Default Sentential Stress and Non-Exceptional Reflexives

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0 Introduction

Default Sentential Stress (**DSS**) is the **assignment of the sentence's Nuclear Stress** in out-of-the-blue contexts

- ↳ In many cases, **DSS tends to fall on the rightmost word** of an English sentence:

  (1) A: What happened in the kitchen?
  B: Remy accidentally burned *Maríe*.

- ↳ This has led to linear-order-based **DSS**-assignment rules, such as the Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR) of Chomsky and Halle 1968:

  (2) **Nuclear Stress Rule**: The rightmost primarily-stressed vowel in a domain receives the strongest stress

- ↳ In this way, **reflexive anaphors of English seem to behave differently**, at first glance:

  (3) A: What happened in the kitchen?
  B: Remy accidentally *búrned* himself.

- ↳ Thus it has been stipulated that **reflexives are simply exceptions** to normal **DSS**-assignment

However, **the data is more complex** than an exception-to-NSR analysis would allow

- ↳ For example, (4) is a syntactic minimal pair with (3), and **DSS** falls on the reflexive:

  (4) A: What happened in the kitchen?
  B: Remy accidentally burned Marie and *himsélf*.

- ↳ Additionally, besides (4), I find another syntactic effect of **DSS** and reflexives in the grammatical voice of the clause

Thus, we need to account for what determines the distribution of **DSS** on anaphors

- ↳ **Following a syntactic account of phrasal stress** like Cinque 1993, I argue that the reflexive as in (3), there is **syntactic movement that feeds the prosody**

1 Methods

The question thus pursued here is: **which reflexives bear DSS, and which reflexives don't?**

- ↳ To answer this, English native speakers are recorded reading short scripts
- ↳ Participants silently read the entire script first, to fully understand the context, and then read the script aloud (two repetitions)
- ↳ Here is a **sample script with the test sentence is underlined**:

(5) A: What a day! I'm tired.
B: I bet you are! How are you liking your job here at the camp?
A: It's a lot of fun, but the kids are a little rowdy.
B: Yeah. What was all that commotion in the crafts room yesterday?
→ A: Moira was gluing Noah to herself. It was in good fun, though.
B: As long as everyone's having a good time!

- ↳ The contexts are set up in so that **everything in the test sentence is new information**, in hopes of eliciting broad-focus on the whole sentence (the context for **DSS**)
- ↳ The test conditions were set up so that **reflexives, r-expressions and pronouns were all tested in the same context**, to allow for direct comparison between the three types of DP

Each test sentence is to be prosodically labelled by (at least) two native-speaker coders, who follow the conventions of MAE_ToBI. (Beckman and Hirschberg 1994)

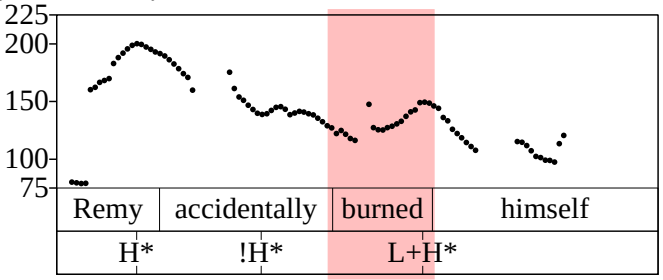
- ↳ If the reflexive bears a pitch accent that both coders perceive as the most prominent, it is considered as the **DSS**

2 Data

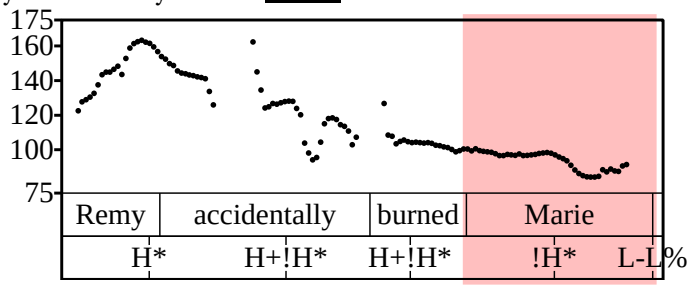
Consider the two minimal triplets below: the reflexive must not bear the **DSS**, even though an r-expression must (and the (c) examples are not attested):

(6) A: What had happagepened in the kitchen?

a. B: Remy accidentally *búrned* himself.



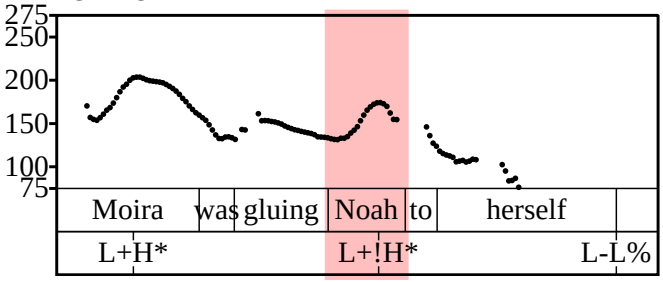
b. B: Remy accidentally burned *Maríe*.



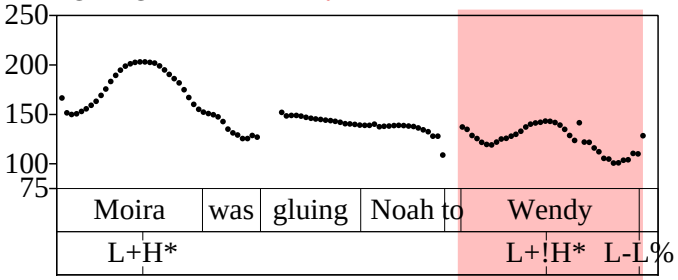
c. B: *Remy accidentally burned *himsélf*.

(7) A: What was all that commotion in the crafts room yesterday?

a. B: Moira was gluing *Nóah* to herself.



b. B: Moira was gluing Noah to *Wéndy*.



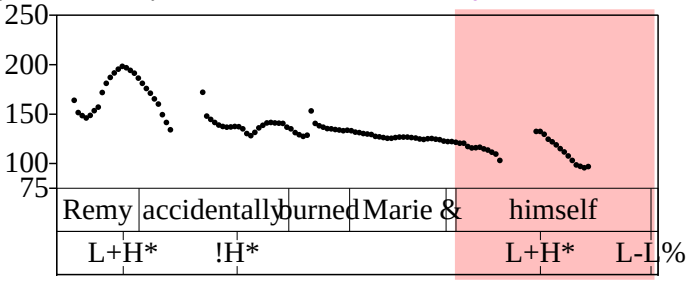
c. B: *Moira was gluing Noah to *hersélf*.

↳ The data above could be accounted if anaphoric elements **DSS** (e.g. Bresnan 1971, Kahnemuyipour 2009) or functional elements (e.g. Zubizarreta 1998) just never bear DSS

↳ But (8)-(9) – minimal pairs with the above data – are entirely unexpected because **these reflexives must bear the DSS** :

(8) A: What had happened in the kitchen?

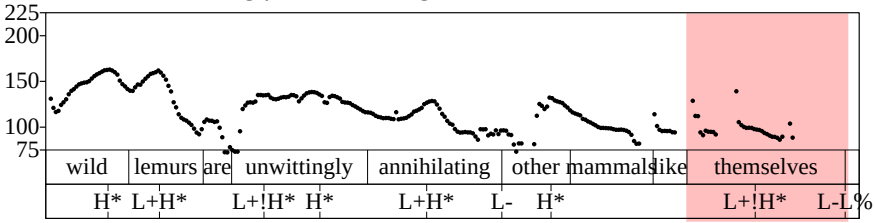
a. B: Remy accidentally burned Marie and *himsélf*.



b. B: *Remy accidentally burned *Maríe* and himself.

(9) A: What are you learning about in ecology?

B: Wild lemurs are unwittingly annihilating mammals like *themsélves*.



B: *Wild lemurs are unwittingly annihilating mammals *líke* themselves.

The fact that some reflexives do bear **DSS**, and the fact that other reflexives do not bear **DSS**, rules out a NSR-based analyses

3 Analysis

3.1 Movement and DSS

Constituents **inside of syntactic islands** are ineligible for movement operations (Ross 1967).

↳ *Marie and X*, as in (8), and *mammals like X*, as in (9), **are both islands**:

(10) a. *Who did Remy accidentally burn Marie and ____?
b. *Which animals are wild lemurs unwittingly annihilating mammals like_____

Notice that there is a correlation between movability and inability to bear DSS
↳ (6)-(7): no syntactic island, no DSS on the reflexive
↳ (8)-(9): syntactic island, DSS borne by the reflexive

↳ The natural conclusion for this fact is:

↳ **syntactic movement is taking place** in (6)-(7), and it somehow feeds "DSS-avoidance"
↳ but the **island constraints block "DSS-avoidance" movement** in (8)-(9)

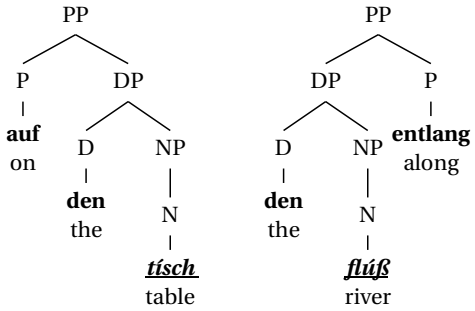
↳ This being the case, **we need a syntactic model of DSS** , such as Cinque's (1993) Null Theory of Phrasal Stress:

(11) **Null Theory of Phrasal Stress**: The most deeply embedded constituent in the S-structure receives the phrasal stress.

↳ This is motivated by cross-linguistic patterns, whereby **the object (more embedded than the verb) bears DSS regardless of headedness** (e.g. Donegan and Stampe 1983):

	DSS on Object	DSS on Verb
VO-language	✓	✗
OV-language	✓	✗

↳ DSS also directly correlates with syntactic headedness within a language, e.g. in German PPs in which **phrasal stress always is borne by the NP** (more embedded than the P), regardless of whether the PP is head-final or head-initial (Cinque 1993):

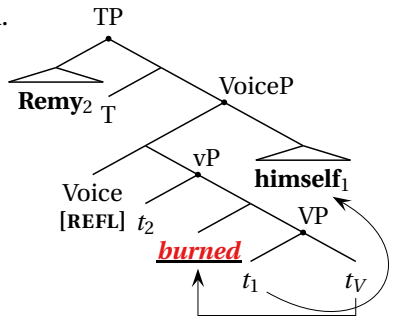


↳ Moreover, in this syntactic model, **movement feeds the prosody** (as has been long noted, going back to at least Bresnan 1971)

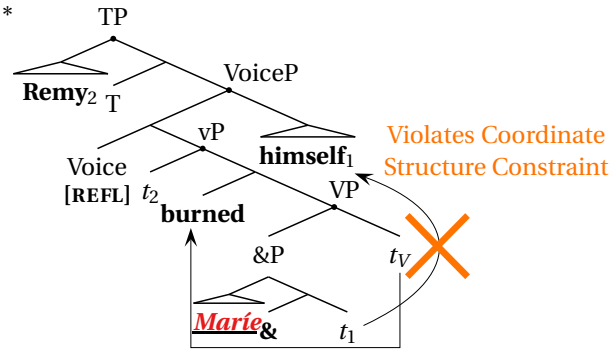
↳ Object reflexives and r-expressions originate in the same, most-embedded position
↳ Reflexives that don't bear DSS **must no longer be most-embedded**, due to movement
↳ When movement is blocked by an island, the reflexive (like the r-expression) will bear DSS

↳ This is exemplified in these trees:

(12) a.



b. *



3.2 Voice Syntax

In the structures above, I have the reflexive moving to a VoiceP – **what is this VoiceP?**

↳ Voice^0 is an "argument structure" head (Sailor and Ahn *in progress*)

↳ It takes the v/VP (and thus all the arguments of the clause) as its complement
↳ It is the "pivot" which **determines a surface structure of the clausal arguments**
↳ This is **distinct** from the way VoiceP is used in, for example, Kratzer 1996, Alexiadou et al. 2006

↳ Thus, we have at least Active, Passive and Middle Voice^{0}s (e.g. Collins 2005, Ahn and Sailor *to appear*)

↳ This allows identical underlying argument structure for all these grammatical voices
↳ This is highly desirable, given a principle like UTAH (Baker 1988)

Moreover, **there is another Voice^0: Reflexive**

↳ Reflexive Voice is responsible for the **compositional interpretation of reflexive clauses**
↳ In English-type languages, **Reflexive Voice syntactically requires an anaphor to move to VoiceP**

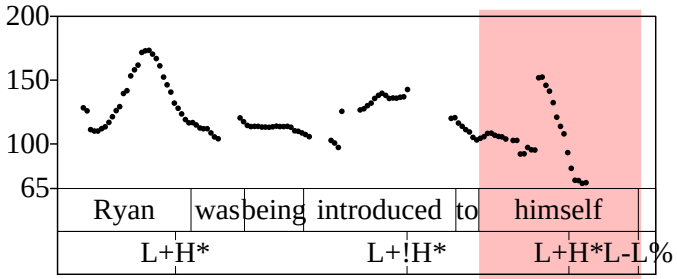
↳ For more argumentation in favor of this, see Ahn (In Progress)
↳ (Reuland 2011 has a very similar movement operation, but the motivations are quite different)

3.3 Prosodic Predictions of the VoiceP

If *Reflexive* Voice is what triggers movement of the reflexive anaphor, we predict other voices will not cause the reflexive to move

↳ A clause with, for example, the Passive Voice^0 cannot also have a Reflexive Voice^0
↳ Prediction: **any reflexive in a passive clause is (in principle) eligible to bear DSS**
↳ This prediction is supported by the data

(13) Passive: **DSS** on reflexive



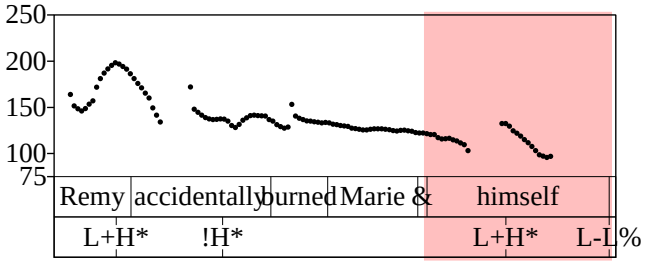
This provides further support for an analysis in which the reflexive moves to VoiceP

3.4 Reflexives vs. Pronouns

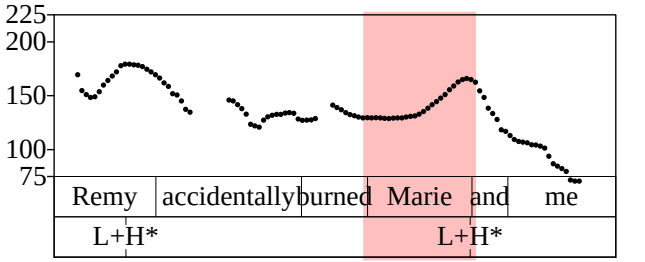
Finally, though reflexives and pronouns share superficial similarities, in terms of usually not bearing **DSS**, **it cannot be that both involve this movement to VoiceP**

- ↳ Since pronouns also don't often bear **DSS**, the NTPS would require that **pronouns are not at the same level of embedding as r-expressions**, similar to reflexives
- ↳ Though reflexives arrive at their surface position by movement, **it is not necessarily the case that pronouns undergo movement of this nature**
- ↳ In fact, **pronouns "avoid DSS" even when movement would be impossible**:

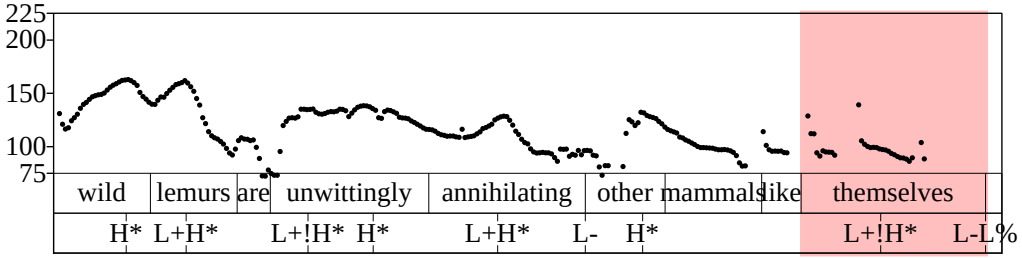
(14) Island: **DSS** on reflexive



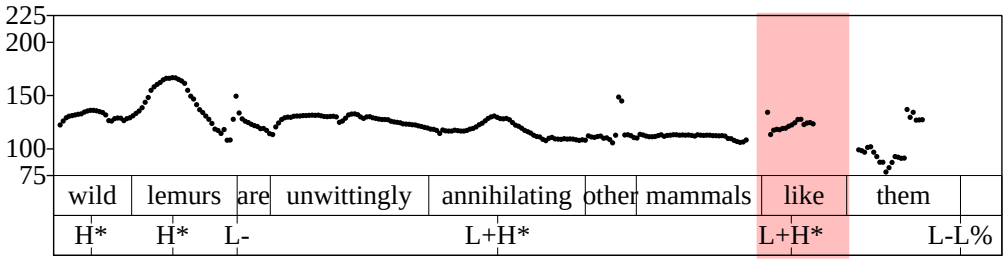
Island: **DSS** not on pronoun



(15) Island: **DSS** on reflexive



Island: **DSS** not on pronoun



- ↳ Therefore, whatever derives which pronouns 'avoid' **DSS** should be treated as different from what derives when reflexives 'avoid' **DSS**

4 Conclusion

This analysis provides further **evidence that DSS is determined structurally**

↳ Supporting existing research (e.g. Cinque 1993, Kratzer and Selkirk 2007, Kahnemuyipour 2009)

This analysis is supported by the fact that **syntactic movement has been independently argued to feed the DSS prosody**

↳ e.g. relative clause data in Bresnan 1971 and Stowell's (Forthcoming) analysis of which post-verbal adverbs of English can bear **DSS**

Finally, **reflexives are not prosodically exceptional**

↳ When they do or do not bear **DSS depends on structural factors** such as island-hood and the clause's Voice
↳ Any analysis that would require such a stipulation of exceptionality is inadequate
↳ This lends further support the idea that **the mapping from syntax to prosody is very direct** (e.g. Kratzer and Selkirk 2007)

5 Further Research

This Voice-analysis has further independent support in that it can explain the following complex phenomena rather simply:

(16) a. Henry defended himself and Anne did too. (Ahn 2011a)
= Anne defended herself.
≠ Anne defended Henry.
b. The diaper won't throw ITSÉLF away. (Ahn 2011b)
= Someone else will throw the diaper away.
≠ The diaper will throw something else away.

Moreover, English reflexives do not look so different from Romance clitics

↳ The reflexives that move are only slightly different from Romance clitics – see Ahn (In Progress) for discussion of the striking similarities

Finally, a Reflexive Voice^0 is, in principle, easily applicable to languages that mark reflexivity with some kind of verbal affix

↳ In fact, Finnish provides especially good insight, since it can utilize either an English-style DP or a verbal affix

To find further support for this analysis, **the extent to which the prosodic properties of the reflexive, as motivated here, is cross-linguistically extendable** must be explored

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