

Syntax-Phonology Interface of Discontinuous Nominal Constructions

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Theme of my talk is the prosodic aspects of discontinuous nominal constructions (DNP) in German. Specifically, it will be shown that syntactic and information structural approaches have to be complemented by a prosodic account for explaining the full array of variation of DNP. The syntactic restrictions are of a different kind from the usual A and \bar{A} -movements, as has been repeatedly shown in the literature. Information structure (IS) cannot explain DNP all by itself either because DNPs have different information structural patterns.

In the past, research has concentrated on syntax (as for instance van Riemsdijk 1989, Fanselow 1988, Fanselow & Cavar 2002, De Kuthy 2002, van Hoof 2005, Schmellentin 2006, Nolda 2007, Ott 2011) but I will show that prosody is necessary, too. Prosody is much simpler than syntax, and only two patterns of discontinuity exist: The first one involves two prosodic phrases (p-phrases or i-phrases), and is pervasive, not only in DNPs but also in all kinds of dislocations. Syntactically it involves two autonomous nominal phrases (Fanselow 1988, Ott 2011). Under special information structural circumstances, it can be considered as 'obligatory' in DNP. Its tonal and prosodic structure is highly variable. The other pattern is 'optional' and involves only one prosodic phrase (one i-phrase and one p-phrase). It involves one nominal phrase. It places the nuclear accent at the beginning of the i-phrase and eliminates all others. Both patterns are strongly restricted by syntax and processing.

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