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0. Introduction. This paper grows out of a discussion by Sandra Chung and myself some years ago (Anderson & Chung, 1977) of the syntax of some languages with basic VSO order. We concluded then that in these languages, there are often arguments for distinguishing between subject and non-subject NP's. Part of the interest of this comes from the fact that the configurational basis for this distinction which is normally available in an SVO language like English does not generalize directly to VSO structures, though we did not suggest a specific alternative.

Among the facts discussed in that paper was the treatment of topicalization in Breton. In this language, it seemed that some facts indicated the existence of a constituent like a VP, despite the fact that an element containing the verb and its object(s), but not the subject, is apparently not a continuous substring of normally structured Breton clauses.

In fact, however, it now seems to me that this conclusion resulted from an inadequate analysis of the properties of topicalization in the language, and is practically a paradigm example of the dangers of drawing theoretical conclusions directly from linguistic facts, rather than from fully worked out analyses. My purpose here is to rectify the situation by sketching some of the points basic to an adequate analysis of Breton topicalization.

1. Basic word order. First, of course, it is important to establish that Breton actually is a verb initial language, if the interest of the earlier point is to be maintained. In the other Celtic languages this is hardly in doubt, since VSO structures predominate under all but clearly derived conditions; but in Breton it is necessary to appeal to a variety of non-central structures to establish this order. The primary analytic problem is to demonstrate that the verb is initial in the clause: the order of the remaining constituents is quite clear.

Verbs are initial in a variety of clause types². Among these are negative declarative sentences (1,2) and imperatives (3):

1. N'eo ket brav an amzer hiziv
neg-is not nice the weather today
"The weather isn't nice today"
2. Ne gave ket Yann alc'houez an armel
neg found not John key the closet
"John didn't find the key to the closet"
3. Ro din eun tamm bara!
give to-me a piece bread
"Give me a piece of bread!"

The same order is characteristic of a variety of subordinate clause types, including those introduced by most conjunctions (4,5) and those serving directly as the complement of a verb (6):

4. Pa welo da vamm-gozh da gaier-notennou ...
when will-see your mother-old your notebook
"When your grandmother sees your notebook, ..."
5. Ma veze Yann skuizh, e chomo er gêr
if he-were John tired prt he-will-rest in-the house
"If John is tired, he'll stay home"
6. (C'hwi a ouie) e oa bet korseriou e Sant Malo gwechall?
you prt you-know prt was been pirates in Saint-Malo formerly
"(Did you know) there used to be pirates in Saint-Malo?"

Clauses preceded by a (subordinate) clause (5,7) show the same order as well:

7. E-kreiz evañ e vanne, e kwezhas Yann war e hed
after drink his glass prt he-fell John on his length
"After drinking his glass, John fall flat out"

The same possibility also exists for affirmative main clauses, where it has the effect of rendering the sentence "emphatic". This structure is largely restricted to sentences in which the main verb is emañ (the locative or habitual copula), as in (9), though it is occasionally found with other verbs (such as mont "go" as in 8):

8. Ez a Yann d'ar porz david pesked
prt goes John to-the port after fish
"John is (really) going down to the port to get fish"
9. Emañ Yann war ar mor
is(loc) John on the sea
"John (really) is at sea"

Typically in declarative main clauses, however, something else precedes the verb. Thus, corresponding to the negative sentence 10, we have 11-13:

10. N'emañ ket Perig o klask e vreur er c'hoad
neg-is not Peter at looking-for his brother in-the woods
"Peter is not looking for his brother in woods"
11. Perig a zo o klask e vreur er c'hoad
Peter prt is at looking-for his brother in-the woods
12. E vreur a zo Perig o klask er c'hoad
his brother prt is Peter at looking-for in-the woods
13. Er c'hoad emañ Perig o klask e vreur
in-the woods is Peter at looking-for his brother

The item appearing in pre-verbal position is the "topic," and the choice of one or another element of the sentence to be topic depends on discourse facts. The construction is distinct from another one that corresponds to English cleft structures; there is no particular emphatic force to sentences such as 11-13, which are quite ordinary declarative clauses. Apparently both topicalization and focus (cf. Prince, 1981) are conflated in this construction,

which (roughly) divides the content of the clause into old information and comment, but in which the initial element may constitute either of these, depending on other factors not examined here. In structural terms, however, the overall generalization is that any single constituent of the clause can be the topic: subject (11), object (12), or adverbial (13), for example. It is also possible to have a possessor as topic (as in 14), or the object of a preposition (as in 15). In each of these cases, we find a resumptive pronoun:

14. Yann a zo Perig o klask e vreur er c'hoad
 John prt is Peter at looking-for his brother in-the woods
 "Peter is looking for John's brother in the woods"
15. Ar c'hoad a zo Perig o klask e vreur ennañ
 the woods prt is Peter at looking-for his brother in-it
 "Peter is looking for his brother in the woods"

In all sentence types, when the direct object of a verb is a pronoun, it appears³ as a "conjugated preposition." This treatment can also be found when the object is the topic, since in this case it can optionally be represented by a resumptive pronoun:

16. N'en-eus ket kavet Yann anezhañ
 neg-he-has not found John of-it ,
 "John has not found it"
17. Ma levr en-eus kavet Yann (anezhañ)
 my book he-has found John (of-it)
 "John has found my book"

Given the facts surveyed above, we conclude that the topic element is strictly external to the structure of the basic clause. The most natural treatment appears to place the topic in the Comp position, as a daughter of $\bar{S}$ and sister of S . Internal to the constituent S itself, we assume VS0 order.

2. Verbs as topics. We have asserted above that any constituent of the clause may be represented by the topic; and since the verb is of course a constituent, we would therefore expect to find verbs as topics, despite the fact that the usual sense of "topic" does not obviously extend to verbs. In fact, we do find verbs as topics: the construction of interest is that in (19), corresponding to (18) with topical subject, in which the verb appears in a non-finite form we will discuss below, and its basic position in the clause is marked by a form of the verb ober "do." The categories of person, number, and tense are marked on this latter element:

18. Me a yelo da weled ac'hanoc'h
 I prt will-go for seeing of-you
 "I'll go and see you"

19. Mond a rin da weled ac'hanoc'h
 go prt I-will-do for seeing of-you
 "I'll go and see you"

It can be noted that this use of ober is parallel to the do of "do-support" in English, rather than to the do of "do-so," since all verbs (and not just activity verbs) can appear in sentences such as 19 (cf. Anderson, 1976 for further discussion of do constructions in English).

When the main verb of the clause is in a compound tense (formed with the auxiliary elements corresponding to "have" or "be" together with the past participle of the verb), the participle can appear in topic position as in (21). When this occurs, no form of ober is found:

20. Ma hent am-eus kollet	21. Kollet am-eus ma hent
my road I-have lost	lost I-have my road
"I have lost my way"	"I have lost my way"

Alternatively, the topicalized verb may appear in the same non-finite form as in sentence 19, in which case the past participle of ober replaces it:

22. Koll am-eus graet ma hent
 lose I-have done my road
 "I have lost my way"

Other elements plausibly forming a constituent with the verb can accompany it when it appears in topic position:

23. Kousked mad a rez?
 sleep well prt you-did
 "Did you sleep well?"
24. Kredi a-walc'h a rafen
 believe gladly prt I-would-do
 "I'd be glad to believe (it)"

Elements such as mad "well" in 23 and a-walc'h "gladly" in 24 are closely associated with the verb, and in fact appear immediately after it (and preceding the subject) in sentences where non-verbs are topics.

The most interesting cases, however, are those in which the verb together with its object constitutes the topic, such as 25:

25. Debrñ krapouezh a raio Yannig e Kemper hiziv
 eat crêpes prt will-do Johnny in Quimper today
 "Johnny will eat crêpes in Quimper today"
26. *Debrñ Yannig a raio krapouezh e Kemper hiziv
 eat Johnny prt will-do crêpes in Quimper today
 "Johnny will eat crêpes in Quimper today"

The verb together with its subject cannot constitute the topic, however, as shown by the ungrammaticality (except on the nonsense reading "crêpes will eat Johnny") of sentence 26. The possibility of 25, in which we have apparently a unique example of a non-constituent as topic, was of course the basis for the claim in Anderson & Chung (1977) that a VP might exist in Breton despite its VSO structure.

3. The categorial status of topicalized verbs. Confronted with an apparent basis for treating (topicalized) verbs together with their objects as constituents, the question immediately arises of what sort of constituent this is. One hint is to be found in the character of the preverbal particle element. We have thus far said nothing about this item, which precedes all verbs (though it is systematically elided before certain vowel-initial forms of a few common verbs such as the various copulas). Basically, as shown by the various sentences above and by 27-30 below, the particle is a exactly when preceded by a (topic) NP⁴; and e (ez or ec'h before vowel-initial verbs) elsewhere - i.e., after adjectives, adverbs, participles, prepositional phrases, initial clauses, or when the verb is itself sentence-initial.

27. Eul levr a lenn Yannig bemdez
a book prt reads Johnny every-day
"Johnny reads a book every day"
28. Yannig a lenn eul levr bemdez
Johnny prt reads a book every-day
29. Bemdez e lenn Yannig eul levr
everyday prt reads Johnny a book
30. An den a varvas e vuoc'h
the man prt died his cow
"The man's cow died"

Given the generalization that whenever the topic is a Noun Phrase, the preverbal particle is a (and otherwise, e), the fact that the particle in 25 is a, then, suggests that debrîñ krampouezh is a NP. This is further supported by sentences like 31:

31. Kestallann evid tantad ar pardon a zo graet
collect gorse for bonfire the pardon prt is done
"Gorse is collected for the bonfire at the pardon"

Sentence 31 represents a topicalized form of a passive clause, whose main verb would be expected to be eo "is" plus a participle. This example presents a number of interesting properties, but what is of interest here is the verb form zo. In the present tense, Breton has three distinct forms of the verb "be": emañ, used for locational expressions or habitual attributes; eo, the ordinary copula; and eus, the verb of existential constructions. These three are only distinguished, however, as long as they are not immediately preceded by a NP. When a topic NP precedes any of the forms of "be," they are all replaced by the form zo.

32. Glas eo ar mor 33. Ar mor a zo glas
 blue is the sea the sea prt is blue
 "The sea is blue" "The sea is blue"

The presence of zo (rather than eo) in 31, then, furnishes further evidence that the topic phrase consisting of the verb together with its object is a NP.

In fact, this conclusion is not as unexpected as it might appear, when we consider the morphology of the verb in topicalized sentences. The form of the verb that shows up in topic position is not the finite verb of corresponding sentences with other topics, but rather the "verbal noun," a form which has all of the properties of other nouns (including gender). Verbal nouns, like other nouns, take adjuncts such as articles (34), prepositional phrases (35), and possessives (36):

34. a. ar mor
the sea
"the sea"	a'. eul levr
a book
"a book"
b. al labourad douar
the working land
"the fact of working the land"	b'. en eur gerzet
in a walk
"while walking"
35. a. eul louzou ouzh ar remm
a remedy for the rheumatism
"a remedy for rheumatism"	a'. stered en oabl
stars in-the sky
"stars in the sky"
b. sellout ouzh an den
to-look at the man
"looking at the man"	b'. kwezhan en dour
to-fall in-the water
"falling in the water"
36. a. doriou an ti
doors the house
"The doors of the house"	b. sevel an ti
building the house
"to build the house"

In connection with 36b, note that the possessor of a verbal noun is interpreted as the object of the corresponding (transitive) verb. This is another example of the general principle explored in Anderson (1977), by which a single complement of an item with a thematic interpretation is interpreted as filling the "theme" relation with respect to its head.

In addition to having the internal constituent structure of NP, Verbal Noun phrases appear in all of the syntactic positions that can be occupied by other noun phrases. This includes subject position (37), direct object (38), as possessor (in certain locative constructions, such as 39), and as object of a preposition (40)):

37. Pegoulz vo an dornañ?
 when will-be the to-thresh
 "When will the threshing be?"
38. Ne garan ket klevet kurunou
 neg I-like not hearing thunder
 "I don't like to hear the thunder"

39. E-lec'h mond da c'haloupad, e vefe gwelloc'h dit chom er gêr
 in-place going to run prt were better to-you stay at home
 "Instead of going running, you ought to stay home."
40. Staotad a rae ar gigerez en he dilhad gand ar c'hoarzin a rae
 pissed prt did the butcher in her clothes by the laughing prt did
 "The butcher(ess) pissed in her pants with the laughing she did"

Note that, in this last case, the verbal noun phrase ar c'hoarzin "the laughing" is not only the object of the preposition gand, but also the head of a relative clause a rae "that (she) did." Further, the internal structure of this relative clause is such as to make it clear that its head is a verbal noun phrase of exactly the sort we are most concerned with here, namely one that arises in the topicalization structure.

We suggest, then, that the topics in sentences like 25 are simply (verbal) noun phrases. If this is so, it explains immediately why the object of a participle (unlike that of a finite verb appearing as a verbal noun) cannot be topicalized with it:

41. *Kollet ma hent am-eus
 lost my road I-have
 (cf. 21 above)

This follows from the structure of participial phrases. In general, participles and phrases built on them can be used as adjectives, just as in English and many other languages. Participial phrases take various complements (such as adverbs, prepositional phrases, and the reflexive pro-clitic sequence en em), but do not occur directly with noun phrase complements. If we assume that a topicalized past participle (phrase) is a constituent, just like all other topics, it should thus display the same limitations as other participle phrases; and thus a direct object NP ought not to occur with it (as we observe in 41). The fact that verbal nouns, in contrast, do take a "direct object" complement follows from the distinct structure of NPs and AdjPs (including participial phrases), and thus the contrast between 25 and 41 is perfectly consistent with (and indeed predicted by) the rest of the grammar of the language.

4. The analysis of topicalized constructions. We concluded the the previous section that the topic in a sentence such as 25 is a NP. As a result, we no longer have any problematic evidence for a constituent such as VP in Breton: in fact, we can return to the original generalization suggested above, to the effect that the "topic" position in a Breton sentence can be filled by any (single) constituent of a type independently generated by the phrase structure rules of the language: Adv, PP, AdjP (including participles), or NP (including those with verbal nouns as heads). Given this conclusion, however, we now have two possible accounts of the origin of the topic constituent: either it is moved there from somewhere else, or it is generated there by the rules of the base. A number of independent lines of evidence seem to favor the latter alternative overwhelmingly.

4.1. If topics arise by movement, it must be that sentences with verbal topics have the verb ober "do" in underlying structure, with a verbal noun as its object. But the construction ober + verbal noun already exists, with another sense:

42. a. Me a raio sevel eun ti
 I prt I-will-do building a house
 "I'm going to have a house built"
 b. Sevel eun ti a rin
 building a house prt I-will
 "I'm going to build a house"

If sentence 42b is derived from a source like that of 42a by a movement of the object of ober, we have no natural account of the considerable divergence in meaning and thematic structure between the two.

4.2. If the verbal noun which presumably undergoes topicalization in sentences like 19, 22, 25, etc. above is the object of ober, it is not clear how we could account for the fact that, beside sentences like 25 in which a verb(al noun) and its object appear as topic, we also find sentences like 43, in which only the verb is topic:

43. Debrîñ a raio Yannig krampouezh e Kemper hiziv
 eating prt will-do Johnny crêpes in Quimper today
 "Johnny will eat crêpes in Quimper today"

In order to derive this sentence in a parallel fashion, we would have to assume that ober is followed by two direct object positions (one occupied by the verbal noun debrîñ and one by the object of this verb). This would first of all be completely unique in Breton: no verb ever appears in surface structure with two direct objects, and there is no reason to believe this is a possible base structure. Furthermore, if it were generated, we would expect to be able to topicalize only the second object, yielding a sentence such as 44:

44. *Krampouezh a raio Yannig debriñ e Kemper hiziv
 crêpes prt will-do Johnny to-eat in Quimper today

If grammatical at all, this sentence has only the causative reading similar to 42a above. The only alternative to this consistent with a movement analysis of 43 would seem to be to allow topicalization to move only the head of a constituent (the verbal noun in a verbal NP), while leaving its complement structure in place: a type of movement that has been argued by a variety of authors to be impossible.

4.3. As noted above, topicalized objects can be represented by a resumptive pronoun. But this is not possible with topicalized verbs:

45. *Lenn eul levr brezhoneg a ra Yannig anezhañ bemdez
 reads a book Breton prt does Johnny of-it everyday
 "Johnny reads a Breton book everyday"

If the topicalized verbal NP is a NP, as we have argued above, and is generated as the object of ober, there is no apparent reason why this object should not (like other objects) be able to leave a resumptive pronoun in place when topicalized.

4.4. The topic position may be filled with the verbal noun bez(a) "be." There is no apparent source for this through movement, however:

46. Bez' am-eus keuneud
 be I-have firewood
 "I've really got firewood!"

4.5. In the case of passives, such as sentence 31 above, the material which would have to be topicalized consists of the verb and its (passive) subject. As we have already seen, the verb and its subject cannot in general be topicalized. If we were to generate the perfectly acceptable verbal noun phrase appearing as topic in 31 in that position, however, and simply associate its interpretation with the (otherwise empty) verb (a) zo graet "is done," no problem arises in consequence. The possibility of a regular transitive verbal noun phrase with a finite verb form showing passive morphology gives a particularly striking argument for treating the material in topic position as generated independently of the structure of the rest of the clause.

4.6. Some intransitive verbs require the auxiliary "have" in the perfect, while others require "be." Any topicalized verb will employ "have," however, since this is required by (transitive) "do." In order to account for the consistent use of "have" with ober, on the assumption that this is inserted as a "resumptive pro-verb" when an underlying verb is topicalized, we would have to make the choice of auxiliary follow a presumed movement rule. On the other hand when a participle is moved, the appropriate auxiliary remains, depending on the original verb; and thus it would seem that whatever rule topicalizes participles must follow the choice of auxiliaries. Assuming we wish to preserve a uniform statement for topicalization, this is a paradox.

47. Menel d'eureuji am-oa graet, hag manet on abaoe.
 stay at-unmarried I-had done and stayed I-am since
 "I remained unmarried, and I have stayed (that way) since"

The second clause in 47 shows that the verb menel "remain" takes "be" as its auxiliary in compound tenses, and that this must remain when the participle is topic; but the first clause shows that topicalization which involves replacement of the finite form by a form of ober leads to the use of "have" as auxiliary.

5. Conclusion. We have seen above that Breton topics are potentially single constituents of any phrasal type; and the arguments of the preceding section suggest that they are generated in place by the

rules of the base rather than being moved into preverbal position from an intra-clausal origin. Note, by the way, that the arguments given above in sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5 also suggest that an analysis parallel to that proposed by Chomsky (1977) for English, involving base-generated topics and a rule of *wh*-movement from a clausal position followed by free deletion in Comp cannot be correct for Breton (since they show that in general, there is no intraclausal position in which it would be appropriate to generate such a *wh*-element).

It appears, however, that a rather natural account of Breton topicalization is available if we simply generalize the notion of "binding" from recent work in syntax. Suppose, that is, we assume that the base rules allow for the generation of a phrase of any type in Comp; and also that (as a general principle), the rules expanding any category within the clause are optional. In line with the "Empty Category Principle" of Chomsky (1980), any such phrasal category which is not expanded must be properly bound; but in fact, a phrase in Comp will c-command any such position within the clause, and thus can be interpreted as potentially binding it. "Binding" is normally interpreted as based on referential co-indexing, and of course the relation between e.g. an Adv in topic position and an unexpanded Adv internal to S is not an instance of this relation; but it is a comparatively direct extension of the co-indexing relation for (potentially) referential NP if we consider that the relation in question consists of supplying the interpretation of the binding antecedent as the interpretation for the unexpanded bound category. We assume therefore that sentences such as 27 and 29 above have the following structures:

The binding relations are shown by dotted lines.

When a verbal noun appears in topic position, it is possible for this to bind the Verb position, if that is unexpanded. Before this proposal can be considered complete, of course, an account of the semantics of verbal noun expressions must be given which reconciles their interpretation with that of the category Verb; but there is every reason to believe that this is simply an instance of a more general problem which occurs in many (if not most) other languages. In English, of course, the pro-verb *do* (cf. Anderson, 1976) also occurs, and in many cases its interpretation is to be supplied by reference to some NP constituent:

50. a. What is this verb doing here?
 b. It's doing the same thing as Breton ober.
 c. How do you get it to do that?
 d. The thing to do is to insert do.
 e. The other thing to do with do is to delete it.

Sentence types such as those in 50 are quite parallel in their interpretive difficulties to Breton topicalized verbs (or verbal noun phrases).

Of course, if we are to treat verbal noun phrases in topic position as binding an unexpanded verb constituent, we must still account for the appearance of a form of ober in the surface structures of such sentences. It does not seem unnatural, however, to propose that a rule of the "phonological" portion of the grammar (that is, one contributing to the relation between s-structure and overt surface form, as opposed to logical form) simply inserts ober for otherwise empty verbs, just as in English it or there is inserted for otherwise empty NP positions under some circumstances.

When the facts of "topicalization" in Breton are considered carefully, then, it appears that there is no such rule in the grammar of the language at all. Furthermore, the appearance that this construction provides evidence for a constituent VP in an otherwise VSO language proves to be a mistaken one. The properties of Breton topics thus do not have the sort of sort of bearing on theoretical issues they initially were taken to have, although it would seem they are nonetheless not without interest.

Footnotes:

- ¹ This paper is based on (limited) fieldwork in Brittany during the summers of 1971, 1972, and 1974, supported in part by research funds from Harvard University; and on material to be found in the published literature on Breton (especially Trépos, [1968]; Gros, 1966, 1970, 1974; and LeGléau, 1973). I am grateful to Sandra Chung, Sharon Hargus, and Tracy Thomas-Flinders for recent discussions contributing to my understanding of these facts.

Forms cited below represent the "standard" literary language, especially as spoken in the Tréguier region. The orthography is by and large the standard in use throughout Brittany, though I may not have completely succeeded in normalizing examples taken from printed sources. For the reader's information, "ñ" represents simply nasality of the preceding vowel (and in fact is often lost altogether in speech); "c'h" represents both voiced and voiceless velar fricatives; and otherwise, the orthographic values are similar to those of French. Like other Celtic languages, Breton has an extensive system of mutations or initial consonant changes; I have made no attempt to indicate below that these have taken place, and if the reader finds a word changing before his eyes, this should not disturb him too much.

In addition to the discussion in Anderson & Chung, 1976, the Breton topicalization construction has also been discussed by Wojcik (1976), as well as in the traditional sources referred to above.

- 2 While the immediately following examples exhibit overt subject and object NP's, it should be noted that, unless topicalized, pronoun subjects never appear overtly in post-verbal subject position. An account of the distribution of pronouns, full NP's, and verbal agreement morphology is proposed in another paper to appear.
- 3 In earlier Breton (and still for some conservative speakers), object pronouns can appear attached to the verb as possessive forms. We omit mention of these forms here, since we have not been able to ascertain the conditions under which they are possible in the modern language (which has generalized the construction with object pronoun as a conjugated form of the preposition a). This alternative morphology for object pronouns, however, does not appear to affect the analysis to be given below.
- 4 Except when this NP is a "predicate nominative." Thus, we get Pesketour e vo Yannig "Johnny will be a fisherman," with e rather than a preceding the verb because the NP pesketour is predicative rather than referential (cf. Yannig a vo pesketour, with the same sense but with referential Yannig preceding the verb). It is well known that non-referential NP's have very different syntactic properties from those that (purport to) refer; cf. Kuno (1970) for extensive discussion.
- 5 We do not, however, find Verbs among the constituents in topic position, except in the form of verbal Nouns. This can be attributed to the fact that the only non-finite forms of Verbs are the verbal Noun and the participle (or verbal Adjective). If a Verb were generated in topic position, it would ipso facto not be in the domain of Tense, and so would require a (non-existent) non-finite form. The absence of topicalized Verbs (per se) thus follows without stipulation from the independent properties of morphology of the language.

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