the 'topic-comment articulation', the 'focus-presupposition articulation', and the 'presentational articulation' respectively.
2. The scare quotes around the term 'predicate' are used because in (1b) the VP denotatum *is to blame* is strictly speaking not 'predicated of' the subject *her husband*. It is rather the subject that is 'predicated' of the VP denotatum (cf. Lambrecht 1994:230ff for further discussion).
3. The representation in (4) is that adopted in Chapter 5 of Lambrecht 1994. For details concerning this representation, the reader is referred to that chapter.
4. It should be noted that the NP *her HUSBAND* in (6) has itself several presuppositions attached to it: (i) the knowledge presupposition that the woman has a husband (conveyed by the possessive determiner *her*), (ii) the identifiability presupposition that the hearer can determine which individual the speaker has in mind (the so-called 'existential' presupposition conveyed by the status of the NP as a definite description), and (iii) the consciousness presupposition that the referent of *her* is activated (conveyed by the pronominal form of the determiner). Moreover, as an unaccented referential pronoun form *her* is a ratified topic expression (cf. Lambrecht 1994: Section 4.4.3), hence it evokes also a topicality presupposition (the sentence answers a question about the referent of *her*, i.e. 'Mary').

These various NP-internal presuppositions do however not serve to distinguish one focus category from another. They can therefore be ignored here.

5. An anonymous reviewer poses the pertinent question whether the difference between (8) (a) and (b) entails that not all sentences of a language fit into one of the three focus categories postulated above. While I believe that there are indeed more than three such categories (Lambrecht 1994: 236), no additional category is needed in the case at hand: formally, (8b) belongs to the PF category.
6. I am assuming that the prosodic structure of *Her HUSBAND had an ACCIDENT* is the same in (9) and in (10B), i.e. whether or not a topicality presupposition is attached to the subject NP in the discourse context. This may turn out to be a false assumption. It seems that in the topic-comment reading illustrated in (10) the subject NP typically has a rising intonation contour (Bolinger's (1989) 'B accent') whereas in thethetic or event-reporting reading in (9) the NP has a fall-rise contour (Bolinger's 'A accent'). However native speakers' intuitions about this intonation difference are shaky, to say the least. If the difference turned out to be systematic, we could say that English has two prosodically marked SF constructions, one for intransitive, one for transitive, sentences. I must leave this issue unresolved here (see Gundel 1978 for some discussion).
7. The principle of interpretation at work in (12b) is called the 'Topic-Comment Principle' in Lambrecht & Michaelis 1998, which is stated as follows: "If a predicate capable of integration with its argument is not subject to accent projection, i.e. if both the predicate and the argument constituent are accented, the two denotata have a topic-comment relation to each other." The concept of predicate-argument integration was first stated by Fuchs (1976).
8. In work not accessible to me, Karlsson (1982, cited in Vilkuna 1989) seems to follow an approach along the lines of (15) with respect to SF constructions in Finnish. Summarizing Karlsson, Vilkuna uses the term 'subject-object neutralization'. Karlsson refers to the SF subject as 'ject', i.e. a constituent which is neutral between subject and object status.
9. An anonymous reviewer makes an intriguing observation concerning (15): since SF sentences strongly tend to be intransitive, the PSON seems to create an ERGATIVE system, with the subjects of SF sentences looking like the objects of transitive sentences. A similar observation is made by Lambrecht (1987c: 255), who hints at an "ergative undercurrent" in the syntax of spoken French because of the striking behavioral similarity between S's and O's in that language. The same idea is expressed also by Vilkuna (1989: 156) in the context of her discussion of existential (i.e. SF) sentences in Finnish. See also DuBois' 1987 analysis of the discourse basis of ergativity. Concerning the present analysis, it should be noted, however, that the set of sentences for which the merging of S and O is postulated constitutes only a subset of intransitive sentences, i.e. those with possible SF construal.
10. Interestingly, *ga* is used not only for SF subjects, but also for a particular class of objects. According to Kuno (1973), [*ga* is used, in addition to subjects, with] "all transitive adjectives and nominal adjectives, as well as verbs of competence, non-intentional perception, possession, and need" (1973: 88). Kuno points out that "all these verbals can be characterized semantically as representing states rather than actions" (ibidem). It would seem plausible to assume that there exists a semantic link between the kinds of predicates which require *ga* as an object marker and the intransitive predicates

typically found in SF constructions across languages. However, I am in no position to substantiate this assumption.

11. Unlike English, however, Japanese does permit prosodic disambiguation of the two kinds of *ga*-sentences via prosodic prominence on the verb in SF and lack of prominence in AF (see Lambrecht 1994: 233ff).
12. One notable exception is the theory of focus accentuation developed in Fuchs 1976, 1980. Fuchs explains the accent pattern in (1c) with the principle of ‘integration’ (cf. Note 7 above), according to which lack of accent on the predicate in a subject–predicate sequence indicates a kind of conceptual unity, comparable to the unity between the verb and its object (cf. Section 3.8.1 below). Both Fuchs’ approach and mine involve a special-case treatment of SF: the rule applies only when the S is not a topic and SV parallels VO.
13. In Haiman’s (1980) view of iconicity, the accent pattern in subject-accented SF sentences would lack ‘imagic iconicity’ but it would nevertheless be ‘diagrammatically iconic’, in that the arrangement of the elements within the pattern would iconically reflect the difference with the PF pattern.
14. For the purpose of the present discussion, I count adjectival modifiers as predicating expressions.
15. The reader may have noticed that in (19c) the semantic role of the subject *John* is that of an AGENT, apparently contradicting the rule that SF subjects cannot be agentive. The same observation can be made for the subjects of the verbs *sing*, *leave*, *make a noise*, *bellow*, *eat*, found in other SF examples below. As argued in Lambrecht (1995), following Goldberg (1995), the interpretation of the semantic role of an argument is often the combined result of the lexical meaning of the predicator and the grammatical construction in which the predicate-argument structure appears. Due to the presentational function of the construction in which it occurs, the subject in (19c) is not conceptualized as an agent but as an entity whose presence in the discourse is manifested via the activity in which it is involved (see also Note 23). See the analyses of SF subjects in Fuchs (1980), Faber (1987), Maling (1988), Bresnan (1994), Borillo (1999), and others.
16. For a discussion of the functions of VS order in Latin cf. Bolkestein (1995). Bolkestein shows that the correlation between VS order and non-topic role of the subject referent is not as strict in Latin as it is in modern Italian or Spanish (but see ex. (46) and discussion).
17. The logical correlation between topic and (pragmatic) definiteness is demonstrated in Gundel 1988 and Lambrecht 1994 (Chapter 4).
18. I am not bothered by the fact that the dummy *il* clearly has formal subject properties (preverbal position, morphological nominative marking, obligatory presence), i.e. that by its morphosyntactic properties it is as much of a subject as the postverbal NP. With traditional French grammar, I take sentences such as (24a) have two subjects, one grammatical or formal (‘sujet apparent’), one semantic or functional (‘sujet réel’).
19. Alternatively, if the accusative patient/experiencer argument is taken to be the semantic subject rather than the locative (as in the German sentence *Mich friert* quoted after item (3) above), the strong claim expressed in the PSON would not hold for (25b). In this case, only the weaker ‘detopicalization’ claim in (14) would apply. The locative NP in (25) has indisputably the positional property of a topic constituent in (a) and of a focus constituent in (b).

20. In the syntactic environment of (31b) (Locative Inversion), *seulement* is in free variation with the complex negation *ne ... que* shown in (29c) (*Dans cette maison ne dorment que des invités*). In spoken French, the bookish (31a) would be replaced by an *avoir*-cleft construction, whose syntax permits use of the more natural *ne ... que* (cf. Lambrecht 1988a and Section 3.5.1 below): *Il n'y a que les invités qui dorment dans cette maison* (lit. 'There are only the guests who sleep in this house').
21. In fact, the appearance of *il* before *y* in written French seems to be due to the prescriptive influence of 17th century grammarians, who thought that this subject pronoun was a logical requirement (see Damourette & Pichon, vol. 4 (p. 524) and Melander 1921). Like its deictic counterpart [*voici/voilà* NP] (ex. (44) below), existential [*y a* NP] is thus grammatically a truly subject-less construction.
22. Wandruszka's generalization does not seem to hold for Rumanian. According to Ulrich (1985), VSO order is common in this language even in 'thetic' sentences, i.e. in sentences in which neither the subject nor the object are topics.
23. (47a) is a particularly striking case of violation of the non-agentivity requirement for SF subjects. The sentence is (at least marginally) acceptable because the activity verb *manger* is contextually construed as presentational: to say that linguists eat in that restaurant is a way of stating not so much their activity as their **presence** there (cf. also Note 16).
24. Presumably, it is the difference between the two sentence constructions in (48) and (48') that explains the different syntactic behavior of existential sentences in Swedish and Icelandic as described in Maling (1988):
- (i) a. *Det at en man en pudding. (Swedish)
 b. *There ate a man a pudding. (English)
 c. Það borðaði maður búðing. (Icelandic)
- According to Maling, the difference between Swedish and English on the one hand, and Icelandic on the other, has to do with the fact that in Icelandic the sentence-initial element does not occupy subject position, thus allowing the lexical subject to occur post-verbally (and VP-internally). If I am correct, (i) (a/b) would pattern like (48b), while (c) would parallel (48'b), with *það* acting as a kind of adverbial. I am unfortunately in no position to verify this conjecture.
25. Sue Schmerling reminds me that there are various syntactic differences between pronouns and full NPs in English (cliticization, behavior in 'dative' shift, constraints on conjunction, etc.). Nevertheless, English personal pronouns do behave like NPs in many contexts.
26. Presumably, (53) could receive SF construal if the subject referent 'Hans' were totally unaware of the noise he is making (e.g. if he were sleeping), hence has no agentive properties.
27. In Lambrecht (1988b) a close functional and formal similarity is observed between the construction illustrated in (57) and the secondary-predication construction in (ia) (an observed utterance) or (iia):
- (i) a. You have your NUMBERS wrong. b. Your NUMBERS are wrong.
 (ii) a. My friend had his WATCH stolen. b. My friend's WATCH was stolen.

As shown by the identity of meaning between the (a) and (b) versions, the object in this construction is functionally and semantically equivalent to the subject in the corresponding Prosodic-Inversion construction. This HAVE-construction differs from the one in

- (56/57) in that the NP following *have* is only the semantic but not the syntactic subject of the following predicate. For detailed analysis of the construction in (i) and (ii) see Brugman (1988).
28. Polinsky (1995: 367) observes that in Kinyarwanda the cohesion between the inverted subject and the verb is in fact even tighter than that between the verb and its direct object. While the sequence V+O may be interrupted by certain manner adverbials or sentential particles, this is not possible in the sequence V+S.
 29. See e.g. Kuno 1972 for an analysis of the constraints on null anaphora in Japanese in such functional terms. See also the discussion of anaphoric constraints on non-topical subjects in Lambrecht 1994 (Section 4.2).
 30. The argument concerning Kinyarwanda is weakened by the fact that direct objects (though no other objects nor adjuncts) may control the null subject of a conjoined coordinate clause (Polinsky 1995: 363).
 31. The English sentence is considerably improved if the subordinate clause is not introduced by a full-fledged subordinating conjunction, as in *They sent workers to paint the house*. This may be due to the fact that the clause without the conjunction can be interpreted as an infinitival relative. Curiously, the French sentence seems improved if the purpose conjunction *afin de* is replaced by the more common *pour* (*Ils ont envoyé des ouvriers pour peindre la maison*). I have no explanation for this difference in French.
 32. Cf. also the term ‘abnormal sentence order’ used in traditional Welsh grammar to refer to a particular type of SF construction (MacCana 1973).

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