A flexible approach to discourse-related word order variations in the DP

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate whether topic and focus movement operations exist DP-internally. The answer that I will reach is by and large negative. First, I will show that the DP, being argumental and not propositional, is ill-suited for topic/comment or focus/background partitioning. Second, I adopt Neeleman and van de Koot’s (2008) proposal for clause-level focus and topic movement. The fundamental idea in this proposal is that topic and focus movement is driven by the need to create a syntactically continuous comment or background constituent. As I explain below, it follows from this that topic and focus movement cannot take place DP-internally. In the remainder of the paper I provide an analysis for two sets of data where DP-internal FocusP has been proposed in the literature: adjective reordering and Greek polydefinites.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate whether topic and focus movement operations exist DP-internally. The answer that I will reach is by and large negative. First, I will show that the DP, being argumental and not propositional, is ill-suited for topic/comment or focus/background partitioning. Second, I adopt Neeleman and van de Koot’s (2008) proposal for clause-level focus and topic movement. The fundamental idea in this proposal is that topic and focus movement is driven by the need to create a syntactically continuous comment or background constituent. As I explain below, it follows from this that topic and focus movement cannot take place DP-internally.

Many languages show discourse-related word order variation. It is generally accepted that examples like (1) involve a topic/comment structure, while (2) involves a focus/background structure.

(1) This tie, Fred bought. (Cormack and Smith, 2000:390)
(2) Nothing I ate for breakfast. (Cormack and Smith, 2000:397)

Reinhart (1981), following Strawson (1964), proposed that when an utterance is assessed in context, this process involves checking ‘predication’, where one expression in the sentence is taken as the argument and the rest as the
predicate. The argument is the topic of the utterance in the given context; the predicate is the comment. Syntactic considerations may constrain what the topic (i.e. the argument of the predication) may be. For instance, in passives, the topic must be the subject and in clitic-left dislocation, the topic is always the dislocated element. In utterances like (1), the topic is distinguished by its position, the rest of the utterance constitutes the comment.

Focus is the part of an utterance that provides an answer to a corresponding (implicit) *wh*-question. This can be implemented with structured meanings (Jacobs, 1983; Von Stechow, 1990; Krifka, 2006) as well as alternative semantics (Rooth, 1992). Either way, what is important is that the background associated with the focus determines the set corresponding to the implicit *wh*-question. In other words, the background is an open proposition, which can be matched to a set of alternatives. In utterances like (2), the focus is syntactically displaced, and the background is the open proposition constituted by the rest of the utterance.1

Given the above considerations, it follows that topic/comment structure or focus/background structure cannot exist inside the DP. The DP cannot be partitioned in these ways. The reason is that both comment and background constitute an open proposition. Thus, these partitionings are intrinsically propositional. Introducing topic/comment or focus/background structure in the DP, which is of course, argumental, is, thus, not possible.2,3

Neeleman and van de Koot (2008) (henceforth N&VdK) present an analysis of sentences involving moved topics and foci, such as (1) and (2), which differs from the standard cartographic treatment in terms of FocusP and TopicP (Rizzi, 1997 and much subsequent work). They argue that topic and focus movement do not target specific functional positions in the tree, rather they undergo A-bar movement and adjunction. The trigger for the movement is that topic and focus movement creates a continuous comment and background constituent. The movement, thus, enables a transparent mapping between syntax and discourse structure at the interface. This state of affairs is illustrated in the schemata below:

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1 Following Neeleman and van de Koot (2008), in this paper I take the notion ‘focus’ to mean contrastive or exhaustive focus (see É. Kiss, 1998). These are the ones that have a background associated with them, and consequently only these may undergo A-bar movement in the proposed system. In a parallel fashion, ‘topic’ is understood to comprise contrastive topics (Büring, 1997) and discourse-new topics, but not continuous topics. This is because, argueably, only the former class is associated with a comment.

2 An anonymous reviewer notes that if a DP contains a relative clause then it has a proposition in it. This is, of course, true, and there is nothing to stop topic or focus movement inside that relative clause. This, however, would not be DP-internal in the relevant sense, as it would target a clause-level topic or focus position inside the relative clause itself. Another point raised by the reviewer concerns allegedly predicational structures of the type *that idiot of a doctor* (Den Dikken, 2006 and references there). Even if such DPs include a predicative part, it is hard to see that they constitute a proposition in the standard sense of the word (also explicitly assumed by the reviewer) that they are of type *t*. One cannot assign a truth-value to such DPs, just as one cannot assign a truth-value to any other DP. So, such DPs cannot contain a background or comment, these being an open proposition.

3 Another reviewer notes that it is conceivable that cases where a subpart of the DP are contrasted, the alternative set involved is of entities and not propositions. So, in *I placed the WHITE books on the shelf* the contrast set would involve different coloured books, rather than propositions of the form, *{I placed x-coloured books on the shelf.}* I believe that the standard treatment since Rooth (1992) is in terms of propositions, so I will adopt that. Also, Szendrői and Mulders (2008) have eye-tracking evidence that hearers evaluate sentences with *only* based on alternative propositions, not just contrasting entities.
As N&VdK show, a series of predictions are easily derived in the system, some of which are harder to obtain in the cartographic alternative. First, only foci that associate with a background, so contrastive foci, but not new information foci (É.Kiss, 1998) may undergo movement. Second, given that the background may not contain a highlighted element such as a topic, it is impossible to move a focus across (a moved or in situ) topic. This is because the complement of the moved focus will be the background and this constituent would contain the topic, if the focus moved across it. The converse, i.e. topic movement across a moved or in situ focus, is possible. In this paper, I will not be concerned with spelling out the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal any further. Rather, I would like to concentrate on one specific prediction that this theory makes with respect to the possibility of focus and topic movement inside the DP.

Recall that comment and background constitute open propositions and that it is therefore impossible to create topic/comment and focus/background partitionings of a DP, because the DP is not propositional. In a system that assumes that the trigger for topic and focus movement is to create a continuous comment or background, such movement cannot take place inside the DP, as this would not result in a continuous comment or background. This is shown in the schema in (4), where X is the DP-internally displaced topic or focus. Here we can see that the movement operation affecting X does not create a continuous background or comment. Rather, the background or comment contains all the constituents preceding the DP, the complement of X inside the DP and the constituents following the DP.

This is not to say that a DP-internal topic or a DP-internal focus is impossible. The topic (or focus) itself, i.e. X, can be smaller than a DP. But movement of this constituent within its own DP would leave the comment (or background) discontinuous. In N&VdK’s system, this means that the movement is not warranted by an appropriate interface effect, and thus cannot take place.

Note that it has a particular theoretical importance, whether structures of the type in (4) actually exist in natural language. Structures like this are predicted to be impossible in N&VdK’s theory, but they would be easy to accommodate in a cartographic approach. The schema in (4) seems perfectly appropriate for highlighting the DP-internal topic or the focus. All one needs to assume is that the series of discourse-related functional heads are not only present at the left-edge of the clause but also projected at the left-periphery of the DP. This way, movement of X to the left-edge of the DP can be triggered in the usual fashion by an attracting Focus or Topic head, inside the D-projection line.

So, cases like (4) are theoretically significant. In the remainder of the paper I will evaluate two proposals that present a case for the existence of structures of this type, involving DP-internal topic and focus positions. I will conclude that none of these proposals present conclusive evidence. If this is on the right track, then we can conclude that the prediction of N&VdK’s proposal that such structures are not possible is presently not refuted.

2. Adjective reordering inside DP

The evidence presented in favour of a DP-internal topic or focus position in the literature involve several different lines of argumentation. I will start by looking at what I believe is the most robust set of data: adjective reordering associated with contrastive focus. In the next section, I will turn to the Greek polydefinite construction, which has been argued to involve DP-internal focus movement in many proposals (see e.g. Ntelitheos, 2004; Kariaeva, 2004; Ioannidou and Den Dikken, 2009).

Truswell (2005) is concerned with certain discourse-related word order variations inside the DP. (See also Laenzlinger, 2000, 2005.) He admits that a syntactic parallel between the clausal left-periphery and the DP is less than straightforward, but nevertheless claims that data like (5) give evidence for focus movement inside the DP.
My friends all drive big cars, but only I drive a black big car. (Truswell, 2005)

Here the normal ordering between a subsective adjective like big and an intersective adjective like black is reversed and the intersective adjective bears heavy, contrastive stress and pitch accent. Truswell notes that such reordering is only possible if the intersective adjective is contrasted. He thus concludes that the adjective is fronted inside the DP in order to be marked for contrastive focus.

But note that reordering is not necessary for a contrastive focus reading. In (6) the adjectives follow the normal order and the contrasting intersective adjective is only marked prosodically. So, focus movement inside the DP, if this is what this example contains, is optional.

(6) My friends all drive big cars, but only I drive a big black car.

Although, it seems clear that the adjective is contrasted and that the reverse order is only allowed if this contrast is present, there is reason to doubt that such cases involve movement, let alone movement induced by focus. To see this, we have to briefly examine how focus movement interacts with scope in the clausal domain.

As N&VdK demonstrate, languages like Dutch allow two different types of scrambling. So-called A-scrambling, interacts with A-binding and secondary predication, does not give rise to weak crossover effects and never reconstructs for scope. In contrast, A-bar scrambling, does not affect binding or secondary predication, gives rise to weak crossover effects and obligatorily reconstructs for scope. The two also have distinct discourse properties: A-scrambling affects discourse anaphoric elements; elements that undergo A-bar scrambling are either (contrastive) topics or foci. These opposing sets of properties lead N&VdK to offer different syntactic analyses for the two different types of scrambling. They claim that A-scrambling is the result of different base-generated orders, while A-bar scrambling is essentially topic or focus movement, triggered by the aim to create a syntactically continuous comment or background.

Since here we are interested in the different scopal properties of the two constructions, I give the relevant data in (7) and (8). (See references in N&VdK: for the rest of the data.) As (7) shows, an indefinite noun phrase that has been A-scrambled across an adverb cannot reconstruct for scope under the adverb in question.

(7) a. dat ik waarschijnlijk iemand uit New York zal uitnodigen (Neeleman and van de Koot, 2007)
   that I probably someone from New York will invite
   (i) ?someone > probably; (ii) probably > someone
   ‘that I will probably invite someone from New York’
   b. dat ik iemand uit New York waarschijnlijk zal uitnodigen
   that I someone from New York probably will invite
   (i) someone > probably; (ii) *probably > someone
   ‘that I will probably invite someone from New York’

In contrast, as (8) shows, A-bar scrambling allows for reconstruction. Here the reading where ‘most’ outscopes ‘at least one’ is available. (In fact, N&VdK 2007 present arguments that in sentences in which focus movement spans a clause boundary, reconstruction is obligatory.)

(8) dat tenminste ÉÉN artikel over syntaxis de meeste studenten t_{DP} wel gelezen zullen hebben
   that at-least one article about syntax the most students indeed read will have
   (i) at least one > most; (ii) most > at least one
   ‘that most students will at least have read one article about syntax’

The syntactic analysis proposed by N&VdK (2007) captures the scope reconstruction data in a straightforward manner: A-scrambling is analysed as a different base-generated order, so it is not surprising that it does not allow reconstruction; A-bar scrambling, which involves A-bar movement, unsurprisingly allows reconstruction for scope.

Now the question is whether the adjective reordering data patterns with A-scrambling or with A-bar scrambling with respect to scope reconstruction (the other tests are not replicable in the DP domain). It turns out, that adjectives do not reconstruct for scope, so an analysis in terms of different base-generated orders is the most parsimonious. To see this, consider an utterance like (9). It is felicitously uttered by the speaker in the discourse context 1 given in (10a) (also
illustrated by Scenario 1). In this context there is a given set of big cars (known to the speaker and the hearer) one of which is black. But the same utterance is not felicitous in discourse context 2 (illustrated in Scenario 2), where there is a set of black cars one of which is big alongside other sets of cars of different colours where one of each set is big. In other words, in (9), the focused adjective does not reconstruct below the subsective adjective for scope.

(9) I drive a **black** big car.  
   Context 1: ✓ Context 2: #

(10) a. Context 1: In this car park you can see the cars of me and my friends. There is a bunch of big cars here. There are many different colours.
   Scenario 1: **Black** Red Blue White Blue Yellow

   b. Context 2: In this car park you can see the cars of me and my friends. There are cars of many different colours. Most of them are small, but there is a big one of every colour.
   Scenario 2: black **Black** red red RED red red

As argued above, lack of reconstruction is the property associated with A-scrambling and in turn with different base-generated orders. This suggests that (9) (and also (5)) does not involve DP-internal adjective movement, rather, such utterances have an atypical base-generated adjective sequence. The order of the adjectives reflects their scopes.4

Similar examples have been cited by Scott (2002:113). He, too, noted that the (11a) and (11b) examples have distinct scopal orders, although Scott advocates for DP-internal focus movement.

(11) a. an **English** alleged baron

   b. an alleged **English** baron

Another example that suggests that the movement is not necessarily focus-driven is (12). As Scott notes, the utterance may be uttered in a context where Carol has twelve children, six of them horrible and another six, nice. He takes this to be indicative of focus movement inside the DP. But this utterance is also perfectly felicitous in a context where Carol has six children altogether, all of them horrible. So the adjective ‘horrible’ is not necessarily contrasted. Rather, the unusual base-generated order is licensed by the scopal reason that ‘it is the group of six children rather than their cardinality that is horrible’ (Andrews, 1983:697, cited in Scott, 2002:113). In fact, even when the adjective is contrasted (i.e. in the context where Carol has twelve children) the point that it is the group of children rather than their cardinality that is horrible remains valid. So, the unusual order is warranted in that case too.

(12) Carol’s horrible six children made life miserable for her second husband.

   (Andrews, 1983:697)

In fact, one could argue that these scope-induced adjective reorderings are similar to cases of scope-induced A-scrambling in Dutch. Ruys (2001) argued that examples like (13) involve A-scrambling of the object *een of andere ziekte* ‘some disease or other’ over the adverb *meestal* ‘usually’ in order to obtain the intended scopal order.

(13) Ik denk dat elke arts wel een of andere ziekte meestal met penicilline behandelt.

   I think that each doctor usually treats some disease or other with penicillin.

   Intended reading: every doctor > some disease or other > usually

To conclude this section, my claim is that adjective reordering is not triggered by focus requirement, although it (often) effects adjectives with focal stress. It is possibly triggered by scope requirements. This undermines the idea of a designated functional FocusP inside DP as the interpretative effect of the reordering is not focus on the fronted adjective, but rather inverse scope.

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4 Note that the typical order (i.e. subsective)) intersective as in (6)) is compatible with either scenarios, suggesting that scope need not be reflected by the surface order. But an atypical adjective sequence indicates a marked scopal order.
3. Givenness and the Greek polydefinite construction

3.1. Givenness

In section 1 I argued that comment and background are intrinsically propositional notions, so they cannot exist DP-internally. There is, however, a discourse-related notion that is not intrinsically propositional, and that is givenness (or discourse anaphoricity). Schwarzschild (1999:5) argues that ‘an utterance is given iff it is entailed by prior discourse’. But entailment only holds between propositions. So, Schwarzschild introduces $\exists$-type-shifting, “a sort of type shifting operation that raises expressions to type t, by existentially binding unfilled arguments.” (Schwarzschild, 1999:147) Thus, his definition of givenness is the following:

(14) Givenness:
An utterance U counts as given iff it has an antecedent A and A entails U, modulo $\exists$-type-shifting.

The following example illustrates how givenness is calculated in a pair of utterances with contrasting modifying adjectives. The context utterance mentions Mary’s red convertible which in turn allows for taking convertible as given, due to $\exists$-type-shifting and the entailment in (16). So, the answer in (15) is appropriate with a destressed noun (and stress on the adjective blue).\(^5\)

(15) {John drove Mary’s red convertible. What did he drive before that?}
A: He drove her [blue]F convertible.

(16) $\exists x(\text{red-convertible}(x)) \rightarrow \exists x(\text{convertible}(x))$

It is important to note that contra Schwarzschild (1999), focus and givenness are not two sides of the same coin, but orthogonal notions. (See Neeleman and Szendrői, 2004; Féry and Samek-Lodovici, 2006a; Krifka, 2006; Reinhart, 2006.) In other words, it cannot be argued that an item is focused if its sister is given or the other way around. For instance, in Neeleman and Szendrői’s (2004) example, (17), the VP is focused, with stress (and additional focus) on Superman, while the PP to some kid is not given. For this reason, it is necessary to have to separate grammatical devices: one for focus and one for givenness.

(17) Instead of doing his homework, Johnny was [reading [SUPERMAN]F to some kid]F.
    (Neeleman and Szendrői, 2004)

Similarly, as Féry and Samek-Lodovici (2006a) argue, givenness can perhaps account for the deaccenting of the noun and the stressing of the adjective in the DP a Canadian farmer in Rooth’s (1992) example in (18). But it is impossible to claim that stress on the adjective in the first DP, an American farmer, can be justified by the givenness of the noun. Rather, it must be the contrastive focus on the adjective that makes stress shift necessary.\(^6\)

(18) An American farmer was talking to a Canadian farmer. (Rooth, 1992)

\(^5\) Schwarzschild claims that parts of a DP can count as given, even in situations like (i). Here ‘prior discourse does not entail that John ate an apple nor that there any apples altogether. However, the phrase green apple may serve as an antecedent for the subsequent use of apple, hence by (16) it can count as given’. (Schwartzschild, 1999).

(i) {If John ate a green apple, he will lose the contest.}
Don’t worry, he ate a [red]F apple.

As Krifka (2006) points out, the fact that the existential presupposition actually fails in such cases suggests that givenness would be better treated in some other way. For instance, following Webber (1978), we could assume that nouns introduce discourse referents for kinds.

\(^6\) So, as this example shows, focus on part of the DP (e.g. on the adjective) is indeed possible. This can be further supported by the fact that example (18) is an appropriate answer to the multiple wh-question in (i).

(i) What kind of farmer was talking to what kind of farmer?

The relevant question from the perspective of this paper is whether it is possible in any language to have adjective fronting within the DP in the equivalent of an example like (18). If such an option were available that would favour the cartographic approach over the flexible approach. This is because focus fronting of the adjective can be accommodated in the cartographic approach by means of a DP-internal FocusP. In contrast, focus fronting in either DP would be ill-explained by the flexible theory, because this operation would not create a continuous background, the background being ‘an x farmer was talking to a y farmer’. I do not know of any language that would allow for this option.
The important point from the above discussion of givenness is that there is no reason why givenness should not induce DP-internal reordering. This can be accommodated in both theories. In the cartographic approach, all we need is a GivenP. In the flexible theory, movement is not excluded, because givenness is not a partitioning on the level of the proposition. Marking a constituent as given does not mean marking the remainder of the utterance as non-given.

In fact, givenness is intimately tied with prosodic deaccenting in many languages. This immediately means that it can only affect constituents that sit in a position where stress would normally fall. In the case of DPs in languages with Adjective–Noun order and rightward oriented stress, stress falls on the noun. So, it is the noun that can be destressed prosodically, or alternatively it can be potentially targeted by DP-internal reordering.\(^7\)

3.2. The syntax of the Greek polydefinite construction

Let us now turn to the so-called polydefinite construction in Greek, i.e. combinations of an adjective and a noun where each features its own determiner, as in (19).

(19) a. to megalo to spiti
   the big the house

b. to spiti to megalo
   the house the big
   ‘the big house’

Polydefinites co-exist in the language with monadics like (20), i.e. modification structures where only one determiner is present—although polydefinites have special syntactic, semantic and pragmatic properties (see Kolliakou, 2004 and Campos and Stavrou, 2004).

(20) a. to megalo spiti
    the big house

b. *to spiti megalo
    the house big
    ‘the big house’

Ntelitheos (2004) argued that the polydefinite construction involves DP-internal focus movement (see also Ioannidou and Den Dikken, 2009 for a similar claim). Following Kolliakou (2004), I will try to show that a better interpretation of the data is that it relies on givenness rather than focus. Following Lekakou and Szendrői (2007), I will present a syntactic analysis of the construction where the different orders are due to base-generation, rather than movement. But let us review Ntelitheos’ proposal first.

Ntelitheos (2004) proposes an analysis that treats discontinuous DPs, NP-ellipsis and polydefinites in a parallel structure. In Greek, the fronted part of a discontinuous NP is focused:

(21) to kokkino idha to forema.
    the red saw-1S the dress
    ‘It is the red dress that I saw.’

In addition, the second part can easily undergo NP-ellipsis, even if the first part remains in situ.

(22) to KOKKINO idha.
    the red saw-1S the dress
    ‘It is the red one that I saw.’

Moreover, the first part of the DP need not move, giving rise to what is called the polydefinite construction (Kolliakou, 2004):

\(^7\) This is similar to Zubizarreta’s (1998) p-movement on the clause level. Also, in Szendrői (2001, 2003), I argued that on the level of the clause, movement is sometimes triggered by deaccenting. In particular, the presence of certain stress-avoiding verbs in Hungarian, when they sit in the position where main stress falls, trigger movement of another constituent into the main stress position. Finally, Neeleman and van de Koot (2008) argued that A-scrambling in Dutch is induced by deaccenting.
Ntelitheos (2004:10) proposes that all three rely on a common structure, which involves focus movement inside the DP, with the fronted part moving to a DP-internal FocusP, and the elided part moving into a DP-internal TopicP. This is the analysis of the polydefinite in (23). In the NP-ellipsis case in (22), the TopicP inside the DP undergoes deletion. In the discontinuous DP case in (21) the DP-internal FocusP undergoes further movement to the clausal FocusP.

Although potentially far-reaching, this unified treatment of the data is undermined by the following problem. There are languages that allow discontinuous NP-topicalisation and NP-ellipsis, DP-internal focus fronting is not possible. This is unexpected in a theory where both these constructions rely on the availability of DP-internal focus fronting. Take Hungarian. In (24a) we see a case of discontinuous DP-topicalisation; (24b) illustrates NP-ellipsis. (24c) and (24d) illustrate that focus movement inside the DP is impossible, with (24c) involving movement of the N over the A, and (24d) involving movement of the A over a possessor. (The brackets around the accusative markers indicate that the problem with these examples is not due to the presence of double accusative marking.)

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It is of course possible to analyse NP-ellipsis and discontinuous NP fronting in ways that do not rely on the possibility of DP-internal focus fronting. But the Hungarian data suggests that the merits of Ntelitheos’ proposal must be evaluated only with respect to the polydefinite construction. So, the question boils down to whether or not this construction involves DP-internal focus fronting. If this turned out to be the correct analysis of the data, that would constitute an argument in favour of the cartographic approach. In contrast, if it turned out that polydefinites can be reduced to NP-ellipsis, which as the Hungarian data shows is needed independently, that would make DP-internal focus movement superfluous. In what follows, I will demonstrate that this line of thinking is feasible.

Lekakou and Szendro˝i (2007) treat polydefinites as a case of close apposition, as in (25) from Greek and (26) from English:

**Close apposition in Greek:**

(25)  
a. o aetos to puli
    the eagle the bird
    ‘the eagle the bird (not the symbol)’

**Close apposition in English:**

(26)  
a. Burns the poet
b. the poet Burns

Since in close apposition both nominal parts contribute to the determination of reference, L&S suggest that both DPs involved in the construction are referential DPs. This is taken to mean that both DPs have an
In Williams’ system, which is adopted by L&S, when a nominal occupies an argument position, its R-role is bound by a thematic role of the selecting predicate, whereas when the nominal occurs as a predicate, it assigns the R-role to its subject. L&S propose that in close apposition an operation takes place which identifies the R-roles of two DPs. This operation, which can be thought of as complex argument formation, is schematically illustrated in (27):

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP}_1[R_1] \\
\text{DP}_2[R_2]
\end{array} \]

Applied to close appositives, theta-identification amounts to identification of two R-roles. This creates a syntactically symmetric structure:

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP}_1[R_1 = R_2] \\
\text{DP}_2[R_1] \\
\text{DP}_2[R_2]
\end{array} \]

That close appositives involve a symmetrical syntactic structure is strongly suggested by agreement facts. An adjective in predicative position can agree in gender with either DP (provided of course that it can sensibly apply to either DP), as shown, in (29).

(29) a. o aetos to puli ine megaloprepos/ megaloprepo.
    the.m eagle(m) the.n bird(n) is majestic.m/ majestic.n
    b. to puli o actos ine megaloprepos/ megaloprepo
    the.n bird(n) the.m eagle(m) is majestic.m/ majestic.n

‘The eagle the bird is majestic.’

As far as polydefinites are concerned, L&S’s proposal is that polydefinites are an instance of close apposition. They are only special in that they involve NP-ellipsis in one of their DP-subparts (cf. Panagiotidis, 2005):

(30) a. [DP [DP to spiti] [DP to megalop \emptyset]]
    the house the big
    [DP to megalop \emptyset [DP to spiti]]
    the big house

The symmetric structure proposed for polydefinites/close appositives is perfectly consistent with their ordering freedom: Since the proposed structure is multiheaded, i.e. the two DPs are sisters, they can appear in either order. This

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8 R-role identification solves a potential theta-theoretic problem that arises by assuming the availability of multiple R-roles within a CA: the occurrence of two (potentially) argumental DPs in the presence of a single theta-role assigner should violate the Theta Criterion. Put differently, why do CAs/polydefinites not require as many theta-assigners as the DPs they consist of? A similar issue arises in secondary predication, as in *John met Mary drunk*, where two predicates (the verbal and the adjectival one) discharge their theta-roles in the presence of a single DP. As argued by Neeleman and van de Koot (2002), by identifying the argument of ‘naked’ with either the internal or the external argument of ‘meet’, both predicates can discharge their theta-roles in the presence of a single DP. Similarly in CA, even though both DP\_1 and DP\_2 are referential and thus potential arguments, by identification of their R-roles it is the highest DP alone that acts as an argument.
explains the word order freedom exhibited by the construction. The presence of the multiple determiners is also accounted for, as in this analysis each heads its own DP projection.\footnote{In contrast, anyone who claims that the polydefinite is related to the monadic via movement (be it focus movement or something else), must relate this movement operation to the appearance of a second determiner. Ntelitheos (2004:49), following Kariaeva (2004), proposes that the second definite article must show up as a special case of definiteness agreement. But this is not more than a restatement of the problem, as it does not explain why definiteness agreement is missing in the monadic construction or why the Focus head would have the special need to associate with definiteness.}

### 3.3. The discourse role of the Greek polydefinite construction

Kolliakou (2004), who studied the Greek polydefinite construction in detail, claims that the pragmatic difference between the monadic construction and its polydefinite counterpart is not focusing the adjective, but deaccenting the noun. If this turned out to be correct, that would undermine a DP-internal focus movement analysis in a fundamental way. She proposed the data in (31) as characteristic of the discourse context in which polydefinites may occur. As (31d) shows, the polydefinite is licensed if the noun pena ‘pen’ is accessibly given information. Deaccenting the noun in the monadic construction, as in (31d’), is also possible in this context.

(31) a. Zoe: Ti pires tu Yanni gia ta christugen a?
   ‘What did you get Yiannis for Christmas?’

b. Daphne: (Tu pira) tin asimenia PENa.
   (I got him) the silver pen.

b’. Daphne: #(Tu pira) tin ASIMENIA pena.
   #I got him) the silver pen.

b”’. Daphne: #(Tu pira) tin pena tin asimenia.
   I bought the pen the silver
   #I got him) the silver the pen

c. Zoe: Ti pires tis Marias?
   ‘What did you get Maria?’

d. Daphne: (Tis pira) tin pena ti chrisI.
   (I bought her) the golden the pen
   ‘I got her the golden pen.’

d’. Daphne: (Tis pira) ti CHRISI pena.
   (I got her) the golden pen.

d”’ Daphne: #(Tis pira) ti chrissi PENa.
   #I got her) the golden pen.

Note, however, that the above context can be interpreted in another way. One could argue that what licenses stress shift in (31d’) and the polydefinite in (31d) is not the givenness of the noun, but rather the contrast on the adjective chrisi ‘golden’ with the previously mentioned adjective asimenia ‘silver’. In this case, it would be focus, rather than givenness that licenses the marked constructions.

In fact, given the analyses followed here, namely Lekakou and Szendröi (2007, 2008), it is actually not easy to tease these apart. This is because, there it is argued that the adjectival part of a polydefinite is in fact a full DP involving NP ellipsis. It is well-known that there is a contrastive focus requirement on the remnant of ellipsis.\footnote{This is actually the basis of several proposals that argue for DP-internal focus movement. A seminal case is Corver and van Koppen’s (2006) proposal, who claim that NP ellipsis involves movement of the remnant of ellipsis to a DP-internal focus phrase and subsequent deletion of its complement. But there does not seem to be direct evidence that NP-ellipsis in fact involves movement. C&vK give indirect evidence in the sense that they identify a morpheme –e(n), which they convincingly demonstrate shows up in cases of emphasis and also on remnants of NP-ellipsis in colloquial Dutch and Frisian. It is, however, questionable, whether the data warrants their conclusion that the –e(n) morpheme is the instantiation of a Focus head. Given that there is no actual data that has both –e(n) and any DP-internal reordering (e.g. adjectival reordering of the type discussed in section 2). There is also no data to show that the morpheme acts independently of the DP that it is claimed to attract. (A similar issue arises with respect to a putative Focus head in Gungbe discussed in Aboh (2007). Here too, there is no evidence other than for the claim that the morpheme is a focus marker that attaches to focused DPs.)} The following two

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sets of data attempts to show that even though the adjectival part of a polydefinite is contrasted, the polydefinite is not licensed unless the nominal part is given. Note that an additional issue that arises is that the required data rely on rather fine-grained pragmatic differences, which are easily masked by accommodation. Ideally, corpus searches would need to be done to substantiate the claims made below.

The first argument comes from adjective reordering of the type discussed in section 2 for English. In Greek too, adjectives can be optionally merged in semantically marked orders so-long as scope requires that.

(32) a. Oli i fili mu dialeksean megal afpokinipa, ela igo dialeksa to MAVRO megal o a fpokinipo.
   all the friends my chose big cars but I chose the black big car
   ‘All my friends chose big cars, but I chose the black big car.’

   b. Oli i fili mu dialeksean megal afpokinipa, ela igo dialeksa to megal o MAVRO a fpokinipo.
   all the friends my chose big cars but I chose the big black car
   ‘All my friends chose big cars, but I chose the big black car.’

In the same context a polydefinite is also licensed, so long as the given constituent, i.e. the second part of the polydefinite, is to megal o a fpokinipo ‘the big car’, as in (33a). But if only to a fpokinipo ‘the car’ is given, as in (33b), then the utterance is infelicitous because the larger constituent has to be given to allow for the intended scopal reading. This is in line with the idea that the nominal part of the polydefinite is marked as given, rather than the adjectival part is marked as focused. If the latter was the case, both (or neither) polydefinites should be allowed, as they both involve focus on the adjectival part.

(33) a. Oli i fili mu dialeksean megal afpokinipa, ela igo dialeksa to MAVRO to megal o a fpokinipo.
   all the friends my chose big cars but I chose the black big car
   ‘All my friends chose big cars, but I chose the black big car.’

   b. *Oli i fili mu dialeksean megal afpokinipa, ela igo dialeksa to megal o MAVRO (to) a fpokinipo
   all the friends my chose big cars but I chose the big black the car
   ‘All my friends chose big cars, but I chose the black big car.’

A second set of supporting data can be constructed using unexpected contrastive stress in contexts where there is no corresponding given constituent. Recall from the discussion at the beginning of this section, concerning (17) and (18), that in certain utterances focusing occurs in the absence of its sister constituent being given. If such cases can only be expressed with stress shift in a monadic construction and disallow the polydefinite, then that would support the idea that the polydefinite is licensed by givenness of the nominal part, rather then by focusing the adjectival part. This is borne out as the following data, based on Krifka’s (2006) examples, illustrate.

(34) O Janis ithele ena metaforiko meso ja tis diakopes tu. Pije sto garage tu patera tu.
   the janis wanted a means-of-transport for the holidays his. went to.the father’s garage
   Epidi to KOKINO (*to) aftokinito ihe idi pulithi pire to ble ((to) aftokinito).
   as the red the car was already taken he took the blue the car
   ‘Janis wanted a vehicle for his holidays. He went to his father’s garage. As the red car was already taken, he took the BLUE car.’

Similarly, in (35), which is based on Rooth’s (1992) example, the contrast between the adjectives does not license the polydefinite.

(35) Anigo tin tileorasi ke ti vlepo?
   switch.on the television and what see.1sg?
   Ton AMERIKANO (*ton) proedro na sinomili me ton IRANO (*/?ton) proedro.
   the american the president subj talk.with with the iranian the president
   ‘I switch on the telly and what do I see? The American president is talking to the Iranian president.’

We can conclude that although there is a clear effect of focus on the adjectival part of the polydefinite, this is due to the fact that the construction involves NP-ellipsis, rather than DP-internal focus fronting. In carefully
constructed examples where the nominal part is not given even though the adjectival part is contrastively focused, the polydefinite cannot be used. So, as Kolliakou (2004) argued, the pragmatic import of the polydefinite seems to be the deaccentuation and therefore givenness-marking of the nominal part, rather than the focusing of the adjectival part.

4. Conclusions and outstanding cases

In this paper I investigated whether there is substantial evidence in the literature for DP-internal (topic or) focus movement. The motivation for this was that it follows from the tenets of the flexible theory of topic and focus movement proposed in Neeleman and van de Koot (2008) that such movement cannot take place. This is because in this theory the trigger for movement does not effect the moved DP itself. Rather, the movement operation takes place to create a continuous comment or background. Given that these are intrinsically proposition-based notions, they cannot be created DP-internally. So, DP-internal movement will never fulfill the interface requirement of such a movement operation, and therefore cannot take place.

In my attempt to review of the literature on DP-internal topic and focus movement I opted for concentrating in a small number of proposals and investigating those in more detail. In particular, I reviewed two proposals in detail: adjectival reordering and the Greek polydefinite construction. In the first case, I argued that (i) the reason for the reordering is not focus, but probably scope inversion and that (ii) the reordering is not the result of A-bar movement, but rather base-generation of different orders. As far as the Greek polydefinite construction is concerned, following earlier work by Lekakou and Szendröi (2007, 2008), I argued that (i) it does not involve movement, but again, different base-generated orders, and that (ii) the pragmatic import of the construction is not focusing the adjectival part, but rather defocusing the nominal part (Kolliakou, 2004).

Here I would like to address briefly a number of other proposals. First, the bulk of the paper deals with proposals that argue for a DP-internal focus projection, rather than a TopicP. But there are proposals for this too. For instance, Aboh (2007) proposes that Gungbe has a specificity marker that must appear on any DP that moves to the clausal topic position. But a morphological marker is not in itself sufficient argument for proposing a DP-internal Topic-head (see also fn. 10). In order to have evidence for a Topic-head, we must see topic-induced DP-internal reordering. Ntelitheos (2004) proposed that this is what takes place in Hungarian. Let us see this proposal in more detail. Note that Hungarian DP’s are right-headed, as shown in (36).

(36)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{a nagy fekete autó} \\
& \text{the big black car} \\
& \text{‘the big black car’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{a városnak a Rómaiak által való elpusztítása} \\
& \text{the city\text{-}GEN the romans due be\text{-}\text{prspart} \text{prt\text{-}destruction} } \\
& \text{‘the destruction of the city by the Romans’}
\end{align*}
\]

Possessors can either follow the determiner and be caseless, as in (37a), or precede it and have dative case, as in (37b). In the latter case, Ntelitheos (2004) claims the possessor targets a DP-internal TopicP.

(37)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{a Péter kalapja} \\
& \text{the Peter hat\text{-}\text{poss3sg} } \\
& \text{‘Peter’s hat’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{a Péternek a kalapja} \\
& \text{the Peter\text{-}\text{dat} the hat\text{-}\text{poss3sg} } \\
& \text{‘Peter’s hat’}
\end{align*}
\]

There are several reasons to doubt that the dative possessor would be in a DP-internal TopicP. First, dative possessors can be extracted from the DP. They can target either a topic or a focus position in the left-periphery of the clause. The possibility of the dative undergoing (clausal) focus movement (see 38b) runs counter to the idea that the possessor is in a TopicP inside the DP, as no constituent can be a topic and a focus at the same time.
As for Peter, I looked at his hat.

I looked at PETER’s hat.

Second, pragmatically speaking there is no reason to think that a dative possessor is necessarily topical or more topical than a caseless one. (39) does not have a topic, it is an all focus sentence. Moreover, the possessor is most easily construed as a non-specific indefinite. Nevertheless, it can be either caseless or dative.

I looked at PETER’s hat.

Conversely, a possessive DP in a clausal topic position is equally well-formed with a caseless or dative possessor:

As for Peter’s hat, it was Mary who sew it.

Finally, certain constituents that are unlikely topics, such as universals, negative quantifiers and wh-words actually must be in dative case even when they are not extracted from the DP:

Mary sew nobody’s hat.

Mary sew everyone’s hat.

Whose hat did Mary sew?

I conclude that the above data refutes the evidence for a DP-internal TopicP hosting dative possessors in Hungarian. Moving on from topic inside the DP back to focus, I would like to mention one final set of cases. Bernstein (2001) argued that Romance languages exhibit, what one might analyse as right-peripheral focus movement inside the DP. This is exemplified in (42).

Without benefit any, not without some benefit
Without ANY benefit (not SOME benefit)

These cases involve movement, targeting the rightmost position inside the DP. So, do they constitute a counterexample to the proposal defended here? I believe that the answer is no. Instead, as Samek-Lodovici (2006b) argues at length, such movement operations are stress-driven. So, the trigger for such operations is not to create a continuous background, but rather to associate a certain part of the DP with the neutral stress position, which is rightmost in Romance languages. This analysis parallels claims for stress-driven movement on the clausal level (see Zubizarreta, 1998; Szendrői, 2002, 2003; Samek-Lodovici, 2005, 2006a). A parallel between the clause and the DP is warranted by the fact that stress rules apply both on the level of the clause and on the level of constituents.

I would like to conclude that at present there is no substantial evidence for topic or focus movement DP-internally. This is in line with a flexible theory of topic and focus movement, such as Neeleman and van de Koot's (2008) theory,
which claims that such movement operations create a partitioning between topic and a continuous comment, and focus and a continuous background, respectively. As topic-comment and focus-background partitionings are intrinsically propositional, we do not expect them to show up inside the DP. This means that we do not expect that there is a DP-internal functional hierarchy involving Focus and Topic heads (contra Cinque, 1999 and subsequent work). If this line of thought turns out to be on the right track, then it may actually provide at least a start of an explanation for the apparent fact that in general, languages allow word order freedom in the clause a lot more than inside the DP.

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