Predicate-fronting and animacy in Burmese
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I present novel data from fieldwork on Burmese predicate-fronting. Although Burmese predicate-fronting has previously been discussed in Ozerov & Daudey 2017, syntactic constraints have not been noted. I show that the availability of predicate-fronting in Burmese is sensitive to the animacy of the subject of the clause. I therefore propose that animate and inanimate subjects are associated with different structural positions in the grammar of Burmese.

Data: Burmese has an SOV word order. A basic ditransitive clause in Burmese is given in (1). In all ditransitives here, the indirect object (IO) is in accusative case while the direct object (DO) does not receive overt case-marking.

(1)   Su-ga   Aung-ko   bopin pei-keh-deh.
       Su-NOM Aung-ACC pen   give-PAST-NFUT
       'Su gave a pen to Aung.'

Burmese predicate-fronting involves the pronunciation of the verb root and its internal argument(s), if any, at the left periphery of the clause, with an inflected copy of the verb also pronounced in sentence-final position. Descriptively, I refer to arguments that appear between the two copies of the verb as "stranded". Predicate-fronting in Burmese has previously been discussed in Ozerov & Daudey 2017 with reference to information and discourse structure, but syntactic constraints have not been noted.

Considering ditransitives (subj-NOM, IO-ACC, DO unmarked), we observe that the DO cannot be stranded alone (2a). While the IO can be stranded alone, subject animacy has a further effect on predicate-fronting (2b). Predicate-fronting is licit with an animate subject (*Su*) but illicit with an inanimate subject (*saing*, 'shop').

(2)   a.   * [Aung-ko   pei-taung] Su-ga   **bopin** pei-keh-deh.
                Aung-ACC give-even Su-NOM pen   give-PAST-NFUT

       b.   [Bopin pei-taung] {√Su/*saing}-ga   **Aung-ko**   pei-keh-deh.
            pen   give-even {√Su/*shop}-NOM Aung-ACC give-PAST-NFUT

            '√Su/*The shop even gave the pen to Aung.'

However, it is not that predicate-fronting is simply incompatible with inanimate subjects. When the subject is itself to the left, the verb and DO can be fronted regardless of subject animacy.

(3)   {**Su/Saing**}-ga   bopin pei-taung Aung-ko   pei-keh-deh.
       {Su/shop}-NOM pen   give-even Aung-ACC give-PAST-NFUT
       '{Su/The shop} even gave the pen to Aung.'

Here I only show ditransitives, but I will show at the talk that the effect of subject animacy is also relevant for unaccusative and unergative intransitives, transitives and derived ditransitives (causatives of transitives), in a manner predicted by the contrasts presented here.

Analysis: I propose that animate subjects can raise out of the *v*P unlike inanimate subjects that must remain in the *v*P, and that predicate-fronting is uniformly *v*P-movement in Burmese. I also propose that the IO can scramble out of the *v*P before *v*P-fronting, but the DO cannot.

Following Landau's (2006) and Hein's (2018) proposals for verb copying, I assume that the lexical verb is base-generated as the head of the VP before head-movement to *v*, then to T. Normally, lower copies of head movement will be unpronounced, resulting in the entire verbal complex in T. However, with focus on the *v*P, a copy of the verb must be pronounced in *v* in order

to host the focus particle, and the verb will also be pronounced in T to host the tense suffixes. I also assume that the highest DP in the vP (the subject) gets nominative case by Agree with T, whether or not it remains in that position in the final derivation.

(4) gives the derivation for (2b) in the case that the predicate fronts across the animate subject. Here, both the animate subject and IO move out of vP (4a), before vP is fronted (4b).

(4) a. [$_{TP}$ **Subj**$_{[+ani]}$ [**IO** [$_{vP}$ t_{subj} [$_{VP}$ t_{IO} **DO V**]]=FOC] T]

   b. [$_{vP}$ t_{subj} [$_{VP}$ t_{IO} **DO V**]]=FOC$_i$ [$_{TP}$ **Subj**$_{[+ani]}$ [**IO** t_i] T]

Unlike animate subjects, inanimate subjects must stay in vP. After IO moves out of vP (5a), fronting vP moves the subject, verb, and DO (5b). This is why word order (2a) with a stranded inanimate subject is unavailable, but predicate-fronting including the inanimate subject is ok (3).

(5) a. [$_{TP}$ [**IO** [$_{vP}$ **Subj**$_{[-ani]}$ [$_{VP}$ t_{IO} **DO V**]]=FOC] T]

   b. [$_{vP}$ **Subj**$_{[-ani]}$ [$_{VP}$ t_{IO} **DO V**]]=FOC$_i$ [$_{TP}$ [**IO** t_i] T]

Finally, to explain why DO cannot be a stranded argument (2a), I tentatively suggest that IO can scramble out of vP before vP-fronting, but the DO cannot. A similar contrast to (2b) has been observed in Japanese and it has been explained by a remnant movement analysis (Tateishi 1991; Yatsushiro 1999). But such approaches do not extend to Burmese, as will be discussed.

<u>More on the animacy effect</u>: I show that the effect of animacy is specifically limited to grammatical subjects because of data from passives. Predicate-fronting is generally not sensitive to the animacy of internal arguments (data at talk). However, in a passive where an internal argument has been promoted to the grammatical subject, predicate-fronting is sensitive to the animacy of what is the grammatical subject and logical theme of the verb, as shown in (6).

(6)   C'icu-taung {$^{\checkmark}$ **sǎya/*keq}-ga**   c'icu-keh-kanya-deh.
    praise-even { teacher/*cake}-NOM praise-PAST-PASS-NFUT
    '{The teacher/*the cake} was even praised.'

<u>Position of adjuncts</u>: If time permits at the talk, I will give additional evidence from the word order facts with respect to adjuncts. I will discuss how (im)possible positions of high and low adverbs in the clause support the proposed analysis.

References:

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