

CLA
Annual Conference

--- 1992 ---

ACL
Congrès Annuel

U.P.E.I.
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
May/Mai 24-26, 1992

Brunson, B., and E. Cowper. "On the Topic of *have*," in
Papers from the CLA Annual Conference. 43-52. (joint
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ON THE TOPIC OF HAVE*

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1. Introduction

This paper brings together work done independently by each of the authors, namely Cowper's (1989, 1991) work on thematic underspecification and the verb *have*, and Brunson's 1992 dissertation on thematic discontinuity, specifically as it deals with the thematic structure of base-generated topic constructions. We will show that the underspecified theta-role Cowper proposed for the subject of *have*, and the variable role Brunson proposed for certain topics, are one and the same thing. This leads to a number of interesting predictions about the behaviour of sentences containing *have*, three of which will be examined in some detail.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides some background from Brunson's thesis, outlining some of the ways in which topics can be licensed thematically, and then demonstrates that the thematic properties of the subject of *have* are determined in exactly the same ways as those of base-generated topics. Section 3 discusses three previously baffling facts about *have*-sentences, and shows that treating the subject of *have* thematically as a topic explains all of them.

2. Background

2.1. Thematic Licensing of Topic-Comment Constructions

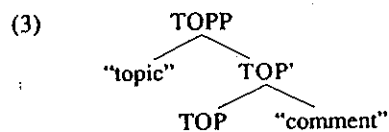
Brunson (1992) argues that base-generated topic-comment constructions, as in (1), differ in thematic and structural properties from derived topic constructions, as in (2).

- (1) As for John, he's late again.
- (2) A gold watch, John gave to Mary for her birthday.

A derived topic receives its role in its base position and moves to adjoin to IP, thus acquiring the structural prominence required for interpretation as a topic. In contrast, the base-generated topic originates in the specifier of a functional projection, TOPP. The head of this projection is the functional category TOP, and it is usually phonetically empty. The complement of TOPP is

* This work has been supported by SSHRCC Grant # 410-91-1683 to Cowper and by a SSHRCC Postdoctoral Fellowship to Brunson. The authors are grateful to members of the Syntax Project at the University of Toronto for helpful discussion.

the comment, normally an IP. The structure of the TOPP projection is as shown in (3).



Unlike other functional categories, TOP assigns a θ -role to its specifier, the topic. This θ -role is not, however, a specific θ -role (like agent or theme), but is a variable θ -role. This role must ultimately be interpreted, in other words it must be assigned thematic content, in order for the topic construction to be felicitous. There are a number of ways that the variable θ -role on the topic can be interpreted. One way that this role might be determined is by pragmatic or discourse factors. Consider (4):

(4) As for Brian, the surgery went well.

This sentence can mean different things in different discourse contexts. Taking it out of context, we know only that the comment "the surgery went well" is in some way relevant to the topic "Brian." Depending on the context in which the sentence is uttered, Brian might be the surgeon, a nurse or doctor assisting the surgeon, the patient, a relative of the patient, an observer of the surgery, and so on.

Another way that the variable role of a topic can be licensed is by being "bound" by the role borne by a constituent in the comment.¹ When the variable role of the topic is bound by the role of a constituent in the comment, the relevance of the comment to the topic is explicitly given within the sentence. Role-binding can happen in two situations. First, consider a sentence in which the topic is coindexed with a coreferential proform in the comment. This is shown in (5). In this sentence, the pronoun *she* receives its role in the normal fashion from the verb. Brunson (1992) shows that the role assigned to *she* in turn binds the role of the topic, *Mary*.

(5) As for *Mary*₁, *she*₁ usually arrives on time.

¹ The term "binding" here is different from its use in standard binding theory. With role-binding, the structurally subordinate constituent -- the one in the comment -- bears a role that instantiates and hence licenses the role assigned to the structurally superior constituent -- the topic. Traditional binding involves reference, not role, and the structurally superior constituent is the binder. It will become clear later why we choose to use the term binding for role-binding.

The second type of role binding happens when the topic forms part of a thematic discontinuity (Brunson 1992). A thematic discontinuity consists of a set of separate constituents, each of which contributes to the identification of a single referent. These separate constituents are the disconstituents of the thematic discontinuity. Each disconstituent of a thematic discontinuity expresses the same entity or concept with a different degree of relative specificity. A simple example of a thematic discontinuity that does not involve a base-generated topic is found in (6).

(6) Emily hurt her finger yesterday at the park during lunch.

The temporal adverbials *yesterday* and *during lunch* form a thematic discontinuity identifying the single time at which the event took place. If the two temporal expressions cannot be interpreted as referring to the same time, then the sentence is unacceptable. This is shown in (7).

(7) * Emily hurt her finger yesterday at the park two days ago.

In (8), we see an example of thematic discontinuity involving a base-generated topic. The two constituents *cars* and *Corvettes* are disconstituents of a thematic discontinuity. *Cars* sets a general framework and *Corvettes* identifies a more specific concept within this framework. In this example, the variable role of the topic, *cars*, is bound by the role of its disconstituent, *Corvettes*, in the comment.

(8) As for cars, Mary usually drives *Corvettes*.

2.1.1 Constraints on Thematic Discontinuity

Brunson (1992) argues that there is a relation between disconstituents of a thematic discontinuity which is not mediated by any predicate. This relation is consistently asymmetric, both syntactically and interpretively. Interpretively, the disconstituents of a thematic discontinuity provide increasingly specific, or fine-grained, identification of the intended referent. They thus exhibit a nesting relationship in terms of granularity. This can be expressed as in (9), adapted from Brunson (1992).

(9) Interpretive Constraint on Thematic Discontinuity
If X₁, X₂ and X₃ are disconstituents of a single role, then X₁ \supset X₂ \supset X₃.
(\supset here is to be read as "is more general, or more coarse-grained than")

This semantic relationship is asymmetric, and consistently correlates with a syntactic asymmetry, given in (10), also from Brunson (1992).

- (10) Syntactic Constraint on Thematic Discontinuity
If X_i and X_j are disconstituents with $X_i \supset X_j$, then X_i m-commands X_j .

Thus, for any pair of disconstituents in a thematic discontinuity, the coarser-grained, more general disconstituent must m-command the finer-grained, more specific disconstituent.

For example, in sentence (8), the coarse-grained, general disconstituent cars must m-command the more specific disconstituent Corvettes. It does in sentence (8), and hence this sentence is grammatical. If Corvettes were to m-command cars, the sentence would violate the Syntactic Constraint on Thematic Discontinuity, and the sentence would be ungrammatical:

- (11) * As for Corvettes, Mary drives cars.

The ways that a variable role can be licensed are summarized in (12):

- (12) The variable role assigned to the topic is determined
- a) implicitly in the discourse
 - or
 - b) explicitly by role-binding with either
 - i) a coreferential pronoun in the comment
 - or
 - ii) a disconstituent in the comment

2.2 The Subject of have

Having shown that the role borne by a base-generated topic can be determined in a number of different ways, we now turn to sentences containing the verb have, and will demonstrate that the role assigned to the subject of have is determined in essentially the same ways.

The sentences in (13) show that the role of the subject of have can be determined by pragmatic, or discourse factors, as was argued in Cowper (1989).

- (13) a. John had a new piano. (owner, user, designer, etc.)
 b. Mary had Susan cook the pizza. (causer)
 c. Brian had surgery this morning. (patient, doctor, etc.)
 d. The teacher had the children sitting quietly. (causer)
 e. Maria had her car stolen yesterday. (experiencer)
 f. Maria had her car fixed yesterday. (causer)

We will now show that first, other determinations are possible, and second, they are the same as those available for base-generated topics.

Sentence (14) is analogous to the coreferential topic construction, and is essentially synonymous to (15).

- (14) This box_i had books in it_i.
 (15) There were books in this box.

It appears that in (14) this box and the pronoun it share a role. This is supported by the ungrammaticality of (16), where there is an independent argument in the place of it.

- (16) * This box had books in my briefcase.

Thus in sentence (14), this box referentially binds the pronoun it, while the pronoun it role-binds this box.

Sentence (17) is analogous to the disconstituent topic construction.

- (17) The new house has ceramic tile in the kitchen.

If indeed the new house and the kitchen are disconstituents forming a thematic discontinuity, then they ought to exhibit the asymmetry typical of disconstituent pairs, namely that the more general, or coarser-grained disconstituent must m-command the more specific, or finer-grained one. Consider (18):

- (18) ?? The kitchen has ceramic tile in the new house.

To the extent that (18) makes sense, it must be talking about a number of houses, and in particular about the kitchens. The new house serves to narrow down the reference to a particular kitchen, and is thus the finer-grained disconstituent.

3. Advantages of treating the subject of have as a topic

Section 2 showed that analogues of discourse topics, coreferential topics and disconstituent topics can be found in sentences containing the verb have. It is thus plausible to treat the subject of have as thematically identical to a base-generated topic. In this section, we will argue that such a treatment is not just plausible, but necessary, in that treating the subject of have as a topic with a variable role provides a principled explanation for certain otherwise mysterious properties of have sentences.

3.1 An Apparent Binding Violation

Consider again sentence (14), repeated here as (19).

- (19) This box_i has books in it_i.

One question that arises about this sentence is why there is a definite pronoun, rather than a reflexive. This was observed by Gruber (1976) and by Jackendoff (1987). It is true that many locative PP's permit definite pronouns where the classic binding theory would predict an anaphor. This is shown in (20).

(20) Mary put the books down near her.

However, in these cases the anaphor is also possible, as shown in (21).

(21) Mary put the books down near herself.

With the *have* construction illustrated in (19), in contrast, the anaphor is completely ungrammatical, as shown in (22).

(22) * This box has books in itself.

Notice that with base generated coreferential topics, the same facts obtain, as shown in (23).

(23) a. As for Mary, that picture of her belongs in the boardroom.
b. * As for Mary, that picture of herself belongs in the boardroom.

Standard binding theory can account for (23b) only if it is stipulated that the matrix IP is the governing category for all governed elements. Otherwise, one might expect *Mary* to be able to bind the reflexive from outside IP, as it does in (24).

(24) Mary thinks that that picture of herself belongs in the boardroom.

While the binding theory can be patched fairly easily to account for (23b), it is less able to explain why a subject NP cannot control an anaphor within the same clause, as in (22). We propose that the ungrammaticality of (22) follows from the fact that *this box* and *it* share a θ -role, with the role of *this box* being dependent on the role of *it*, while at the same time *it* is referentially dependent on *this box*. Anaphors appear not to be possible unless the anaphor is unilaterally dependent on the antecedent. *It* in (19) role-binds *this box* and as such is not unilaterally dependent on it. The same is true in (23b). If this proposal is correct, then it may be possible to eliminate, or limit the scope of, the stipulation that the matrix IP is the governing category for governed elements.

It should be noted that the subject of *have* can control an anaphor in the same clause in many instances. Some cases are shown in (25).

(25) a. Sue has a picture of herself on her desk.
b. Mary's not lonely; she has herself to talk to.

c. Stop wallowing in self-pity -- you'll have yourself crying in no time.

The crucial difference between these sentences and the previous one is that here, the subject of *have* is not role-bound by the anaphor. These are cases where the role of the subject of *have* is pragmatically determined. Thus we conclude that the apparent binding theory violation in (19) is due to the special thematic connection between the subject and the pronoun. This interaction between the binding theory and the determination of variable roles is why we have chosen to call the phenomenon role-binding.

3.2 Multiple Topics

A second mystery in sentences containing *have* concerns the unacceptability of sentence (26).

(26) * As for the books, the box has them in it.

The analysis proposed in this paper would treat (26) as containing two constituents with the thematic properties of base-generated topics.

Multiple base-generated topics are subject to fairly severe restrictions. There are a number of forms for base-generated topics -- common ones include the "as for" topic, the "with" topic, and the bare left-dislocated topic. Bare left-dislocated topics can only be licensed by a coreferential pronoun in the comment. The other options for licensing the variable topic θ -role are not available.

(27) a) As for dogs, I like Shelties. (compare * Dogs, I like Shelties)
b) With Shelties, I prefer young ones.
c) John, I really like him.

One restriction rules out sentences with more than one topic in any given form, although multiple topics of different forms are possible, particularly if they are all disconstituents of one thematic discontinuity.

(28) a) * As for dogs, as for Shelties, I prefer young ones.
b) * With dogs, with Shelties, I prefer young ones.
(29) a) As for dogs, with Shelties, I prefer young ones.
b) As for children, Emily, she's so sweet.

There are a number of interacting factors that determine whether a particular topic-comment construction is felicitous. The exact analysis of multiple topic constructions is non-trivial, and involves the nature of the comment as well as the nature of the topics. Multiple-topic constructions improve if greater weight is given to the comment, by the addition of adjuncts or relatively heavy NPs. Without giving a detailed account of all of these factors,

we will try to keep them constant, so as to bring out the similarities between multiple topics on the one hand, and a single topic together with the subject of *have* on the other.

Sentences with multiple topics are most unacceptable if the comment has little independent semantic content. This is particularly true when both topics are coreferential ones, as in (30).

(30) ??As for the watch, John, I gave it to him.

Here, aside from the verb, the comment VP contributes nothing to the meaning of the sentence and is thus not felicitous as a comment. This sentence can be improved if we add an adjunct, as in (31), or if we make either topic a disconstituent, as in (32).

(31) ?As for the watch, John, I gave it to him for his birthday and he lost it.

(32) As for watches, John, I gave him a Rolex.

Now consider what happens when the *have*-construction appears in a sentence with another base-generated topic. Consider (33).

(33) ??As for the books, the box had them in it.

Just as with the double-topic construction, this sentence is improved by the presence of an additional adjunct, or if one of the topics is a disconstituent, as in (34)-(35):

(34) As for these books, the box had them in it until it was tipped over by the careless mover.

(35) a. As for books, the box has novels in it.
b. As for ceramic tiles, this house has them in the kitchen.

What we have shown here is that a single base-generated topic together with the subject of *have* behaves similarly to sentences with multiple base-generated topics. If the subject of *have* is a topic, then these two phenomena reduce to a single problem.

3.3 Interpretation of agents with causative *have*

We now turn to a third case where treating the subject of *have* as a topic explains a previously mysterious phenomenon. Consider (36)

(36) Judith had the sink repaired.

As Cowper (1989) pointed out, this sentence means that someone other than Judith repaired the sink. By contrast, in (37), the normal reading is that Judith herself repaired the sink.

(37) Judith had the sink repaired by lunchtime.

These facts follow naturally from the theory of thematic discontinuity.

Brunson (1992) adapting a proposal made by Baker (1988) shows that in passive sentences, *-en* behaves as a maximally coarse-grained agent. As such, it must m-command any more specific, or fine-grained agent. This blocks topicalization of the by-phrase in a passive, as shown in (38)

(38) * By Judith, the sink was repaired.

In (38), *-en*, the coarser-grained disconstituent, does not m-command *Judith*, the finer-grained disconstituent. This violates the syntactic constraint on thematic discontinuity, and the sentence is ungrammatical.

Let us now consider what would happen if *Judith* were interpreted as the agent of the repairing in (36). If *Judith* is an agent, then it is a disconstituent with *-en*. But in (36), *-en* does not m-command *Judith*, giving a violation of the syntactic constraint on thematic discontinuity, and making the sentence ungrammatical. The only possible interpretation is the one in which *Judith* is not the agent of repair. The role assigned to *Judith* is thus determined pragmatically.

Now consider (37). As Cowper (1989) pointed out, the lower clause in (37) is an adjectival, rather than a verbal passive. What is being referred to here is the resulting state of good repair, not the event of repairing. If we assume that adjectival passives are lexically derived adjectives, while verbal passives are syntactically derived participles, and if we further assume some version of di Sciullo and Williams' (1987) claim that lexically derived words are syntactic atoms, then it follows that in an adjectival passive, *-en* is not available to form a thematic discontinuity. The causer role assigned to *Judith* in (37) is determined as in (36), by pragmatic factors. In this case, however, nothing blocks the interpretation with the most direct causation possible, namely that Judith herself performed the repair.

Note that if we substitute for *have* a verb which assigns a specific θ -role to its subject, the picture changes. Consider the sentences in (39).

(39) a. Judith wanted the sink repaired, so/*but she did it herself.
b. Judith_i wanted PRO_i to have the sink repaired, but/*so she did it herself.

Want, unlike *have*, assigns a specific θ -role to its subject. Thus *Judith* in (39a) has its own θ -role and will not form a thematic discontinuity with *-en*, even

if *Judith* is understood as the agent of repair. There is thus no contradiction between *Judith* wanting the sink repaired and doing it herself. *So*, rather than *but*, is therefore appropriate.

In (39b), *Judith* controls the PRO subject of *have*. If *Judith* is understood as the agent of repair, then PRO will form an ungrammatical thematic discontinuity with *en*. There is thus a contradiction between *Judith* wanting to have the sink repaired and doing it herself. *But*, rather than *so*, is therefore required.

4. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that it is not only possible, but necessary, to analyze the subject of *have* as thematically identical to a base-generated topic. This analysis accounts for the thematic variation discussed in Cowper (1989), while at the same time making interesting predictions about a number of constructions. While many technical details remain to be worked out, especially with respect to multiple topics, we believe that the approach is essentially correct.

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STATUT PROSODIQUE DE LA PARTICULE DISCURSIVE *LÀ* EN FRANÇAIS QUÉBÉCOIS*

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0. Introduction

Si la tradition grammairienne reconnaît depuis longtemps la fonction «désambiguïsante» de l'intonation, l'intérêt pour la contribution générale de l'information prosodique à l'interprétation des énoncés est plus récent, et les mécanismes qui relient les structures prosodiques aux structures syntaxico-discursives ne sont pas encore nettement identifiés. La plupart des études partent de la syntaxe pour aller vers la prosodie; il est rare qu'il soit pris appui sur un examen précis des faits phonétiques pour aller à la rencontre des faits syntaxiques et discursifs.

Des particules discursives du français québécois oral spontané comme *là* (*les paramètres là d'évaluation...*) pose un problème de catégorisation syntaxico-discursive qu'il est intéressant d'aborder dans une perspective prosodique, d'autant plus que le *là* peut également porter une valeur adverbiale bien connue et permettre ainsi de faire ressortir les caractéristiques prosodiques de la particule discursive par rapport à celles de l'adverbe. La présente étude a pour objectif général l'établissement du statut prosodique de la particule discursive *là*, à savoir s'il s'agit d'un syntagme intonatif autonome ou dépendant de ce qui précède, ce qui devrait éclairer, de façon générale, la compréhension des relations entre l'organisation prosodique et l'organisation syntaxico-discursive.

1. Problématique

Des chercheurs se sont déjà demandé quelle était la valeur discursive et prosodique du type de *là* que l'on retrouve dans l'exemple suivant:

Un gars qui est pas habitué *là*, le bruit d'un lièvre qui part, une perdrix surtout hein, une perdrix *là* quand elle lève *là* tu sais un gars qui est pas habitué *là*... Il faut que tu sois habitué au bruit.

(Vincent 1983:61)

Les études discursives de cette particule apportent des réponses diverses (Pupier et Poitras 1975; Villiard et Champ Roux 1982; Vincent 1983; Forget 1989), mais toutes lui attribuent une valeur plus ou moins différente de celle du *là* adverbial. Du point de vue prosodique, à peu près tous les auteurs se limitent à reconnaître une valeur accentuée au *là* adverbial et non accentuée au *là* discursif.

Vincent va cependant plus loin dans la description prosodique des particules discursives du type *là* qu'elle appelle «ponctuants»:

* Cette recherche a été effectuée dans le cadre d'un mémoire de maîtrise grâce à une bourse du FCAR. Je tiens à remercier tout spécialement le professeur Jean Dolbec qui a dirigé mon travail ainsi que l'équipe de recherche Proso de l'Université Laval pour l'aide apportée.