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BOUNDED PROJECTION: THE EFFECT OF PROSODIC PHRASING ON FOCUS INTERPRETATION

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0. Introduction¹

It is well-known from studies of languages other than English that focus can affect the grammatical possibilities of prosodic phrasing for an utterance. I argue here, based on the results of a comprehension experiment for English, that the reverse can also hold true: the prosodic phrasing of an utterance can affect the interpretation of focus. Specifically, I claim that prosodic phrasing blocks the projection of focus, limiting focus to material in the prosodic phrase which contains the focusing pitch accent. I shall refer to this as the *bounded projection* effect.

The bounded projection effect may appear to be a counterexample to a phonological analysis such as in Truckenbrodt (1995) that claims there is no direct connection between focus and prosodic phrasing. However, I show that the comprehension facts can be accounted for through a parsing explanation and thus do not necessarily challenge his grammatical analysis.

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