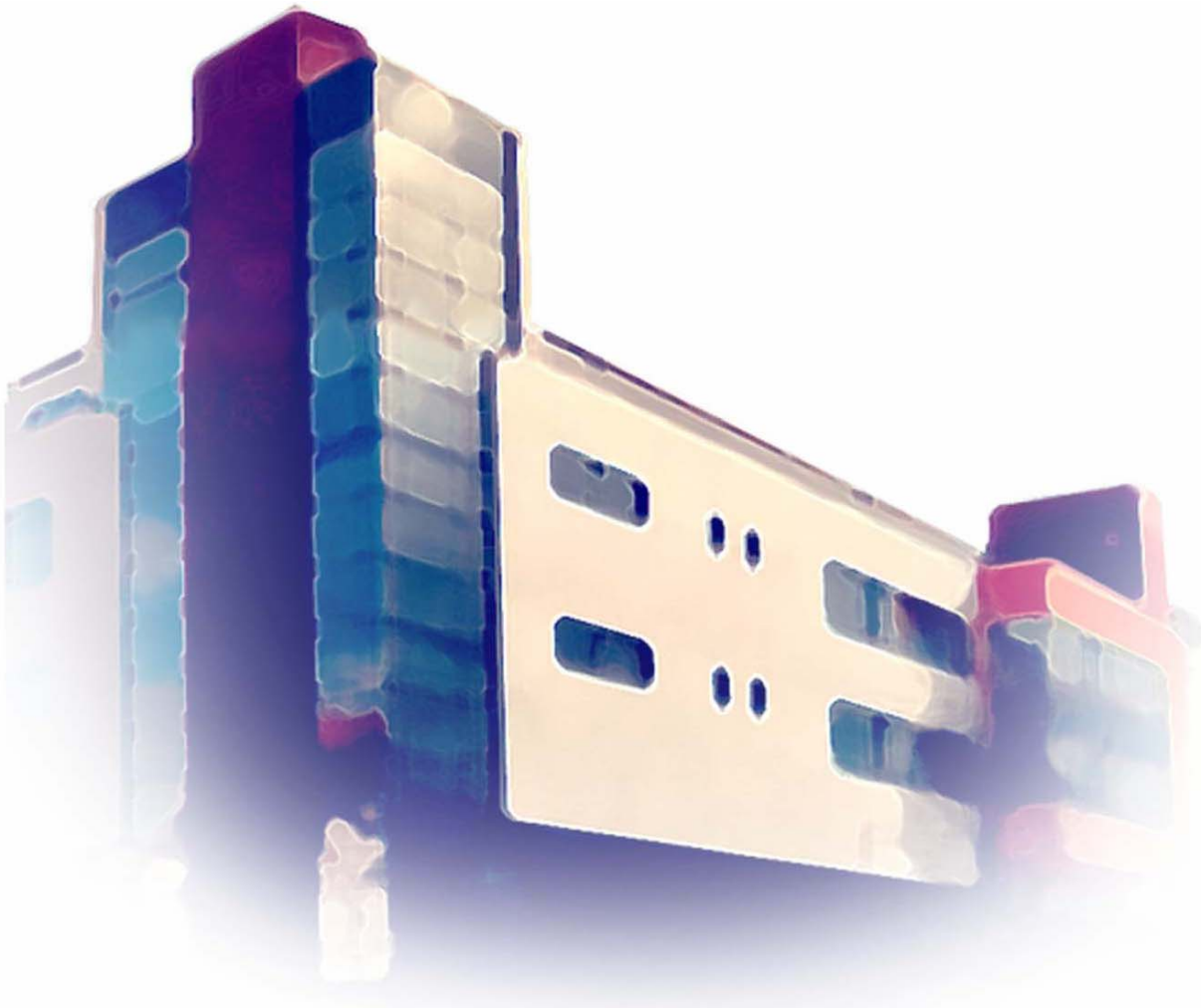


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*Information Structure of Estonian -
Compared to Finnish and Hungarian*



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INFORMATION STRUCTURE OF ESTONIAN - COMPARED TO FINNISH AND HUNGARIAN

by

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to compare the Finno-Ugric languages Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian with respect to information structure. In particular, it will be examined how word order in these languages is influenced by the discourse functions *topic*, *focus*, and *contrast*. Since this aspect of language is less investigated in Estonian than in Finnish and especially in Hungarian, a further purpose of this thesis is to establish facts concerning the influence of information structure on word order in Estonian.

It will be shown that in all three languages considered in this thesis, word order depends, at least to some extent, on the discourse functions *topic*, *focus*, and *contrast*. However, it will also become clear that in each language, this dependence takes a different form.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the work of È. Kiss, it is generally accepted that word order in Hungarian depends on information structure. More recently, Vilkuna has proposed that also in Finnish - which like Hungarian belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family - information structure has an effect on sentence structure. These results give rise to the question whether word order in Estonian - a further member of the Finno-Ugric language family - also depends on information structure. And if this is the case, it seems natural to ask whether the mapping of discourse functions to certain syntactic positions is similar in the three languages.

In this thesis, Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian are compared with respect to information structure. In particular, it will be examined how **word order** in the three languages is influenced by the discourse functions *topic*, *focus*, and *contrast*. Compared with Finnish and especially Hungarian, this aspect of Estonian has not been subject to thorough research yet¹. Placing facts about Estonian side by side with what is known about Hungarian and Finnish will thus allow us to gain insight into the way word order in Estonian depends on information structure.

The first chapter of my thesis provides a theoretical background for what is about to follow. I will explain the notion of information structure, focusing on the concepts of *topic*, *focus*, and *contrast*. Chapters II, III, and IV deal with Hungarian, Finnish, and Estonian respectively. Each chapter contains three sections. Section 1. is about topics, section 2. about foci, and section 3. about contrast in the particular language considered in this chapter. At the end of each section, a brief summary of the section is provided.

It will be shown that the discourse functions *topic*, *focus*, and *contrast* have an effect upon word order in all three languages considered in this thesis. However, it will also become clear that in each language this influence manifests itself in a different way, and to a different degree.

¹ For an overview of research on Estonian word order see (Lindström, 2005, p.36-42.). As can be seen there, many linguists have evoked some kind of information structural concepts (e.g. novelty, or the intention to stress something) in order to explain the underlying principles of Estonian word order. However, most of these investigations have not been conducted within a general theoretical framework, making it difficult to develop a generally accepted model of Estonian word order and its dependence on information structure.

I INFORMATION STRUCTURE

According to a widespread standpoint in linguistics and in philosophy, meanings of sentences in natural language can be reduced to their truth conditions. Thus, if my friend Ben says: “I finished my thesis yesterday”, what he means is that it is the case that he finished his thesis yesterday. While certainly plausible, this approach does not explain all our intuitions about the meaning of natural language utterances.

The sentences in a. - d. are truth-conditionally equivalent - they are true if and only if the speaker finished her thesis yesterday. Nonetheless, they do not seem to be equivalent in meaning, as they would be appropriate in different situations. For example, whereas b. would be a natural response to “What did you do yesterday?”, d. would sound strange in this context. A speaker who utters d. should presuppose that the addressee already knows that she finished something yesterday, and so d. would be an appropriate response to e.g. “What did you finish yesterday?”.

- a. I finished my thesis yesterday.
- b. Yesterday, I finished my thesis.
- c. It was yesterday that I finished my thesis.
- d. It was my thesis that I finished yesterday.

The problem for the truth conditional approach is thus that there exist structures which are truth-conditionally equivalent, but differ with respect to syntactic form and to meaning (in the sense that they are appropriate in different contexts). Exactly these kinds of structures are what the study of information structure is all about (see Lambrecht, 1996, p.9). To be more precise, the study of information structure investigates how the syntactic structure of a sentence depends on the context it is uttered in, and on the mental states of the interlocutors (ibid. p.5). Mental states that are of importance here have to do with the speaker’s assumptions about the addressee’s knowledge (e.g. to utter c. the speaker should assume that the addressee knows that she has finished her thesis), but also with what the speaker himself considers to be relevant (e.g. a. could be uttered by a speaker who does not attach importance to the exact day of finishing her thesis). The study of information structure is concerned with the **way** a certain propositional content is transmitted depending on the context (ibid. p.3).

In the next three sections, I will discuss the concepts of *topic*, *focus*, and *contrast*, which are all used to analyse sentences within the study of information structure. Before that, however, I want to introduce a further notion that will be of importance in this thesis. Following Lambrecht, I will distinguish between marked and unmarked sentences (Lambrecht, 1996, p.15). To appreciate this difference, consider the examples a. and c. above. Sentence c. can only be used in order to identify the exact day that the speaker finished her thesis on; the fact that she finished her thesis should be already presupposed by the addressee. In contrast, a. would be an appropriate response to many different

questions, e.g. “When did you finish your thesis?”, “What did you finish yesterday?”, “Who finished his thesis yesterday?”, and even “What happened?”. The reason for this difference in the possibilities of application is that a. is an unmarked and c. a marked structure. Whereas unmarked structures can serve many different discourse functions, the application of a marked structure is rather restricted - it is ‘tailored’ for being used in a few specific contexts (ibid. p.17).

At this point, it might be objected by saying that a. *as such* can not be used in all the different contexts listed above. The intonation pattern of a. would have to be adjusted in each case in order for the utterance to be appropriate. In fact, sentence accentuation is subject to extensive investigation within the study of information structure (see e.g. Lambrecht, 1996, p.322-333). However, in this thesis I will leave aside sentence accentuation and focus only on the syntactic structure of sentences, in particular on word order.

In addition to marked and unmarked sentences, I will talk about marked and unmarked constituents in this thesis. A constituent of a particular sentence is unmarked if it occupies the same position as in the unmarked structure, and marked if it occupies some other position. For example, the constituent “my thesis” is marked in d., where it occupies a preverbal position - as can be seen in the unmarked structure in a., the unmarked position of this constituent is postverbal.

1. TOPIC

Most linguists agree that the notion of topic has got to do something with **aboutness**. In particular, that it is either the phrase or the entity that the rest of the sentence is about. Complementary to the notion of topic is the notion of **comment**: that what is said about the topic. Beyond that point, there seems to be no common accord as to what topic really is. Some linguists focus primarily on **pragmatic** factors when analysing sentences in terms of topic-comment structures. For others, the notion of topic belongs to **semantics** rather than to pragmatics. In the following, I will briefly present and discuss these two diverging views on topic.

In his book “Information structure and sentence form” (1994), Knud Lambrecht elaborates the pragmatic perspective on topic. Lambrecht’s definition of topic makes reference to the given context and to the speaker’s mental states (Lambrecht, 1994, p.131; my emphasis):

“a referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if **in a given situation** the proposition is construed as being about this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is **relevant** to and which **increases the addressee’s knowledge** of this referent” .

Since what is the topic of a sentence depends on the given context, one and the same sentence can have different topics in different contexts according to Lambrecht:

1. *What did the children do next?* The children went to school.
2. *What happened next?* The CHILDREN went to school².

(Lambrecht, 1994, p.121)

Whereas 1. is intended to increase the addressee's knowledge about the children, the function of 2. is to inform the addressee about an **event** involving the children as participants (ibid. p.121, 124). Since 1. is about the children, it has a topic-comment structure. 2., on the other hand, is about no particular entity - it lacks a topic altogether. Sentences with and without a topic are called **categorical** and **thetic** respectively.

In contrast, Kuroda (2005), Gécseg (2006), and È. Kiss (2007), associate topic with **semantic** or **logical** rather than pragmatic functions. Different from Lambrecht, they consider the topic-comment structure to be **inherent to a given sentence**. While admitting that sentences with different topic-comment structures are often appropriate in different contexts, they argue that context does not determine the topic-comment structure of a sentence completely. Consider the following dialogue, a modified version of one of Gécseg's examples:

3. A: How are you doing?
3.a. B: Mary has got ill.

(Gécseg, 2006, p.161)

If B knows that A is aware of Mary's importance to him, it is perfectly natural for him to answer 3. with 3.a. - in doing so, he is counting on A's ability to infer from the fact that Mary is ill that he himself is not doing so great either. Despite of the fact that no constituent in 3.a. refers to the speaker, in the given situation the purpose of this sentence is to increase the addressee's knowledge of the speaker. Thus, according to the pragmatic approach to topic, the topic of 3.a. is the speaker³. However, in uttering 3.a., B also increases A's knowledge about Mary. Gécseg's proposal is that in this context, 3.a. **pragmatically** asserts something about the speaker by means of a proposition which [**logically or semantically**] asserts something about Mary (Gécseg, 2006, p.161).

The two views on topic presented in this section do not correspond to actual theories. When analysing topic-comment structures of sentences, adherents of the 'pragmatic approach' do not completely exclude sentence-internal semantic factors. Likewise, supporters of the 'semantic approach' do not deny the importance of context entirely. These two aspects, the pragmatic and the semantic, are rather **two dimensions** of topic, and most linguists have a preferred dimension that they focus on more than on the other.

² Granted, 1. and 2. differ in where the main accents are placed. However, since it is syntactical structure I am concerned with in this work, I will ignore sentence accentuation here.

³ Lambrecht recognises the possibility of sentences having topics which are not represented in them as constituents (see Lambrecht, 1994, p.15).

One way to unite these two dimensions is Vilkkuna's **question-based approach**⁴ to topics. In this approach, each sentence in a discourse is considered to be a countermove to some other sentence, i.e. each sentence is regarded as somehow connected to the previous sentences in the discourse. These connections, however, can remain **implicit**, and it is the task of a linguist to reconstruct the "underlying connections between the sentences actually uttered" (Vilkkuna, 1989, p.74). Applying this approach to the above examples, the information structure of 3. might be reconstructed as follows:

A: How are you doing?

B: *How I am doing depends on many things.*

Since I care about Mary, how I am doing depends on how she is doing.

How is Mary doing?

Mary has got ill.

The sentences written in *italics* represent the reconstruction of the underlying connections between the two actually uttered sentences. As can be seen, the immediate question that B answers (*How is Mary doing?*) is about Mary. In this reconstruction, the structure of the context in 3. and 3.a. is similar to the structure of the context in 1. The only difference is that the question determining the topic of the sentence is explicitly uttered in 1., but remains implicit in 3.a., where it only occurs in the speaker's mind.

The question-based approach is a compromise between the two views presented at the beginning of this section. On the one hand, the sentence under consideration is viewed as quite **independent** from the explicit discourse context - the reconstruction is based on the sentence as such. On the other hand, in reconstructing an implicit context, i.e. finding out the immediate question answered by the sentence under discussion, the importance of sentence-external factors is emphasised - even if the 'playground' of these factors is just the speaker's mind as in the example above.

I am going to follow Lambrecht's distinction between topic and topic expression. The topic of a sentence is the thing that the proposition expressed by the sentence is about (Lambrecht, 1994, p.118). The **topic expression** is the **constituent** that refers to the entity that the proposition expressed by the sentence (with which the constituent is associated) is about (ibid. p. 131).

Whereas a topic expression always refers to the entity that functions as the topic of this sentence, a topic is not necessarily encoded as topic expression in a given sentence. This is illustrated by the following example (a modified version of Lambrecht's 4.4 on p. 129):

4. What did Felix do? He praised himself.

Since the answer in 4. adds relevant knowledge about Felix, Felix is the topic of this sentence. Interestingly, there are two constituents in the answer that refer to Felix : *he* and

⁴ Vilkkuna's approach is based on Lauri Carlson's book "Dialogue Games: An Approach to Discourse Analysis" (1983).

*himself*⁵. But only the first of them is a topic expression. The reflexive pronoun *himself* is part of the comment, and its “referent just happens to coincide with the referent of the topic expression” (ibid. p.129).

Since topic expressions denote entities that sentences are about, they should be **referential** - otherwise there would be nothing for the sentence to be about. Thus it is generally agreed that non-referring constituents like e.g. *few students* cannot function as topic expressions (see e.g. Ę. Kiss, 2002, p.10). However, the notion of referentiality must be understood in a broad sense here - what matters is that in the given context, the topic expression can be interpreted as denoting an individual or a set of individuals. Thus, also **generics**⁶ (see Kuroda, 1972) and specific indefinites (see Endriss & Hinterwimmer, 2007) can serve as topics.

The topic-comment distinction has sometimes been equalised with the division between **old and new information** in a sentence. According to this view, topics are entities that are given (old), or at least accessible, for the speaker.

I will follow Lambrecht in distinguishing the concept of topicality from the concept of accessibility. The latter is associated with a linguistic expression and its referent, and has got to do with the state of this referent in a person’s mind (Lambrecht, 1994, p.104). Topic, on the other hand, is defined as a referent that stands in a certain **relation** to a **proposition**, and is thus fundamentally different from the concept of accessibility which has to do with the representations of discourse referents in the interlocutors’ minds at given points in a conversation (ibid. p.160). Thus, also brand new referents can in principle function as topics - in case the speaker is able to construe them as entities that the proposition expressed by the sentence is about.

Whereas Lambrecht emphasises the difference between topic as a pragmatic **relation**, and accessibility as a pragmatic **state**, he admits that there is a certain connection between these two. In order to make a referent interpretable as the topic of a proposition, it should have certain activation properties: in order to function as the topic of a sentence, an entity has to have a degree of activeness or at least accessibility (ibid. p.164). Sentences whose topics are active in the discourse are thus most easily processed and cognitively speaking most acceptable (ibid. p.165).

2. FOCUS

Similar to topic, the notion of focus has been defined differently by different linguists. What is generally agreed on is that focus has got something to do with **novelty**, **unpredictability**, or **relevancy** - that it is that part of the sentence which contributes the

⁵ To be more accurate, the constituent *himself* refers to the topic indirectly, in virtue of being “anaphorically linked to the topical antecedent *he*” (Lambrecht, 1994, p.129).

⁶ Actually, there seem to be two ways for generics to be referential: they can either be interpreted as referring to a set of individuals, or to kinds (see Ę. Kiss, 2002, p.10).

most important information. Complementary to the notion of focus is the notion of **background** - that part of the sentence which is already presupposed by and thus not so important for the hearer. Consider the following examples:

5. What did Mary buy for herself? 5.a. She bought herself a bicycle.
6. Did Mary buy herself a bicycle or a car? 6.a. She bought herself a bicycle.

Since the speaker's purpose in uttering 5.a. is to convey that it was a bicycle that Mary bought, the constituent *a bicycle* conveys the most important information in the sentence. This constituent is **new** and **unpredictable** (from the hearer's point of view) with respect to the question the sentence is supposed to answer. That Mary bought herself **something** is known to both participants of the dialogue, and thus the open sentence *Mary bought herself x* is the background in 5.a.

6.a. above answers a question where the focused constituent (*a bicycle*) has already been mentioned. This suggests that the novelty and unpredictability relevant for focus cannot be ascribed to the focused constituent (in this case *a bicycle*) as such.

Lambrecht accounts for 6.a. and similar sentences by arguing that focus, like topic, is a pragmatic **relation** - a relation that stands between an element of a proposition and the proposition as a whole. Thus, what is new or unpredictable in 5.a. and 6.a. is not the element *bicycle* as such, nor what it refers to, but its **role** as the second argument of the predicate *buy*, i.e. its relation to the open sentence *Mary brought herself x* (see Lambrecht, 1994, p.210). An element serves as the focus of a sentence if its addition to an open sentence makes the whole sentence a piece of new information (ibid. p.207, 211).

In other words, focus is that part of a proposition whereby that what is said differs from the background⁷ (ibid. p.213). But since what is background depends on the given context, one and the same sentence can have different focus-background structures in different contexts. Lambrecht distinguishes between three kinds of focus-background structures, illustrated in 7.-9. (a modified version of Lambrecht's 4.2. on p.121; foci are underlined):

Predicate-focus structure:

7. How is Tom doing?
7.a. Tom (he) just got a promotion.

Argument-focus-structure (identificational sentence):

8. I didn't understand - who just got a promotion?
8.a. Tom just got a promotion / It was Tom who just got a promotion.

Sentence-focus structure:

9. What happened?
9.a. Tom just got a promotion.

⁷ Throughout his book, Lambrecht uses the notion of presupposition instead of the notion of background.

In 7.a., the predicate is focused. 7.a is a topic-comment sentence where focus corresponds to comment and background to topic (ibid. p.121, p.226).

In 8.a., a single argument of the verb is focused. Background is an open sentence lacking an argument, and the focus corresponds to this argument. Since these kinds of sentences serve to identify a referent as the missing argument in an open proposition, Lambrecht calls them **identificational** sentences (ibid. p.123, p.228).

In 9.a., the whole sentence is focused, and there is no background. These kinds of sentences can be uttered 'out of the blue', and are therefore called **event-reporting** sentences (ibid. p.124, p.233).

According to the Hungarian linguist È. Kiss, Lambrecht's characterisation of focus is insufficient in that it does not capture the difference between two fundamentally different types of foci - **identificational focus** and **information focus**.

Information focus more or less matches Lambrecht's description of focus: it represents the non-presupposed information in a sentence (È. Kiss, 1998b). Consequently, according to È. Kiss the underlined constituents in 7. -9. are information foci.

The identificational focus, on the other hand, is not hallmarked by being non-presupposed, but rather by expressing **exhaustive identification**. By answering with a sentence that contains identificational focus, the speaker commits himself to providing a **complete** answer to the question. In contrast, by answering with a sentence that contains information focus, the speaker commits himself to no statements beyond what is expressed by the proposition he utters.

In English, the presence of identificational focus is indicated by cleft-constructions (see È. Kiss, 1998b):

10. Who did you introduce to Peter yesterday?
11. I introduced Mary to Peter yesterday.
12. It was Mary that I introduced to Peter yesterday.

11. and 12. express the same proposition, and are both appropriate answers to 10. Since the constituent *Mary* is non-presupposed and unpredictable, it functions as focus in both sentences according to Lambrecht. Despite of all these similarities, there is an aspect of meaning that makes 12. different from 11. Uttering 12., the speaker implies that it is Mary and **no-one else** that he introduced to Peter yesterday. 12. would be inappropriate in a situation where the speaker introduced both Mary and John to Peter. 11., on the other hand, would be perfectly appropriate in this situation. A speaker who uses 11. does not commit himself to any implications concerning the existence of other people besides Mary who he might have introduced to Peter.

Thus, identificational focus has the semantic feature [+exhaustive], whereas information focus is [-exhaustive]. È. Kiss claims that while information focus never involves movement either in syntax or in logical form, identificational focus undergoes operator movement - either in syntax or in logical form - and lands in a position where it c-commands its scope (È. Kiss, 1998., p.707).

Apart from exhaustively identifying the relevant individuals for whom the predicate holds, identificational focus performs another operation, namely the exclusion of potential alternatives. For this reason, universal quantifiers, as in 13., cannot function as identificational foci - universal quantifiers perform identification **without** exclusion (see Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p. 126-127).

13. Who danced with Mary yesterday?

*It was everybody that danced with Mary yesterday.

Although identificational focus has the feature [+exclusive], the potential alternatives it excludes do not have to be present in the context. After hearing a sentence containing identificational focus, the hearer is **not** required to be able to form a complementary subset containing the elements for which the predicate in question does not hold. Identificational foci can also be used to exhaustively identify the extension of a predicate if not all the relevant alternatives are known, as in 14. (see È. Kiss, 1998b, p.268):

14. Who wrote the German Requiem?

It was Johannes Brahms who wrote the German Requiem

I will follow Molnár & Järventausta in attributing this tolerance of the identificational focus to its feature [\pm contrastive]. According to Molnár & Järventausta, an operator is [+contrastive] if it requires the presence of alternative elements in the context (see the next section on contrast).

As I will show later, the distinction between identificational and information focus is especially important with respect to the Hungarian language, where the two kinds of foci occupy **different syntactic positions** in a sentence.

3. CONTRAST

I will follow Molnár & Järventausta (2003, p.126) in assuming that contrastiveness has got to do something with the presence of relevant alternatives in the context. Different from the features [α exhaustive] and [α exclusive] discussed in the previous section, [α contrastive] is a **pragmatic** feature - its value is based on alternatives specified in the context (ibid.). Thus, a constituent has the feature [+contrastive] if it stands in opposition to other elements in the context. E.g. in 15. below, the activity of playing badminton is contrasted to the activity of playing tennis. In 16., on the other hand, the activity of playing badminton is not being opposed to anything - the answer just supplies new information from an unlimited set of possibilities.

15. Should we play tennis or badminton? Let's play badminton.

16. What should we do? Let's play badminton.

There are differences of opinion concerning the nature of the relevant alternatives required for contrastiveness. On Jackendoff's account, the decisive factor is the hearer's ability to generate a set of alternatives for the contrasted constituent (see Molnár, 2002, p.101). According to this view, the alternatives need not to form a clearly delineated set, and neither do they have to be mentioned explicitly in the context. I will call this rather relaxed concept of contrast **implicit contrast**.

According to Chafe, on the other hand, the relevant alternatives should be members of a limited set - a set whose elements can be completely identified by the interlocutors. Jacobs even argues that the alternative candidates should be explicitly mentioned in the context (Molnár, 2002, p.101). I will use the term **explicit contrast** to refer to this rather strict concept of contrast.

Different from topic and focus, contrast is not realised *as such* in a sentence - apart from being contrastive, a contrastive element must also be either focused or topicalised. A contrastive element is either a contrastive focus or a contrastive topic. This might be the reason why Lambrecht considers contrast to be a feature of focusing and topicality, serving to further parametrise these functions (Molnár, 2002, p.102). According to him, contrast - unlike topic and focus - is not an information structurally relevant notion, but mainly a cognitively motivated category (see Lambrecht, 1994, p.290).

With respect to the three languages investigated in this thesis, however, the notion of contrast turns out to be particularly important. There are structures in Hungarian, but especially in Finnish and in Estonian, which cannot be understood without taking the notion of contrast into account. As will be shown in chapter III, the first position of a Finnish sentence is occupied by a contrastive element - regardless of its status as focus or topic. This shows that the view on contrast as merely further parametrising topic and focus is not justified - on the basis of Finnish evidence, one could just as well consider topic and focus as further parametrising contrast. I will follow Molnár (2002) in recognising contrast as a further information packaging phenomenon, **independent** from topic and focus.

3.1. CONTRASTIVE FOCUS

Contrast and focus are often regarded as very closely related concepts. In fact, there are linguists, e.g. Bolinger and Lambrecht, according to whom focusing is always contrastive (Molnár, 2002, p.100). They would argue that whereas in 15., the activity of playing badminton is explicitly contrasted to the activity of playing tennis, in 16. it stands in implicit contrast to anything else the group might do (see Lambrecht, 1994, p.290). If one shares this view on focusing, contrastiveness must be seen as a gradient notion, and there are only clear and less clear instances of contrastiveness (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 290).

According to others (see Molnár, 2002, p.102), there is a **qualitative** difference between sentences that supply new information from an unlimited set of possibilities (like 16.), and sentences where the constituent bearing new information is chosen among a limited set of candidates (like 15.). As I will show later in this thesis, evidence from Finnish does indeed

support the view that contrastive foci are not just a subtype of “plain” foci, but rather constitute an independent category of information structure.

As already discussed in the previous section on focus, È. Kiss also distinguishes between two fundamentally different types of foci: **information focus** and **identificational focus**. In fact, she claims that the term “contrastive focus” is interchangeable with the term “identificational focus” (È. Kiss, 1998b, p.245). And indeed, there is something that the two types of foci have in common, namely the features [+exhaustive] and [+exclusive].

However, I will follow Molnár (2002, p.103) in keeping contrastive focus and identificational focus apart⁸, altogether distinguishing between three kinds of foci (contrastive, identificational, and information focus). As I already showed in the previous section, identificational focus can also be used if no alternatives are present in the context (see example 14.). This shows that exhaustive identification (the hallmark of identificational focus) and opposition to relevant alternatives present in the context (the hallmark of contrastive focus) do not always go together. As I will show later on, the use of contrastive foci is limited to contexts where alternatives are present, and this makes their behaviour quite different from that of identificational foci. It would thus be misleading to subsume the two under the same category.

3.2. CONTRASTIVE TOPIC

Contrast is not only relevant in combination with focusing - also topics can be contrastive. A contrastive topic arises when the topic of the sentence is opposed to other elements that could potentially be topics of other sentences. In English, the most important syntactic means to indicate that an element is a contrastive topic are **left-dislocation** and **topicalisation** (Molnár, 2002, p.105). The following examples show that the concept of contrast is necessary for understanding topicalisation in English:

17. You see every Woody Allen movie as soon as it comes out.

17.a. No - *Annie Hall* I saw (only) yesterday.

18. Why are you laughing?

18.a. #*Annie Hall* I saw yesterday. I was just thinking about it.

(Molnár, 2002, p.105)

Unlike in 17.a., where the topicalised element *Annie Hall* is opposed to other instances of Woody Allen movies, in 18.a. there is no element that *Annie Hall* could be opposed to, and therefore topicalisation is inappropriate.

⁸ Instead of identificational focus, Molnár talks about a focus operator that operates “either on a contextually open or closed set”; instead of contrastive focus, she talks about a focus operator that excludes alternatives from a closed set (Molnár, 2002, p.103-104).

According to Molnár (2002, p.108), contrastive topics and contrastive foci have both the feature [+exclusive] - 17.a. suggests that there is at least one Woody Allen movie that the speaker **did** see as soon as it came out. But different from contrastive foci, contrastive topics are [-exhaustive] (ibid.). Whereas a contrastive focus excludes all other alternatives from the extension of the predicate, contrastive topics only exclude one or some of the relevant alternatives. So, the sentence in 17.a. does not exhaustively identify Woody Allen movies that the speaker did not see as soon as they came out - rather, only one example of such a Woody Allen movie is given.

The most important features of foci and contrastive elements are summarised in table 1. below.

	FOCUS		CONTRAST	
	INFORMATION FOCUS	IDENTIFICATIONAL FOCUS	CONTRASTIVE FOCUS	CONTRASTIVE TOPIC
SEMANTIC	-	[+exclusive], [+exhaustive]	[+exclusive], [+exhaustive]	[+exclusive], [-exhaustive]
PRAGMATIC	new information	alternatives not necessary: [± contrastive]	[+contrastive]	[+contrastive]

Table 1.: *Semantic and pragmatic features of foci and contrastive elements*

II. HUNGARIAN

Among the three languages considered in this thesis, Hungarian is the one most investigated in terms of its information structure. As early as 1981, È. Kiss suggested that particular information structural roles are indicated by syntactic means in Hungarian: “Hungarian sentence structure marks constituents from a communicative point of view: its distinguished structural units function as topic and focus” (È. Kiss, 1981, p.185).

By now, it is generally agreed that the discourse functions topic and focus are mapped to particular syntactic positions in Hungarian (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p. 119). According to È. Kiss (2002, p.2), Hungarian sentences can be divided into a **topic** and into a **predicate** (comment) part. The topic position is sentence-initial, and the focus position immediately precedes the finite verb inside the predicate⁹:

[_{TOPIC} topic] [_{PREDICATE} focus - *everything else*]

In contemporary Hungarian linguistics, the terms ‘topic’ and ‘focus’ are often used to refer to any constituent in the position associated with the respective discourse function (see e.g. È. Kiss, 2007, p.69). I will, however, keep the syntactic positions proposed for topic and focus apart from the discourse functions topic and focus as discussed in chapter I. Following Molnár & Järventausta (2003), I will show that correlation between the discourse functions topic and focus on the one hand, and certain syntactic positions on the other hand, is not as straightforward as it is traditionally claimed to be in Hungarian. At the end of this chapter, I will briefly discuss the role of contrast in the syntax of Hungarian.

1. TOPIC

In 2002, È. Kiss characterised the sentence-initial topic position in Hungarian in the following way (È. Kiss, 2002, p.9, my emphasis):

“The topic foregrounds an individual (a person, an object, or a group of them) from **among those present in the universe of discourse** as the subject of the subsequent predication.”

The following permutations (19.-21.) of a simple transitive sentence all describe the same state of affairs (of John loving Mary), but formulate it as statements about its different participants. 19. would be used by someone who wants to describe the state of affairs without foregrounding any of the participants. In contrast, 20. and 21. are statements about John and Mary respectively. In the light of È. Kiss’ characterisation of topic given above, the choice between 19., 20. and 21. seems to depend on the **context** in which the

⁹ There is also a position for distributive quantifiers before the focus (see e.g. Molnár & Järventausta, 2003). I will not deal with this position in more detail in this work.

proposition is uttered, e.g. on whether it is John or Mary whose romantic life is currently at issue.

19. [PREDICATE Szereti Janos Marit]
loves John Mary-ACC
John loves Mary.

20. [TOPIC Janos] [PREDICATE szereti Marit]
John loves Mary-ACC
*John, he loves Mary.*¹⁰

21. [TOPIC Marit] [PREDICATE szereti Janos]
Mary-ACC loves John
Mary, she is loved by John.

(È. Kiss, 1981, p. 187)

È. Kiss' definition of topic given above suggests that only contextually given elements can occur in sentence-initial position. But in a newer article, È. Kiss (2007) claims that also all-**new** sentences can have topics, and topics of Hungarian sentences need **not** be present in the universe of discourse (ibid. p.72). È. Kiss' new characterisation of topic makes less reference to context than the one given above (ibid. p.70, my emphasis):

"The topic is an XP extracted from the functionally extended verb phrase into the left-periphery of the sentence. It precedes the pitch accent that marks the left edge of the functionally extended verb phrase in Hungarian. **It is interpreted as the logical subject of predication**"

One phenomenon that the new characterisation of topic is meant to cope with is that a so-called 'out of the blue' sentence can also have its topic position filled. For example, the question "What happened?" can often be answered in different ways:

22. [TOPIC Bodri] [PREDICATE megharapta Marit]
Bodri bit Mary-ACC
Bodri bit Mary.

23. [TOPIC Marit] [PREDICATE megharapta Bodri]
Mary-ACC bit Bodri
Mary was bitten by Bodri.

(Kiefer, 2005, p.261)

24. [PREDICATE Megharapta Bodri Marit]
bit Bodri Mary-ACC
Bodri bit Mary.

(c.f. Gécseg&Kiefer, 2009, p.606)

¹⁰ I do not use the 'as for X' translation of È. Kiss, because it evokes a contrastive interpretation which is not necessary (although possible) in this case.

The purpose of an answer to “What happened?” is not to convey information about Mary or Bodri, but rather to describe a situation. Thus, according to the kind of approach to topics put forward by Lambrecht, only 24. should be an appropriate response to “What happened?” - given that a sentence-initial element really does correspond to the pragmatically defined topic of the sentence. The fact that in Hungarian also 22. and 23. can be used in the given situation suggests that filling out the Hungarian topic position is **semantically** rather than pragmatically motivated.

Although È. Kiss’ two characterisations of Hungarian topic position differ with respect to the importance of discourse context, what is common to both is that this position is supposed to host a constituent referring to something the sentence is about. To guarantee that there really is something for the sentence to be about, certain elements (e.g. verbs) should be barred from this position.

In 2002, È. Kiss argues that a topic expression must be **referential** and **specific** (È. Kiss, 2002, p.11). This is the reason why verbs and monotone decreasing quantifiers (as in 25.) cannot occur in this position. It also explains why topicalised indefinites can only be understood specifically - *egy autó* (“a car”) in 26. has to be interpreted as meaning *one of the aforementioned cars*¹¹.

25. *[_{TOPIC} Kevés várat] [_{PREDICATE} meg védtek a zsoldosok a törökök ellen]
few fort-ACC VM defended the mercenaries the Turks against
Few forts were defended against the Turks by mercenaries.

26. [_{TOPIC} Egy autó] [_{PREDICATE} meg állt a házunk előtt].
A car VM stopped our house before
One of the cars has stopped in front of our house.

(È. Kiss, 2002, p.10)

However, also non-specific expressions may appear in topic position:

27. [_{TOPIC} Valaki] [_{PREDICATE} kopog]
somebody knocks
Somebody is knocking

(È. Kiss, 2002, p.11)

To account for sentences like 27., È. Kiss (2007) proposes a new requirement for topic expressions: they must denote entities that exist in the universe of discourse **independently of the event described in the sentence** (ibid. p.71). This criterion explains why the non-specific *valaki* (“somebody”) can appear in topic position, and also why *egy autó* (“a car”) must be read as *one of the aforementioned cars* in 26. In addition, it accounts for the fact that sentences containing verbs which express the ‘coming into

¹¹ If the constituent *egy autó* (a car) would occupy some other position in the sentence, it would be likely to be interpreted as introducing a new car into the domain of discourse (È. Kiss, 2002, p.10).

being' or 'appearing' of something are necessarily topicless. E.g., the following sentence does not have a "topicalisable constituent" (È. Kiss, 2002, p.15):

28.a. [PREDICATE Alakult két új egyesület].

formed two new union

Two new unions (were) formed

(È. Kiss, 2002, p.14)

While this new requirement for topic expressions can account for several facts about Hungarian sentences, it makes the concept of topic associated with Hungarian sentence-initial position rather different from the information structural notion of topic as presented in chapter I. In fact, Gécseg & Kiefer (2009) and Molnár & Järventausta (2003) argue that there is no strict correlation between sentence-initial position and discourse functional topics in Hungarian. In the following, I will present some evidence for this claim.

First, it is hard to imagine how the indefinite pronoun *somebody* in 27. could denote something that the whole sentence is about. This could only be the case if the speaker has a certain individual in mind while uttering the sentence. But according to È. Kiss, this need not to be the case: 27. could also be used in a situation where the existence of an unidentified person has been inferred (È. Kiss, 2002, p.11). In this case, however, the sentence would not be about anything; it would merely assert the existence of somebody who just knocked on the door (Kiefer, 2005, p.260). There seems to be no good reason for attributing topic-comment structure to 27. - regardless of whether one has adopted the pragmatic or semantic view on topics.

A further example of 'non-topic-worthy' elements occupying the alleged topic position is 29, where a brand-new referent (as indicated by the indefinite article *egy*) has been topicalised. 29. clearly violates È. Kiss' first definition of topic given above. Since this sentence can be uttered 'out of the blue', a passer-by does not have to be already present in the universe of discourse (Gécseg&Kiefer, 2009, p.607).¹²

29. [TOPIC Egy járókelot] [PREDICATE megharapott egy kutya]

a passer-by-ACC bit a dog-NOM

A passer-by was bitten by a dog.

(Gécseg & Kiefer, 2009, p. 606)

Molnár & Järventausta (2003) point out sentence adverbials, like *talán* ("perhaps"), as another type of elements that appear in sentence-initial position without functioning as information structural topics:

¹² On the basis of 29., an interesting observation can be made about topics in Hungarian as compared to topics in **Japanese**. Japanese, like Hungarian, is regarded to be a topic-prominent language. Japanese topics are followed by the morpheme *wa*. Kuroda (1972) claims that Japanese constituents followed by *wa* cannot be translated into indefinites in English, and vice versa (ibid. p.167). In other words, indefinite nouns cannot function as topics. However, the topicalised element in 29. is translated into English as an indefinite noun. This shows that Japanese and Hungarian - two languages that are widely considered to be topic-prominent - have different requirements for constituents that can be syntactically marked as topics.

30. [TOPIC Talán] [PREDICATE jön Péter holnap]
 Perhaps comes Peter tomorrow
It is possible that Peter will come tomorrow.

(Molnár&Järventausta, 2003, p.142)

On the other hand, there are elements that function as information structural topics but do not occur in topic position. Although the universal phrase functions as topic of 31., it is not in topic position but appears in the position associated with quantifiers instead (see n.9):

What did you buy for your children as a wedding present?

31. [PREDICATE [Q Mindegyikük] [FOCUS egy Autót] kapott]
 all-of-them a car got
Each of them got a car

(Molnár, 1998, p.148)

Because of the discrepancies between the discourse function of topic and topic position in Hungarian, several linguists (Ë. Kiss, 2007; Gécseg & Kiefer, 2009) have begun to argue that the Hungarian sentence-initial position is associated with **logical** rather than discourse functions (Ë. Kiss, 2007, p.69). According to this view, a constituent in sentence-initial position is interpreted as the logical subject of predication (ibid.) which is, different from topics, completely independent from context and “based exclusively on the concept of aboutness” (Gécseg & Kiefer, 2009, p.608). At first sight, one might think that the proponents of this view have adopted an extremely ‘semantic perspective’ (see chapter I) on topics. However, it is hard to imagine what kind of aboutness relation could exist between the denotation of *perhaps* and the proposition *Peter comes tomorrow* (see example 30.). Similarly, an aboutness relation between a non-specific indefinite (like *somebody* in 27.) and a proposition seems inconceivable to me.

Instead of proposing a new kind of aboutness relation next to the traditional concept of aboutness associated with discourse functional topics, I will follow Molnár & Järventausta in arguing that the correlation between information structure and syntactic structure in Hungarian is not strict. As Molnár & Järventausta claim, in Hungarian, there is at best a tendency of the discourse function of topic to be assigned to a certain syntactic position in the sentence (Molnár&Järventausta, 2003, p.144).

Summary

The sentence-initial position in Hungarian is associated with the discourse function of topic. It has been claimed that only constituents whose referents exist in the universe of discourse independently of the event described in the sentence may occur in this position. However, discrepancies between discourse functional topics and elements occurring in the sentence-initial position indicate that there is no one-to-one correlation between the discourse function of topic and sentence-initial position, but rather a tendency for topics to land in this position.

2. FOCUS

Although the immediate preverbal position in Hungarian is often referred to as ‘focus position’, it can actually host only one type of focus, namely identificational focus. Constituents functioning as information foci usually stay *in situ* or are formulated as contrastive topics (È. Kiss, 2007, p.77).

The difference between the two types of foci in Hungarian can be seen in 32. - 35., which can all serve as answers to the question “What did Mary pick for herself?”.

In 32. and 33., the constituents carrying new information are in focus position¹³. In accordance with the characteristics of identificational focus, these sentences are expected to provide a complete answer to the question - an exhaustive list of things that Mary bought for herself. That this is indeed the case can be seen by the fact that 33. is **not** a logical consequence of 32., but rather contradicts it. (È. Kiss, 1998b, p.250). Whereas 32. asserts that Mary picked for herself a hat *and* a coat (and nothing else), 33. claims that it was *only* a hat that Mary picked for herself. 34. and 35., on the other hand, do not express contradicting information. In fact, 35. is a logical consequence of 34. If Mary picked a hat and a coat for herself, then she also picked a hat for herself - here, unlike in 32. and 33., the conjunction elimination rule of classical logic applies.

32.[TOPIC Mari] [PREDICATE **egy kalapot és egy kabátot** nézett ki magának]
Mary a hat-ACC and a coat-ACC picked out herself-to.
It was a hat and a coat that Mary picked for herself.

33.[TOPIC Mari] [PREDICATE **egy kalapot** nézett ki magának]
Mary a hat-ACC picked out herself-to.
It was a hat that Mary picked for herself.

34.[TOPIC Mari] [PREDICATE ki nézett magának EGY KALAPOT ÈS EGY KABÀTOT]
Mary out picked herself-to one hat-ACC and a coat-ACC
Mary picked a HAT and a COAT for herself.

35.[TOPIC Mari] [PREDICATE ki nézett magának EGY KALAPOT]
Mary out picked herself-to one hat-ACC
Mary picked a HAT Mary for herself.

(È. Kiss, 1998b, p.250)

32. and 33. illustrate that constituents in Hungarian focus position are not merely associated with exhaustive identification, but actually **entail** it - the presence of identificational focus has an effect on the truth conditions of a sentence.

In 2002, È. Kiss proposed the following characterisation of the Hungarian focus position (È. Kiss, 2002, p.78, my emphasis):

¹³ That these constituents are indeed in the focus position can be seen by the fact that the verbal prefix *ki* has moved to a postverbal position - in the absence of focus, it is the verbal prefix that occupies the immediately preverbal position (È. Kiss, 2002., p. 77).

The focus represents a **proper** subset of the set of **contextually given elements** for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the **exhaustive** subset of this set for which the predicate actually holds.

According to this definition, constituents in Hungarian focus position have the following features:

- [+exhaustive] - the subset for which the predicate holds has to be **exhaustive**
- [+exclusive] - the subset for which the predicate holds has to be a **proper** subset of the set of contextually given elements, i.e. some elements have to be excluded from the extension of the predicate
- [+contrastive] - the identification is performed among a **set of contextually given referents**, i.e. relevant alternatives should be present in the context

That Hungarian focus position has the feature [+exhaustive] was illustrated by 32.-35. That it has the feature [+exclusive] can be seen by the fact that universal quantifiers are barred from this position - even if they are the only constituents carrying new information in the sentence (Molnár&Järventausta, 2003, p.125). Although 36. can serve as an answer to “Who did John introduce to Mary?”, the universally quantified phrase in focus position renders the sentence ungrammatical¹⁴. The ungrammaticality of 36. can be accounted for by pointing out that a universal quantifier has the feature [-exclusive]: although it performs exhaustive identification, it does so without exclusion (È. Kiss, 1998b, p.252). Lack of the feature [+exclusive] is also the reason why phrases associated with *also* and *even* are barred from the focus position (È. Kiss, 1998b, p.252)¹⁵.

36. *[_{TOPIC}János] [_{PREDICATE} mindenk_{nit} mutatott be Marinak]
John everyone-ACC introduced VM May-to.
John introduced Mary to everybody.

(È. Kiss, 2002, p.81)

The role of the feature [α contrastive] with respect to Hungarian focus position is not so straightforward. Although the above definition suggests that the relevant alternatives, among whom the exhaustive identification is performed, have to be present in the context, there are sentences which demonstrate that this need not be the case:

¹⁴ As in 32. and 33., the fact that the verbal prefix *be* is in a postverbal position indicates that *mindenk_{nit}* (“everybody”) is focused in 36.

¹⁵ Both *also* and *even* identify a member of the relevant set for whom the predicate holds without excluding any members for whom it does not hold (È. Kiss, 1998b, p.252).

I agree that in a strict sense, *also* and *even* are reconcilable with the feature [+exclusive], i.e. that e.g. the sentence *Even John laughed* can be legitimately used in case there are also people who did **not** laugh. However, I have the intuition that *also* and *even* phrases could not be used to actually **imply** the existence of individuals to whom the predicate does **not** hold. On the contrary, such sentences are used to imply that there is some other individual (besides the one associated with *also* or *even*) for whom the predicate holds. This might explain why these phrases cannot occur in a position where they should imply the existence of other individuals for whom the predicate does **not** hold. While theoretically reconcilable, these two implications would not be easy to combine in actual language use.

37.[_{TOPIC} A Magyar rapszódíákat] [_{PREDICATE} Liszt Ferenc írta]
The Hungarian rhapsodies-ACC Ferenc Liszt wrote.
*As for the Hungarian rhapsodies, it was **Ferenc Liszt** who wrote them.*

(É. Kiss, 2002, p.80)

In 37., the identification of the author of the Hungarian rhapsodies is performed on an open set, thus a complementary subset for which the predicate does not hold cannot be formed. But identificational focus can also be used if identification is performed on a closed set, giving rise to contrast between the subset of elements of which the predicate holds, and the complementary subset, of which the predicate does not hold. Identificational focus in Hungarian is thus [\pm contrastive] (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.126).

Movement into Hungarian focus position is obligatory: all constituents that are [+exclusive] and [+exhaustive] **must** occur in this position (É. Kiss, 1998b, p.268). This is the reason why phrases modified by *only* are obligatorily focused (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p. 127). Hence, there is a one-to-one correlation between [+exclusive] and [+exhaustive] constituents on the one hand, and constituents in focus position on the other hand.

Since exhaustive identification is an operation interpretable primarily on a set of individuals, individual-denoting constituents are the preferred elements in Hungarian focus position (É. Kiss, 2002, p.80, but cf. 3.1. of this chapter). Although the question in 38. requests the speaker to exhaustively identify **a number** (of English books that John got as a present), the whole DP *egy angol könyvet* (“one English book”) has to be moved to focus position. For the same reason, *that*-clauses and VPs are excluded from focus position (É. Kiss, 1998b, p.261).

How many English books did John get as a present?

38.[_{TOPIC} Janos] [_{PREDICATE} egy angol könyvet kapott ajandekba.]
John one English book-ACC got as-present
*It was **one** English book that John got as a present.*

(É. Kiss, 1998 , p.260)

Although the concept of focus has been generally associated with new and unpredictable information (see section 2 of chapter I), there is no strict correlation between new information and the focus position in Hungarian. In 38., the unpredictable part was properly contained in the focused constituent. In 39. below, the focused constituent is properly contained in the unpredictable part (in this case the whole sentence). On the basis of sentences like 38. and 39., É. Kiss concludes that “in focus constructions, there is a containment relation between the focus and new information” (É. Kiss, 2007, p.78).

What happened?

39.[_{PREDICATE} Az Olasz csapat nyerte meg a világbajnokságot!].
the Italian team won VM the world-cup
It was the Italian team that won the world cup!

(É. Kiss, 2002, p.78)

As illustrated by 34. and 35., the focus position in Hungarian can also remain empty¹⁶ - in this case, the unpredictable part is encoded as information focus.

Summary

The immediately preverbal position in Hungarian is reserved for identificational foci. All constituents in this position have to carry the features [+exhaustive] and [+exclusive], and all constituents carrying these features obligatorily move to this position. Focused constituents may optionally be contrastive. Information foci in Hungarian remain *in situ* or move to the topic position. In case the sentence has a focus, it either contains or is subsumed by new information.

3. CONTRAST

3.1 CONTRASTIVE FOCUS

As seen in the previous section, Hungarian focus position is primarily occupied by individual-denoting expressions, and is not necessarily contrastive. However, **if** a contrast is present, also non-individual-denoting expressions can be focused (È. Kiss, 2002, p. 80). To explain that, È. Kiss (ibid.) and Szabolcsi (1981) suggest that non-individual-denoting expressions are **individuated** by contrast, i.e. by opposing them with their alternatives. The presence of contrast is thought to render non-individual-denoting expressions similar to constituents that can usually be focused. This is the reason why 40. and 41. below, with a non-individual-denoting expression in focus position, are appropriate:

40. [TOPIC Péter] [PREDICATE **okos lányt** akart feleségül venni], nem szépet.
Peter smart girl-ACC wanted as-wife to-take, not beautiful.
*As for Peter, it was a **smart girl** that he wanted to marry, not a **beautiful one**.*

41. [TOPIC János] [PREDICATE **fokozatosan** értette meg a problémát.]
John gradually understood VM he problem-ACC
*As for John, it was **gradually** that he understood the problem.*

(È. Kiss 2002, p.80)

In 40., the elliptical clause opposes the property of being a beautiful girl to the property of being a smart girl, creating the impression that these are individual and distinct properties. This impression is what makes it possible for the non-individual-denoting expression *okos lány* ("smart girl") to occur in focus position (È. Kiss, 2002, p. 80). The elliptical sentence

¹⁶ In this case, the preverbal position is filled by the verbal prefix.

specifying an opposite is needed because the property *okos lány* (“smart girl”) does not have an ‘inherent opposite’. This is different in 41., where the focused adverb *fokozatosan* (“gradually”) is naturally opposed to *egyszerre* (“at once”) - the latter therefore does not have to be mentioned explicitly (*ibid.*). The kind of contrast needed for contrastive foci in Hungarian is thus **implicit** contrast.

3.2 CONTRASTIVE TOPIC

Also in case of topics, contrast is seen as a means of individuation. If pronounced with a rising intonation, several kinds of elements which are usually barred from topic position are allowed in it. Again, it is proposed that non-individual-denoting expressions such as adverbials (in 42. and in 43.) and verbs¹⁷ (as in 44.) are interpreted as denoting distinct properties in the presence of contrast. This makes them able to function as ‘usual’ topics that the rest of the sentence predicates a (higher order) property about. This analysis therefore assimilates contrastive topics to ordinary topics. (É. Kiss, 2007, p.73).

42. [TOPIC √´Jól] [PREDICATE `Kati oldotta meg a feladatot.]
well Kate solved VM the task-ACC
Kate was the one who solved the task WELL

43. [TOPIC √´Kétszer] [PREDICATE csak `Pistát hívtam fel.]
twice only Steve-ACC called VM
It was only Steve whom I called TWICE.

44. [TOPIC Péter] [TOPIC √´enni] [PREDICATE `evett.]¹⁸
Peter eat-INF ate
As for eating, Peter did eat.

(Gyuris, forthcoming, p.30)

Allowing ‘non-topic-worthy’ elements to be topicalised is not the only function of the rising intonation. It also gives constituents that regularly occur in topic position a different interpretation - giving rise to contrast between the topicalised element and its relevant alternatives in the context (Gyuris, forthcoming, p.20).

For example, *a padlón* (“the floor”) in 45. stands in **implicit contrast** with some other place where Peter could have slept (e.g. the tent) - even if is not actually mentioned in the context. Furthermore, it suggests that, in contrast to the floor, Peter did **not** sleep in that other place (Szabolcsi, 1981, p.144). Notice, however, that this is not an entailment -

¹⁷ Szabolcsi (1981) argues that the structure in 44. comes about by moving a copy of the verb into topic position, where it acquires the infinitival suffix. This kind of copying mechanism is necessary because the finite verb has a fixed position in the sentence. The only function of this procedure is to generate the special semantic effect of contrast.

¹⁸ Multiple topics are allowed in a Hungarian sentence (see É. Kiss, 2007, p.70).

unlike identificational focusing, contrastive topicalisation is **not** part of the truth conditional meaning of a sentence, but “merely provides a possibility for another kind of interpretational surplus to arise” (ibid.).

45. [TOPIC √ A padlón] [PREDICATE **Péter** aludt.]
the floor-ON Peter slept
*As for the floor, **Péter** slept there.*

(Szabolcsi, 1981, p.144)

Summary

Contrastive topics and contrastive foci in Hungarian occupy the same syntactic positions as plain topics and plain foci. Contrastive interpretation is evoked by a special rising intonation. The range of elements allowed to function as contrastive topics and contrastive foci is wider than the range of elements accepted as plain topics and plain foci. To explain that, contrast is analysed as a means of individuation: if contrasted, non-individual denoting expressions are understood as denoting distinct individuals.

III. FINNISH

Word order in Finnish is relatively free: changing the word order of a sentence usually does not render it ungrammatical or change its basic meaning (Vilkuna, 1995, p.244). But not all permutations are acceptable in one and the same context, suggesting that the word order of a Finnish sentence depends, at least to some extent, on the discourse functions of its constituents.

Whereas the structure of Hungarian sentences depends on the functions topic and identificational focus, topic and contrast are of main importance in Finnish. Two positions associated with discourse functions have been proposed for Finnish: the sentence-initial **K** for contrastive elements, and the preverbal **T** for topics (ibid. p.245):

K - T - V-field

However, the names K and T are supposed to have only an allusive connection to the discourse concepts contrast and topic (Vilkuna, 1989, p.38)¹⁹. These two positions should be rather seen as compromises between pragmatic, syntactic (ibid.), and semantic categories (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p. 140). In this chapter, I will deal with T and K, and their relation to discourse functions. I will also examine whether the presence of foci has an effect on the structure of Finnish sentences.

1. TOPIC (T - POSITION)

According to Vilkuna (1989, p.81), a constituent in T-position is most naturally construed as referring to the entity the sentence is about. Whenever a speaker wants to mark something as topic, a good option is to place the constituent referring to it in T. And from the hearer's point of view, the presence of a constituent in T is a permission to interpret it as referring to the topic (Vilkuna, 1995, p.252). This is illustrated by 46. which addresses the question "What is committee language?". Despite of its different grammatical cases in 46.a.-e., the constituent referring to *committee language* appears in T in all sub-clauses.

46.

46.a. [T Mietintökieleen] tärkeimmät semioottiset tunnusmerkit ovat, että
committee-report-language-GEN most-important semiotic characteristics are that
The main semiotic characteristics of committee language are that ...

46.b. [T se] on monistettu puolentoista rivivällillä A4:n suuruiselle paperiarkille.
it is duplicated 1.5-GEN spacing-ADE A4-GEN sized-ALL paper-ALL
it has been duplicated with 1.5 spacing on an A4 paper ...

¹⁹ Also the name 'V-field' should not be taken literally: although the material after T usually contains at least one verb, it can also remain empty, e.g. if the only verb in the sentence is in K (Vilkuna, 1989, p.38).

46.c. [_T sillä] on pitkä nimi
it-ADE is long title
it has a long title ...

46.d. [_T sen] on tehnyt työryhmä
it-ACC has made work-team
it has been written by a team ...

46.e. ja [_T se] letkuu veikeästi kun sitä pitää kädessä.
and it flaps amusingly when it-PART holds hand-INE
and that it flaps in an amusing way when you hold it in your hand.

(Vilkuna, 1989. p. 81)

Moving the topic expression to T is merely a strategy - it is not obligatory. Both 47. and 48. are appropriate answers to the given question, but the pronoun referring to the entity at issue (the winter coat) only occurs in T in 47.

What has happened to your winter coat?

47. [_T Se] vietiin Pelastusarmeijaan.
It took-PAS Salvation Army-ILL
It was taken to the Salvation Army.

48. [_T Äiti] vei sen Pelastusarmeijaan.
mother took it-ACC Salvation Army-ILL
My mother took it to the Salvation Army.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.81)

There is, however, one type of topic expressions that always occurs in T. A topic expression denoting a **continuous topic** - an entity that is the topic of a longer stretch of discourse - is always placed in T (Vilkuna, 1995, p.251) For example, 49. below is suitable in a context where Anna is the main subject of conversation (i.e. the continuous topic), and a sub-question emerges: "What about Mike, what did *he* give to Anna?". As an answer to this question, 49. has two topics - a contrastive topic²⁰ in K and a continuous one in T (ibid).

49. [_K Mikolta] [_T Anna] sai kukkia.
Mike-ABL Anna got flowers-PAR
From Mike, Anna got flowers.

(Vilkuna, 1995, p.246)

Unlike in Hungarian, where topicless sentences are possible (see examples 24. and 39. in chapter II), the T-position of Finnish sentences should be filled if possible (Vilkuna, 1989,

²⁰ For more about contrastive topics in Finnish, see 3.2 of this chapter.

p.40). In fact, many Finnish sentences contain a constituent that occupies the T-position **by default**. Usually, this constituent is the grammatical subject, like in 50., but in some clause-types, as in 51., also non-subjects occupy T by default (ibid. p.41).

50. [T Mikko] pesi astiat.
Mikko-NOM washed dishes-GEN.
Mikko washed the dishes.

51. [T Minusta] tulee lääkäri
I-ELA comes doctor.
I'll become a doctor.

(Vilkuna 1989, p.42, 44)

In 50. and 51., the constituents in T are suitable for functioning as discourse functional topics. But also elements that cannot function as aboutness topics (e.g. because they do not refer, as in 52.) can occupy T by default. Different from È. Kiss, Vilkuna does not try to convince us of the 'topic-worthiness' of the non-referring constituent in 52. (see example 27. and the discussion in chapter II), but rather claims that since these sentences lack a topic in the information structural sense, the T-position is filled by default (Vilkuna, 1989, p. 82).

52. [T Joku] välittää sinusta.²¹
somebody cares you-ELA
Somebody cares for you.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.82)

In colloquial Finnish, the T-position can even be filled by expletives - semantically empty pronominals like *se* ("it"). The function of the expletive in 53. is to indicate that the finite verb *oli* (was) is in K (see 3.1. of this chapter). Without the dummy pronoun, it would not be clear whether this constituent is in K or in T.

53. [K Oli] [T se] kiva nähdä sinua.
was it nice see-INF you-PAR
It was indeed nice to see you.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.41)

However, even if the sentence contains an element that occupies T by default, some other constituent may appear in T. If this is the case, it is very likely that the constituent in T refers to the topic entity. Although 54. below is syntactically marked - the grammatical subjects is not in T -, it might sound most neutral in certain contexts, e.g. when the dishes are under discussion.

²¹ Admittedly, 10. also can be uttered by a speaker who has someone special in mind, but this is not necessary.

54. [τAstiat] pesi Mikko.
Dishes-GEN washed Mikko.
The dishes were washed by Mikko.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p. 42)

Thus, if a constituent appears in T by default, no conclusions can be drawn about its discourse function. However, if something unusual occurs in T (i.e. something that does not appear there by default), “one is entitled to suspect that this is because it refers to the topic entity” (Vilkuna, 1989, p.82).

The Finnish T-position can only remain **empty** if there is neither a grammatical subject (which could occupy T by default) nor a contextually motivated topic in the sentence, as in 55. But as soon as there is something ‘T-worthy’ in the sentence, it must fill in the T-position. In 56. and 57. T is occupied by *täällä* (“here”) - the only ‘T-worthy’ element in the sentence.

55. On satanut.
has rained
It has been raining.

56. [κOn] [τtäällä] satanut.
has here rained
Oh yes, it has been raining here.

57. [τTäällä] on satanut.
Here has rained.
It has been raining here.

(Vilkuna, 1989. p.40)

Summary

The relation between the Finnish T-position and the discourse function of topic is an indirect one. An element which occurs in T by default must not refer to the topic of the sentence. However, if some other element appears in T, it is likely that it refers to the topic entity. Compared to the Hungarian topic position, filling of the Finnish T-position is motivated by syntactic factors to a higher degree. Unlike the Hungarian topic position, the Finnish T-position is filled by default in unmarked sentences, and also dummy elements can appear in this position. Hence, the correlation between topic as a syntactic position and topic as a discourse function is closer (although not perfect either, see section 1. of chapter II) in Hungarian than in Finnish.

2. FOCUS

The literature on Finnish suggests there are two structural positions associated with focusing. First, there is the marked OVS structure for focusing the subject (unmarked structures in Finnish are generally SVO). Second, a wider range of elements (including finite verbs) can be focused by positioning them in the sentence-initial position. Since the sentence-initial position in Finnish is reserved for contrastive elements, only ‘special’, contrastive foci can occur in this position. In this section, I will deal with the first type of focus; contrastive foci in Finnish will be considered in 3.1. of this chapter.

As seen in the previous section, grammatical subjects are the constituents that are most likely to occur in T by default. In accordance with that, Kaiser (2004, p.120) points out that the subject of an unmarked SVO sentence is usually interpreted as old information, i.e. as referring to an entity that has already been mentioned in the discourse. Since the property of being old information is highly compatible with the capacity to function as topic, this can be seen as further evidence for an affinity between T-position and topicality. Subjects that occur **after** the verb, on the other hand, are usually interpreted as information that is new to the discourse (ibid.). This is illustrated by the following example. 58. and 59. are unmarked SVO sentences, 60. and 61. are their marked OVS counterparts:

58. Anna puhuu syntaksista.
Anna talks syntax-ELA.
Anna will talk about syntax.

59. Uusi pesuaine poisti tahrان.
new detergent removed spot-ACC
The new detergent removed the spot

60. Syntaksista puhuu Anna.
syntax-ELA talks Anna
It is Anna who will talk about syntax.

61. Tahrان poisti uusi pesuaine.
spot-ACC removed new detergent
It was the new detergent that removed the spot.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.178, 179)

Like all unmarked sentences, 58. can be used in many different contexts, with different constituents (e.g. *Anna*, *syntaksista* (“about syntax”), or *puhuu syntaksista* (“talks about syntax”)) functioning as (information) focus. 60., on the other hand, can only be interpreted as a reply to “Who will talk about syntax?”, and not e.g. to “What about syntax?” (Vilkuna, 1989, p.178). Thus, only the subject (*Anna*) occupying the marked sentence-final position can serve as focus in 60. To put it figuratively, 60. seems to be specially tailored to answer the question “Who will talk about syntax?”, whereas 58. has a ‘multipurpose structure’. Similarly, whereas 59. can be used in various contexts, 61. is possible only as an immediate answer to “What removed the spot?”.

That OVS structures indicate the novelty of the subject is also suggested by the fact that these structures are often used to mark the subject as indefinite. The indefinite article in English is usually employed to introduce a new entity into the discourse. In Finnish, the

SVO/OVS alternation compensates for the lack of indefinite articles (Kaiser, 2004, p.120). This is illustrated by the following Finnish translation of a sentence from Beatrix Potter's "The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher". While the English sentence in 62. has a SVO structure with an indefinite subject, in Finnish the discourse-new subject appears in sentence-final position:

62. A great big water-beetle came up underneath the lily leaf.

63. Lumpeenlehden alla ui iso vesikuorianen
lily-leaf-GEN under swam big-NOM water-beetle-NOM.

(Kaiser, 2004, p. 120)

Further evidence for the subject focusing purpose of Finnish OVS structures comes from psycholinguistic experiments conducted by Kaiser & Trueswell (2004). Compared to SVO, OVS structures, are more difficult²² for readers to process when presented in isolation. However, a suitable context, where the subject is new, alleviates the effort needed to interpret OVS sentences (ibid. p.128). 64.b. below has OVS structure, but in the given context it is as easily processed as its SVO counterpart in 64.a (ibid. p.126):

64. Yesterday, Lotta was looking for mushrooms in the forest. In the grass, she noticed a hare that was moving forward carefully.

64.a. Hiiri seurasi jänistä ja linnut lauloivat.
Mouse-NOM followed hare-PART and birds were-singing.
A mouse was following the hare and the birds were singing.

64.b. Jänistä seurasi hiiri ja linnut lauloivat.
Hare-PART followed mouse-NOM and birds were-singing.
The hare was followed by a mouse and the birds were singing.

(Kaiser, Trueswell, p.12)

Kaiser & Trueswell further conducted an experiment that involved eye-tracking during listening. The subjects were shown pictures depicting situations described in the sentences they were listening to. The authors found that OVS sentences elicited anticipatory eye-movements to the discourse-new referent at the very onset of the second noun²³, i.e. prior to a point at which listeners could have phonetically analysed the second noun (ibid. p.135).

Kaiser & Trueswell conclude that listeners use OVS structures to make predictions about the upcoming postverbal subject **before** they even hear the subject (ibid. p.139). In contrast, SVO sentences do not involve such a predictive power: a postverbal object in

²² The difficulty of sentence-processing is measured by analysing participants' reading times and their accuracy of answering questions about the sentences (ibid. p.125).

²³ All sentences used in the experiment were simple transitive sentences with either SVO or OVS structure.

Finnish can be either old or new information and thus a listener who has heard SV... cannot make any predictions about the discourse status of the upcoming object (ibid.).

The preceding examples suggest that the subjects of Finnish OVS structures function as informational foci. Instead of carrying features such as [+exhaustive] and [+exclusive] like identificational foci in Hungarian, the subject of Finnish OVS sentences rather is hallmarked by indicating the novelty of its referent. Interestingly, this fact seems to contradict È. Kiss' claim that information focus never involves movement either in syntax or in logical form (È. Kiss, 1998; see section 2. in chapter I) - it is through movement to sentence-final position that the Finnish subject acquires its status as information focus.

OVS structures are associated with a focused subject only if they are marked, i.e. if the sentence has an unmarked SVO counterpart. There are also sentences for which OVS is the most natural order. This is often the case when the subject is non-agentive, and bears an extremely close semantic relationship to the verb. For example, in 65., *ampiainen* ("bee") is not necessarily interpreted as focus, because stinging is a prototypical activity bees perform towards humans (Vilkuna, 1989, p.181).

65. Minua pisti ampiainen.

I-PAR stung bee

I was stung by a bee.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.180)

However, if the subject is agentive, and the semantic relationship between it and the verb is abolished, as in 66.b., the OVS structure can only be interpreted as subject-focusing:

66. Why is Anna crying?

66.a. Häntä pisti ampiainen.

She-PAR stung bee

She was stung by a bee.

66.b. Häntä pisti terveystyöntekijä.

She-PAR stung nurse.

She got an injection from a/the nurse.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p. 182)

As an answer to 66, 66.b. conveys that Anna resents the identity of the one who did the stinging, not the stinging itself. This reveals that it actually answers the (implicit) question "Who was Anna stung by?". In contrast, 66.a. conveys that the child is crying because he was stung, and not because it was precisely a bee that stung her (ibid. p.182).

Summary

In Finnish, marked OVS sentences indicate that the subject is new, i.e. the subject has to function as information focus in these sentences. There are also unmarked OVS structures where the subject does not have to be interpreted as new - in these sentences, the subject is semantically closely related to the verb.

3. CONTRAST (K - POSITION)

The sentence-initial K position in Finnish is reserved for **contrastive** elements - regardless of their status as topics or foci. According to Vilkuna (1995, p.249), elements in K are 'informationally **ambivalent**' - they are simultaneously new and old. This ambivalence results from the fact that sentences where K is filled are addressed to different questions at the same time, the element in K being new with respect to one of them and old with respect to the other (Vilkuna, 1989, p.102). The first part of this section deals with focused (old-new) and the second with topicalised (new-old) elements in K.

3.1. CONTRASTIVE FOCUS

Sentences where the element in K is interpreted as a contrastive focus are called FOCTOP sentences by Vilkuna (1989, p.102). In these sentences, the element in K is the **main news**. But in addition to being the main news, the element in K is also **old** in some sense - it is old in the general context the sentence is used in, but new with respect to the immediate question the sentence answers ('old-new'). This can happen if the same element has already occurred as an answer *to the same question* before, if the speaker considers the answer to be obvious, or if something is being confirmed or corrected (ibid.). Vilkuna uses 67., uttered by someone choosing a cake in the cafeteria, in order to illustrate the informational ambivalence of contrastive foci. 68. depicts the reconstructed information structure of 67. (the underlined sentences are the sentences that are actually uttered).

67. Tuo on hyvän näköinen. [_{KF} Sen] minä otan.
that is good-GEN looking. It-ACC I take.
That one looks good. That's what I'll take.

68. *Which cake shall I take?*
(I'll take one that is good) (assumption)
What are the cakes like? What is that one like?
That one looks good.
(It is best to take that one) So shall I take that one?
That's what I'll take.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.103)

The FOCTOP sentence in 67. has already been presented as a suggestion (the last sentence in the parentheses in 68.) before the sentence is actually uttered. In uttering 67., the speaker thus confirms a sentence that was implicitly on his mind already (Vilkuna, 1989 p.103).

If a question is directly answered by a FOCTOP sentence, as in 69. below, there is a sense of impatience in the answer that is lacking in the unmarked version in 70. Vilkuna

suggests that this impatience rises from the fact that the speaker has already answered the question himself and thus considers the answer obvious (Vilkuna, 1989, p.104).

Which one will you take?

69. [K Tämän] minä otan.
This-ACC I take.

70. Minä otan tämän.
I take this-ACC

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.104)

Among the most conspicuous uses of FOCTOP sentences in Finnish are confirmation, as illustrated in 71., and contradiction, as illustrated in 72. (Vilkuna, 1989, p.102):

Peter flew to Reykjavik.

71. Tosiaan, [KF REYKJAVIKIIN(han)] Pekka lensi(kin), (eikä Tukholmaan)
That's right, Reykjavik-to (-indeed) Peter flew(-indeed) (not Stockholm-to)
That's right, (it was to) Reykjavik Peter flew, (not to Stockholm)

Peter flew to Stockholm

72. (Eihän, vaan [...]) [KF REYKJAVIKIIN] Pekka lensi.
(no but) Reykjavik-to Peter flew
(That's not true), it was Reykjavik Peter flew to.

(Molnár & Järventausta, p.132, 133)

Explicit mention of a city where Peter did **not** fly to improves the acceptability of 72. (Molnár & Järventausta, p.133). In case of the corrective use, a counter-element of which the predicate does not hold (*Stockholm*) is present by default. This suggests that K (of FOCTOP sentences) can only be occupied by an element that is opposed to some explicitly mentioned (or at least contextually salient) alternative. Thus, different from the identificational focus in Hungarian, contrastive focus in Finnish is [+contrastive] (È. Kiss, 1998b, p.271), and requires **explicit** contrast.

Similarly to identificational focus, contrastive focus in Finnish is [+exhaustive] and [+exclusive]. In 71. and 72., Peter's flight destinations are listed exhaustively, and at least one element (the explicitly mentioned alternative) is excluded from the extension of the predicate (Molnár&Järventausta, p.132). Due to this similarity, Finnish sentences containing contrastive foci (as in 74. and 75. below), and Hungarian sentences containing identificational foci (cf. 32-33. in chapter II) are both translated into English by forming an *it*-cleft for the focused element - a structure which according to È. Kiss (1998b) indicates the presence of identificational foci.

73. Esa luki kirjan. (neutral)
Esa read book-GEN
Esa read the book.

74. [KF ESA] kirjan luki. *It was Esa who read the book.*

75. [KF KIRJAN] Esa luki. *It was a book that Esa read.*

(Järventausta, 2003. p.101)

In fact, È. Kiss (1998b) claims that sentence-initial focus in Finnish, like the Hungarian preverbal one, is identificational focus. According to her, the only difference between the two is that while the Hungarian focus is [**±contrastive**], the Finnish one is [**+contrastive**]. However, the differences between these two foci seem to be too pronounced for subsuming them under the same category.

First, the fact that contrastive focus in Finnish requires the relevant alternatives to be explicitly mentioned in the context makes its use very restricted compared to the identificational focus in Hungarian. Contrastive focus would be inappropriate in many contexts where identificational focus would be the most natural choice. For example, sentence 37. in chapter II could not be a FOCTOP sentence in Finnish, because the relevant alternatives are not mentioned in the context.

While moving an element with the features [+exhaustive] and [+exclusive] into focus position is obligatory in Hungarian, in Finnish it is **optional**. In fact, the occurrence of a contrasted element in K is sometimes even rated as highly marked (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.133). 76. below, where the contrasted element has remained *in situ*, would be the unmarked option as a response to “Peter flew to Stockholm”(ibid. p.134).

76.(Eihän, vaan [...]) Pekka lensi REYKJAVIKIIN.

(no but) Peter flew Reykjavik-to
(That's not true), Peter flew to Reykjavik.

(Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.134)

As seen in chapter II., universal quantifiers and *also*-phrases are banned from focus position in Hungarian, because they lack the features [+exclusive] and [+exhaustive] respectively. In Finnish, these elements are allowed as contrastive foci in K - given that a relevant alternative is explicitly mentioned in the context, as in 77. (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.132-133). The feature [+contrastive] thus seems to be more relevant than the features [+exclusive] and [+exhaustive] in determining which elements can occur in K.

To Stockholm, only SAS flies.

77. [K KAIKKI lentoyhtiöt] Tukholmaan lentävät.

all airlines Stockholm-to fly.
All airlines fly to Stockholm.

(Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.133)

A further difference is that identificational focus lacks the ‘informational ambivalence’ that is characteristic to contrastive foci in Finnish. Only elements that are both old and new (‘old-new’) can occupy the K position of FOCTOP sentences. Identificational foci, on the other hand, can be just new - they do not imply that the focused element has already occurred as an answer *to the same question* before. And finally, whereas the preverbal position in Hungarian can only host identificational foci, the Finnish K position can also be occupied by contrastive topics, which I will discuss in the next section.

The most important features of identificational foci in Hungarian and contrastive foci in Finnish are summarised in table 2. below.

	Hungarian identificational focus	Finnish contrastive focus
syntax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preverbal position • reserved only for contrastive foci • movement obligatory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentence-initial position • reserved for contrastive foci and for contrastive topics • movement not obligatory
semantics	[+exclusive], [+exhaustive]	[+exclusive], [+exhaustive] (this requirement can be loosened if an overt contrast is present, see p.36)
pragmatics	alternatives not necessary: [± contrastive]	explicit contrast: [+contrastive]

Table 2.: Identificational focus in Hungarian and contrastive focus in Finnish.

3.2. CONTRASTIVE TOPIC

Sentences where the element in K is interpreted as a contrastive topic are called TOP sentences by Vilkuna (1989, p.102). Different from FOCTOP constructions, in these sentences the main news is **not** in K, but somewhere else - usually at the end of the sentence (Vilkuna, 1995, p.249). Like contrastive foci, contrastive topics are 'informationally ambivalent'. But whereas the former are 'old-new', the latter are '**new-old**': new with respect to the general question, and old with respect to the immediate question the sentence is supposed to answer (Vilkuna, 1989, p.90). The following example illustrates how the informational ambivalence of TOP sentences can come about:

Q₁. What did you buy for who?

Q₂. What did you give to your mother? What did you give to your father?

78. [KT Äidille] [T minä] ostin tohvelit.
mother-ALL I bought slippers
For my mother, I bought a pair of slippers.

79. [T Minä] ostin äidille tohvelit.
I bought mother-ALL slippers
I bought a pair of slippers for my mother.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.89 - 90)

In answering *Q₁* with 78., the speaker reveals to have unpacked the question by forming sub-questions like the ones in *Q₂* (Vilkuna, 1989, p.89). The informational ambivalence of *äidille* ("for my mother") results from the fact that the sentence it occurs in answers two questions simultaneously. *Äidille* ("for my mother") is new with respect to *Q₁*., but old with respect to *Q₂*. According to Vilkuina (ibid. p.92), TOP sentences are often used when the general subject matter is unpacked in some systematic fashion. A TOP sentence serves to

answer some general question that the speaker has unpacked by forming sub-questions which contain the element that is in the K position in this TOP sentence.²⁴

But Q₁ does not have to be answered with a TOP sentence - not even if Q₂ is explicitly present in the context (ibid. p.96). The unmarked version in 79. would also be an appropriate response. According to Vilkuna, 78. differs from 79. in that it physically separates two constituents - *äidille* (“for my mother”) and *tohvelit* (“a pair of slippers”) - that have a separate information status in the sentence, and is thus an “active application of a discourse option” (ibid. p.97).

Unlike contrastive foci, contrastive topics do not require alternatives to be mentioned explicitly in the context. For example, 80. below is also grammatical if not followed by 81. (Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.135). But even if no alternative is mentioned explicitly, a contrastive topic implies the existence of at least one. 80. suggests that there exists at least one destination which cannot be reached by Finnair (ibid.) Hence, contrastive topics share with contrastive foci the feature [+exclusive]. Different from the latter, however, they are not [+exhaustive] - in 80., Stockholm need not to be the only place that Peter reached with Finnair.

80. [KT Tukholmaan] [T Pekka] lensi Finnairilla.
to-Stockholm Peter flew Finnair-with,
To Stockholm, Peter flew with Finnair, ...

81. [KT Reykjavikiin] (Pekka lensi) Icelandairilla.
to-Reykjavik (Peter flew) Icelandair-with.
to Reykjavik, (Peter flew) with Icelandair

(Molnár & Järventausta, 2003, p.135)

Also non-finite verb forms can function as contrastive topics in Finnish (Vilkuna, 1989, p. 113). For example, in 82. the denotation of the verb *leipoa* (“to bake”) is contrasted with Mike’s other domestic activities (Vilkuna, 1995, p.253):

82. Mikko on hyvä ruoanlaitossa, mutta [KT leipoa] [Thän] ei osaa.
Mike is good cooking-INE, but bake-INF he not can.
Mike is a good cook, but he can’t bake.

(Vilkuna, 1995, p.253)

Finite verbs, on the other hand, cannot function as contrastive topics. A finite verb in K has to be interpreted as polarity **main news**, giving rise to a FOCTOP sentence. 83. below would hence be an appropriate answer to Q₁. but not to Q₂.

Q₁. *Do you like household chores?*

Q₂. *What do you like? What do you hate?*

²⁴ See Buring (2003) for a theoretical account on how the strategy of answering questions by forming sub-questions gives rise to contrastive topics.

83. [_{KT} Pidän] [_T minä] tiskaamisesta.
like I dish-washing-PAR
I do like washing dishes.

(Vilkuna, 1989, p.99)

In case a sentence contains both a contrastive topic and a contrastive focus, it is the contrastive topic that occupies sentence-initial position, immediately followed by contrastive focus (Newson & Maunola, 2006, p.18-19). The resulting structure is similar to typical Hungarian sentences, where sentence-initial topics (including contrastive topics) are followed by preverbal foci.

In 84. and 85., Anna is introduced as one of the set of people being discussed, thus the element referring to her functions as a contrastive topic. Peter is introduced as a surprise element, contrasting with the expected individual (Mary), and hence functions as contrastive focus. 85. shows that the appropriate word order is indeed determined by the information structural status of the constituents, not by their grammatical roles.

We are talking about a group of people and what they did on Wednesday evening. Anna usually meets Mary, but not this time around.

84. [_{KT} Anna] [_{KF} Petrin] tapasi keskiviikkona
Anna Peter-ACC met Wednesday-on
As for Anna, it was Peter she met on Wednesday (and not Mary)

84'. * ... Petrin Anna tapasi keskiviikkona.

We are talking about a group of people and what they did on Wednesday evening. Mary usually comes to meet Anna, but not this time around.

85. [_{KT} Annan] [_{KF} Petri] tapasi keskiviikkona
Anna-ACC. Peter met Wednesday-on
As for Anna, it was Peter who met her on Wednesday (and not Mary)

85'. * Petri Annan tapasi keskiviikkona.

(Newson & Maunola, 2006, p.19)

Summary

There are two types of Finnish sentences with a filled K position. In FOCTOP sentences, the main news is in K; in TOP sentences, it is somewhere else. Elements in K are contrastive and informationally ambivalent: either old-new (contrastive foci) or new-old (contrastive topics). Both contrastive foci and topics have the feature [+exclusive], but contrastive topics differ from contrastive foci in being [-exhaustive] and not requiring alternatives to be explicitly mentioned in the context. Although Finnish sentences containing both a contrastive topic and a contrastive focus are structurally similar to Hungarian sentences containing a (contrastive) topic and an identificational focus, there are important differences between contrastive foci in Finnish and identificational foci in Hungarian.

IV. ESTONIAN

Estonian, like Finnish and Hungarian, has a relatively free word order, meaning that most permutations of a simple sentence are grammatical, and do not change its basic meaning. In fact, statistical data presented in (Tael, 1988) suggests that word order in Estonian is even ‘freer’ than in Finnish. Whereas in Finnish, SV-orderings (61%) clearly outweigh VS-orderings (16%), in Estonian SV-orderings (33%) and VS-orderings (30%) are in a rough balance (ibid. p.8).

Compared to the other two languages considered in this thesis, Estonian is the one least investigated in terms of its information structure. Accordingly, there is no widely accepted discourse configurational sentence schema for Estonian. In this chapter, I will examine whether the discourse functions topic, focus, and contrast have an effect on word order in Estonian. It turns out that with regard to information structure, Estonian is more similar to Finnish than to Hungarian. Nonetheless, as the statistical data above suggests, important differences also exist between Finnish and Estonian.

1. TOPIC

The following example shows that what the sentence is about does have an effect on word order in Estonian. Although 86. is the syntactically unmarked structure²⁵, in the given context it is less appropriate than 87., where the constituent referring to Peter is in sentence-initial position.

What about Peter?

86. ?Mulle meeldib ta. (syntactically unmarked)

I-ALL like:2SG he
I like him.

87. Ta meeldib mulle.

He like:2SG I-ALL
I like him.

As I will argue later on in this chapter, sentence-initial marked elements in Estonian are usually interpreted as contrastive, and sentence-final marked elements as focused. However, neither of these interpretations is necessary (although possible) for 87., which can also be interpreted as having a topic-comment structure (the speaker says about

²⁵ 86. belongs to the class of sentences where the sentence-initial position of the unmarked structure is not occupied by the grammatical subject. In this construction, the grammatical subject is the ‘object of liking’, and it is also the constituent that the verb agrees with. The sentence-initial position is occupied by the agent, which is an adverbial. See (Metslang & Erelt, 2006) for a description of clause patterns in Estonian.

Peter that she likes him). The deviation from the unmarked word order in 87. is thus motivated by the fact that the pronoun *ta* (“he”) refers to the topic of the sentence. This claim is further supported by 88. - 89., where the ‘object of liking’ is referred to by a ‘non-topic-worthy’ expression: an indefinite (*keegi* (“someone”)) in 88. and a non-finite verb form (*joosta* (“to run”)) in 89. Both 88.b. and 89.b., where the agent has changed positions with the patient, sound clearly less appropriate than the structurally equivalent 87.

88.a. *Mulle meeldib keegi.*
I-ALL like:2SG someone.
There is someone I like

88.b. *?Keegi meeldib mulle.*
Someone like:2SG I-ALL
 IM: *There is someone I like*

89.a. *Mulle meeldib joosta.*
I-ALL like:2SG run-INF
I like running.

89.b. *?Joosta meeldib mulle.²⁶*
run-INF like:2SG I-ALL
 IM: *I like running*

86.-89. suggest that the discourse function of topic has some influence on Estonian sentence structure. In particular, it might seem that topic-expressions prefer the sentence-initial position. However, as the following examples show, they are more adequately characterised as **avoiding** the sentence-final position.

What about Mary?

90.a. *Peeter kinkis talle käevõru.*
Peter gave her bracelet
 90.b. *?Peeter kinkis käevõru talle.*
Peter gave bracelet her
 90.c. *?Talle kinkis Peeter käevõru.*
Her gave Peter bracelet
 IM: *Peter gave her a bracelet.*

What about the bracelet?

91.a. *Peeter kinkis selle Marile*
Peter gave it-GEN Mary-to
 91.b. *?Peeter kinkis Marile selle*
Peter gave Mary-to it-GEN
 91.c. *?Selle kinkis Peeter Marile*
it-GEN gave Peter Mary-to
 IM: *Peter gave it to Mary.*

90.a. and 91.a., where the topic expression occurs just after the finite verb, sound most natural in the given context. The sentence-initial pronouns of the c.-versions have to be interpreted as contrastive topics, and the b.-versions are most naturally interpreted as identificational sentences, answering the questions “Whom did Peter give the bracelet?” and “What did Peter give to Mary?” respectively.

Whereas 86.-87 showed that the topic expression has to move if its unmarked position is sentence-final, 90.-91. demonstrate that the destination of this movement need not be the sentence-initial position. If the unmarked position of the topic-expression is not sentence-final, it can stay *in situ*, as in 92. In the given context, 92.a. is clearly more appropriate than

²⁶ 89.b. could only be interpreted as a sentence where *jooksma* (“to run”) functions as contrastive topic, and *mulle* (“me”) as focus: *As for running, it is me who likes it.* An analogous interpretation is not available for 88.b. however - the sentence *As for somebody, it is me who likes him* does not make any sense - and thus there seems to be no context at all where this sentence would be appropriate.

92.b. and 92.c., where the sentence-initial *Marile* (“to Mary”) has to be interpreted as contrastive topic, and the sentence-final elements (*tema* (“he”) and *käevõru* (“bracelet”) respectively) as foci.

What about Peter?

92.a. Ta kinkis Marile käevõru

He gave Mary-to bracelet

92.b. ?Marile kinkis käevõru tema.

Mary-to gave bracelet he

92.c. ?Marile kinkis ta käevõru.

Mary-to gave he bracelet

IM: *He gave Mary a bracelet.*

The fact that topic expressions in Estonian avoid the sentence-final position is not surprising if one takes into account that topics are preferably old information, and that in all languages there is a tendency to place **old information before new information**. As I will argue in the next section, Estonian sentence-final position is associated with the function of identificational focus. Hence, by avoiding the sentence-final position the topic expression also avoids appearing after new information, or being interpreted as identificational focus.

The observation that Estonian topic expressions prefer neither the sentence-initial position, which is associated with contrast, nor the sentence-final position, which is associated with focusing, makes it natural to ask whether Estonian topic expressions behave similarly to Finnish topic expressions, i.e. whether there is an equivalent of the Finnish T-position in Estonian.

As seen in the previous chapter, the only constituents that always occur in T are expressions referring to **continuous topics**. And the latter can be reliably identified in TOP sentences where a contrastive topic appears in K. Examples of such structures in Finnish were given in 49. and 78., the latter is repeated here as 93. Indeed, 93. and its Estonian counterpart in 94. are identical in structure. Most importantly, in both the continuous topic *minä/ma* (“I”) occupies the same position.

What did you buy for who?

93. Äidille minä ostin tohvelit. (Finnish)

94. Emale ma ostsin sussid. (Estonian)

Mother-ALL I bought slippers.

For my mother, I bought a pair of slippers.

Further evidence for the existence of an Estonian analogue to the Finnish T-position comes from the fact that only **referring expressions** (i.e. only ‘topic-worthy’ expressions) can occur between a contrastive element and the finite verb in Estonian. 95. below would be most natural in a context where John’s attitude towards different women is under

discussion, and a sub-question emerges about his attitude towards Mary. In this sentence *Marit* (“Mary”) serves as contrastive topic, and *Jaan* (“John”) as continuous topic. In 96., which is structurally identical to 95., a non-referential expression (*vähased inimesed* (“few people”)) occupies the position between the contrastive topic and the finite verb. The ungrammaticality of this sentence suggests that this position is available for referring constituents only.

95. [_{KT} Marit] [_{TOPIC} Jaan] armastas.

Mari-PART John loved.

As for Mary, John loved her.

96. *_{KT} Marit] [_{TOPIC} vähased inimesed] armastasid.

Mary-PART few people loved

IM: *As for Mary, only few people loved her.*

This restriction only seems to apply in case there is a contrastive element present in the sentence. 97. and 98., where a monotone decreasing quantifier (*vähased õpilased* (“few students”)) and an indefinite (*keegi* (“someone”)) respectively occupy the immediately preverbal position, are grammatical.

However, the absence of a contrastive element makes it difficult to judge whether the elements in question really occupy the suspected T-position - they might just as well be in the sentence-initial position usually associated with contrast (see section 3. of this chapter). In fact, it would be most natural to use 97. in order to introduce a discussion about students who do **not** take a shower after sport, suggesting that the phrase *few students* is in fact used in a contrastive way here, and thus occupies the position associated with contrast rather than the one associated with topic. 98. however would be most naturally used in a context where one of the interlocutors knows the identity of the one who cares, or at least that it is a specific person, and thus it might be argued that the immediate preverbal position forces a specific reading on the indefinite *keegi* (“someone”)²⁷, i.e. makes it ‘worthy’ to occupy a topic position.

97. *Vähased õpilased käivad pärast sportimist pesemas.*

few students go after sport-making-ELA washing-INF.

Only few students take a shower after sport.

98. *Keegi hoolib sinust.*

somebody cares-for you-ELA

Somebody cares for you.

²⁷ In order to explicitly evoke a contrast with 98., the word *ikka* (“still”) should be placed between the finite verb and the indefinite subject. Thus the sentence *Keegi ikka hoolib sinust* would be an appropriate reply to “Nobody cares for me!”.

Different from Finnish, there are no dummy elements in Estonian. Consider the Estonian counterpart of 53., repeated here as 99. In Finnish, emphasis on the finite verb arises through the dummy element which indicates that the verb is in K. In Estonian, the same effect would be achieved by just stressing the finite verb, or by adding the word *küll* (“indeed”). Thus, it seems that a filled T-position is not obligatory in Estonian, as it is in Finnish.

99. [_K Oli] [_T se] kiva nähdä sinua.
was it nice see-INF you-PAR (Finnish)
It was indeed nice to see you.

100. (küll) Oli (küll) tore sind näha.²⁸
(indeed) was (indeed) nice see-INF you-PAR. (Estonian)
It was indeed nice to see you.

93. and 94. above suggest that Estonian and Finnish sentences containing contrastive elements are always structurally identical. However, 49., repeated here as 101.a., and its Estonian counterpart in 102.a. show that things are more complicated than that. 101.a. and 102.a. would be suitable in a context where the main subject of conversation is “What did Anna get from her friends?”, and a sub-question emerges about Mike. In both sentences, *Anna* functions as continuous topic and *Mike* as contrastive topic.

Finnish

101.a. [_{KT} Mikolta] [_T Anna] sai kukkia.
Mike-ABL Anna got flowers-PAR
From Mike, Anna got flowers.

Unmarked Finnish

101.b. Anna sai Mikolta kukkia.
Anna got Mike-ABL flowers-PAR
Anna got flowers from Mike.

Estonian

102.a. [_K Mikult] sai [_T Anna] lilli.
Mike-ABL got Anna flowers-PAR
From Mike, Anna got flowers.

Unmarked Estonian

102.b. Anna sai Mikult lilli.
Anna got Mike-ABL flowers-PAR
Anna got flowers from Mike.

The only structural difference between 101.a. and 102.a. is that in the latter, the (continuous) topic expression *Anna* occurs after the verb²⁹. The reason for that is that in Estonian, the **V2 constraint** plays a more important role than in Finnish³⁰. Thus, if an Estonian sentence contains a sentence-initial contrastive element (like *Mikult* (“from Mike”)

²⁸ The sentence-initial *küll* (“indeed”) is used to emphasise how nice it was for the speaker to see the addressee. The *küll* that immediately precedes the finite verb, on the other hand, would be used to correct someone who has maintained the opposite (i.e. that it was not nice for the speaker to see him).

²⁹ Actually, it would also be possible for *Anna* to precede the finite verb, like in the Finnish structure. However, this structure would sound slightly less natural than the one in 102.

³⁰ To some extent, the V2 principle is also present in Finnish, but its influence is not as strong as in Estonian or in German (see Vilkuna, 1981, p.188)

in 102.a.), it is often not immediately followed by the continuous topic, as in Finnish sentences, but by the finite verb instead. In the presence of a contrastive element, the Estonian verb has to change positions with the continuous topic in order to satisfy the V2 principle.

This was also observed by Tael (1988), who argued that Estonian word order is governed by different principles than Finnish word order. According to Tael, the most important constraint on word order in Estonian is the V2 principle, operating after a marked element is moved into sentence-initial position (ibid. p.37-38). In Finnish, however, movement of a marked element into sentence-initial position does not break down the basic structure of a sentence, i.e. other elements remain in their original positions (ibid.p.38). The importance of the V2 principle in Estonian also explains the statistical data presented in the beginning of this chapter. SV-orderings dominate in Finnish because different from Estonian, the verb and the subject do not have to switch positions in order to satisfy the V2 constraint.

As shown by example 94. above, also some Estonian sentences violate the V2 constraint. Lindström (2002) investigated under which conditions a constituent remains in its original preverbal position if some other element has moved to sentence-initial position. Her result was that the more **agentive** this constituent is, the more likely it is for the sentence to violate the V2 constraint (ibid. p.98).

Thus, it seems that 'topic-worthy' constituents are more likely to stay in their preverbal positions in the presence of a sentence-initial contrastive element. It might be that these constituents are under the influence of two opposing constraints. First, as topics they should remain in the preverbal position - the Estonian analogue to the Finnish T-position. But second, if a contrastive element is present, they also should move to a postverbal position in order to comply with the V2 principle. Which one of these two constraints prevails might depend on the properties of the element in question. For example, if it is a prototypical topic expression (as in 94.), the pressure to remain in the preverbal position might be stronger than the pressure to satisfy the V2 constraint. A similar suggestion has also been made by Tael (1988, p.42.).

Summary

Estonian topic expressions avoid the sentence-final position - if the unmarked position of a topic expression is sentence-final, it has to move to some other position. Topic expressions in Estonian behave similar to the ones in Finnish, except that in the presence of a contrastive element, they are more likely to switch positions with the verb in order to comply with the V2 principle. This accounts for the fact that the percentage of SV-orderings in Finnish is much higher than in Estonian. A further difference from Finnish is that Estonian does not make use of dummy elements to fill the preverbal position associated with topicality, suggesting that unlike in Finnish, the filling of the alleged T-position in Estonian is not a grammatical necessity.

2. FOCUS

As seen in chapter II, exhaustive identification in Hungarian is expressed by placing the relevant element - the element of which the predicate exhaustively holds - to the immediately preverbal position. In this section, I will show that also in Estonian, word order is used to distinguish exhaustive from non-exhaustive identification. Before that, however, I want to point out another possibility for making this distinction.

Although 103. and 104. below are identical except for the object's case - accusative in 103. and partitive in 104., - they slightly differ in meaning. 103. states that all of the water was bought by John, while 104. only asserts that John bought **some** water. In other words, the constituent referring to John functions as identificational focus in 103. and as information focus in 104. Manipulating object's case can thus be sufficient for distinguishing the subject's status as identificational or information focus in Estonian.

103. Jaan ostis vee.

John bought water-ACC

It was John who bought all the water

104. Jaan ostis vett.

John bought water-PART

John bought some water.

È. Kiss (1998) suggests that postverbal foci (whether immediately following the verb, or in clause-final position) never act as identifying operators but are mere information foci. In accordance with that, she proposed that Estonian has both an initial and a final focus position - "presumably the initial one for the focus operator³¹ and the final one for the information focus" (ibid. p.721-722). As seen in section 2. of chapter I, she further argues that the function of information focus is merely to express the novelty of the material it contains, and that it "never involves movement either in syntax or in logical form" (ibid. p. 707). Contrary to È. Kiss, I want to argue that in Estonian,

- i) **sentence-final** position is associated with the function of **identificational focus**
- ii) **information focus** remains *in situ*, or **leaves the sentence-final position**
- iii) information foci can express **more** than the novelty of the material they contain, namely **non-exhaustivity**

The first part of this section will deal with i), the second part with ii) and iii).

2.1. IDENTIFICATIONAL FOCUS

105. below shows two possible ways to answer a simple question. 105.b. is the syntactically unmarked SVO structure, and 105.a. a syntactically marked OVS structure. In both sentences, the main news is written in bold.

³¹ È. Kiss' uses the terms *operator focus* and *identificational focus* as synonyms (see È. Kiss, 1998, p.707)

105. *Who saw Mary?*

105.a. Marit nägi **Peeter**.

Mary-PART saw Peter

It was Peter who saw Mary.

105.b. **Peeter** nägi Marit.

Peter saw Mari-PART.

Peter saw Mary.

A speaker who answers the question in 105. with 105.a. - where the focused subject (*Peeter*) has switched positions with the given object (*Marit*) - seems to offer a complete list of persons who saw Mary. The marked sentence-final constituent in 105.a. thus functions as identificational focus. A speaker who uses 105.b., on the other hand, is not implying anything beyond what is expressed by the proposition *Peter saw Mary*. The *in situ* subject in 105.b. thus functions as information focus.

Based on 105., it seems that the sentence-final position in Estonian is occupied by **identificational foci**, thus resembling the preverbal position in Hungarian. Also Help (1996, p.29) has argued that the sentence-final position in Estonian and preverbal position in Hungarian are discourse functionally equivalent³².

105.c.-f., which could all serve as a response to “Who saw Mary?”, provide further evidence for the claim that Estonian sentence-final focus is similar to identificational focus. 105.d., where the focused element is sentence-final, is not as ‘reconcilable’ with 105.c. as 105.f. (where the focused element has remained *in situ*) is with 105.e. The hint of incompatibility between 105.c. and 105.d. demonstrates that a marked element in sentence-initial position does indeed perform exhaustive identification (see examples 32.-35. in chapter II for the same test concerning the Hungarian focus position).

105.c. Marit nägid **Peeter** ja **Anna**.

Mary-PART saw Peter and Anna

105.e. **Peeter** ja **Anna** nägid Marit.

Peter and Anna saw Mary-PART

105.d. Marit nägi **Peeter**.

Mary-PART saw Peter

105.f. **Peeter** nägi Marit.

Peter saw Mary-PART

Different from the identificational focus in Hungarian, however, the sentence-final focus in Estonian does not change the truth conditions of a sentence. It carries an **implicature** of exhaustive identification rather than **entailment**. As seen in 105.g., 105.d. can be continued with a sentence that identifies another individual for which the predicate holds. For this purpose, though, the element *ka* (“too”) needs to be mentioned explicitly. 105.g. also creates the impression that at the moment of uttering the first clause, the speaker did indeed think that Peter was the only one who saw Mary. The fact that Mary was also seen by Anna appears to have come into the speaker’s mind only after uttering the first clause.

105.g. Marit nägi Peeter, ja Anna nägi teda ka!

Mary-PART saw Peter, and Anna saw him too

Mary was seen by Peter, and Anna saw him too!

³² Instead of *identificational focus*, Help uses the term *Nucleus of the Grammaticalised Logical Predicate (GLP-Nucleus)*.

Another difference from the Hungarian identificational focus is that movement of an element that performs exhaustive identification is **not obligatory** in Estonian. Even if the speaker knows that Peter is the only relevant person who saw Mary, he might still use 105.b. instead of 105.a. Furthermore, the following response (in 106.) to 105.b. would be possible in Estonian, whereas in Hungarian it would be nonsensical as a reply to a sentence containing a ‘mere’ information focus. The negation in 106. can only be interpreted as ‘protest’ against a sentence which claims to provide an exhaustive list of individuals who saw Mary (cf. È. Kiss, 2002, p.79).

106. Ei, Anna nägi teda ka.

No, Anna saw her too

No, also Anna saw her.

As seen in chapter II (see example 36.), universal quantifiers are barred from the Hungarian focus position because they lack the feature [+exclusive]. Analogously, a universal quantifier in Estonian sentence-final position sounds strange - even if it carries the main news in the sentence, as in 107. (in order for the response to be appropriate, the universal quantifier should be either sentence-initial or immediately follow the verb)³³.

Who went swimming today?

107. ? Täna käisid ujumas kõik.

today went swimming everybody.

IM: *Everybody went swimming today.*

In addition to universal quantifiers, *also-* and *even-*phrases are excluded from the Hungarian focus position (because they lack the feature [+exclusive]). Here, the analogy between Estonian and Hungarian breaks down. In Estonian, *ka* (“also”)- and *isegi* (“even”)-phrases seem to be able to occur practically everywhere in the sentence. In 108.-109., “_” indicates a possible landing site for *ka* (“also”) or *isegi* (“even”)³⁴.

108. _ Jaanile _ meeldib _ Mari _

John-ALL likes Mary

John likes Mary.

109. _ Mari _ meeldib _ Jaanile _

Mary likes John-ALL

Mary is liked by John/ It is John who likes Mary.

Although 108. and 109. might seem as counter evidence to the claim that Estonian sentence-final position is associated with the function of identificational focus, I will argue

³³ 107. could be interpreted as a sentence containing a contrastive topic: *Today, everybody went swimming; last week, only Peter went swimming.*

³⁴ Both *ka* (“also”) and *isegi* (“even”) can appear either before or after the noun they are modifying, resulting in minor differences in meaning which I will not go into detail here.

that this need not be the case. The fact that *ka* (“also”)- and *isegi* (“even”)-phrases can appear in sentence-final position does not necessary mean that they have been moved there ‘on purpose’. It might simply be that they would render the sentence ungrammatical in any other position.

Consider the following example, where a **marked** sentence-final element (the neutral structure is given in 108.) is modified by *ka* (“also”). This sentence would be used in a conversation that revolves around Mary; *Mari* (“Mary”) would be naturally construed as the topic expression of 110. As seen in the previous section (see examples 86. and 87.), a topic expression in this clause type prefers the sentence-initial position. But if the sentence-initial position is occupied by the topic expression (*Mari*), the constituent that was there in the unmarked case (*Jaanile*) has to move to sentence-final position in order to satisfy the V2 constraint. As seen in the previous section (see p.44-45), a violation of the V2 principle is only tolerated if the constituent preceding the verb is a ‘topic-worthy’ expression and the sentence-initial constituent is interpreted as a contrastive topic - neither of which is the case in 110. Thus, the constituent *Jaanile ka* (“also John”) has to change positions with the finite verb in order for the sentence to be grammatical.

110. Mari meeldib Jaanile ka.
Mary likes John-ALL also
Also John likes Mary.

There is no possibility in Estonian to distinguish constituents that occupy sentence-final position because they function as identificational foci from constituents that occupy this position because this is their only option (as *Jaanile ka* in 110.), or because this is their unmarked position (as *Marit* in 105.b.). These kinds of ambiguities do not arise as often in Hungarian, because many Hungarian sentences contain a verbal prefix that changes its position in the presence of identificational focus (see e.g. È.Kiss, 2002, p.77).

Only-phrases in Hungarian obligatorily move to the focus position (see chapter II, p.23). The following examples demonstrate that also Estonian *only*-phrases prefer the sentence-final position. Constituents whose unmarked position is sentence-final (as *õpetajaga* (“with the teacher”) in 111) cannot move away from this position if they are modified by *ainult* (“only”). As seen in 112.a., *only*-phrases can also stay *in situ* - even if they are **not** sentence-final. But as seen in 112.b., they can also move to sentence-final position, suggesting that this position is more suitable for *only*-phrases.

111.a. Ma rääkisin ainult õpetajaga.
I talked only teacher-with

111.b. ?Ainult õpetajaga rääkisin mina.
only teacher-with talked I
IM:I talked only to the teacher.

112.a. Ainult mina rääkisin õpetajaga.
Only I talked teacher-with

112.b. Õpetajaga rääkisin ainult mina.
teacher-with talked only I
Only I talked to the teacher

Previous examples have shown that marked sentence-final elements in Estonian are associated with exhaustive identification and in this respect resemble preverbal foci in

Hungarian. The differences between the two foci suggest that the relation between identificational focus and a certain syntactic position is 'looser' in Estonian than it is Hungarian. Exhaustive identification in Estonian seems to be an **implicature** rather than an entailment like in Hungarian.

Another difference between the two foci is that the Estonian sentence-final focus is associated with new information more strongly than the Hungarian preverbal one. As seen in chapter II (see p.23), there is no strict correlation between new information and the constituent in the Hungarian focus position. In that respect, Estonian sentence-final focus resembles more the sentence-final subject of Finnish OVS sentences (see section 2. of chapter III).

In Estonian - which lacks articles like Finnish - word order is used to make distinctions that are made by articles in other languages. Discourse-new subjects that in English have indefinite articles occupy the sentence-final position in Estonian. The Finnish 63., repeated here as 113., and its Estonian counterpart in 114. are structurally identical:

113. Lumpeenlehden alla ui iso vesikuoriainen

114. Vesiroosi alla ujus suur vesimardikas.

lily-leaf-GEN under swam big water-beetle

A great big water-beetle came up underneath the lily leaf

Further evidence for the relationship between novelty and marked sentence-final elements comes from negated sentences such as 115.-117 (this example is inspired by Vilkuna, 1989, p. 180, 181). If in a negated sentence, there is a marked element in sentence-final position, this element will be the only constituent in the scope of negation. Thus, this constituent must be the only one in the sentence that is not presupposed. In 115., the whole event of meeting is negated. 116. suggests that the speaker met somebody other than Mary, e.g John, and 117. that someone else than the speaker met Mary.

115. Seekord ma Mariga ei kohtunud.

This time I Mary-with not meet

This time I did not meet Mary.

116. Seekord ei kohtunud ma Mariga.

This time not meet I Mary-with

This time it was not Mary that I met.

117. Seekord ei kohtunud Mariga mina.

This time not meet Mary-with I

This time it was not me that met Mary.

2.2. INFORMATION FOCUS

Evidence presented in the previous section suggests that - contrary to what È. Kiss claims - the sentence-initial position in Estonian expresses exhaustive identification. At this point, it might still seem that information focus in Estonian never involves movement in syntax or in logical form (information focus in 105.b remained *in situ*), and that it does not express anything over and above novelty. 118. below will cast some doubt on these two claims.

118.a. is unmarked, and 118.b. a marked OVS structure. It is **possible** to interpret 118.a. as exhaustively identifying the individuals who Peter saw, but it is not necessary. Since the focused constituent *Marit* occupies the sentence-final position in the unmarked structure anyway, its status as identificational focus cannot be signalled by manipulating word order of the sentence.

In 118.b., the focused subject **must** be interpreted as information focus. By answering 118. with 118.b., the speaker admits to have been stuck for an answer at first. Searching through his memory for possible answers, he at some point arrives at Mary, realising that she was indeed seen by Peter. In order to communicate the result of this ‘sudden recollection’, he utters 118.b. which implies, according to my intuition quite strongly, that it is just an ‘example-answer’, i.e. that there might be other possible answers to the question.

118. *Who did Peter see?*

118.a. Peeter nägi **Marit**.

Peter saw Mary-PART

Peter saw Mary

118.b. **Marit** nägi Peeter!

Mary-PART saw Peter

Mary was seen by Peter.

118.b. provides evidence for both ii) and iii) (p.46):

For ii): the focused subject in 118.b. acquires its status as **information focus** by **moving away from sentence-final position** to sentence-initial position.

For iii): information focus in 118.b. expresses **more** than the novelty of the material it contains: it also implies that the sentence is a **non-exhaustive** answer to the question.

As seen in section 1. of this chapter, leaving the sentence-final position is also characteristic for topic expressions. The fact that topic expressions and constituents functioning as information foci behave similarly in this respect raises a question about the relation between these two discourse functions. By comparing sentences such as 118.b. to categorical sentences in Japanese, I will argue that the constituent *Marit* in 118.b. acquires its status as information focus by moving to the position typically held by topic expressions. Before explaining how the Japanese linguist Kuroda accounts for the phenomenon ‘topic and focus in one’, I will analyse 118.b. within Vilkuna’s question-based approach which nicely captures some nuances of its meaning.

As seen in section 3. of chapter III, according to Vilkuna there are two kinds of elements that are **ambivalent** when it comes to attributing novelty or oldness to them. Also *Marit* (“Mary”) in 118.b. could be seen as being informationally ambivalent: it is a **new** element

appearing in a position that is usually associated with topicality and thus preferably occupied by **old** elements. In Vilkuna's framework, an informationally ambivalent constituent would have to be either a contrastive topic or a contrastive focus.

In the first case, *Marit* would have to be new with respect to the main question but old with respect to the immediate question the sentence is supposed to answer; it would not carry the main news in the sentence. The structure of 118.b. would reflect the speaker's strategy of answering the question by forming **sub-questions** about different individuals (e.g. *what about John - did Peter see him; what about Mary - did Peter see her?*). As I argued before, it is indeed likely that a speaker who uses 118.b. has executed this kind of a 'search procedure' in his mind. But different from Vilkuna's contrastive topics, *Marit* does carry the main information in 118.b.

For that reason, it might seem that *Marit* in 118.b. would be more adequately described as a contrastive focus, which - in addition to being informationally ambivalent - also carries the main news in the sentence. In this case, 118.b. would already have had to occur as an answer to the given question at some earlier point in time. According to Vilkuna, contrastive focus is often used in case of a **sudden recollection** - when the speaker has succeeded in remembering an answer he should already know (Vilkuna, 1989, p. 106). As I already noted, 118.b. would indeed be used by a speaker who has succeeded in remembering something. Unlike contrastive foci, however, *Marit* in 118.b. does not require the presence of (not even implicit) alternatives in order to be acceptable. In fact, it does not even exclude other individuals from the extension of the predicate, but provides a mere 'example-answer' to the question.

Hence, despite of similarities to both contrastive foci and contrastive topics, *Marit* in 118.b. also differs from both of these significantly.

A different theoretical account for informationally ambivalent elements is proposed by the Japanese linguist Kuroda (2005). In Japanese, which is considered to be a topic-prominent language, topics are followed by the morpheme *wa*³⁵. Interestingly, also elements that carry the main information in the sentence can be topicalised. In some cases, as in 119., it is even **obligatory** for the focused element to be followed by *wa*.

119. Who is very rich?

119.a. Microsoft no syatyoo no Gates-san wa oo-ganemti desu

119.b.? Microsoft no syatyoo no Gates-san ga oo-ganemti desu

Microsoft president Gates big-rich be

IM: *Mr. Gates, the president of Microsoft, is very rich.*

(Kuroda, 2005, p.7)

According to Kuroda, 119.b. is not an appropriate answer to 119. because it suggests that Mr. Gates is the *only rich person in the discourse context*. Without hints to the contrary, assuming that only one person is very rich is not justified, and 119.b. is thus "pragmatically loaded" (Kuroda, 2005, p.7). Since 119.b. excludes the existence of other individuals

³⁵ In addition, *wa* can also mark contrastiveness, but this is irrelevant to the current discussion.

satisfying the predicate, the *ga*-marked constituent *Microsoft no syatyoo no Gates-san* (“Mr. Gates, the president of Microsoft”) functions as identificational focus.

119.a. is a more natural answer to the question. It carries what Kuroda calls the “anti-exhaustive listing implicature” - the implicature that there might be other entities than what the *wa*-phrase designates that also satisfy the predicate (Kuroda, 2005,p.42)³⁶. In uttering 119.a., the speaker performs an “autonomous mental act” of predicating *very rich* of Mr. Gates (ibid. p.33). 119.a. is autonomous in the sense that its structure is not directly determined by the question it answers. In contrast, the whole purpose of the structure in 119.b. is to give a **complete** answer to the given question³⁷. A speaker who chooses 119.a. rather than 119.b. to answer 119. is aware that what he has to offer might only be a proper subset of the complete answer.

The Estonian counterparts of 119.a. and 119.b. are given in 120. The nuances of meaning in 120.a. and 120.b. are the same as in the Japanese 119.a. and 119.b. respectively. The sentence-**final** focus in 120.b. is similar in function to the *ga*-marked focus in Japanese, and the sentence-**initial** focus in 120.a. to the *wa*-marked focus in Japanese. But since the Japanese *wa* marks the topic of a sentence, it seems that focus and topic also coincide in Estonian.

120. Who is very rich?

120.a. **Microsoft'i president härra Gates** on väga rikas.

Microsoft-GEN president Mr. Gates is very rich.

120.b. ?Väga rikas on **Microsoft'i president härra Gates**.

Very rich is Microsoft-GEN president Mr. Gates.

IM: *Mr. Gates, the president of Microsoft, is very rich.*

For Kuroda, the concept focus is defined on the basis of context. The concept of topic, on the other hand, is defined at **sentence-level** - it does not depend on the exact question the sentence is supposed to answer. As the two notions are defined at different levels of language organisation, they need not to be complementary. Different from Vilkuna, Kuroda thus holds that a constituent can be both focus and topic **with respect to one and the same question**.

To explain why the focus of a sentence is *wa*-topicalised, Kuroda refers to Gricean maxims. When somebody asks a question, he invites the other to “supply as informative description of the situation as required” (Kuroda, 2005, p.42). By answering with a thetic sentence, the speaker would be describing a situation³⁸. Therefore, he would be expected to fulfil the maximality constraint, i.e. to answer the question as informatively as possible. But it might be that the speaker is aware that he is unable to give a complete answer to the question, and wants to somehow **hedge** this expectation. This he can do by answering the

³⁶ Kuroda claims that 119.a. only carries the anti-exhaustive listing **implicature**, and therefore differs from sentences with a contrastive topic which **entail** the anti-exhaustive listing.

³⁷ That 119.b. nevertheless is inappropriate has got to do with the particular question, which is apparently **not** interpreted as requiring a complete answer.

³⁸ According to Kuroda (2005, p.32)., *ga*-sentences describe perceptually or conceptually given scenes.

question with a sentence where focus and topic coincide, i.e. where the sentence is not perfectly “tuned” to the question. In the question, something about very rich persons is asked, but in the answer, something about Mr.Gates is asserted (ibid. p.42). By asserting the attribution of the predicate *is very rich* to Mr. Gates, the speaker does not commit himself to any propositions beyond the one he is uttering.

Sentences where information focus and topic coincide thus have a particular function in language. By making focus and topic coincide, a sentence is rendered independent of the question it answers. Such a sentence carries the implicature that it does not give an exhaustive answer to the question.

Summary

Sentence-final marked foci in Estonian express exhaustive identification and are thus similar in function to the preverbal identificational foci in Hungarian. However, the restrictions on this position in Estonian are not as strict as in Hungarian - exhaustive identification in Estonian seems to be an implicature rather than entailment. Furthermore, Estonian sentence-final position is associated with new information more strongly than the focus position in Hungarian.

Marked foci in sentence-initial position, on the other hand, are interpreted as information foci. Constituents functioning as information foci behave similarly to topic expressions. Comparing sentence-initial information foci in Estonian to *wa*-marked foci in Japanese suggests that information focus in Estonian can coincide with topic. In sentences carrying the non-exhaustive listing implicature, information focus has moved to the position associated with topicality.

3. CONTRAST

3.1. CONTRASTIVE FOCUS

Sentence-initial position in Estonian is not as readily accessible for contrastive foci as in Finnish. Marked sentence-initial elements in this position are preferably interpreted as contrastive topics (see section 3.2. of this chapter).

As seen in section 3.2. of chapter III, correction is among the most conspicuous uses of the FOCTOP construction in Finnish. In Estonian corrective sentences, however, the focused element either stays **in situ** or occupies the **sentence-final position** which, as I argued in the last section, is associated with the function of **identificational focus**. The following example shows possible corrective constructions in Estonian. The Finnish FOCTOP structure 72. is repeated here as 121.d.

121. *Peter flew to Stockholm.*

121.a. *Ei, Peeter lendas Reykjavikki.*

No, Peter flew Reykjavik-to

121.b. *??Ei, Reykjavikki Peeter lendas.*

No, Reykjavik-to Peter flew

(Estonian)

121.c. *?Ei, Reykjavikki lendas Peeter.*

No, Reykjavik-to flew Peter

IM: *(No), it was Reykjavik Peter flew to.*

121.d. (Eihän, vaan [...]) REYKJAVIKIIN Pekka lensi.

(no but) Reykjavik-to Peter flew

(Finnish)

(That's not true), it was Reykjavik Peter flew to.

In Estonian, the unmarked 121.a. is most appropriate in the given context. As can be seen by comparing b. and d., a word-by-word translation of the Finnish sentence to Estonian results in a sentence that is unacceptable in the given context³⁹. 121.c. shows that the unacceptability does not just stem from the violation of the V2 constraint, which in general is more important in Estonian than in Finnish. Although 121.c. is clearly more appropriate than b., in the given situation it is still less appropriate than a.

Based on 121., it might seem that contrastive foci in Estonian stay in *situ*. The following example, where the unmarked position of the contrastive focus is sentence-initial, suggests that things are more complicated than that:

122. *Matthew studies astrophysics.*

122.a. *Ei, Risto õpib astrofüüsikat.*

no Chris studies astrophysics

122.b. *Ei, astrofüüsikat õpib Risto.*

no, astrophysics studies Chris

No, it is Christ who studies astrophysics.

Both the unmarked 122.a., and 122.b. where the contrastive element is in sentence-final position, are appropriate responses to 122. The difference between the two versions is that 122.b. implies more strongly than the unmarked version that among the relevant individuals, Chris is the only one studying astrophysics.

121. and 122. show that contrastive foci in Estonian either stay in situ or move to sentence-final position. However, as seen in the last section, Estonian sentence-final position, like the Hungarian preverbal one, is associated with exhaustive interpretation in general, and does not require the presence of alternatives in the context. Whereas the Estonian 122.b. could also be used to identify the person studying astrophysics if no alternatives are present in the context, Finnish sentences containing a contrastive focus

³⁹ 121.b. can be interpreted as a TOP sentence, where *Reykjavik* is contrastive topic, and the verb is focused: *To Reykjavik, Peter flew, but to Tallinn, he went by ferry.*

(like e.g. 121.d.) are acceptable only if the relevant alternatives are explicitly mentioned in the context. Thus, it might seem that in Estonian, unlike in Finnish, there is no syntactic position for contrastive foci; in contexts where Finnish makes use of FOCTOP constructions, Estonian appears to get by using simply identificational focus (which is less ‘specialised’ than contrastive focus).

However, I will argue that there actually is an Estonian analogue - admittedly, a rarely used one - to the Finnish contrastive focus. Vilkuna’s example of a Finnish contrastive focus in a FOCTOP sentence in 69. is repeated here as 123. Interestingly, its counterpart in the word-by-word translated Estonian 124. cannot be interpreted as a contrastive focus, but only as a contrastive topic. 124. would be used by a speaker who wants to say about one particular cake that he will take it. 124. differs from its inversed counterpart in 125. in that it does not evoke an exhaustive reading. Whereas 125. would be used by a speaker who has decided to have only one cake, somebody who considers having several cakes would rather use 124. instead.

123. [_{KF} Sen] minä otan.
It-ACC I take. (Finnish)
That’s what I’ll take.

124. Selle ma võtan.
It-ACC I take.
That I will take.

125. Ma võtan selle.
I take this-GEN
That’s what I’ll take

Different from its Finnish counterpart in 123., there is no hint of impatience in 124., and neither does it imply that the speaker has already answered the question in his mind or considers the answer obvious

Interestingly, there is a structure in Estonian which matches the nuances of meaning that Vilkuna attributed to the Finnish 123. The only difference between 124. and this structure in 126. is the **missing pronoun** *ma* (“I”) in the latter. As an answer to “What will you take?”, 126. would even sound impolite; there is a perspicuous overtone that the speaker is answering the question reluctantly, that he is impatient or considers the question obvious. Thus, it seems that Vilkuna’s analysis of contrastive foci as old-new can be applied to the sentence-initial element of 126.

126. **Selle** võtan.
This-ACC take

127. Selle võtan **ma (mina)**⁴⁰
This take I
I will take this

The fact that the FOCTOP reading is available for 126. and not for 124. is a clue concerning the scarcity of sentence-initial contrastive foci in Estonian.

⁴⁰ Since in this structure, the subject is forced to be an identificational focus, the longer version of the pronoun *ma*, i.e. *mina* would be preferably used.

Consider again the unmarked structure in 125. To mark the sentence-final *selle* (“this”) as contrastive focus, it would have to be moved to sentence-initial position (assuming that an analogue of the Finnish K position exists in Estonian). In 124., which is the resulting structure, the verb violates the V2 constraint and is in a highly marked position at the end of the sentence. As seen in the last section, marked sentence-final elements are interpreted as identificational foci in Estonian. But since the verb in 124. functions as focus⁴¹, the sentence-initial object has to be interpreted as contrastive topic - assuming that there is no room in a sentence for two elements carrying the main news.

Shifting the verb to the left in order to satisfy the V2 constraint results in 127. But in this sentence, it is the subject *ma* (“I”) whose marked sentence-final position forces it to be interpreted as identificational focus. Again, the sentence-initial *selle* (“this”) would have to function as something else than focus (e.g. as contrastive topic).

Since marked elements in the Estonian sentence-final position are interpreted as identificational foci, all other elements in the same sentence, including a marked element in the sentence-initial position, are prevented from functioning as foci.

In 126., however, the verb occupies its unmarked second position, and does not have to be interpreted as focus. In fact, there is nothing in the postverbal part that would have to be interpreted as an identificational focus. If 126. is construed as a response to “What will you take?”, *selle* (“this”) **has** to be interpreted as focus⁴². As already mentioned, the meaning of 126. is very similar to the meaning of the Finnish 123., in that they both evoke the feeling that this is not the first time the speaker is answering the given question.

Sentence-initial elements in Estonian - like in Finnish - may thus function as contrastive foci. But since marked sentence-final elements in Estonian are interpreted as identificational foci, leaving no room for other focused elements in the sentence, contrastive foci can only arise in structures where there are no marked elements in the sentence-final position, e.g. in OV sentences like 126.

3.2. CONTRASTIVE TOPIC

Marked sentence-initial elements in Estonian are usually interpreted as contrastive topics. While Estonian sentences containing contrastive topics are very similar to the Finnish TOP sentences, in Estonian, the space of possibilities associated with this structure is even larger than in Finnish.

128. and 129. below are suitable in contexts where the denotation of the first element is being opposed to something. Whereas 128. suggests that there is something other than the cake, e.g. the cookies, that the speaker did **not** bake himself; 129. implies that there is something else - something that is opposed to watching TV - that the speaker does **not** hate, or even likes. A marked sentence-initial element in Estonian thus has the feature

⁴¹ 124. would be appropriate as an answer to “Will you take this one?”, the polarity of the sentence-final verb would thus be the main news.

⁴² In another context, *selle* (“this”) in 126. could also function as contrastive topic.

[+exclusive] - it suggests that there is at least one entity in the universe of discourse of which the predicate does not hold.

Unmarked

128. Koogi ma küpsetasin ise. Ma küpsetasin ise koogi.
Cake-ACC I baked myself. I baked myself cake.
The cake I baked myself.

129. Telekavaatamist ma vihkan. Ma vihkan telekavaatamist.
TV-Watching -PRT I hate. I hate watching TV.
As for watching TV, I hate it.

In Estonian sentences containing a contrastive topic, the **main news is in the sentence-final position**: regardless of whether it is a noun, verb, or an adjective. This is illustrated by 130. and 131 below. In both sentences, the contrastive topic is underlined and the main news is written in bold.

130. Telekavaatamist ma **vihkan**, raamatute lugemist aga **armastan**.
TV-Watching I hate books-reading but love.
I hate watching TV, but I love reading books.

131. Telekavaatamist vihkan **mina**, raamatute lugemist aga **Mati**.
TV-Watching hate I books-reading but Matt.
As for watching TV, I hate, but as for reading books, Matt hates it.

In 130., the verb is the main news in each sub-clause, and accordingly occupies the final position in each sub-clause. The purpose of the construction is to establish a relation between the denotation of the contrastive topic and the verb (Watching TV - hating; reading books - loving).

In 131., it is the grammatical subject that is the main news and occupies the final position in each sub-clause. This structure serves to establish a relation between the denotation of the contrastive topic and the grammatical subject (Watching TV - me; reading books - Matt).

The constituents between the contrastive topic and the focus in 130. and 131. refer to that what is currently at issue, i.e. what both sub-clauses are about (the speaker in 130; hating in 131.).

In Estonian, the range of elements that can function as contrastive topics is wider than in Finnish, including **verb phrases and adjectives**:

Adjectives:

Talking about how to reach a particular location:

132. Kiiresti sõidab sinna **lennuk**, odavalt aga **rong**.
Fast goes there plain, cheap but train.
By plain you can go there fast, by train you can go there cheap.

Talking about a particular collection of movies:

133. Naljakas on näiteks **The Meaning of Life**, traagiline aga **Titanic**.
Funny is e.g. The Meaning of Life, tragic but Titanic.
A funny movie is e.g. The Meaning of Life, a tragic one Titanic.

VPs:

134. Kiidan ma **harva**, laidan aga **igal võimalusel**.
Praise I seldom, criticise but at-every opportunity.
I praise seldom, but criticise at every opportunity.
135. Laulab **Hanna-Liina Võsa**, klaveril saadab **Mart Siimer**.
sings [name], on-the-piano accompanies [name].
Hanna-Liina Võsa sings, Mart Siimer accompanies on the piano.
136. Tekste luges **Anu Lamp**, klaverit mängis **Mart Siimer**.
texts read [name], piano played [name].
Texts were read by Anu Lamp, the piano was played by Mart Siimer.
137. Tekste luges **Anu Lamp**, luuletusi (luges) **Mart Siimer**.
texts read [name], poems (read) [name].
The texts were read by Anu Lamp, the poems by Mart Siimer.

In 136., the whole VP is interpreted as a contrastive topic. If only the first element *tekste* (“texts”) would be the contrastive topic, the next sentence should contrast reading texts to reading something else (by someone else), as is the case in 137. But instead, 136. contrasts the whole activity of reading texts with the activity of accompanying on the piano.

Summary

Compared to Finnish, the use of contrastive foci in Estonian is more restricted. The reason for this is probably the fact that marked sentence-final elements in Estonian are interpreted as identificational foci. Many marked structures therefore have to be interpreted as containing a sentence-final identificational focus, leaving no room for a sentence-initial contrastive focus as well. Marked elements in sentence-initial position are usually interpreted as contrastive topics in Estonian. The range of elements that can be interpreted as contrastive topics in Estonian is wider than in Finnish.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have looked at the way word order in Hungarian, Finnish, and Estonian depends on the discourse functions topic, focus, and contrast. My particular interest has been to establish facts concerning the influence of information structure on word order in Estonian. A detailed overview of my results is provided in table 3., here I will confine myself to pointing out the most important results.

Hungarian differs more from Finnish and Estonian than the latter two from each other. The two discourse functions most important for Hungarian word order are topic and identificational focus. Contrast in Hungarian is expressed merely by intonation and mainly just allows a wider range of elements to appear in topic or in focus position. As opposed to this, the sentence-initial position in both Finnish and in Estonian is strongly associated with the discourse function of contrast. But whereas in Finnish, contrastive foci as well as contrastive topics can appear in this position, Estonian sentence-initial position is primarily occupied by contrastive topics. As I argued, the reason for this is that unlike Finnish, Estonian has a sentence-final position for elements functioning as identificational foci. In addition to the sentence-initial contrast position, Finnish and Estonian also seem to have in common a preverbal position associated with the function of topic. However, Estonian topic expressions often move to a postverbal position in order to satisfy the V2 constraint which in Estonian plays a more important role than in Finnish. Information foci in Estonian can be moved to the position usually associated with the function of topic, resulting in a sentence that carries a 'non-exhaustive listing implicature'. Thus, Estonian has both an initial and a final focus position - the initial one for information focus and the final one for identificational focus.

Another difference with regard to the information structure of the three languages is that in Hungarian, the relevant syntactic positions are associated with discourse functions more strictly than in Finnish or in Estonian. Whereas in Hungarian there is obligatory movement of identificational focus to the focus position, constituents performing exhaustive identification in Estonian, and contrastive foci in Finnish, can also stay *in situ*. This might be related to the fact that different from the Hungarian focus, discourse functions encoded in Estonian and in Finnish do not change the truth conditions of a sentence. In contrast to the Hungarian focus position that **entails** exhaustive interpretation, identificational foci in Estonian and contrastive foci in Finnish rather seem to carry an **implicature** of exhaustive identification. Furthermore, unlike in Hungarian, the topic position in Finnish can be filled by default elements (including dummy elements) unable to function as discourse functional topics. In Finnish as well as in Estonian, the position that is reliably occupied only by discourse functional topics is the position between the finite verb and a sentence-initial contrastive element.

To conclude, Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian sentences have in common that their word order depends on the discourse functions of their constituents. However, this dependence takes an idiosyncratic form in each language, discourse functions are mapped to syntactic positions in different ways.

List of Abbreviations

IM - intended meaning
PAS - passive
INF - infinitive
VM - verbal prefix

Grammatical cases:

NOM - nominative
GEN - genitive
ACC - accusative
PRT - partitive
ILL - illative
INE - inessive
ELA - elative
ALL - allative
ADE - adessive
ABL- ablative

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