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TOPICS, GRAMMATICALIZED TOPICS, AND SUBJECTS

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1. Introduction

A question that continues to interest me is why human languages should have syntax. Of course, this question presupposes an answer to another question, namely: do human languages have syntax? And in what follows, I will try to answer this more basic question. Let me elaborate on what I mean by these questions. If we make a tripartite division among semantics, pragmatics, and syntax, then it is reasonably clear why human languages need semantics and pragmatics. One of the functions of human languages is to convey meaning, therefore the ability to deal with meaning is a prerequisite for any human language. Since human languages are used both in social interaction and as cognitive devices, both of which require the presentation of new information against the background of existing information, it is clear why human languages need pragmatics, or at least the ability to differentiate between such concepts as old and new information. But why should human language need anything beyond this? Of course, language would need to have some way of presenting meaning and pragmatics, and one might, following the usage of logicians, call this syntax, i.e. there would be the syntax of semantics (semantic representation) and the syntax of pragmatics (pragmatic representation). But when linguists speak of syntax, they do not usually mean this; rather, they mean a set of structural properties of language that are at least potentially independent of semantic or pragmatic properties. With regard to the problem area outlined in my title, this consists in the belief that there is a valid notion of subject, distinct from the semantic notion of agent (actor) and from the pragmatic notion of topic.

With respect to this problem area, there are three positions that can be identified. The first extreme position would be that syntax as so defined does not exist. In other words, all phenomena which linguists have identified as syntactic can be reduced to semantic or pragmatic phenomena; in particular, the notion of subject would be reducible to that of agent or topic or some combination thereof. Of course, even under this approach there would have to be some means of indicating semantic and pragmatic phenomena ('syntax' in the logicians' sense): but semantics/pragmatics would determine what is to be encoded, and the only arbitrariness would be the choice of how these phenomena are to be encoded, e.g. the fact that the topic is to be encoded by a particle wa rather than sentence-initial position, to choose an example not entirely at random. As an illustration of this position applied to the notion subject, we may take the discussion in Givón (1984, chapter 5). Givón's concept of subject is deducible from the definition (p. 139):

- (1) Subjectivization is the assignment, by whatever coding means available in the language, of the pragmatic case-role of subject (or 'primary clausal topic') to one of the arguments ('semantic case roles') in the clause.

Thus, although Givón uses the term subject, it is used as a terminological equivalent to a pragmatically defined notion. Indeed Givón says further (p. 138):

- (2) A largely terminological argument used to rage as to whether one is talking about "subject" or "topic". The gist of it, it seems, was whether the main clausal topic was strongly or weakly coded. That is, whether the topic was encoded by a maximal array of word order, morphology and intonation devices, or whether it was coded by relatively few devices.

In other words, there is no notion of subject definable in terms other than pragmatics plus the devices for encoding the relevant pragmatic distinctions.

At the opposite extreme, there is the position that has come to be called autonomous syntax, which holds not only that there is such a thing as syntax but that this syntax is in principle completely independent of semantics and pragmatics, i.e. is in no way determined by semantic or pragmatic constraints. Of course, even under this approach it will ultimately be necessary to link syntax, semantics, and pragmatics together, but under this approach the structure of the syntactic component of the overall linguistic model would be essentially independent of the semantics and the pragmatics and of the relations between these and the syntax. This is the position associated with mainstream generative grammar and some of its offshoots, such as (mainstream) Relational Grammar. Since my interest in this paper lies in the interaction of syntax and pragmatics (and, in principle, semantics), I shall not devote much discussion to the more extreme variants of this view. I regard autonomous syntax in this extreme sense as a fallback position, the null hypothesis, to be accepted only if we fail in valiant attempts to explain syntax in pragmatic and/or semantic terms.

The third position is an intermediate position. It holds that syntax is potentially independent of semantics and pragmatics, in the sense that there are many syntactic phenomena in many languages that cannot be given complete or even nearly complete analyses in purely semantic or pragmatic or semantic-pragmatic terms. However, in many instances such syntactic phenomena can be given partial explanation in such nonsyntactic terms; in particular, many syntactic phenomena can be viewed as phenomena semantic and/or pragmatic in origin which have become divorced from their semantico-pragmatic origin, in other words as instances of the grammaticalization (or, more accurately,

syntacticization) of semantico-pragmatic phenomena. This is my own position, and I will try to argue for it in terms of the data to be presented in the body of the paper.

Within the third position, there are a number of different subpositions that one might adopt, some of which I will outline without necessarily committing myself to one or another. For instance, when one talks of grammaticalization (syntacticization), is this a diachronic phenomenon? In other words, if one speaks of a subject as being a grammaticalized topic, does this mean that at an earlier stage of the language the noun phrases in question were simply topics, but by diachronic change the coding properties that originally applied only to topics have been extended to certain other noun phrases (and perhaps removed from certain topics)? In some cases, the diachronic dimension does seem to be correct. For instance, Cole et al. (1980) provide a number of examples of the following diachronic development: At stage I, a given noun phrase is a topic but lacks the coding properties of subjects in the given language; at stage II, the noun phrase in question takes on some of the coding properties of subjects; at stage III, the noun phrase in question has all the coding properties of subjects. Stages I and III are illustrated by the earlier and modern English sentences below:

- (3) Them liketh the apple.
- (4) They like the apple.

In (3), the topic (and semantic experiencer) them has neither nominative case nor does it trigger verb agreement; in (4) it has both these properties. Of course, the fact that some subjects derive diachronically through the syntacticization of topics does not mean that all subjects derive in this way. Indeed, in the example just given it is crucial that English already had an independent language-internal grammatical relation of subject, defined for instance in terms of case assignment and verb agreement, to which the experiencer noun phrase could assimilate. If topics become subjects by assimilating to already existing subjects, one is in danger of an infinite regress: where did the first subject come from? Incidentally, if subjects are viewed as diachronically syntacticized topics, a further question to arise is whether this is relevant to their synchronic analysis, whether in general or in individual instances (depending perhaps on the degree of syntacticization); exemplification will be given in the body of this paper. Givón (1979) illustrates a number of other historical processes, in addition to diachronic change as traditionally conceived, that lead from pragmatic to syntactic notions, such as first and second language acquisition and pidginization.

2. Grammatical Encoding of Pragmatic Relations

It follows from the above that the term grammaticalization is potentially misleading. On the one hand, it can refer simply to grammatical encoding, for instance the grammatical encoding of topic by means of the particle wa in Japanese, without any implication that the notion we are speaking of is other than a pragmatically defined one. On the other hand, it can refer to an entity that has become divorced from its pragmatic origin, for instance to subjects that are not synchronically topics, as in Russian example (5), with the word order given:

- (5) Kolumb-om byl-a otkryt-a Amerika.
Columbus-INSTR was-FEM discovered-FEM, America-NOM
'America was discovered by Columbus.'

In this example, Amerika is syntactically the subject of the sentence, as can be seen from the feminine singular verb agreement, but 'Columbus' is the topic, as can be seen from its clause-initial position.² To avoid confusion, I will make a terminological distinction between grammatical encoding and syntacticization. Grammatical encoding refers simply to the formal encoding of a given pragmatic or semantic distinction, with no implication of departure from the strict semantic or pragmatic definition of that distinction. Syntacticization refers to a syntactic distinction that cannot be reduced to semantics, pragmatics, or a combination thereof.

As an illustration of grammatical encoding, I want to digress slightly from the main discussion, concerning topics and subjects, to examine the grammatical encoding of focus (essential new information). A number of languages have a general rule whereby the focus of a sentence must immediately precede the verb of that sentence. This phenomenon has been documented perhaps most fully for Hungarian, including recent studies by Horvath (1986) and Kiss (1987), while a rather detailed crosslinguistic study coupled with an indepth analysis of Korean is provided by Kim (1984). I will take examples here from my own work on focus in Modern Eastern Armenian (Comrie 1984).

The basic rule in Modern Eastern Armenian is that the focus must immediately precede the finite verb form. This is an absolute rule when the focus is an interrogative pronoun, for most interrogative pronouns.³ Thus (6) and (7) are possible, while (8) is not:

- (6) Petros-n inč' kerav?
Peter-DEF what ate
(7) Inč' kerav Petros-ə?
(8) *Inč' Petros-ə kerav?
'What did Peter eat?'

As such, this might seem to be a straightforward example of the grammatical encoding of a pragmatic relation, with no implications for syntacticization. However, further investigation shows that even in a case as apparently transparent pragmatically as this, there is in fact some degree of syntacticization.

First, the preverbal focus position, while obligatory for interrogative pronouns, is only optional for other focused noun phrases. Thus, in answer to the question in (6) one could answer with either (9) or (10):

- (9) Petros- $\emptyset$ mi xənjor kerav.
Peter-DEF a apple ate.
(10) Petros- $\emptyset$ kerav mi xənjor.
'Peter ate an apple.'

Second, Modern Eastern Armenian has syntactic constraints on the movement of constituents, so that some focused constituents cannot be moved to the preverbal focus position one would expect. In particular, it is usually impossible in Modern Eastern Armenian to extract a constituent out of a larger constituent. For subconstituents of noun phrases, one must simply move the larger noun phrase, even though only part of it is the focus, as in (11):

- (11) Um xənjor- $\emptyset$ kerar?
whose apple-DEF you-ate
(12) *Um kerar xənjor- $\emptyset$?
'Whose apple did you eat?'

For constituents of subordinate clauses, they may move to the focus position within their own clause, but not to the focus position of the main clause, which is where one would expect them to move given the semantico-pragmatic interpretation of the clause:

- (13) Petros- $\emptyset$ karcum e vor Aram-n um-n e
Peter-DEF thinking is that Aram-DEF whom-DEF is
tesel?
having-seen
(14) *Petros-n um-n e karcum vor Aram- $\emptyset$ tesel e?
'Who does Peter think that Aram has seen?'

Moreover, in several languages that have a preverbal focus position, it has been noted that a preverbal negative particle apparently necessarily occupies this position; this is the case, for instance, in Hungarian. It is also, again apparently, the case in Armenian, as can be seen by comparing (15)-(17):

- (15) Petros-ə xənjor-n utum e.
Peter-DEF apple-DEF eating is
'Peter is eating an apple.'
- (16) Petros-n inč' e utum?
Peter-DEF what is eating
'What is Peter eating?'
- (17) Petros-ə č'-i utum xənjor-ə.
Peter-DEF not-is eating apple-DEF
'Peter is not eating the apple.'⁴

Sentence (15) involves the most neutral focus for this statement, with utum, the present participle of the verb 'eat', formally in focus position, immediately preceding the finite verb e '(he) is'. In (16), the preverbal focus position must be occupied by the interrogative pronoun, and the present participle is thrown after the finite verb. Sentence (17) shows exactly the same phenomenon of the present participle being thrown after the finite verb, which is now immediately preceded by the negative particle č'(ə)-, thus providing prima facie evidence that this negative particle is in preverbal focus position. Suppose, however, that a clause contains both negation and an interrogative pronoun. In this case, the only possibility is for the negative particle to precede the verb immediately, with the interrogative pronoun preceding this whole complex:

- (18) Petros-n inč' č'-i utum?
Peter-DEF what not-is eating
'What is Peter not eating?'

In terms of a formally defined focus position, one might in principle argue either that sentence (18) has a doubly filled focus position, or that there are in fact two distinct positions occupied by the interrogative pronoun and the negative particle. There is evidence that the second alternative is correct. The verb c'uyč' tal 'show' consists etymologically of the noun c'uyč' 'demonstration' and the verb tal 'to give'. The two components are sufficiently closely bound together that they may not be separated by an interrogative pronoun, which must precede the whole complex; however, they are sufficiently loosely bound that the preverbal negative particle must separate them, being attached to the finite form of tal. Sentence (19) thus illustrates that there are two positions, in fact two nonadjacent positions:

- (19) Inč' c'uyč' č'ə-təvec'ir inj?
what demonstration not-you-gave to-me
'What didn't you show to me?'

Thus even if the word order behavior of negation in Modern Eastern Armenian has its origin as a special case of focus, this behavior has now become to some extent syntacticized, differing from the behavior of other elements in preverbal focus position.

These data on the preverbal focus position point to an interesting conclusion concerning the grammatical encoding of pragmatic relations. My impression is that it is extremely rare across languages to find a formal device that literally, in one-one correspondence, encodes some pragmatic distinction or combination of pragmatic (and semantic) distinctions. Thus even those instances that seem to be purely grammatical encoding of a pragmatic distinction often turn out, on closer investigation, to involve some degree of syntacticization away from the original pragmatic distinction. In my study of focus in Modern Eastern Armenian, it proved necessary to make a clear distinction between pragmatic focus (the new information requested or given) and syntactic focus (the preverbal position). Moreover, neither of these necessarily coincides with the intonational focus, which can be used to mark contrast as in (20), where the intonational focus falls on the contrastively stressed k'o 'your', while the interrogative pronoun inč' is (necessarily) in preverbal focus position:

- (20) Isk k'o anun-n inč' e?
 and your name-DEF what is
 'And what is your name?'

3. Grammaticalized (Syntacticized) Topics

In section 2, I examined a phenomenon that is close to being pure grammatical encoding of a pragmatic distinction, though with some slight degree of syntacticization. In this section I wish to examine some phenomena that are widely regarded in the literature as instances of pragmatic relations, more specifically the pragmatic relation of topic, perhaps with grammatical encoding, but where in my opinion the degree of syntacticization is in fact much greater - though still not so great as in the case of a fully syntacticized subject. In other words, I will be arguing that we need to recognize, at least for some languages, a category of syntacticized topic that is neither the pragmatic relation of topic nor the syntactic (grammatical) relation of subject.

3.1. Multiple Subject Constructions in Japanese

In a paper that has been highly influential in the literature on subject and topic, Li and Thompson (1976) argue for a distinction between subject-prominent languages and topic-prominent languages, or perhaps more accurately between subject-prominence and topic-prominence as characteristics of linguistic phenomena, since a given language can have both subject-prominent and topic-prominent properties (e.g. Japanese). Perhaps the main

operational criterion for distinguishing between subject and topic in their proposal is that the subject of the clause must be subcategorized by the verb or other predicate, while the topic does not need to bear any subcategorizational relation to the predicate (pp. 461-463). One example from Japanese, originally introduced as the title of a monograph devoted to this construction type (Mikami 1960), has become the canonical example of topic-prominence and will be so cited here:

- (21) Zoo wa hana ga nagai.
elephant TOP nose SUB long
'The elephant's nose is long'/'The elephant has a long nose.'

In this sentence, hana 'nose' clearly bears a subcategorizational relation to the predicate nagai 'long', as can be seen from the semantic interpretation of the sentence whereby length is predicated of the nose; however, zoo 'elephant' does not bear any predication relation to the predicate nagai, since the sentence does not imply that the elephant is long. At first sight, it might seem that this sentence can readily be handled in terms of topic-prominence: zoo will be identified as a topic and indeed takes the topic marker wa, but not as a subject, while hana will (or at least can) be identified as subject.

But first, it should be noted that while zoo 'elephant' in (21) can take the topic particle wa, it does not have to; in particular, it can occur with the subject particle, as in (22):

- (22) Zoo ga hana ga nagai.

The normal interpretation of this sentence would be with 'elephant' as focus, not topic, for instance in answer to the question in (23), as discussed by Martin (1975:256-272, especially 257-258):

- (23) Nani ga hana ga nagai?
what SUB nose SUB long
'What has a long nose?'

Moreover, if we look at other criteria that potentially distinguish between topics and subjects in Japanese, these rather consistently identify the 'elephant' position rather than the 'nose' position in (22) as subject, even though the subcategorizational relationship is clearly between the 'nose' position and the predicate. An interesting set of examples is provided by possessive predicate sentences, as in (24):

- (24) Boku wa kuruma ga aru.
I TOP car SUB be-INAN
'I have a car.'

- (25) Boku wa ii buka ga iru.
 I TOP good subordinate SUB be-ANIM
 'I have good subordinates.'

In these examples, note the collocational restriction between the 'nose' position, i.e. the possessum, and the verb, which can be stated roughly as follows: inanimate nouns take aru, animate nouns take iru; for a fuller statement, reference may be made to Martin (1975:193-198). Most predicates in Japanese have special forms to show respect to the subject. One productive such formation is to prefix the stem of the verb by o-, following this verb form with the preposition ni 'to' and the conjugated verb naru 'become'. If the basic verb is aru, this gives o-ari-ni-naru. This can be used in the construction of (24), as in (26), where respect is clearly shown to the possessor, not to the possessum (Martin 1975:194-195), i.e. by this test, it is the possessor (the 'elephant' position), not the possessum (the 'nose' position), that is subject:

- (26) Syatyoo wa kuruma ga o-ari-ni-naru.
 company-president TOP car SUB have-INAN-SUB:RESP
 'The company president has a car.'

The situation with the animate possessum verb iru is more complex. Martin (1975:194-195) treats aru and iru alike, stating that in both cases respect is shown to the possessor, though since his examples are all translations of 'who has a child?', it is unclear that respect is necessarily being indicated to the possessor rather than to the possessor's child. The verb iru does not have a regularly formed subject-respect form, though it does have irregular forms, such as irassyaru and orareru. The problem that arises is deciding to whom respect is shown in sentences like (27):

- (27) Syatyoo wa ii buka ga
 company-president TOP good subordinate SUB
 irassyaru/orareru.
 be-ANIM-SUB:RESP
 'The company president has good subordinates.'

The judgement is made difficult (as in the examples cited by Martin) in that the subordinates could conceivably be receiving respect vicariously, through their association with the company president. One might attempt to obviate this difficulty by having an inanimate possessor. Indeed, (28) below is acceptable, in which respect is clearly being shown to the possessum rather than to the possessor:

- (28) Kono kaisya (ni) wa ii syatyoo ga
 this company to TOP good president SUB
 irassyarū/orareru.
 be-ANIM-SUB:RESP

'This company has a good president.'

In this example, however, as generally with inanimate possessors, the possessor corresponds not to a noun phrase with the subject marker ga but to a noun phrase with the dative marker ni (which, at least in some instances, can be omitted before the topic particle wa). Of sentences (29)-(30), version (29) is highly marginal, and actually gets an interpretation where respect is shown to the company; version (30) is acceptable, with respect being shown to the president:

- (29) ?*Kono kaisya ga ii syatyoo ga irassyarū/orareru.
 (30) Kono kaisya ni ii syatyoo ga irassyarū/orareru.

These data suggest that irassyarū/orareru behave like o-ari-ni-naru, with respect being shown to the possessor; but where the possessor is inanimate and takes the particle ni, the syntactic structure is different, with the possessum retaining all syntactic subject properties, the possessor having none.

To summarize the relevance of the Japanese multiple-subject construction: The problem posed by such sentences is not solved by calling them topic-comment structures, since the noun phrase in the 'elephant' position is not necessarily a topic, moreover this noun phrase does have independently motivated subject properties, including not only the particle ga (which is at best a weak criterion, given the use of ga to mark some objects; Martin 1975:198-201), but also the more reliable test of subject respect forms.

3.2. Grammaticalized Topics in Haruai⁶

In this section, I wish to examine another construction for which one might be led to a solution in terms of the notion of topic, but where on further examination such an analysis turns out to be at least incomplete. Haruai is a Highland Papuan (non-Austronesian) language spoken in the southwest of⁷ Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. Like many of its neighbors, Haruai has subject-verb agreement and switch-reference, both of which, at least in the simplest cases, provide good criteria for the syntactic relation of subject. Sentences (31)-(32) illustrate subject-verb agreement, which is also shown to be independent of word order variations; Haruai, incidentally, has no case-marking of noun phrases:

- (31) An hōn pay-n-ŋ-a.
 we pig hit-FUT:1PL-DEC

- (32) H8n an pay-n-ŋ-a.
'We will hit the pig.'

Version (32) would be used to topicalize 'pig' explicitly, i.e. sentence-initial position correlates with topic status in Haruai. In the absence of explicit topicalization, the usual word order is subject-object-verb. Switch-reference is illustrated by sentences (33)-(34); the general rule is that if two clauses combined as a single sentence have the same subject, the same subject suffix -8n is required; otherwise, the different subject suffix -m(8n) is required:

- (33) An h8n pal-8n, dy-n-ŋ-a.
we pig hit-SS, go-FUT:1PL-DEC
'We will hit the pig and we will go.'
(34) An h8n pal-m8n, dy-8n-a.
we pig hit-DS, go-FUT:3SG-DEC
'We will hit the pig and it (i.e. the pig, or conceivably some other third person singular referent) will go.'

Problems arise in considering the construction that is required by a number of experiencer predicates (and also possessive predicate constructions), as in (35):

- (35) N ky8 pl-8ŋ-a.
I hunger shoot-PAST:3SG-DEC
'I was hungry,' lit. 'Me hunger shot.'

In sentence (35), it is normal for the experiencer to come clause-initially, or at least before the cause noun phrase 'hunger'; indeed, this is the only order found in my textual material and in material elicited by translation from Tok Pisin, and Haruai speakers were unhappy with made-up sentences having the word order of (36):

- (36) ?Ky8 n pl-8ŋ-a.

However, this experiencer noun phrase is not subject of the clause in terms of verb agreement: the only verb agreement possible is third person singular, not first person singular (cf. (37)); nor is it subject in terms of switch-reference, since Haruai quite strictly requires the different subject marker in sentences like (38):

- (37) *N ky8 pl-m-a.
I hunger shoot-PAST:1SG-DEC
(38) N ky8 pl-m8n/*pl-8n, h8m18 nm-m-a.
I hunger shoot-DS/shoot-SS banana eat-PAST:1SG-DEC
'I was hungry and I ate some banana.'

We may therefore conclude that this experiencer noun phrase is not a subject. Is it, however, a topic? While in most instances the experiencer noun phrase in this construction is indeed a topic, this is not a necessary requirement, since the experiencer can equally be the focus of the clause, as in the question (39), and equally in (35) if this is used as the response to (39):

- (39) Yŋnm kyð p1-ŋŋ?
 who hunger shoot-PAST:3SG
 'Who is hungry?'

Thus, some such experiencer nouns are not topics. Moreover, although it is common in Haruai for topics to be preposed, this is by no means an invariant rule, with many textual examples presenting the topic, i.e. the noun phrase that would be regarded as topic in all or most current viable characterizations of topic, in noninitial position. This general pattern is in keeping with one of the salient characteristics of clause structure in most Papuan languages: changes in pragmatic role of a constituent do not lead to changes in syntactic role. There are thus no syntactic-relation changing rules like passivization. The basic syntactic relations in a clause like (31) remain the same whatever the distribution of pragmatic roles; likewise, the basic syntactic relations in the clause-type illustrated by (39) remain the same whatever the distribution of pragmatic roles. The experiencer noun phrase in (39) is not a subject, nor is it (necessarily) a topic. The fact that it occurs, at least typically, clause-initially is surely related to a high correlation between such noun phrases and topic position (their topicworthiness), and for this reason we can reasonably call them syntacticized topics, provided always that we bear in mind that this category is distinct from both topic and subject.

The Haruai experiencer construction in fact corresponds to an early stage in the diachronic development from topic to subject posited by Cole et al. (1980). The examination of switch-reference in other Papuan languages carried out by Reesink (1983) suggests that Haruai represents a minority pattern, areally speaking, in this regard: the more common pattern in Papuan languages is for the experiencer in such constructions to control switch-reference (although even in such languages it is the cause rather than the experiencer that controls subject-verb agreement, and also case marking in those languages where this is relevant). In these languages, then, the experiencer has acquired more subject properties, although still not all subject properties (e.g. subject-verb agreement), so that it is still a category, in the terminology of this paper a syntacticized topic, distinct from subject. Let me emphasize that for Papuan languages there is no direct evidence of a diachronic path from topic to subject, though Papuan languages do provide evidence in

favor of a grammatical account where topic and subject are endpoints of a chain of intermediate degrees of syntacticization.

Let one should argue that the chain is in fact a purely syntactic chain, there is clear evidence from some cases of such developments that factors of topicworthiness are involved. Let us reconsider the English examples presented above as (3)-(4), repeated below:

(40) Them liketh the apple.

(41) They like the apple.

One quite traditional explanation offered for the development from the construction in (40) to that in (41) is that, with the loss of morphology in the historical development of English, many constructions would in fact be ambiguous between the two analyses, e.g. (42), this providing a bridge for reanalysis of the older construction in (40) as the newer construction in (41):

(42) The boy likes the girl.

However, Thornburg (1984) shows that the earlier evidence for transfer of syntactic properties to the experiencer comes in examples like (40), where the experiencer clearly lacks morphological subject properties, than in potentially ambiguous examples like (42). It seems thus that the subject properties are transferred first in those examples where the experiencer is more topicworthy, i.e. to personal pronouns before common nouns, etc. In other words, topic is a relevant factor in the initiation and development of this diachronic chain.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, I have tried to present evidence arguing in favor of a particular viewpoint on syntax. Syntax is not reduceable to other facets of language, in particular some combination of pragmatics and semantics; those approaches that attempt to eliminate syntax in this way do so only be failing to take into account some of the relevant evidence. But equally, syntax is not autonomous of pragmatics and semantics: many syntactic phenomena only make sense against a background of pragmatic and semantic correlates; many syntactic phenomena can be regarded as syntacticizations of semantic-pragmatic phenomena, in particular subjects can be regarded as syntacticizations of topics. In answer to the question posed earlier as to whether there is such a thing as syntax, my answer is 'yes'. In answer to my other question, as to why there should be such a thing as syntax, I can only offer a brief speculation, which another paper may ultimately elaborate. The full range of semantic and pragmatic oppositions that different languages make is immense. If speakers were required to make all these distinctions each

time they spoke, the communicative act would become impossibly unwieldy, especially given other constraints on communication (such as processability). This complexity is reduced considerably by syntacticization, which effectively means that speakers do not have to make all the semantic and pragmatic choices that face them. While part of my motivation for writing this paper was to crystallize my opposition to some of the implications of the quotations from Givón given in (1)-(2), I find myself quite sympathetic to one of his conclusions (Givón 1979:109):

- (43) Syntax cannot be understood or explained without reference to BOTH its evolution ex-discourse and the communicative parameters and principles that govern both its rise out of the pragmatic mode and its selective use along the register of human communication.

Notes

1. The following abbreviations are used: ANIM - animate, DECL - declarative, DEF - definite, DS - different subject, FEM - feminine, FUT - future, INAN - inanimate, INSTR - instrumental, NOM - nominative, PL - plural, SG - singular, SS - same subject, SUB - subject, SUB:RESP - subject respect, TOP - topic.
2. In terms of the quantitative approach to topic definition advocated by Givón (1983), both Kolumbom and Amerika in sentence (5) might turn out to be topics, the former in terms of referential distance (anaphoric coherence, look-back in discourse, pp. 13-14), the latter in terms of topic persistence (cataphoric coherence, look-ahead, pp. 14-15). But in any event, there is discrepancy between which noun phrases are identified as topics and which nouns are identified as subjects in terms of syntactic coding devices.
3. More adverbial (adjunct) interrogative pronouns, such as inč'u 'why', are less strict, so that yerkink'-n inč'u kapuyt e? 'sky-DEF why blue is 'why is the sky blue?' is possible alongside yerkink'-n inč'u e kapuyt? Note that in the transcription of Modern Eastern Armenian I use the apostrophe to indicate aspiration; voiceless stops not followed by an apostrophe are ejective; j represents a voiced dental affricative. The suffixed definite article has the form -n before a vowel, -ə elsewhere.
4. The form -i is a variant of e 'is' found after the negative particle č'ə- (prevocalic variant č'-). Note that clauses with objects preceding the verb and clauses with objects following the verb are both in principle possible in Modern Eastern Armenian.
5. I am grateful to Akiko Kumahira Comrie for discussion of the Japanese examples; assignments of acceptability and interpretation reflect her judgements.
6. The Haruai material presented here is taken from Comrie (1987), which should be consulted for further details.

7. Including Kobon, for which Davies (1981:99-102) proposes an analysis for experiencer constructions in terms of the notion of topic.
8. In a fuller account, the semantic notion of agentivity might also be involved. I have in general left semantic, as opposed to pragmatic, factors out of account in this paper, not because I believe them to be unimportant, but merely in order to provide a more coherent argumentation within the allotted space limits.

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