Information Packaging

linguistic realisation
acc. Vallduví & Engdahl
Overview

● What is Information Packaging
● Tripartite scheme
● Linguistic Realisation
● English
● Catalan
Information Packaging

Part of the information structure

Realisation of the needs of communication in some context:

Semantic meaning + Instruction
Terminology minefield

Two basic models:

➔ ground/focus
➔ topic/comment
Informational vs non-informational

● The pipes are $\text{[}_F \text{RUSTY} \text{]}$
● $\text{[}_F \text{The PIPES} \text{]}$ are rusty
Point of departure for the message “about”

→ John saw the play yesterday

→ Yesterday John saw the play
She gave [F a SHIRT] to Harry
Information Packaging

How to apply information to the cognitive state, modelled as a collection of “files”

● **Focus**: update potential of the sentence
● **Link**: *locus* of update (what file)
● **Tail**: mode of update (how to record)
The president \[^F\text{hates CHOCOLATE}\].

The president \[^F\text{HATES} \text{ chocolate}\].

\[^F\text{He hates CHOCOLATE}\].

\[^F\text{He HATES} \text{ chocolate}\].
Linguistic Realisation

➔ Morphology
    ◆ Japanese: *John wa sono hon o yonda*

➔ Syntaxis
    ◆ Hungarian, Turkish, Catalan

➔ Prosody (intonation/stress)
    ◆ Dutch, German, English

Often combined/multiple strategy
(Mostly) fixed word order.

Information packaging realised with pitch accent.
Focus

Focus associated with nuclear stress (A accent, H* tone)

The pipes are \([_F \text{ RUSTY }]\).
The pipes \([_F \text{ are RUSTY }]\).
\([_F \text{ The PIPES are rusty }]\).
\([_F \text{ The PIPES] are rusty.}]\)
The pipes \([_F \text{ ARE}] \text{ rusty.} \)
Ground

Link in B-accent (L+H* tune) (sometimes optional)

Where can I find the cutlery?
The forks are in the CUPBOARD, but I left the knives in the DRAWER.

Tails not marked, and can remain in situ.
Ambiguity

John $[F \text{ LEFT }]$. type 1 or type 4 instruction?
Did you get wet? 
\[ F \text{ Bloody SOAKING } \] I was.

They named their dog \[ F \text{ FIDO } \].
\[ F \text{ FIDO } \text{ they named their dog.} \]
Weak pro-forms

John \([ F \text{ LOVES } ]\) beer. vs John loves \([ F \text{ BEER } ]\).

\([ F \text{ He LOVES it} ]\). vs He loves IT (?)

How does John feel about beer? \([ F \text{ He LOVES it} ]\).

What drink does John love? \([ F \text{ BEER } ]\).

In Null-subject languages, ‘He’ would be dropped.
Catalan

Romance language
Null-subject
Underlyingly VOS
Pronominal clitics for dropped phrases
Right/left detachment
El Joan₁ [F va deixar una nota damunt la TAULA t₁]
Joan left a note on the table
Constituent movement

Non-focal elements are moved away from the focus position

El Joan$_1$ [$F$ hi va deixar una NOTA $t_2$ $t_1$], damunt la taula$_2$.

El Joan$_1$ [$F$ l$_3$ ’hi$_2$ va DEIXAR $t_3$ $t_2$ $t_1$], una nota$_3$, damunt la taula$_2$. 
The constituents in the main clause conform the focus, the ground must be moved away.

\[ F \text{ Deu estar rovellada la } \text{ CANONADA } \].

must be rusty the pipes

‘The pipes must be rusty.’
Links are detached to the left, the tail is detached to the right:

On són, els coberts?
Les forquilles són a l’armari, però…

a. els ganivets₁ els₁ vaig ficar t₁ al CALAIX.
b. #vaig ficar els ganivets al CALAIX.
c. #els₁ vaig ficar t₁ al CALAIX, el ganivets₁.
La Sió₁ [F va insultar la COIA₂ t₁ ]
Sió₁ insulted Coia
i ella₂ [F li₁ va fotre una HÒSTIA t₂ ].
and she her hit
‘Sió₁ insulted Coia₂ and she₂ hit HER₁.’
La Sió₁ [F va insultar la COIA τ₁ ]. [F Li va fotre una HÒSTIA ].
‘Sió insulted Coia. She hit her’

Who hit whom? Ambiguous
In English, too

Ann \(_F\) hugged SUE \(_F\).

\(_F\) She would forever be GRATEFUL to her \(_F\).

She \(_F\) would forever be GRATEFUL to her \(_F\).
Other issues

➔ It-clefts:
   It is John who left ; \([F \text{JOHN}]\) left.

➔ Deaccenting, recursiveness of ground-focus:
   The men in the hospital looked horrible.
   Especially the OLD men.

➔ Metalinguistic correction in catalan.
Conclusion

Information packaging is a cross-linguistic phenomenon.

It is realised with different tools in different languages.
Cross-linguistic analysis lets differentiate phenomena that are intrinsically independent but are realised through the same means in a particular language.