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Enjambement of *Narrow Focus + Verb* in Homeric Greek

A Corpus-Based Investigation of Prosodic, Syntactic and Information-Structural Factors Leading to Increase in Prosodic Boundary Strength

Some Examples of Focus Enjambement

τὸν δ' ἕτερον ξίφει μέγαν [κλιῖδα παρ' ὤμον]_{Narrow Focus}
[πληξ']_{Verb}, ἀπὸ δ' αὐχένος ὤμον ἐέργαθεν ἠδ' ἀπὸ νώτου.
(Hom. // 5.146–147)

Κύκλωψ, οὐκ ἄρ' ἔμελλες [ἀνάλκιδος ἀνδρὸς ἐταίρους]_{NFOC}
[ἔδμεναι]_V ἐν σπηῖ γλαφυρῷ κρατερῆφι βίηφι.
(Hom. Od. 9.475–476)

ἦ μὲν γάρ θ' ὕδατι λιαρῷ ῥέει, ἀμφὶ δὲ [καπνὸς]_{NFOC}
[γίγνεται]_V ἐξ αὐτῆς ὡς εἰ πυρὸς αἶθομένοιο·
(Hom. // 22.149–150)

Narrow Focus + Verb

as Core Elements of Their Information-Structural Domain

[Dik 1995, Matić 2003, Bertrand 2010]

NARROW FOCUS CONSTRUCTION



Τὸν δ' ὁ γέρων Πρίαμος **πρῶτος ἴδεν** ὀφθαλμοῖσι

Il. 22.025

NRTop NRTop NFOC V RTop

- Narrow Focus and Verb have to be contiguous (Matić 2003: 619–625, Bertrand 2010: 351–356).
- They exhibit more *liaison*-phenomena than other pairings of information-structural constituents (Bertrand 2011).

Hypotheses

1. Narrow Focus + Verb as the core elements of their information-structural domain should not be separated by line-end.

88 instances in Bertrand's reference corpus contradict this hypothesis.
(2828 lines; *Iliad* books 5, 22 + *Odyssey* books 1, 9, 20)

2. If they are separated by a line-end, this implies a promotion of the prosodic boundary between the two.

Which factors might license such an increase in prosodic boundary strength?

Enhancement of Prosodic Boundaries

As Demarcating Mechanism for Foci

[Féry 2013]

- There is a cross-linguistic tendency to align foci with the edges of major prosodic domains (ι -phrases, ϕ -phrases).
- Alignment may be achieved by different syntactic, prosodic or lexical strategies. It can also trigger prosodic boundary promotion.
- Foci are more likely to be aligned if they are stronger, i.e. more contrastive.

French [Féry 2013: sect. 4.1.2]

informational focus

((**Une femme**) _{ϕ} pousse la **voiture**) _{ι}
(F_F) _{ι}

contrastive focus

Non, ((**C'est un homme**) _{ι} (qui pousse la voiture)) _{ι}

Homeric Hexameter as a Stylized Prosodic Domain

[Foley 1990, Devine & Stephens 1994: 400; Bakker 1997, Allan 2009; Goldstein 2014]



| | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------|--|
| Hexameter | line-end | 3 | Intonational Phrase (ι) |
| Hemistich | main caesura (B) | 2 | Embedded Intonational Phrase ((ι)) / Phonological Phrase (ϕ) |
| Kolon | secondary caesurae ($A_{3,4}$, C) | 1 | Phonological Phrase (ϕ) |
| Komma | colon-internal word boundaries | 0 | Prosodic Word (ω) |

- Line-end is characterized by *brevis in longo* = phrase-final lengthening, and blocking of *liaison*-phenomena = blocking of resyllabification.

The corpus

- Based on Bertrand 2010:
 - Il. 5 and 22; Od. 1, 5 and 20
 - 2828 lines
 - 4087 clauses
- 1317 clauses with Narrow Focus construction
- 88 instances of focus enjambement (NFoc+Verb separated by a line-end)
- We also tagged
 - 88 NFoc+Verb structures separated by a B caesura
 - 88 NFoc+Verb structures separated by a C caesura
 - 88 NFoc+Verb structures separated by a colon-internal break

Licensing factors:

1. Size Matters

- The autonomous phrasing of a focus phrase can be licensed by its size, or weight.
- Different ways of computing the weight of a phrase:
 1. Phonetic weight: number of morae
 2. Prosodic weight: number of prosodic words
(clitics, postpositives and prepositives are assumed form one prosodic word with their host)
 3. Complexity:
 - Simple: no dependency, no coordination
 - Coordination
 - Dependency (noun + adjective, noun + genitive, etc.)
 - Coordination + Dependency

Licensing factors:

1. Size Matters (phonetics)

| # of morae | <5 | 5<8 | 8<12 | >12 | Total |
|----------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|
| Line-end | 14 | 24 | 15 | 35 | 88 |
| B caesura | 26 | 40 | 22 | 0 | 88 |
| C caesura | 35 | 24 | 21 | 8 | 88 |
| Colon-internal | 29 | 37 | 20 | 2 | 88 |
| Total | 104 | 125 | 78 | 45 | 352 |

P-value: > 0.001

Licensing factors:

1. Size Matters (prosody)

| # of prosodic words | <2 | 2<3 | >3 | Total |
|---------------------|-----|-----|----|-------|
| Line-end | 39 | 24 | 25 | 88 |
| B caesura | 63 | 24 | 1 | 88 |
| C caesura | 59 | 24 | 5 | 88 |
| Colon-internal | 52 | 33 | 3 | 88 |
| Total | 213 | 105 | 34 | 352 |

P-value: > 0.001

Licensing factors:

1. Size Matters (syntax)

| Complexity | Simple | Dep. | Coord. | Dep. + Coord | Total |
|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| Line-end | 35 | 32 | 9 | 12 | 88 |
| B caesura | 61 | 25 | 1 | 1 | 88 |
| C caesura | 57 | 24 | 5 | 2 | 88 |
| Colon-internal | 52 | 35 | 0 | 1 | 88 |
| Total | 205 | 116 | 15 | 16 | 352 |

P-value: > 0.001

Licensing factors:

2. Contrast

Focus relies on the elimination of alternatives. Depending on the number of alternatives, the contrast can be of different strengths.

- Adding Focus: set of alternatives = infinite

Περγασίδην, ὃν Τρῶες **ὁμῶς Πριάμοιο τέκεσσι**
τῖον, ἐπεὶ θεὸς ἔσκε μετὰ πρώτοισι μάχεσθαι.

Il. 5.534–535

- Identificational Focus: set of alternatives restricted by the type of variable

καὶ βάλεν Ἄμφιον Σελάγου υἱόν, ὃς ῥ' **ἐνὶ Παισῶ**
ναῖε πολυκτῆμων πολυλήϊος· ἀλλὰ ἔ μοῖρα

Il. 5.612

- Contrastive Focus: set of alternatives restricted to a few (contextual) variables

πρὶν χειρῶν γεύσασθαι, ἐπεὶ σύ περ **οὐ κατὰ κόσμον**
αἰτίζεις· εἰσὶν δὲ καὶ ἄλλοθι δαῖτες Ἀχαιῶν.

Od. 20.181

Licensing factors:

2. Contrast

| Type of Focus | Adding | Identificational | Contrastive | Total |
|----------------|--------|------------------|-------------|-------|
| Line-end | 18 | 23 | 47 | 88 |
| B caesura | 14 | 39 | 35 | 88 |
| C caesura | 19 | 44 | 25 | 88 |
| Colon-internal | 19 | 53 | 16 | 88 |
| Total | 70 | 159 | 123 | 352 |

P-value: > 0.001

Licensing factors:

2. Contrast (controlling weight)

| Type of Focus | Adding | Identificational | Contrastive | Total |
|----------------|--------|------------------|-------------|-------|
| Line-end | 7 | 5 | 23 | 35 |
| B caesura | 8 | 26 | 27 | 61 |
| C caesura | 14 | 26 | 17 | 57 |
| Colon-internal | 10 | 31 | 11 | 52 |
| Total | 39 | 88 | 78 | 205 |

P-value: > 0.001

Licensing factors:

2. Contrast (negation)

| Negation | – Negation | + Negation | Total |
|----------------|------------|------------|-------|
| Line-end | 69 | 19 | 88 |
| B caesura | 78 | 10 | 88 |
| C caesura | 84 | 4 | 88 |
| Colon-internal | 81 | 7 | 88 |
| Total | 312 | 40 | 352 |

P-value: 0.003

Licensing factors:

3. Dead ends

- Other possible factors were tested but yielded no significant results:
 1. Discourse mode (narrative vs. speech)
 2. Syntactic function of the focus constituent
 3. Semantic category of the verb: transitive, intransitive (unaccusative, unergative)
 4. Semantic type of the verb: existential, movement, experience, saying, etc.
- Clause-end after the verb: higher rate both with colon-internal breaks and focus enjambement

Colon-internal break

οἱ δὲ τοι εἰς ἄστυ ἄλεν, σὺ δὲ **δεῦρο** λιάσθης.

Il. 22.12

Line-end

ἐν δέπας ἐμπλήσας ὕδατος ἀνά **εἴκοσι μέτρα**
χεῦ', ὁδμὴ δ' ἠδεῖα ἀπὸ κρητῆρος ὀδώδει.

Od. 9.209

Conclusions and prospects

- In addition to word order, prosody is used as an exponent of information structure in Ancient Greek.
- Prosodic and informational factors compete to license the separate phrasing of the focus phrase in the Narrow Focus Construction.
- More specifically, a prosodically heavy Focus constituent can constitute a prosodic domain which is higher in the prosodic hierarchy.
- The same device is used to highlight contrastive focus phrases.
- Those factors are at play in the Homeric hexameter, where a line-end can separate a heavy and/or contrastive focus phrase from the following verb.

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