Basic generalization

Function words tend not to be full prosodic words:

1. Kate [ad] seen Bill. (AUX)
   - Kate’s jealous [av] Bill. (PREP)
   - Kate ate [∅] peach. (DET)
2. Kate followed [ʔm] (OBJ. PRONOUN)

Ito & Mester (2009a, 2009b): they cliticize into an adjacent prosodic word (ω).

Right-cliticizing

PP \[→ \omega\] to Bill

Left-cliticizing

VP \[→ \omega\] to ‘em

Claim

The prosodic behavior of English function words emerges in the competition between (a) the word’s prosodic subcategorization frame and (b) MATCH WORD.

A (slightly) radical sub-claim

MATCH WORD applies to functional X’s. This contrasts with the standard assumption:

- Lexical Category Condition (Truckenbrodt 1999:226)
  "Constraints relating syntactic and prosodic categories apply to lexical syntactic elements and their projections, but not to functional elements and their projections."
- Discussion in Elfner (2012:243)
  "Function words are not governed by Match-Word, such that there is no impetus to parse them as prosodic words."
- MATCH Word principle (Bennett et al. 2015:34)
  "Phonological words correspond to heads of syntactic phrases—verbs, nouns, adjectives, and so on, the basic building blocks of the syntactic system."

SubCAT forces syntactic-prosodic non-isomorphism (for justification of winning structures, see handout).

Fnc without SubCAT frame ⇒ ω

Prepositions and auxiliaries in sentence-final position become full ωs (Selkirk 1996):

- a. The kid Mary talked (ω to)
- b. I can’t help, but Bill (ω can)

Explanation: there is no way to satisfy SubCAT.

Some function words always map to ωs:

- a. Follow (ω that) car. (cf. C0 [∅at])
- b. Go (ω via) Ohio.

Availability of linking /r/ shows that some function words map to ωs:

- a. (ω saw) [ɹ]Ohio vs. (ι int[∅]) [ɹ]Ohio
- b. (ω via) [ɹ]Ohio

Explanation: they lack a subcategorization frame.

Conclusions

- Behavior of English function words is nicely captured with violable subcategorization frames.
- MATCH WORD applies to Fnc, and not just Lex, leaving a simpler Match Theory.
- Decomposing the notion of a ‘function word’: an X that is more likely to have a SubCAT frame.

References

Elfner, Emily. 2012. Syntax-prosody interaction in Irish: PhD diss, UCL.

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