

Phonological Movement in Greek and Latin

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Languages group words and phrases syntactically (1) as well as prosodically (2), and the two types of grouping do not always coincide:

- (1) [_{VP}occiderint [_{PP}in [_{DP}eodem [_{NP}castello]]]] =Syntactic Constituency
(2) ((occiderint)_ω (in eodem)_ω (castello)_ω)_φ =Prosodic Constituency
died_{3p.pf.subj} in same_{mds} castle_{mds}

The syntactic constituency in (1) is built up from embedding of XPs, while the prosodic constituency in (2) is built up from three prosodic words: (occiderint)_ω, (in eodem)_ω, and (castello)_ω joined into one prosodic phrase (Selkirk 1984, 1986, 1995).

We look at *hyperbaton* in classical Greek and Latin prose and show that it involves movement of prosodic rather syntactic constituents. (3) shows a classic case of hyperbaton, where the underlined portion is focused and fronted:

- (3) in eodem occiderint castello
in same_{mds} died_{3p.pf.subj} castle_{mds} ‘died *in the same* castle’ (Caesar)

Comparison of the underlined portion of (3) with the syntactic phrasing (1) shows that it is not a constituent in the syntax. Comparison of (3) with the prosodic phrasing (2), on the other hand, reveals that it *is* a prosodic constituent. Similar cases occur in Greek:

- (4) es tās állas épempe summakhíās
to the_{fap} other_{fap} sent_{3s} allies_{fap} ‘sent (them) to the other allies’ (Herodotus)

Again, the syntax groups the PP as [_{PPes} [_{DP} tās [_{QP} állas [_{NP} summakhíās]]], where [es tās állas] is not a syntactic constituent. The prosody groups this as ((es tās állas)_ω (summakhíās)_ω)_φ, where (es tās állas) is a prosodic word as defined in Selkirk’s work, i.e., as a string of function words terminating in a content word (noun, verb, or adjective). The fact that (es tās állas) is subject to hyperbaton under focus suggests that hyperbaton moves prosodic rather than syntactic constituents.

We show that hyperbaton is syntactically cross-categorical and not limited by any known constraints on syntactic movement. Thus, hyperbaton disobeys the Left-Branch Condition (5) and

the Coordinate Structure Constraint (6) (Ross 1967), the Adjunct Condition (7) (Huang 1982), and binding conditions on anaphors (8):

(5) *magna* proposit *eis* *qui* *occiderint* *praemia*
 great_{nap} proposed_{3s} those_{mdp} who_{mnp} died_{3p.pf.subj} rewards_{nap}
 ‘proposes great rewards for those who died’ (Caesar)

(6) *quas* *inter* *et* *castra*
 which_{fap} between and camp_{nap} ‘between which and the camp’ (Caesar)

(7) *suo* *stare* *loco*
 their_{ngp} stayed place_{ngp} ‘stayed in their position’ (Livy)

(8) *se* *Milo* *continuit*
 self Milo_{mns} restrained_{3s} ‘Milo restrained *himself*’ (Cicero)

Syntactic analyses of hyperbaton in Greek (Devine & Stephens 2000) and Latin (Devine & Stephens 2006) are not consistent with such facts.

There are robust restrictions on movement in Greek and Latin, but they are prosodic in nature. A careful search of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecorum shows that Greek never allows strings of homophonous function words like τῆς τῆς, τῶν τῶν, τοῦ τοῦ, or μὴ μὴ (Golston 1995; Smyth 1920, §1162), though it freely allows strings of different sounding function words like τῆς τοῦ, τῆς τῶν, τῶν τῆς and μὴ οὐ. We present new data here that shows the same thing for Latin: in a large electronic search of Latin we found no strings of homophonous function words like *quod quod* ‘because that’ or *cum cum* ‘when with’ despite finding many syntactically identical strings of different sounding function words like *quod quis* ‘because who’, *ut cum* ‘so with’, *cum ab* ‘when from’, *cum ad* ‘when towards’, and so on. This phonological constraint on hyperbaton makes sense if hyperbaton involves movement in the phonology, but not if it involves movement in the syntax, which is arguably phonology-free (Zwicky & Pullum 1986).

The fact that hyperbaton is also attested in Sanskrit (Speijer 1886) suggests that it may be ancestral in PIE, though probably not earlier than that, as Anatolian languages like Hittite do not seem to allow hyperbaton. PIE may well have been a language in which all movement was prosodic and not syntactic.