

Subject Copies at the Intersection of Syntax, Discourse and PF: The Uyghur case

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Abstract. This paper investigates the paradox of subject positioning in Uyghur, where subjects appear low on the surface but behave as if they occupy a higher position. I argue that this mismatch arises from the interaction between syntactic movement and PF realization. In narrow syntax, subjects indeed raise to the highest TP position; however, different copies are pronounced at PF to satisfy discourse-related prosodic requirements. For subject focus, the lower copy in Spec, FocP is realized to satisfy focus-prominence constraints, while for subject ground, the highest copy in Spec, TP is pronounced. This unified analysis not only accounts for the scope differences between subject focus and subject ground, but also explains the distinct behaviors of subject and object phrases.

Keywords. subject positioning; focus; ground; copy theory; PF realization; Uyghur

1. Introduction. Uyghur (Turkic) has canonical SOV word order, as illustrated in (1). However, in certain contexts, the subject can surface between the direct object and the predicate. This is particularly evident when the subject is interpreted as focused. For instance, in response to the question posed in (2A), the focused subject *Ali* appears in the immediately preverbal position.

- (1) Ali kitab-ni al-d-i.
 Ali book-ACC buy-PAST-3SG
 ‘Ali bought the book.’
- (2) A: *Who bought the book?*
 B: Kitab-ni [**Ali**]_{Foc} al-d-i.
 book-ACC **Ali** buy-PAST-3SG
 ‘Ali bought the book.’

While previous studies have examined preverbal focus in other Turkic languages, there has been limited empirical investigation of Uyghur data. This paper addresses this gap by investigating the derivation of word orders exemplified in (2B). Specifically, I argue that while the focused subject in cases like (2B) surfaces in a low position, scope asymmetries between subjects and objects with respect to negation indicate that the subject must raise to a higher position in overt syntax (Section 2). In Section 3, I propose that the apparent paradox of subject positioning in Uyghur arises from the interaction of syntactic and PF components. Drawing on the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995), I argue that the subject in Uyghur does indeed raise to the highest position of TP in overt syntax, but when it represents focus, the lower copy is pronounced at PF because the [+focus] feature on the Foc head requires its specifier to bear heavy stress.

* I would like to thank all five Uyghur informants for sharing their language; all unreferenced examples in this work are attributed to them. I am also deeply grateful to Ruth Kramer for her invaluable guidance and suggestions, without which this work would not have been possible. My thanks also go to reviewers and participants of Tu+10 for their questions and comments. Any errors are my responsibility. Author: Xiang Li, Georgetown University (xl570@georgetown.edu).

This contrasts with cases where the subject is interpreted as ground information, and the highest copy in Spec, TP is pronounced. Besides developing the analysis, Section 4 further explores the motivation behind the movement of these discourse-related constituents. I demonstrate that the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) feature plays a crucial role in triggering movement. This analysis provides a straightforward explanation for the various syntactic positions that discourse-related constituents may occupy in Uyghur, especially those interpreted as background information. Section 5 concludes the discussion and raises potential issues for future research.

2. Paradox of Subject Positioning in Uyghur. In some languages, focus is indicated by moving the focused constituent to a designated position in the clause. In Italian, for example, focused elements move to the left periphery, while the remaining background information remains in situ, as shown in (3). To capture such patterns, Rizzi (1997) proposes a Focus Phrase (FocP) in the CP domain. According to his analysis, the head of FocP contains a [+focus] feature that attracts the focused constituent, such as the direct object *il tuo libro* ‘your book’ in (3), to its specifier.

(3) Italian (Rizzi 1997)

[*FocP* [*DP* *Il tuo libro*] *Foc*⁰ [*TP* *ho* [*VP* *comprato t_{DP}*]]] (*non il suo*)
the your book have-1SG bought (not the his)
‘I bought your book, not his.’

Unlike Italian, Uyghur marks focus in the immediately preverbal position with the focal accent (Çetinkaya 2023). In this respect, it might be necessary to generate a FocP in the preverbal area to account for the ex-situ foci in Uyghur. This raises an important question: where exactly in the preverbal area is FocP projected?

2.1. SUBJECT-OBJECT ASYMMETRIES IN SCOPE. For Turkish preverbal focus, it has been proposed that FocP is positioned immediately above *vP* in the TP domain (Vallduví & Engdahl 1996; İşsever 2003; Gürer 2015). A similar proposal appears promising for Uyghur, as evidence from scope readings with respect to the verbal negation suffix *-mA* indicates that FocP should be positioned below NegP within the TP domain in this language.¹ Consider the example below within a context:

(4) A: *What about Ali? What didn't Ali buy?*

B: [*Ali*]_{Top} [**hemme kitab-ni**]_{Obj-Foc} *al-mi-d-i*.
Ali all book-ACC buy-NEG-PAST-3SG

‘Ali did not buy all the books.’

(Neg > ∀; *∀ > Neg)

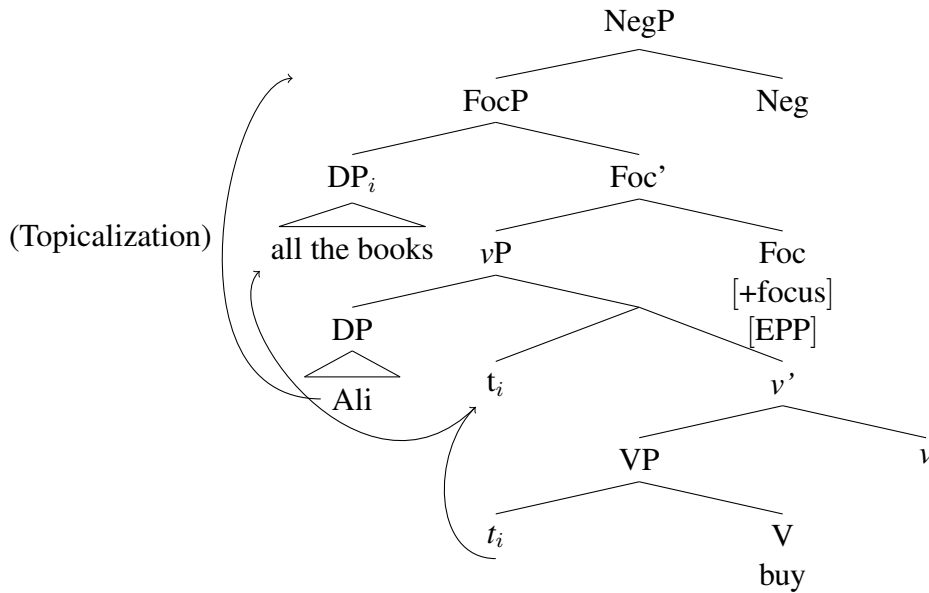
In (4B), the direct object phrase containing the universal quantifier serves as the focused constituent, responding directly to a *wh*-question. Crucially, when the verb is negated, the focused direct object only takes narrow scope under negation.² Assuming that negation takes scope no lower than the fixed position where it is merged, the scope reading in (4B) suggests that the direct object must remain below NegP. This supports the idea that FocP in Uyghur is positioned below

¹ While Asarina (2011) shows that the suffix *-mA* consistently projects as NegP above *vP*, Sugar (2019) contends that *-mA* may appear in four different positions, including *vP*, VoiceP, AuxP and ProgP. Despite this debate, both agree that *-mA* is projected above *vP* within the TP domain. In this paper, I follow Asarina’s view and assume that when only a single verb is present, negation heads a fixed NegP projection in the clause immediately below TP in Uyghur.

² To my knowledge, there is no context in which object phrases scope over negation.

NegP but above vP in the TP domain. The derivation of (4B) is illustrated below:³

(5) The derivation of (4B):



If this analysis is on the right track, we would expect that focused subject phrases in the preverbal position also exhibit narrow scope. However, this prediction is not borne out. In (6), the quantifier, as part of the focused phrase in the subject position, can take wide scope over negation, while the narrow scope reading is only marginally accepted. This directly contrasts with the behavior of focused direct object phrases, which consistently receive narrow scope under negation.

(6) A: *What about the book? Who didn't buy the book?*

B: [*Kitab-ni*]_{Top} [**hemme adem**]_{Subj-Foc} *al-mi-d-i*.
 book-ACC **all people** buy-NEG-PAST-3PL
 'All people didn't buy the book.' ($\forall \succ \text{Neg}$; %Neg $\succ \forall$)

A similar asymmetry arises in the case of ground information. Consider the following scenario and the sentence:

(7) SCENARIO: A group of students discusses a project that requires buying all the books on the list. One student asks who didn't buy all the books, and Ahmet responds:

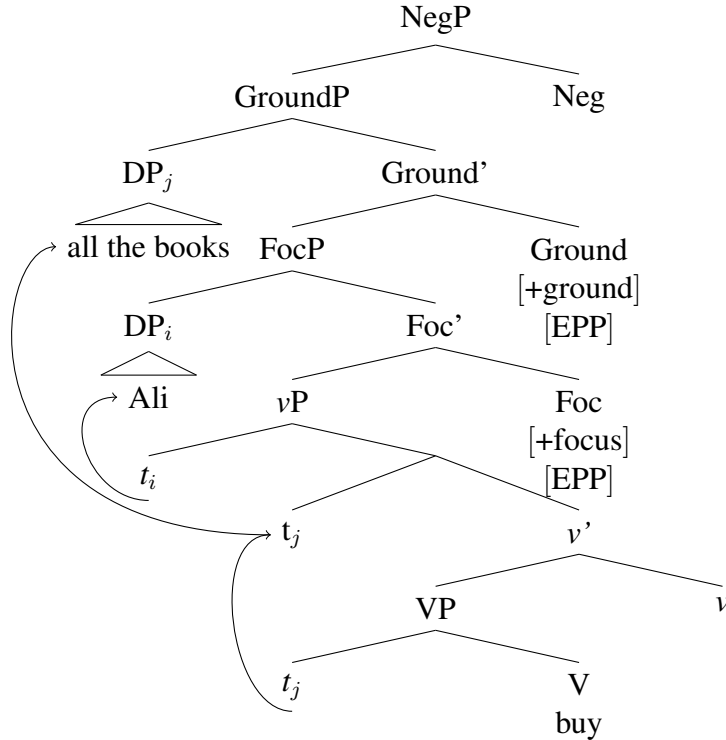
[**Hemme kitab-ni**]_{Obj-Ground} [*Ali*]_{Subj-Foc} *al-mi-d-i*.
all book-ACC *Ali* buy-NEG-PAST-3SG
 'Ali did not buy all the books.' (Neg $\succ \forall$; * $\forall \succ \text{Neg}$)

In (7B), the subject *Ali* serves as the focus and thus occupies the immediately preverbal position. In contrast, the direct object *hemme kitab-ni* 'all books' is understood as ground information that the speaker assumes the hearer already knows. Notice that this ground phrase surfaces to the left of the focused constituent. To account for this, we might posit another functional projection

³ This analysis assumes multiple specifiers for vP: the outer specifier hosts the external argument, while the inner specifier accommodates the direct object raised from the VP and assigns accusative case to the direct object. For detailed discussion, see Major (2024).

(GroundP) for ground elements. Given that the universal quantifier *hemme* ‘all’ within the ground phrase only takes narrow scope under negation, it suggests that GroundP must be positioned below NegP but above FocP in the TP domain. The derivation of (7) can be presented as in (8):

(8) The derivation of (7):



Again, this analysis predicts that a quantifier in a subject phrase serving as ground information should also take narrow scope under negation. However, this prediction is not supported by the data. As shown in (9), the same quantifier within the subject phrase consistently takes wide scope over negation, and the narrow reading is not available.

(9) SCENARIO: A group of students discusses a project that requires any items they think will be helpful. One student asks what all the people didn't buy, and Ahmet responds:

[**Hemme adem**]_{Subj-Ground} [kitab-ni]_{Obj-Foc} al-mi-d-i.
all people book-ACC buy-NEG-PAST-3PL

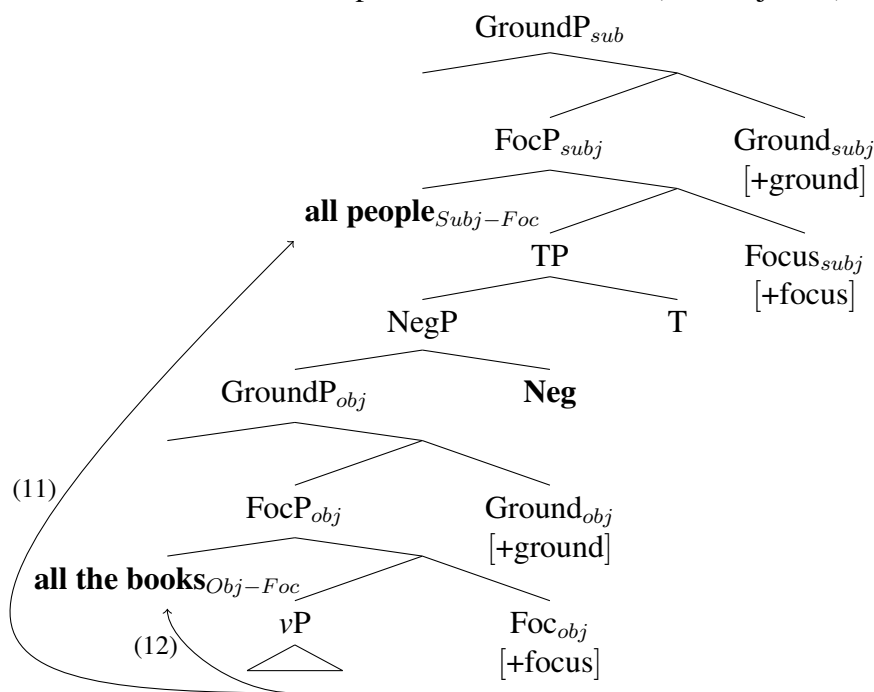
‘All people didn't buy the book.’

($\forall \succ \text{Neg}$; * $\text{Neg} \succ \forall$)

Taken together, the patterns presented in this section reveal a critical subject-object asymmetry in Uyghur: subject phrases, whether serving as focus or ground, consistently take wide scope over negation, whereas object phrases uniformly receive a narrow scope reading.

2.2. DIFFERENT PROJECTIONS FOR SUBJECT AND OBJECT. Given the way we have set things up so far, one possible way to address the observed subject-object asymmetry in Uyghur is to assume that different FocP and GroundP positions are projected for subject and object phrases. Specifically, subject phrases are attracted to higher FocP and GroundP projections situated above NegP, while object phrases raise to lower FocP and GroundP projections located below NegP. Consequently, the structure of a Uyghur sentence can be schematically represented as in (10).

(10) Uyghur Clause Structure with Multiple FocP and GroundP (to be rejected):



This proposed structure captures the contrasting scope interpretations observed in (6) and (4), repeated here as (11) and (12). In (11), the subject *hemme adem* ‘all people’ is focused and moves to a high subject-FocP above negation, yielding a wide-scope interpretation. Conversely, in (12), the direct object *hemme kitab-ni* ‘all the books’ is focused and moves to a lower object-FocP below negation, resulting in a narrow scope interpretation. The corresponding derivations for ground constituents follow the same logic, but are not illustrated here due to space limitations.

- (11) [*Kitab-ni*]_{Top} [**hemme adem**]_{Subj-Foc} *al-mi-d-i*.
 book-ACC **all people** buy-NEG-PAST-3PL
 ‘All people didn’t buy the book.’ (∀ > Neg; %Neg > ∇)
 =(6)

- (12) [*Ali*]_{Top} [**hemme kitab-ni**]_{Obj-Foc} *al-mi-d-i*.
 Ali **all book-ACC** buy-NEG-PAST-3SG
 ‘Ali did not buy all the books.’ (Neg > ∇; *∀ > Neg)
 =(4)

While this analysis explains the subject-object asymmetry in scope interpretation relative to negation, it introduces several theoretical and empirical issues. Theoretically, projecting multiple FocP and GroundP layers for different phrase types could be problematic in terms of economy. Empirically, it remains unclear how subject phrases consistently target higher projections and object phrases target lower ones. Without further constraints, this analysis will overgenerate. Moreover, even assuming that subject phrases do raise to the higher FocP to scope over negation, this account wrongly predicts that any constituent positioned to the left of the focused subject should also receive a wide scope interpretation over negation. Yet, this prediction is not borne out. For instance, direct object phrases serving as ground information consistently fail to scope

over negation. A relevant example is repeated in (13), where the direct object *hemme kitab-ni* ‘all the books’ precedes the focused subject *Ali*, but must be interpreted within the scope of negation.

(13) SCENARIO: A group of students discusses a project that requires buying all the books on the list. One student asks who didn’t buy all the books, and Ahmet responds:

[**Hemme kitab-ni**]_{Obj–Ground} [Ali]_{Subj–Foc} al-mi-d-i.
all book-ACC Ali buy-NEG-PAST-3SG
 ‘Ali did not buy all the books.’ (Neg > ∀; *∀ > Neg)
 =(7)

Given these issues, we must reconsider the assumption that subject phrases move overtly above negation. Nonetheless, it is also important to acknowledge that even when they appear low on the surface, subjects still behave syntactically as if they were in a position at least higher than that of the negation. A plausible hypothesis for the target position is the one that standardly hosts the subject in sentences, namely Spec, TP. Thus, even when it appears low on the surface, the subject is still in Spec, TP in overt syntax. Then this leads to another crucial question: how can the subject appear in both a low and high position in the tree simultaneously? I argue that this paradoxical situation can be resolved if the following assumptions are true: (i) movement leaves copies instead of traces, and (ii) a lower copy can be pronounced at PF under certain conditions.

3. Subject Movement and Pronunciation of Different Copies. In this section, I show that subjects in Uyghur raise to Spec, TP position in overt syntax, but different copies are realized at PF.

3.1. THE COPY THEORY OF MOVEMENT. While the trace theory of movement has traditionally been adopted to account for the displacement of elements in syntactic structures, recent developments in the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995, 2000, 2001) propose that movement does not introduce a trace but instead leaves behind a complete copy of the moved element. Typically, all copies, except the one in the head of the chain, are deleted at PF, given that overt movement must have a PF effect (Chomsky 1995). However, several authors have recently argued that the lower copy can also be pronounced, especially when PF has a preference for the pronunciation of the lower copy (Bobaljik 2002; Bošković 2001, 2002; Pesetsky 1998, among others). This concept is supported by many empirical arguments.

In English, for example, the higher copy is generally assumed to be pronounced, as demonstrated by the presence of overt *wh*-movement (Nunes 2004; Bobaljik 2002). However, there are instances where lower copies are pronounced if a marked interpretation is necessary for both the LF and the PF interfaces. One such case is Heavy NP Shift (HNPS) in the so-called *to*-dative construction, shown in (14b). Following the previous observation that the ‘shifted’ DP functions as the focus of the sentence (Rochemont 1978), Takano (1998) argues that in both examples in (14), the direct object undergoes obligatory movement across the PP for case-feature checking at narrow syntax. Crucially, in the HNPS version of the construction in (14b), the higher copy is deleted at PF and the lower copy is pronounced instead. This mechanism allows the lower copy to be interpreted as the focus at LF and receive a focus stress at PF.

- (14) a. John sent the letter to Mary.
 b. John sent to Mary [the letter that he had just finished last night].

Another relevant case in English involves the Locative Inversion Construction (LIC), illustrated in (15), where the theme DP occurs postverbally and the location PP appears to occupy

the so-called ‘subject position’. Evidence has shown that in such constructions, the locative PP serves as the topic (Takano 1998), while the theme DP functions as the subject and the focus of the sentence (Mikami 2010). Based on these, Mikami (2010) proposes that this configuration is derived through two key movements: the location PP undergoes overt movement to Spec, TopP, while the theme DP undergoes movement to Spec, TP at narrow syntax. Importantly, the theme DP is pronounced in its lower original position at PF due to its status as a focused phrase.

- (15) a. [On the hill]_{Top} stood [a large oak tree]_{Subj-Foc}.
 b. [Into the room]_{Top} walked [the professor]_{Subj-Foc}.

The realization of the lower copy rather than the highest one is also observed in other languages like Serbo-Croatian. Stjepanović (2007) argues that a subject representing new information focus, as seen in (16a), stays in situ in Spec, vP on the surface. However, there are data indicating that the subject must raise to a higher position. In particular, in (16b), the subject *Jovan* binds a reflexive in an adverb that precedes the subject. Given that the adverb must be left adjoined to a maximal projection above the subject, this binding relation suggests that the subject must have moved to a higher position in the tree than the adverb.

- (16) Serbo-Croatian (Stjepanović 2007)
- a. Mariju je nesumnjivo oborio **Jovan**.
 Marija.ACC is undoubtedly failed **Jovan.NOM**
 ‘Jovan undoubtedly failed Marija.’
- b. Mariju je protiv **svoje** volje oborio **Jovan**.
 Marija.ACC is against **his.REFL** will failed **Jovan.NOM**
 ‘Jovan_i failed Marija against his_i will.’

Building on earlier work on the pronunciation of lower copies, Stjepanović argues that in the examples above, the subject does indeed raise to the highest position of TP in overt syntax. Nevertheless, when the subject represents new information focus, a lower copy is pronounced at PF to satisfy requirements on sentential stress assignment. This analysis thus captures the extremely free word order of Serbo-Croatian as well as discourse effects on scrambling and copy deletion.

With these theoretical approaches in mind, I propose that the realization of the subject focus in Uyghur follows a similar pattern, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. THE LOWER COPY REALIZATION OF SUBJECT FOCUS. Recall that in Uyghur, when the subject functions as the focus, it appears in the immediately preverbal position, yet it can still take scope over the verbal negation, with the relevant example repeated below in (17).

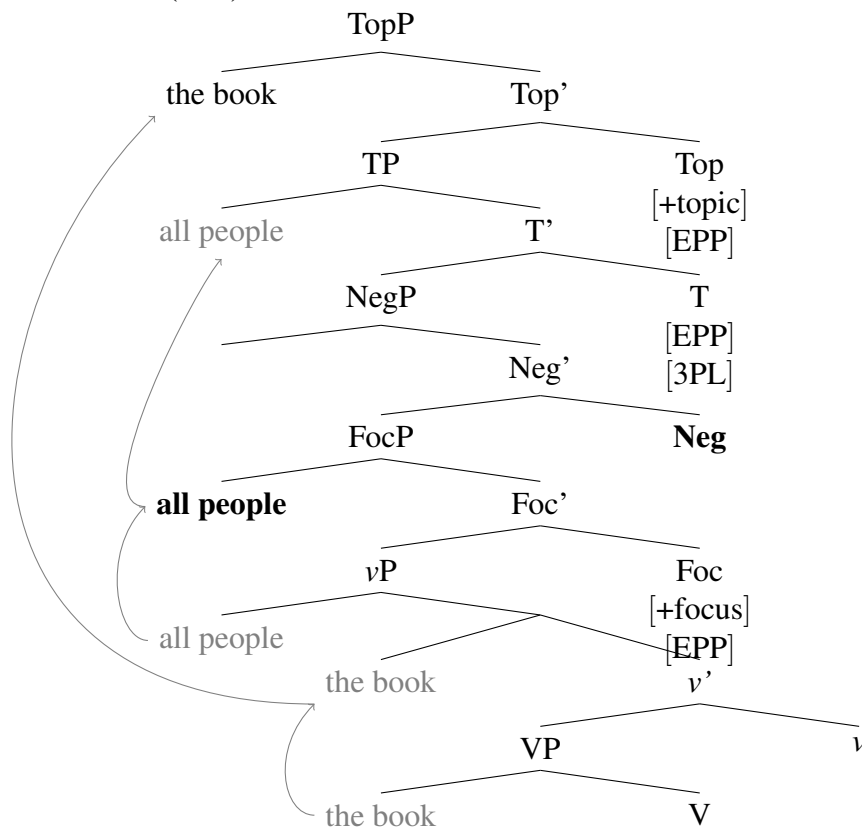
- (17) A: *What about the book? Who didn’t buy the book?*
- B: [Kitab-ni]_{Top} [**hemme adem**]_{Subj-Foc} al-mi-d-i.
 book-ACC **all people** buy-NEG-PAST-3PL
 ‘All people didn’t buy the book.’ (∀ > Neg; %Neg > ∀)
 =(6)

Under the copy theory of movement, I propose that the derivation of (17B) involves both movement of the subject in narrow syntax and the pronunciation of a lower copy at PF. In narrow syntax, the subject *hemme adem* ‘all people’ is base-generated in Spec, vP. When FocP is introduced,

the subject checks the [+focus] feature and moves overtly to Spec, FocP to satisfy the EPP feature. As soon as T is introduced, it probes down the tree for a goal and enters into an Agree relation with the subject DP. This agreement ensures that the verb shows 3rd-person plural agreement with the subject DP *all people*, and the subject DP is assigned nominative case from the finite T. Subsequently, the subject DP undergoes movement to Spec, TP to satisfy the EPP feature on T.⁴

When the derivation is transferred to PF, further complexity is introduced due to the interaction between prosodic prominence and word order. I propose that the focal stress pattern on the preverbal element is closely linked to the projection of FocP. This connection stems from the strong [+focus] feature in the Foc head, which is assumed to require the assignment of primary prominence in the sentence (Chomsky 1971; Jackendoff 1972; Selkirk 1984, 1995). Consequently, although the subject DP undergoes movement to Spec, TP in narrow syntax, the lower copy in Spec, FocP must be pronounced to satisfy the prosodic requirements. The derivation of (17B) can be presented as in (18), where the gray element is visible only in narrow syntax:

(18) The derivation of (17B):



With the structure outlined above, all the features that require agreement can be properly valued,

⁴ Some may worry that the movement of Uyghur subject focus constituent is an instance of improper movement, where it undergoes A'-movement first and then A-movement afterwards (Chomsky 1973). However, recent work argues that the A/A' distinction is unclear in minimalism (Safir 2019). For example, in Lega (a Bantu language), a *wh*-phrase can move to the edge of vP and still satisfy the EPP by agreeing with T, even though it technically undergoes A'-movement and should not be driven by the need for case and agreement. Similarly, in Dinka, another Bantu language, movements that appear to be A'-movement (like long-distance movement of objects past matrix subjects) behave for the purposes of binding and agreement like A-movement. These observations suggest that the distinction between A and A'-movement may not be tenable, thereby challenging the status of the ban on improper movement.

and the focused subject is realized in the immediately preverbal position at PF, resulting in the expected word order.

This analysis also accounts for the scope interaction between subject focus and negation. When the higher copy of the subject in Spec, TP is interpreted, the subject focus takes wide scope over negation, giving rise to the default interpretation of the subject in the higher position. Note here that it is not problematic at all for the higher copy to make a semantic contribution in the determination of scope interpretation, because the copy theory of movement in principle makes it possible for the unpronounced copy to be interpreted. Nevertheless, the subject focus may also take the narrow scope, although this reading is only marginally accepted. I argue that this interpretation arises from the possibility of interpreting the subject in the lower Spec, FocP. Since the lower copy is pronounced at PF, this alternate interpretation could be available, albeit less preferred. The flexibility in the interpretation of subject focus contrasts with the more rigid interpretation of subject ground, which will be explored further in the next section.

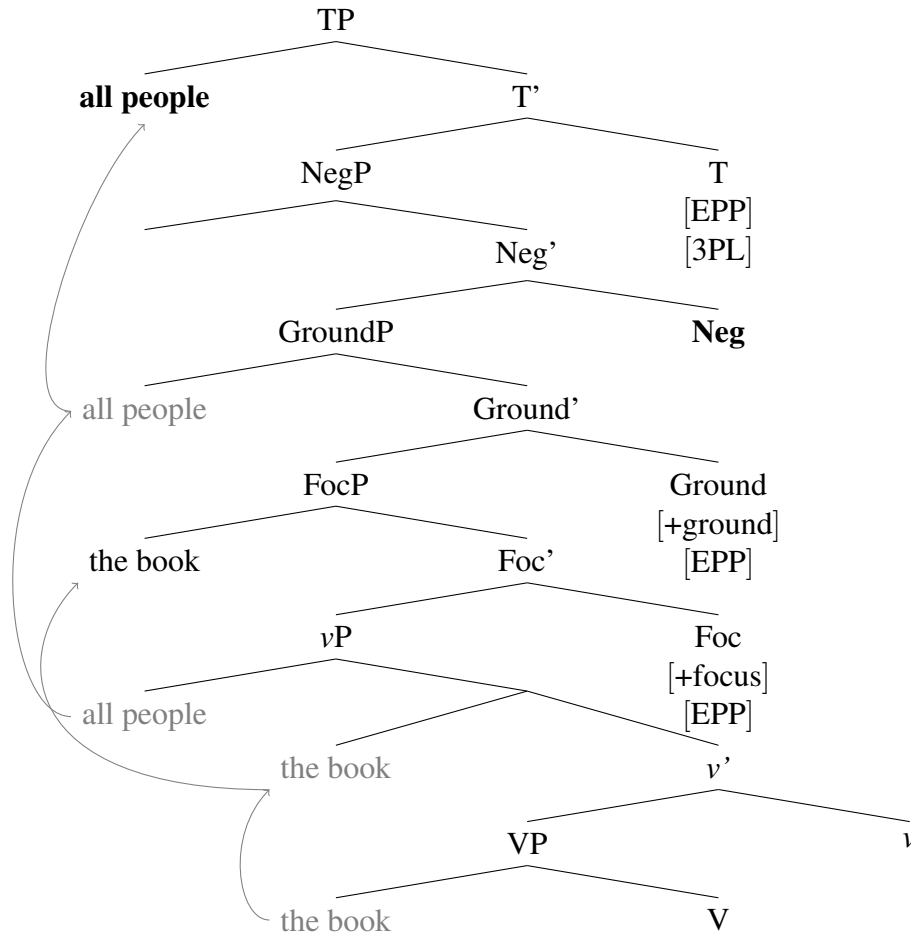
3.3. THE HIGHER COPY REALIZATION OF SUBJECT GROUND. Recall that when the subject functions as ground information, it also takes scope over the negation, with the relevant example repeated below in (19).

- (19) SCENARIO: A group of students discusses a project that requires any items they think will be helpful. One student asks what all the people didn't buy, and Ahmet responds:
- | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|---|----------|----------------------|------------------|
| [| Hemme adem |] _{Subj-Ground} | [| kitab-ni |] _{Obj-Foc} | al-mi-d-i. |
| | all people | | | book-ACC | | buy-NEG-PAST-3PL |
- ‘All people didn’t buy the book.’ (∀ > Neg; *Neg > ∇)
=(9)

In light of the copy theory of movement, I propose that the derivation of (19) proceeds similarly to cases involving subject focus but with key differences. The subject *hemme adem* ‘all people’ is initially base-generated in Spec, vP, and subsequently moves to a higher position. In this case, however, it moves to Spec, GroundP rather than Spec, FocP, as it functions as the ground information instead of the focus. When T is introduced, it probes down for a goal and establishes an Agree relation with the subject DP in Spec, GroundP. As with subject focus constructions, this agreement ensures that the verb shows 3rd-person plural agreement. T also assigns nominative case to the subject, which then undergoes movement to Spec, TP to satisfy the EPP requirement.

What should be particularly noted is that the Ground head is not typically associated with prosodic prominence. Consequently, only the highest copy of the subject in Spec, TP is sent to PF for pronunciation, as shown in (20), where the gray element is visible only in narrow syntax. This contrasts with the subject focus case in (18), where the lower copy in Spec, FocP is pronounced to meet prosodic requirements. The realization of the higher copy in (20) also results in the fixed scope relation between the subject ground and negation, as the higher copy consistently scopes over negation at LF. This, once again, stands in contrast to the subject focus case in (18), where the narrow scope interpretation of the subject focus could be marginally available due to the possibility of interpreting the lower copy in Spec, FocP.

(20) The derivation of (19):



So far, we have shown that the subject-object asymmetry in scope interpretation relative to negation can be effectively captured by employing the copy theory of movement. Specifically, subject focus phrases move to Spec, TP in narrow syntax, but the lower copy is realized in Spec, FocP at PF to satisfy prosodic requirements. In contrast, subject ground phrases also raise to Spec, TP, but in these cases, it is the highest copy that is sent to PF. The next section turns to a deeper analysis of ground elements, focusing on their displacement patterns and the mechanism that derives their surface positions.

4. More About the Displacement of Ground Elements. Some may have noticed that both FocP and GroundP in the proposed structure are assumed to bear an EPP feature that triggers the movement of focused and ground constituents, respectively. This assumption stands in contrast to the view in earlier analyses of other Turkic languages. For example, Toplar (2019), in her study of Turkish, argues that the ground element is base-generated in its thematic position, and then placed into a higher position via adjunction. Under her analysis, ground information, unlike topic or focus, does not exhibit any distinct characteristics and thus cannot have formal features associated with a GroundP to attract the ground constituent from its original position. Adjunction, as opposed to canonical movement, does not require a feature-checking relationship between the moved category and a functional head (Chomsky 1995).

However, Toplar’s adjunction-based approach presents several critical issues. First, no con-

clusive evidence has been provided to demonstrate the absence of formal features associated with ground elements. It is still plausible that a ground feature operates similarly to other discourse-related features, such as topic or focus, by probing its domain to attract constituents with a matching feature. Another issue concerns the motivation behind the movement of ground information. Similar to other discourse-related elements, the displacement of ground information in Uyghur could be driven by an EPP feature on the Ground head. This is what I argue for in this paper: a GroundP, projected below NegP but above FocP, carries an EPP feature, which attracts ground constituents to its specifier. Crucially, this EPP feature on GroundP can better account for the various syntactic positions that ground information may occupy in Uyghur.

4.1. PREVERBAL AND POSTVERBAL GROUND CONSTITUENTS. One striking property of ground information in Uyghur is its flexible surface positioning: it can freely appear either to the left of the focused constituent or to the right of the verb without changing the core meaning of the sentence. As illustrated below in (21), question A can be answered in two different ways. In both responses, the focused subject consistently appears immediately before the verb, while the direct object, as the ground information, appears preverbally in (21-B1) but shifts to a postverbal position in (21-B2).

(21) SCENARIO: A and B are discussing how excited Aygül was when she received the book as a birthday gift. However, A forgot who bought the book for Aygül, so he/she asked:

A: *Who bought the book?*

B1: [**Kitab-ni**]_{Ground} [Ali]_{Foc} al-d-i.
book-ACC Ali buy-PAST-3SG
 ‘Ali bought the book.’

B2: [Ali]_{Foc} al-d-i [**kitab-ni**]_{Ground}.
 Ali buy-PAST-3SG **book-ACC**
 ‘Ali bought the book.’

This pattern, where the ground element can occupy the postverbal position, aligns with observations in other head-final languages such as Hindi and Amharic (Kramer & Eilam 2012; Manetta 2012). In these languages, constituents interpreted as old or backgrounded information scramble to a position after the verb, resulting in a verb-medial order:

(22) Hindi (Manetta 2012)
 Siita-e Mohan-ko dikhaa-ii [**ek kitaab**]_{Ground}.
 Sita-ERG Mohan-DAT show-PERF **a book**
 ‘Sita showed a book to Mohan.’

(23) Amharic (Kramer & Eilam 2012)
 Astämari-w bälla [**doro wät'u-n**]_{Ground}.
 teacher-DEF ate.3MS **chicken stew-DEF-ACC**
 ‘The teacher ate the chicken stew.’

To account for such data, Manetta (2012) proposes that rightward scrambling is driven by a special kind of EPP feature, called the EPP-R feature, which triggers movement to a rightward specifier of the functional head bearing this feature. Focusing on Hindi, Manetta argues that T is the

head that hosts the EPP-R feature, causing constituents to scramble rightward to its specifier position. Similarly, Kramer & Eilam (2012) adopts this approach for Amharic, proposing that a Topic head, rather than T, carries the EPP-R feature.⁵

For Uyghur, however, I propose that the Ground head hosts either the EPP-R feature, responsible for rightward movement, or the normal EPP feature (also referred to as EPP-L), which triggers leftward movement. Like other heads that possess only the normal EPP feature, the Ground head in Uyghur probes its domain for a constituent with a matching ground feature. Once the Agree relation is established, the ground feature on the head is checked, and then the goal can move either rightward or leftward, depending on the specific type of EPP feature hosted by the Ground head.⁶

It is worth noting that the focused phrase can never follow the verb (Çetinkaya 2023), and therefore, the two alternative answers for question A in (21), shown below in (24), are both pragmatically ill-formed in this context.

(24) Repeating the same context from (21):

B3: # [*Kitab-ni*]_{Ground} *al-d-i* [**Ali**]_{Foc}.
 book-ACC buy-PAST-3SG **Ali**

Intended meaning: ‘Ali bought the book.’

B4: # *Al-d-i* [**Ali**]_{Foc} [*kitab-ni*]_{Ground}.
 buy-PAST-3SG **Ali** book-ACC

Intended meaning: ‘Ali bought the book.’

To account for such data, I propose that only the Ground head can select for the EPP-R feature, while the Focus head is limited to the normal EPP feature, which triggers leftward movement of the focused constituent to Spec, FocP. This results in the desired word order, where a focused phrase always appears to the left of the verb.

4.2. MULTIPLE GROUND CONSTITUENTS. Another key aspect of this analysis is its ability to account for the presence of multiple ground constituents in Uyghur, especially in the postverbal position. As shown in (25), question A can be answered in two ways: in response B1, both objects functioning as ground information appear preverbally, while in response B2, these same ground constituents shift to the postverbal position:

(25) SCENARIO: A and B are discussing how excited Aygül was when she received the book as a birthday gift. However, A forgot who gave the book to Aygül, so he/she asked:

A: ‘Who gave the book to Aygül?’

B1: [**Aygül-ge**]_{Ground} [**kitab-ni**]_{Ground} [**Ali**]_{Foc} *bër-d-i*.
 Aygül-DAT **book-ACC** Ali give-PAST-3SG

‘Ali gave the book to Aygül.’

⁵ Kramer & Eilam (2012) refer to the postverbal elements in Amharic as Topic but note in a footnote that they could also represent background information.

⁶ It is important to note that while the EPP feature ensures that ground constituents in Uyghur move to Spec, GroundP in narrow syntax, specified features such as EPP-R and EPP-L, come into play only at PF. This separation ensures that narrow syntax is concerned with establishing hierarchical relationships among constituents, while linear order is subsequently determined at a later stage.

B2: [Ali]_{Foc} bër-d-i [**kitab-ni**]_{Ground} [**Aygül-ge**]_{Ground}
 Ali give-PAST-3SG **book-ACC** **Aygül-DAT**
 ‘Ali gave the book to Aygül.’

The existence of multiple postverbal constituents is not unique to Uyghur, and a similar pattern is also observed in Hindi (Manetta 2012). To account for the Hindi pattern, where several constituents undergo rightward movement to the postverbal position, Manetta (2012) proposes that the EPP feature on the functional head has an additional [multiple] property. This property allows all the matching goals within the search domain of the probe to move to the specifier of the relevant functional head. By contrast, Kramer & Eilam (2012) argue that in Amharic, the EPP-R feature lacks this [multiple] property and hence only one constituent can be moved postverbally. In Uyghur, though, I propose that a similar [multiple] property also exists on the EPP feature. This allows for the movement of multiple ground constituents to either the preverbal or postverbal position in this language, resulting in the word order in (25).

4.3. FLEXIBLE ORDERING OF GROUND CONSTITUENTS. A final important property of ground elements in Uyghur is that they can appear in variable surface orders. Crucially, the EPP feature itself does not impose strict requirements on the specific elements that fulfill it. If we analyze the displacement of ground information in Uyghur as driven by the EPP feature on the head, we can easily account for the two alternative responses to the question in (25A), shown below:

(26) Repeating the same context from (25):

B1: [**Kitab-ni**]_{Ground} [**Aygül-ge**]_{Ground} [Ali]_{Foc} bër-d-i.
book-ACC **Aygül-DAT** Ali give-PAST-3SG
 ‘Ali gave the book to Aygül.’

B2: [Ali]_{Foc} bër-d-i [**Aygül-ge**]_{Ground} [**kitab-ni**]_{Ground}
 Ali give-PAST-3SG **Aygül-DAT** **book-ACC**
 ‘Ali gave the book to Aygül.’

When comparing answer (25-B1) to (26-B1), it is clear that while the focused subject remains in the immediate preverbal position, the two ground objects, *Aygül-ge* ‘to Aygül’ and *kitab-ni* ‘the book’, can take turns in their surface realization. The same variability can also be found in the answer pair (25-B2)-(26-B2), where the two ground constituents both appear postverbally, except that they are ordered differently. The variability suggests that there are no ordering restrictions on ground information in Uyghur. This observation further supports the argument that the EPP feature on the Ground head is responsible for the displacement of ground constituents. Notably, this feature only requires the specifier position to be filled, but does not inherently specify which constituents must occupy the required position, allowing for flexible ordering of ground information in Uyghur.

Taken together, these findings support the claim that the displacement of ground elements in Uyghur is driven by an EPP feature on the Ground head. Depending on the specific type of EPP feature on the Ground head, the ground information can freely appear either to the left of the focused constituent or to the right of the verb. This can account for various positions that ground constituents may occupy in Uyghur.

5. Conclusion and Remaining Issues. The current paper has examined the paradox of subject positioning in Uyghur, where subjects may appear low on the surface yet exhibit interpretive properties typically associated with higher syntactic positions. Drawing on the copy theory of movement, I argued that all subjects undergo overt movement to the highest position in TP, but different copies are realized at PF depending on their discourse status: focused subjects trigger the pronunciation of the lower copy in Spec, FocP, while ground subjects surface as the higher copy in Spec, TP. This unified analysis not only provides a straightforward explanation for the scope differences between subject focus and subject ground, but also accounts for the distinct behaviors of subject and object phrases. Importantly, it remains consistent with the earlier proposal that FocP in Uyghur is projected right above vP. By relying on different realization of copies at PF, this approach eliminates the need for additional projections for subject phrases.

One issue that remains unresolved concerns the interpretive asymmetry between scope and discourse interpretation in copy realization. For instance, a focused subject can be interpreted in either Spec, TP or Spec, FocP. However, the higher copy is typically preferred for scope interpretation with respect to negation, whereas the lower copy is more likely to be interpreted in the discourse information structure. This asymmetry between scope and discourse interpretation raises an important question as to why such a preference exists. Future research could explore why the higher copy makes a semantic contribution only in the determination of scope interpretation.

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