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"How to share with coordination: interactions between syntax and prosody"

The aim of this talk will be to consider the role of prosody as a potential source of syntactic structuring in natural language. A very nice way to test this potential correlation is to study highly problematic constructions related to coordination, sometimes called sharing structures (Right-Node-Raising and Across-The-Board constructions, Conjunction Reduction, Non-constituents coordination, Gapping). Our general hypothesis is that in order to get a better understanding of syntax (i.e. structuring and linear order constraints), syntactic theories should care about prosody as much as they do with semantics. One way to capture and analyse the role of prosody (and its limits) with respect to syntax is to study sharing constructions, i.e. cases where part of a sentence is coordinated while the rest corresponds to a shared fragment. Examples are given below in (2) and (3), compared to a more simple example without sharing in (1):

| Subj | V | Obj |
(1) My colleague [said that this project was very interesting].

(2) [My colleague said] and [the jury confirmed] that this project was very interesting.

(3) My colleague said [last week that this project was very interesting] and [yesterday that it was boring].

Consider these examples in the light of some fundamental assumptions about syntax, all related to structure: (i) syntactic constituency/grouping (which gives rise to structure/hierarchy), (ii) the well-known subject-object asymmetry (the former having scope over the latter), and more generally, (iii) syntactic embedding. If (1) can be seen as a case of "regular" syntax (the verb combining "first" with its object), examples like (2) and (3) are highly problematic as they suggest that syntax could coordinate non-constituents (string of words in brackets). The basic intuition is that such sharing constructions require a very specific prosody, which itself could "drive" syntactic and semantic procedures (or structuring). In other words, our fundamental idea is that such constructions show the potential of prosody to influence syntax. Hence, the question is not to understand how prosody follows from syntax and semantics, but rather to study how prosody could drive syntax (and semantic composition), and what are the limits of this influence. Firstly, we will show the limits of previous accounts of such constructions, which do not (really) integrate prosodic constraints. We will then present another approach that integrates prosody, and some preliminary experimental data from French that could serve as a baseline to test our general hypothesis about the role of prosody. The following sub-questions will be discussed among others:

- (i) how much syntax can be disrupted in such sharing constructions?
- (ii) how prosodically weak items behave in such sharing constructions?
- (iii) how do such sharing constructions relate to (semantic, syntactic, prosodic?) ellipsis?