A Syntactic Study of Verum Focus Phenomena in English: With Special Reference to VP Ellipsis and VP Preposing

A Syntactic Study of Verum Focus Phenomena in English: With Special Reference to VP Ellipsis and VP Preposing[*]

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1. Introduction

This paper concerns a puzzle studied widely within the generative literature: a unified account for VP Ellipsis (VPE) and VP Preposing (VPP) in English (cf. Johnson (2001), Aelbrecht and Haegeman (2012), among others). The following examples show that the constructions appear to have common properties:

(1) a. Sandra didn't watch a rerun of "Casablanca" but Anna DID ø.
    (López and Winkler (2000:628), with slight modifications)
 b. It was necessary to pass if I was stay at Oxford, pass I DID *t*.
    (Huddleston and Pullum (2002:1377), with slight modifications)

In fact, they commonly have stressed auxiliaries (*did* in the examples) at the ends of the sentences.[1] In Government and Binding (GB) framework, it has been argued that VPE is licensed under head government by INFL (e.g. Lobeck (1987, 1995)). This accounts for the obligatory realization of INFL head in VPE. As for VPP, it has been claimed that Empty Category Principle (Chomsky (1986)) must be sanctioned by INFL head (e.g. Roberts (1990), Zagona (1988)). In the theoretical perspective, the view that VPP is considered to be parallel to VPE is supported. There are cases, however, in which VPE and VPP are licensed not by an INFL head (cf. Pollock (1989), López (1995)):

(2) John has bought the book, but Peter has not ø.

Since INFL is no longer a single functional head, it is hard to claim that INFL licenses ellipsis or preposing. In this connection, López and Winkler (henceforth, L&W) (2000) argue that a sigma ($\sum$) head (Laka (1990)) licenses ellipsis, which is cross linguistically supported by verb phrase ellipsis constructions in Spanish and German (see also López (1995)). The head functions as assigning truth value (i.e. affirmation/negation) to a proposition.

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[1] See Johnson (2001) for a detailed discussion and Aelbrecht and Haegeman's (2013) argument against him.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 outlines L&W's (2000) argument for the presence of polarity focus for VPE and some problems we face when we follow their insight, in which the focus is obligatory for the construction. Section 3 introduces Kobayashi's (2009) focus assigning system for some *toritate* particles in Japanese attempts, adopting the system, to solve the purported problems. Section 4 further employs the analysis in the previous 3 for VPP and draws a conclusion.

2. Verum Focus-Related Constructions in English

2.1. López and Winkler's (2000) Observations

In this subsection, I outline L&W (2000) and their insight, in which VPE cross linguistically (e.g. English, Spanish, and German) requires a polarity to bear a focus.

2.1.1. Phonological Properties

Let us first consider phonological properties imposed on a stranded auxiliary. L&W observe that VPE with an auxiliary contracted to a subject is prohibited:

(3) a.   John had not read Dostoyevsky's *Idiot* but Peter has.
     b. * John had not read Dostoyevsky's *Idiot* but Peter's.

(López and Winkler (2000:638))

Note further that *has* in (3a) is obligated to have a strong form [hʌz] rather than a weak one [həz].[2, 3]   L&W argue that this phonological property in VPE can be captured if we follow Laka (1990) in assuming that an empty affirmative feature *AFF* is assigned [+F(ocus)] (cf. Jackendoff (1972)) and, due to its phonological emptiness, the feature is realized as an auxiliary with a strong form.

2.1.2. Semantic Properties

In what follows, we shall see semantic properties imposed on stranded auxiliaries.   L&W investigate VPE construction observed in the three languages: English, German, and Spanish, and propose that it is licensed by focalized polarity, stating that "the H* L-L% accent [=pitch accent] is realized on the auxiliary *did*,

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[2] See Wilder (2013), who describes phonological/semantic properties of emphatic *do* and analyzes it in accord with Laka (1990).

[3] L&W point out that since an auxiliary is adjacent to a subject which often bears a contrastive focal accent (e.g. Rooth (1992)), some authors wrongly conclude that focus in these cases has only been assigned to the subject.   They further note that the auxiliary with a strong form can be identified if an adverb such *probably* intervenes between the two constituents.

which represents the positive instantiation of sentence polarity" (López and Winkler (2000:628-629)):

(4) (Context: Sandra and Anna are twins who live in different cities)
    A: They even spend their evenings in the same way.
    B: /SANDRA didn't watch a rerun of "CasaBLANCA"\ but /ANNA DID\.

                    (López and Winkler (2000:629))

Furthermore, López and Winkler (2000:636) claim that "it (=polarity) can be interpreted either as presentational focus as in [(4)] and [(5a)], or as contrastive focus as in [(5b)]":

(5)   (Context: A and B are talking about Anna and Sandra.)
    a. A: Who did what?
       B: /ANNA LEFT\ but /SANDRA DIDN'T\.
    b. A: Can John solve the problem?
       B: No, he CAN'T.
           (López and Winkler (2000:636-637), with slight modifications)

Given that a leaving event by Anna differs from one by Sandra, polarity in the second conjunct in (5aB) (i.e. *not*) is interpreted as presentational focus. Meanwhile, the example (5bB) clearly exhibits that in the course of its context, falsehood of the proposition John can solve the problem is focalized.   Thus it pertains to contrastive focus.[4]   More precisely, it should be a peculiar focus phenomenon so-called Verum Focus identified by Höhle (1992) (see also Nagata and Honda (2017)).

       With this in mind, let us consider the following structure advocated by L&W. They suggest that both presentational and contrastive focus (Verum Focus) are assigned syntactically.   The former is assigned if a feature (either *AFF* or *not*) on $\sum$ receives [+F].   Accordingly, this focus does not require agreement with a functional head (i.e. Spec-Head Agreement) in intonational languages.   Meanwhile,

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[4] The terms *presentational/contrastive* focus should be defined explicitly.   According to them, presentational focus is "pragmatically defined as an utterance that is not contextually construable (Rochemont (1986)), or not discourse-linked (D-linked)" (Pesetzky (1987)) (López and Winkler (2000:627)).   Meanwhile, the other (i.e., contrastive focus) is É. Kiss's (1998) term, in which it evokes a suitable "subset of the set of contextually or situationally given elements for which the predicate phrase can potentially hold; it is identified as the exhaustive subset of this set for which the predicate phrase actually holds" (É. Kiss's (1998:245)).

Verum Focus is claimed to be guaranteed by establishing agree relation with F(ocus) Phrase above TP. In addition, contrastive focus on polarity can be established by LF-movement of a $\sum$ feature:

(6)　　$[_{FP} [_{F'} F^0 [_{TP} \textit{Subj} [_{T'} T^0 [_{\sum P} [_{\sum'} \sum^0_{[+F]} [_{VP} \textit{pro}]]]]]]]$

　　　(i)　[+F] assigned to　a $\sum$　$\Rightarrow$　presentational polarity focus.
　　　(ii)　The $\sum$ in (i) covertly moves to FP　$\Rightarrow$　Verum Focus.

(cf. López and Winkler (2000))

2.2. VP Preposing

　　　Let us consider the two aspects of properties of VPP in comparison with VPE we have seen earlier. Ward (1990) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) describe a lot of examples.[5] The latter state that "[o]ne special case of non-focus complement preposing [=VPP] has the focus on the polarity of the clause, positive or negative, and serves as a means of assessing the truth on the proposition expressed" (Huddleston and Pullum (2002:1376)):

(7)　　a.　At the end of the term I took my first exams, it was necessary to pass if I was to stay at Oxford, [pass I did].

(Huddleston and Pullum (2002:1377), underline mine)

　　　b.　As member of a Fray panthers committee, we went to Canada to learn and [learn we did].

(Ward (1990:743), underline mine)

Crucially interesting is that generally, unlike VPE, VPP is used only to make reference to an existing proposition, not an event. Hence, if the subject in the targeted clause is altered from that in the antecedent, VPP is banned:[6]

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[5] Huddleston and Pullum (2002) divide the discourse function of VPP into three types: (i) proposition affirmation; (ii) concessive affirmation; and (iii) scalar affirmation.

[6] Another fact is that VPP cannot be used in contexts where the truth of an existing proposition has already been denoted. Thus, a proposition which a factive predicate (e.g. *regret*) selects is unable to be targeted by preposing:

(i) a.　I am so proud of Andy for getting a hundred on his exam. #And [get a hundred he did]

　　 b.　I am so proud of Andy for getting a hundred on his exam. And [pass he did!]

　　　- He got a hundred.

(Ward (1990:752))

(8) *   I wanted to take a vacation, but take a vacation <u>Sám</u> did.

(Krifka (2001:11), underline mine)

Note further that VPP exhibits some phonological properties which VPE does. One of them is the prohibition of contraction to a subject:

(9) a.   He claimed he could take first place, and taken first place he has.
     b.* He claimed he could take first place, and taken first place he's.

(Roberts (1990:389))[7]

These phonological/semantic facts reasonably lead us to suggest that VPP is partly parallel to VPE in that they are polarity focus related constructions; structurally speaking, it can be claimed that a $\sum$ head is crucial in deriving VPP (see also Samko (2016) for a syntactic account of VPP with a $\sum$).   Nevertheless, it seems difficult directly to adopt L&W's analysis of VPE to VPP, and so does even my proposal here. I will discuss in more detail in section 4 and offer some speculations for the issue.

2.3. *Interim Summary and Problem*

Let us briefly summarize the section above.   According to L&W (2000), following López (1995), $\sum$ is crucial to account for VPE, unlike previous literature assuming that T licenses VPE.   This analysis is proved by the phonological and semantic properties observed in VPE.[8]   Indeed, it seems to me to be reasonable that the phonological facts are attributed to a [+F] marked $\sum$.   In contrast, one may doubt whether the semantic descriptions from L&W are really semantic "facts."   A contrastive polarity focus, namely Verum Focus, is readily perceptible because Verum Focused VPE as in (5b) is compatible with the general view that a sentence has a focus (cf. Vallduví (1992), Heycock (1993)).   Meanwhile, s/he may doubt whether a presentational polarity focus in VPE is solid; more precisely, when $\sum$ has a presentational focus, then this often co-occurs with a contrastive focus on a subject. Rooth (1992), for example, points out that VPE and its fully spelt counterpart have the pragmatic function of expressing redundant information and the redundant information licenses contrastive focus on a remnant, that is, a subject:

(10) a.   First John came up with a good idea, then [MARY]_F did [e].

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[7] According to Roberts (1990), this fact indicates that ECP must be applied even in PF. However, the proposal to be established here can capture the fact (see Nagata and Honda (2017), cf. Samko (2016)).

[8] López (1995), who first notices that $\sum$ rather than T is crucial, supports his own view in comparison with Spanish cases corresponsding to English VPE.

b.   First John came up with a good idea, then [MARY]_F [*came up with a good idea*].

(Rooth (1992), cited from Winkler (2000))

Although I do not explore Rooth's argument more precisely here, the point is that the information in the second conjunct *someone came up with a good idea* is checked against the counterpart in the first conjunct and is taken to be redundant; then non-redundant information in the second conjunct (i.e. Mary) is identified as contrastive focus.   In these cases, because the focus part of the sentence is arguably *Mary*, it may be claimed that the presence of a presentational polarity focus does not seem to be empirically or semantically motivated.   In other words, they may suggest that a presentational polarity focus would be theory-internally motivated in order only to account for the phonological facts.   If a presentational polarity focus didn't have its entity, L&W's claim that polarity focus licensed VPE would be untenable.   This is problematic.   Therefore, the next section will offer a proposal, which will lend support to L&W's idea.

3.   Proposals

This section provides a solution to the problem raised in the last section.   For this purpose, I discuss Kobayashi (2009) first, and then, offer the new view with respect to what L&W (2000) call presentational focus.

3.1.   *Theoretical Assumptions*
3.1.1.   *Kobayashi's (2009) Focus Assigning System*

Kobayashi (2009) analyses *Toritate* particles in Japanese: *mo* and *wa*. Following traditional terminology, she points out that "the adverb called *toritate si* in Japanese Linguistics renders a phrase attached to it *new information*" (Kobayashi (2009:141), translation mine).   To anticipate, although the particles are often known as a kind of focus particle (Miyagawa (1997, 2005, 2007), Hasegawa (1991, 1994, 2005), among others), rather, she sees them as new information markers on polarity.   I do not outline all the discussions in the paper for space and point readers to the article.   Let us consider some crucial examples of *mo*:

(11)   Hanako-wa   <u>keeki-*mo*</u>   tabe-ta
         Hanako-TOP   cake-*mo*   eat-PST
         'Hanako ate a CAKE, too.'
           (i) P (~α)   α=cake

(ii) [Hanako has eaten *sushi*.]⁹

(Kobayashi (2009:122), translation mine)[10]

As exhibited in (i), *mo* presupposes that P($\sim\alpha$) is true. Concretely speaking, attaching *mo* to *keeki* presupposes that it is true that Hanako has eaten some food other than a cake. This context restricts the alternative set to food (e.g. *sushi*) in the presupposition since food is the semantic type of cake. In short, the functions of the particles are described as follows:

(12) *mo*
  (i)Presupposition:$\exists_{x\neq\alpha}\ x\in\lambda x\mathrm{P}(x)$

  $(sushi)\in\lambda x[\text{Hanako ate } x]$

  =Hanako ate *sushi*

  (ii) Assertion: $\alpha\in\lambda x\mathrm{P}(x)$

  $cake\in\lambda x[\text{Hanako ate x}]$

  =Hanako ate a cake

  (Kobayashi (2009:134-135); cf. Kato (1985))

Unlike the previous studies (e.g. Miyagawa (2005, 2007) and Hasegawa (2005), among others), Kobayashi views them as new information markers due to the discourse below:

(13) a. Kinou-no   party-wa   dou da-tta?
       yesterday-GEN   paati-TOP   how COP-PST
       'How was the party yesterday?'
   b. Hanako-ga   sushi-wo   tabe-masi-ta
       Hanako-NOM sushi-ACC eat-HNR-PST
       'Hanako has eaten sushi.'
   c. Hanako-wa   Keeki-*mo* tabe-masi-ta
       Hanako-TOP cake-*mo*   eat-HNR-PST
       'Hanako ate even a cake.'
   d. Keeki-mo   tabeta-kara   futo-tta-nda
       cake-*mo*   eat-because fat-PST-PTCL
       'Because she has eaten even the CAKE, she got fat.'

(Kobayashi (2009:133), translation mine)[11]

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⁹ Following Kobayashi (2009), I use *sushi* to indicate $\sim\alpha$ henceforth for ease of exposition.
[10] Kobayashi (2009) is written in Japanese. Thus, the existing Japanese examples cited from her are translated and glossed into English by the author here.
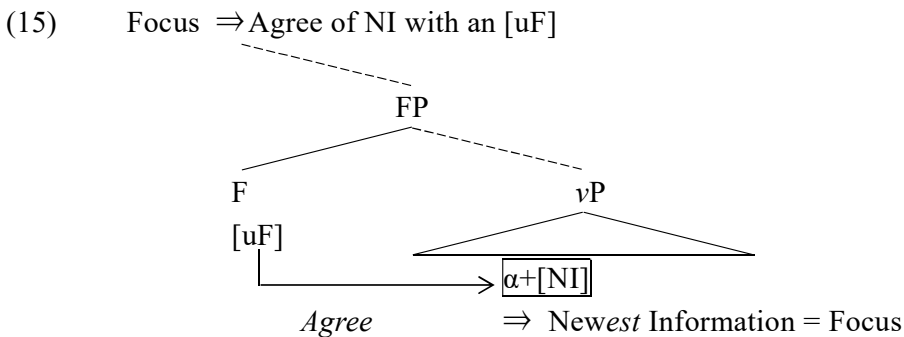
Indeed, *keeki* 'cake' attached to *mo* is the focus in (13c). However, the utterance in (13c) excludes the possibility that *keeki* in (13d) is also the focus since the phrase is given here. This fact leads Kobayashi to consider that it is reasonable to see that *mo* is a mere information marker rather than a focus particle. In line with this discussion, Kobayashi offers the following assumptions:

(14) a. (At least) *mo* and *wa* are N(ew) I(nformation) markers, which is an interpretable feature, $NI_{Pos(itive)}$ and $NI_{Neg(ative)}$ respectively.

   b. A matrix clause always includes F(ocus) that is occupied by an uninterpretable focus feature [uF].

   c. A [uF] as a Probe is deleted via Agree with a corresponding Goal.

   d. An Agreed Goal is interpreted as the New*est* Information of a sentence at LF. This pertains to the traditional term *Focus* (cf. Jackendoff (1972)).

(cf. Kobayashi (2009:133))

In addition, she further assumes that Focus is New*est* Information, which is syntactically licensed:

(15)   Focus ⇒ Agree of NI with an [uF]

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{FP} \\
\diagdown \\
\text{F} \qquad\qquad\qquad \textit{v}\text{P} \\
[\text{uF}] \\
\qquad\qquad \boxed{\alpha + [\text{NI}]} \\
\textit{Agree} \qquad\qquad \Rightarrow \text{ New}\textit{est}\text{ Information} = \text{Focus}
\end{array}
$$

Note that this ensures that a sentence has a focus (cf. Vallduví (1992), Heycock (2008)). With these Kobayashi's ideas in mind, let us reconsider the case discussed so far.

3.1.2. *Presentational Focus as New Information Marker*

This subsection argues that Kobayashi's mechanism can be successfully employed for the problem raised above. In section 2, I have argued that L&W's

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[11] Abbreviations are as follows: ACC=accusative, COP=copula, GEN=genitive, HNR=honorific expression, NOM=nominative, PST=past, PTCL=particle, TOP = topic.

contrastive polarity focus pertains to Verum Focus first identified by Höhle (1992) (cf. Lohnstein (2012, 2016), Wilder (2013)).   The problem is that as L&W propose, if polarity focus is crucial to VPE, what does a presentational polarity focus do in cases where a remnant (i.e. subject) bears a contrastive focus reading.   In this connection, I will reinterpret L&W's presentational polarity focus in terms of Kobayashi (2009).   Recall that L&W state that the following example bears a presentational polarity focus because a leaving event done by Sandra is different from Anna's, thus it is newly introduced into discourse.

(16)   (Context: A and B are talking about Anna and Sandra.)   (= (5a))
      A: Who did what?
      B: /ANNA LEFT \ but /SANDRA DIDN'T \

If this is on the right track, the so-called presentational polarity focus here functions as signaling that an existing event *someone left*, is not true for Sandra.   In other words, whether it is presentational or contrastive, a polarity focus generally evokes that an existing event *someone do* is true / false for a subject in a VPE clause.   I convincingly claim that this function of polarity focus in VPE is parallel to that of *Toritate* particles *mo* (and *wa*) in that *mo* presupposes an event with a variable X (Hanako ate X is true) and updates the information that the event without a variable is also true (Hanako ate a cake is true, too).   Therefore, a $\sum$ feature with [+F] in L&W's term turns out to be a [NI] marker on polarity in Kobayashi's term:

(17)   (i)   [NI$_{Pos(itive)}$], *AFF* with [+F] in L&W, invokes that an existing event is true for a subject of a VPE clause.

      (ii)   [NI$_{Neg(ative)}$], *not* with [+F] in L&W, invokes that an existing event is not true for a subject of a VPE clause.

Consequently, this assumption naturally leads us to argue that it is Verum Focus, which is analyzed as LF-movement of a $\sum$ feature to PF in L&W, that is really a focus: in Kobayashi's sense, focus (i.e. New*est* Information) is syntactically determined via Probe-Goal relation.   Thus, the further assumption is obtained:

(18)   Verum Focus
      A result of Agree of an [uF] with a [NI$_{Pos/Neg}$]

3.2. Analysis

    Let us employ the assumptions above in order to account for some typical

cases.   Initially, as Rooth (1992) points out, VPE tends to have a subject bearing a contrastive focus reading:

(19) A: Some frat guys will bring the booze.
      B: (i) No, MARY\ will (not the frat guys).
          (ii) Even JOHN\ will.
          (iii)No, only JOHN\ will.

                                  (López and Winkler (2000:652))

The brackets in (20b) below show that there are two discourse-new elements: Mary and [NI$_{Pos}$].   The latter itself evokes the new information that *someone bring the booze* is true for the subject *Mary*.   In this case, however, a [uF] (Probe) seeks its counterpart (Goal) in its c-command domain and Agrees with *Mary*, with an interpretation that Mary (not the frat guys) will bring the booze.

(20)   Contrastive focus on a subject
        a. A: Some frat guys will bring the booze.
            B: No, MARY will (not the frat guys).
        b. [$_{FP}$ [u̶F̶] [$_{TP}$ Mary$_{+[NIPos]}$ [$_{T'}$will$_{+[NI]i}$ [$\sum$P t_i [$_{vP}$ *pro*]]]]]

                  New*est* Information

Let us then see cases of Verum Focus.   Consider the following pair:

(21)   a.   Jan said that he hasn't read Dostoevsky's *Idiot*, but he HAS\.
        b.   Jan said that he has read Dostoevsky's *Idiot*, but he HASN'T\.

                                  (López and Winkler (2000:635))

In these cases, as *he* in the second conjuncts alludes, it is the polarity that is focused here.   In addition, since they are used to *contradict* (cf. Grimshaw (2010)) the truth value of the polarity, they are arguably identified as Verum Focus.   The syntactic realization is illustrated as follows:

(22)   Verum Focus
        a.   Jan said that he hasn't read Dostoevsky's *Idiot*, but he has.
        b.   [$_{FP}$ [u̶F̶] [$_{TP}$ he [$_{T'}$has$_{+[NIPos]i}$ [$\sum$P t_i[$_{vP}$ *pro*]]]]]

               New*est* Information = Verum Focus

At the stage of Numeration, [NI$_{Pos}$] is not identified as Verum Focus; rather it is mere new information that evokes *someone has read Dostoevsky's Idiot* is true for the subject of the second conjunct. Thus, the idea that a polarity focus licenses VPE is maintained due to the existence of [NI$_{Pos}$] to be realized later as *has* ([hʌz]). Then, the derivation proceeds up to PF and the [uF] seeks its counterpart. There are not, however, any potential candidates other than the [NI$_{Pos}$] since the subject is given, making reference to *Jan*. Thus, it Agrees with the [NI$_{Pos}$], and a Verum Focus reading is obtained as a result.

4. Concluding Remarks

To summarize, we have successfully accounted for the fact that VPE sometimes clearly shows polarity focus in accordance with L&W's (2000) insight, in which VPE is licensed by polarity focus. Kobayashi's insight gained through *Toritate* particles that discourse-new (New Information) is not necessarily focus (New*est* Information) can not only capture the facts, but also keep L&W's insight tenable. Further, if one directly adopts the function of the particles to focalized *AFF* and *not* (cf. Laka (1990)), s/he may intuitively understand why ∑ licenses a predicative *pro*: pro is appropriately interpreted, possibly because [NI$_{Pos/Neg}$] evoke an existing event *someone do something* is (not) true. I do not know of evidence about the issue, thus it is left for future research.

In this final paragraph, I attempt to extend the proposal to VPP and provide some speculations. As observed in subsection 2.2, VPP is one of typical constructions exhibiting Verum Focus in a broad sense. The difference between the two constructions is that VPP does not allow a subject to be altered:

(23) * I wanted to take a vacation, but take a vacation <u>Sám</u> did.   (= (8))

On the face of it, this suggests that VPP is a Verum Focus proper construction unlike VPE. This seems to be true. The problem is, however, that Verum Focus observed in VPP is not a contrastive polarity focus, as the following examples allude:

(24)   A   People didn't use the internet to get news and exchange views about the election.
       B a.   (No /Yes) they DID use it.
          b.# (No /Yes) use it they did.

(Samko (2016:139))

Although I do not explore emphatic *do*, the construction also exhibits Verum Focus (see Wilder (2013), cf. Grimshaw (2010)).[12]   Meanwhile, when A's utterance is affirmed again, VPP is felicitous as B's utterance as shown in (25):[13]

(25) A: People used the internet to get news and exchange views about the election.

  B: (Yes,) use it they did.

I have assumed that Verum Focus is decomposed into a [uF] and [NI$_{Pos/Neg}$] (cf. (18)), and my proposal, following Kobayashi (2009), requires the [NI$_{Pos/Neg}$] to be present in the Numeration. This is logically problematic: in (25), for example, [NI$_{Pos}$] realized as *did* cannot be discourse-new because the event *someone used the internet* is identical to the event in the antecedent (i.e. *people used the internet*).   In other words, we cannot readily regard the *did* as a NI marker, unlike VPE.   Thus, the account developed here cannot directly extended to VPP. Let me further introduce Kobayashi's idea in order to account for this logical problem.   She

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[12] Wilder (2013) provides data to suggest emphatic *do* cannot be used to a polar question. Consider the following examples:

(i) A : Does he work hard?
  B1: Yes.
  B2: (Yes,) he does.
  B3: (Yes,) he works hard.
  B4:? (Yes,) he DOES work hard.

(Wilder (2013:169))

The answer (iiB4) is better if the following context is given instead:

(ii) A: I hear that he might not work hard. DOES he work hard?
  B: (Yes,) he DOES work hard.

(Wilder (2013:169))

The better acceptability clearly follows from *contradictions* (Grimshaw (2010)'s term), as witnessed by *not* in the antecedent.   Although it is unclear which claim is descriptively adequate, I tentatively assume that emphatic *do* is not appropriate as an answer to a polar question unless a special context is given, following Wilder's statement that "[n]ormal Yes-answer to explicit neutral polar questions do not contain emphatic *do*" (Wilder (2013:168)).

[13] Samko (2016) points out that the uses of emphatic *do* and *not* in such contexts are infelicitous:

(i) A: She made nachos.
  B:# (Yes,) she DID make nachos.
(ii) A: She didn't make Nachos.
  B:# (No,) she did NOT make nachos.

(Samko (2016:121-122))

assumes that in a configuration where there are no [NI] items, [uF] seeks *less old information* to delete the unvalued feature, resulting in Topic-Comment configuration (cf. Miyagawa (2005, 2007), Heycock (2008)):

(26)   Agree ([uF], [NI$_{Pos}$]) forms a Topic-Comment configuration if there are no NI items.   Otherwise, Agree necessarily forms a Focus-Presupposition configuration.

(cf. Kobayashi (2009:141))

If her idea that [uF] seeks to enter into Agree, if necessary, with even the information, which is *not* new, for the sake of avoiding the crash of the derivation is correct, the case might pertain to VPP although she does not provide any relevant examples.   If it is on the right track, the example (25) undergoes the derivation in (27b):

(27)   Verum Focus in VPP
        a. use it, they did.
        b. [$_{FP}$ [~~uF~~] [$_{TP}$ they [$_{T'}$did [∑P *AFF* [$_{vP}$ use it]]]]]

                    less old Information = Verum Focus in VPP

Since she does not provide any empirical arguments employing (26), I have no evidence supporting her (25) and the structure (27); thus, it is required to be examined in depth.   Nevertheless, Kobayashi's dichotomy and mechanism, at least, should be valued as being more investigated in many languages.

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