

India *not* as a Linguistic Area: An insight from Minimalism*

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1 Areal Linguistics and UG: Superstructures in Linguistics

The concept of Universal Grammar (UG) as a super-structure in Linguistics that this essay contends, needs to be now opened up and re-examined. Areal Linguistics, almost in the same vain, is a similar delusion; we are prone, too often, to look only at neighbouring languages when either generalising or formulating linguistics principles on the basis of data. However, these two strands, areal linguistics and UG don't mix, that is, although both the strands are seen here as super-structures of sorts, there's an inherent tension among them. Further discussion on this point will be taken up in section 1.2.

In this connection, the present paper seeks to offer an insight from Minimalism to destabilise these superstructures. In particular, I wish to propose that instead of deriving the differences between languages by the technical apparatus afforded by parametric research and its equivalents, we explore the possibility for the first time to derive these differences from within each concerned language; this, it is implied, is the Minimalist way of looking at the issue. In other words, our job as practitioners of the science of Minimalism is to discover the *pressure points* created in a language which erupt into these so-called inter-language differences and to locate these pressure points at the Interfaces.

1.1 Are we too old-fashioned? A note on Universal Grammar

In this section, I would like to place before the reader the plausibility of debunking the UG – and thereby the areal linguistics myth. In other words, it is proposed that UG has played its role in the theory of grammar and must now be rethought. Such

* The genesis of this essay lies in a question put to me by Neil Smith: *Why Hindi and Bangla, why not Bangla and Welsh* (whereupon I did go and look at Welsh)? Most of the arguments were formed over the intervening years in trying to defend this challenge. The inspiration to write this down came after several informal discussions at various linguistics circles especially at Cortona, Fresno, Jena, Leipzig and Manchester. I am particularly grateful to Ritchie Kayne, Jan Koster, Paul Kiparsky, Thomas Weskott and Hany Babu M.T. for disagreeing with most of what I was saying, it's meaningless therefore to trace to them any mistake in this defence.

statements are neither new nor bold. Haider (1993), for example, argues against the possibility of a UG guiding general cognitive mechanisms, thus denying the notion of parameters as well. In fact, this line of research attempted to show that it is possible to maintain the notion of innateness *without* necessarily implying UG and parameter setting. In Chomsky (1999a)¹, this possibility is in fact not exclusively denied:

Cartesian concept of innate ideas, biologically determined properties of the mind/ brain that provide a framework for the construction of mental representations, a framework that then enters our perception and action.

That is, what is innate is the possibility to make use of a framework to compute representations, it need not be specific to language, but rather a general endowment to interpret linguistic information in the input in an optimal fashion.

Consider in this connection the latest manifestation of Universal Grammar (UG):

Uniformity Principle

(1) In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, assume languages to be uniform, with variety restricted to easily detectable properties of utterances.

Chomsky (2001)²

There are certain key, operative terms in this “Principle” which requires a closer look. The parameters of Principles and Parameters (P&P) approach to grammar reduce to easily detectable differences, by which, it is intended to mean, differences which are easily detectable by a language acquiring device. In other words the differences must be present at the surface for everyone to see. It is clear that these differences also need to be compelling differences. That is, not any easily detectable difference but the ones which are real.

But do they have to also stem from real differences? And this is where I think the problem begins to show up because by the logic of UG there are no real differences. One goal of this essay is to show that it may perhaps be time to consider going beyond the idea of UG as is formalised. That is, having worked on this idea for the

¹ Chomsky, Noam. 1999a. On the nature, use and acquisition of language. In T. Bhatia and W. Ritchie (eds.), *Handbook of Child Language Acquisition*, pp. 33-54. San Diego: Academic Press.

² Chomsky, Noam. 2001. Derivation by phase. In M. Kenstowicz (ed.), *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1-52.

past 40 years or so, this essay makes an appeal to build upon this enterprise in a way that in effect would imply moving away from the simplistic concept of UG³.

In an even later elaboration on the matter Chomsky considers the possibility of looking beyond language specific tools for explanations:

Returning to the three factors of language design, adoption of a P&P framework overcomes a difficult conceptual barrier to shifting the burden of explanation from the first factor, the genetic endowment, to the third factor, language-independent principles of data processing, structural architecture, and computational efficiency, thereby providing some answers to the fundamental question of biology of language, its nature and use, and perhaps even its evolution.

Chomsky (2005)⁴

Thus, it is easier now (or since the appearance of P&P, Chomsky insists) to look for explanation in language-independent principles; not the original formulation UG anymore.

1.2 Oil and Water: The Boas-Sapir Debate

The tension between UG and areal linguistics that I referred to in section 1, in a way that the idea of parameters has somehow diffused, though both erecting dichotomies of familiar sort that seem to plague the entire canon of western philosophy, it is sometimes easy to forget, is a legacy of the Boas/ Sapir controversy in the early quarter of the 20th century. In this section, I revisit this debate and show that, in our times, Richard Kayne has embodied this tension arising from the dichotomy (without himself realising it⁵).

Boas and Sapir disagreed over strategies of investigation of genetic relationships.⁶ Boas was against demonstrating distant relations and emphasised intra-family work. Sapir, on the other hand, emphasised exactly the opposite. Thus in this early stage of the debate, one can easily see that Boas is in favour of areal linguistics and against linguistics based on genetic, language-family related relationships. Given the

³ The idea that UG may perhaps had its day can be traced back to much before UG was thought of. Herder, Johan Gottfried (1772) in *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* had expressed similar notions of the differences between languages and their importance in forming generalisations.

⁴ Chomsky, Noam. 2005. Three factors in language design. In *Linguistic Inquiry*, 30.1, pp 1-22.

⁵ Pointing this out to him in Manchester in 2000, though acknowledged as “new”, never provoked any substantial response either then or later in his writings.

⁶ See *The languages of Native America: Historical and Comparative Assessment* edited by Lyle Campbell and Mariane Mithun, University of Texas press, Austin/ London. 1979.

development of the idea of an UG much later, this view reduced to the fact that Boas was against positing a notion similar to UG which aides in either language acquisition or description. The fact that many of us still scramble towards to the neighbouring languages to seek support for our generalisations can thus be found an early precedence in this idea of Boas. Simplifying somewhat, diffusion or contact is a “reality”, like code alteration is, in a way *that-t* phenomenon is not simply because we can’t see it. The boundaries of which we are merely victims were drawn much earlier.

Boas, in particular, argued for a separation between diffused and inherited languages.⁷ The following quotation from Boas is revealing from this perspective:

Neighbouring dialects have shown a lot of similarity in morphology but not vocabulary...; beyond a certain point the geneological question has no meaning since it would lead to several sources and an arbitrary ancestral selection when languages are influenced by each other to a large extent. ... Languages influence each other so much that we can no longer speak of a single origin. In other words, the theory of *Ursprache* must not be believed until we have found that languages are not originated through acculturation.

(Boas 1940 [1920]⁸: 217)

This is as definitive a statement one can get against the notion of UG; the “truth”, for Boas, must be visible. This, as we know, is the driving force behind the enterprise of Typology and areal Linguistics in general: *the truth must be visible*. In other words, knowledge must be obtained directly.

I object to this reductionism in the scientific enterprise and will show in section **Error! Reference source not found.** that Typology is meaningless unless we also find a syntactic explanation for the facts listed by the typologist. In fact, at that level of operating, we begin to essentially see a unification of the two; if unification is a subversion of a sort, then, I believe, we should find ourselves there before it is too late.

Sapir too, to begin with, allowed for areal influences (1916 [1949]⁹) but later as a reaction to Boas, argued against structural influences to be traced to areal diffusion. The following quotation clearly shows his preference, mild though his language may be:

⁷ See Darell, R. and J Sherzer. 1971. Areal Linguistics in North America: A historical perspective. *IJAL* 37, 20-28 for a re -cap

⁸ Boas, Franz. 1940. *Race, language and culture*. New York: Macmillan.

⁹ Sapir, Edward. 1949. *Selected Writings in Language, Culture, and Personality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

"...if there is no really convincing example of profound morphological influence by diffusion, we shall do well not to put too much reliance on diffusion theories."

(Sapir 1921a: 206¹⁰)

Thus by 1921 Boas and Sapir were proclaimed quarrelling over separability of areal and geneological similarity in languages. Boas believed their separability to be dubious making genetic research questionable. In contrast, Sapir believed that the effects of diffusion would not be profound, making proposals of remote relations brighter.¹¹

This debate, unnoticed, has been re-enacted in our times through the work embodied, surprisingly, in one person. Richard Kayne, whose *Linear Correspondence Axiom* (LCA¹²) though is one of the most outrageous statements in generative grammar, it is still in line with the general logic of UG. This is so because the logic of UG is to look for broad, and in the opinion of this essay, sweeping, generalisations that languages are basically similar. At the same time though, his stance in general regarding the *microparametric* approach is most clearly identifiable with the Boas school in the Boas versus Sapir debate of 1920s mentioned above. Kayne (1996)¹³ in his introduction, remarks that the micro-linguistic trend of comparing closely related languages is a meaningful one. That is, he takes the position (obvious but not apparent in the UG view of language) that comparing geographically closely related languages will lead to more interesting results than comparing genetically more distantly related languages. His cooperative work on Northern Italian and Sardinian dialects are efforts towards this direction. Is this then a case of oil and water finally coming together, if not in spirit at least in body?

¹⁰ Sapir, Edward. 1921. *Language*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

¹¹ See also Jakobson, R. 1944. Franz Boas' Approach to Language. *IJAL* 10.1 88-95

¹² Trivialising for the non-specialist, LCA reduces to the statement that there is only one word order available in UG and it is the Head-Medial order. For definition and elaboration, see Kayne, Richard. 1994. *The Antisymmetry of Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. For an elaboration of how LCA may apply to south Asian languages in the domain of NPs and Wh movement, see the following:

(i) Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 1999. *The Structure of the Bangla DP*. London: University College London dissertation.

(ii) Simpson, Andrew and Tanmoy Bhattacharya. 2003. Obligatory Wh- Movement in a Wh-in-situ Language. *Linguistic Inquiry* 34.1: 127-142.

¹³ Kayne, Richard. 1996. Microparametric syntax: some introductory remarks. *Microparametric Syntax and Dialectic Variation*, ed. by J. R. Black and V. Motopanyane, ix-xviii. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

1.3 India Not as Linguistic Area

Notwithstanding Boas' take on areal linguistics and Kayne's faith in microparametric syntax, we go back to the main title of this paper: *India Not as a Linguistic Area* (INLA). In this section, I will point out merely two examples, for illustrative purposes, from Bangla and Hindi-Urdu and assume that it is obvious that otherwise similar differences can be seen within contiguous languages and in several other domains.

1.3.1 Complement Clauses in Bangla/ Hindi-Urdu

Consider for example a simple clause like the following:

(2) John knows [that mother will come].

In Bangla and Hindi-Urdu, this translates as follows:

- (3) a. John jane [je ma aSbe]. Bangla
 knows that mother come.will
 b. John jantaa hai [ki maa aayegii]. Hindi
 knows is that mother come.will.3SF

The English *that* and Bangla *je* and Hindi-Urdu *ki* are the typical clause connecting complementisers. On surface these three sentences look quite similar although the latter two languages have been classified as SOV or Verb-final languages.

However, differences begin to appear when one looks at the relative mobility of the complement clause (in square brackets) in these languages. Bangla seems to show a greater degree of freedom in moving the complement around:

- (4) a. John [ma je aSbe] jane.
 b. [ma je aSbe] John jane.
 c. *John [maa ki aayegii] jantaa hai.
 d. * [maa ki aayegii] John jantaa hai.

Notice, crucially though that this order in Bangla is only possible if the words within the complement are re-arranged, both incidentally are again ungrammatical in Hindi-Urdu:

- (5) a.* John [je ma aSbe] jane
 b.* [je ma aSbe] John jane

Up to this point what I have done is typology, I have simply listed the difference between the two languages. The next step of asking why this should be so and what properties of *je* and *ki* dictate this difference is a matter of syntax proper. The analysis of this phenomenon in Bhattacharya (2000a *et seq*)¹⁴ relates it to the broader domain of focus accent in Bangla. The point that is to be made is as follows: without the syntactic explanation of this difference, the difference as displayed above is merely a listing strategy and therefore meaningless. The difference is not parametric if parametric differences are considered to be reducible to matters of Morphology; rather, the difference is available due to the structural pressure that the language in question faces. That is, a child acquiring either of these languages does not in any way perform a *switch* to a particular choice (= value) of the position of the complementiser that is available universally, rather the child deduces a particular possibility in a particular language from other visible/ invisible *goings on* (or what I am calling here as *pressure points*) in that very language. The connection with morphology is discernable from discussion of parameters early on (starting with Borer (1984)¹⁵ and following on by Fukui (1986)¹⁶, Chomsky (1989)¹⁷, Ouhalla (1991)¹⁸, among others) where it was suggested that parameters depend on lexical properties of words, primarily inflectional, instead of syntactic properties. I will come back to the issue of pressure points in section 1.4.

1.3.2 *Wh* Scope in Bangla/ Hindi-Urdu

Yet another area where the two languages seem to substantially differ and where yet again the difference in principle is of an entirely different nature than parametric differences is in the domain of *Wh* scope.

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- ¹⁴ Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2000a. Comp-internal Clauses: Derivation by Phase. *Klausurtagung*, Großbothen.
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2000b. Peripheral and Clause-internal Complementizers in Bangla: A Case for Remnant Movement. *Western Conference in Linguistics (WECOL) 2000*, Fresno, CA (published as 2002c)
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2001a. Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2001. The Puzzle of Bangla Comp-Internal Clauses. *SNIPPETS 3*. Universite di Urbino, Italy
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2001b. Breaking GROUND, *Klausurtagung*, Großbothen
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2002a. Breaking ground: the syntax of two-Accent sentences in Bangla, *Architecture of Language*, CIEFL, Hyderabad
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2002b. Focus Accent in Bangla in a Complex Model of Discourse, 24th LSI Conference, Mysore
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2002c. Peripheral and Clause-internal Complementizers in Bangla: A Case for Remnant Movement. *Proceedings of Western Conference in Linguistics 2000*, 100-112, Fresno, CA.
 Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2002d. Focus accent in Bangla complex sentences, 31st SALA Meeting, Univ of Iowa.
¹⁵ Borer, Hagit. 1984. *Parametric Syntax: Case Studies in Semitic and Romance Languages*. Dordrecht: Foris.
¹⁶ Fukui, Nakoa. 1986. *A Theory of Category Projection and its Application*. Ph.D. dissertation, MIT.
¹⁷ Chomsky, Noam. Some notes on economy of derivation and representation. *MIT Working Papers*, 10, 43-74.
¹⁸ Ouhalla, Jamal. 1991. *Functional Categories and Parametric Variation*. London/ New York: Routledge.

If a *wh*-phrase occurs in an embedded clause and is intended to have matrix clause scope, the CP has to occur in the pre-verbal position, as in (6) and the gloss in (6i).

- (6) Ora [CP ke aS-be] Sune-che. Sub [CP ..wh..] V
 they who come-FUT.3 hear-PAST.3
 i. Who have they heard will come?
 ii. They have heard who will come.

In (7) where the same CP occurs in a post-verbal position it is no longer possible for the *wh*-subject to take matrix scope and only the indirect reading in gloss (ii) is possible:

- (7) Ora Sune-che [ke aS-be]. Sub V [CP ..wh..]
 they hear-PAST.3 who come-FUT.3
 (i) #Who have they heard will come?
 (ii) They have heard who will come.

This state of affairs simply does not exist in Hindi-Urdu:

- (8) a. us-ne sunaa hE ki [kaun aayegaa]
 s/he-ERG heard is COMP who come.FUT.3.M
 (i) S/he heard that who will come.
 (ii) #Who has s/he heard will come?
 b. *us-ne [kaun aayegaa] sunaa hE

That is, in Hindi-Urdu, there is no way of obtaining wide scope for the *Wh* unless one uses a complex *Wh* expression. In Simpson and Bhattacharya (2003)¹⁹, we wanted to give an account of restrictions on the scope of *wh*-phrases and the observation that a *wh*-phrase in the CP complement of a verb can only have matrix interrogative scope and a direct questioned interpretation if the CP containing it occurs in the pre-verbal position in Bangla, and not in the post-verbal position. Our syntactic explanation relates this to the word order being SVO in Bangla. Again, this cannot be a parametric difference (as there is no Morphology involved)²⁰ but to do more with syntactic structures available in the language concerned.

¹⁹ Simpson, Andrew and Tanmoy Bhattacharya. 2003. Obligatory Wh- Movement in a Wh-in-situ Language. *Linguistic Inquiry* 34.1: 127-142

²⁰ See section 1.3.1 for an elaboration on this point.

What I have done so far is to show that (i) there are crucial syntactic differences between closely related languages which may not be reducible to parametric differences, and (ii) that mere listing of these differences is rarely useful.

1.4 Pressure Points A View from the Interfaces

As stated in the introductory section, all is not lost. In fact, I suggest we discover the pressure points created in each language which derives the form and shape of specific constructions or of specific syntactic features, seen otherwise (by typological or parametric criteria) as the so-called inter-language differences. Furthermore, Minimalism, for the first time, provides the opportunity to locate these pressure points at the Interfaces.

1.4.1 What are Interfaces?

Very briefly, Chomsky's view is that FL (Language Faculty) is embedded into already existing "external" systems: the sensorimotor system and some kind of system of thought (conception, intention etc.) both of which are somewhat independent of language. The language faculty has to interact with these systems, otherwise it won't be usable (like, if the liver produced something else, not bile, that is not usable by the rest of the organs of the body, then it wouldn't be useful). So the question we ask is: Is it well designed for interaction with those systems? Then we get a different set of answers and conditions. Given that language is essentially an information system, the only condition that clearly emerges is that the information it stores must be accessible to the other systems with which it interacts. So we ask whether language is well designed to meet the condition of accessibility to the systems in which it is embedded.

With regards to the external systems, the situation may be comparable to the suggestion in Bhattacharya (2003)²¹ that Coherence or Centering (of Grosz, Joshi and Weinstein 1995)²² is a cognitive phenomenon *independent of language*, perhaps a part of the module responsible for general cognitive abilities like concept formation, intention and the like. The requirement that such a concept as Coherence may impose on the FL is manifested in ways the notion of Centering surfaces in discourse segments through a choice of referring expressions. That is, the structuring of the discourse is a response to the global/ local interface requirement of Coherence.

²¹ Bhattacharya, Tanmoy. 2003. The Role of Interfaces in Language Design: Destabilising Categories. Talk at IIT, Kanpur. (September).

²² Grosz, Barbara, Arvind Joshi and Scott Weinstein. 1995. Centering: A Framework for Modelling the Local Coherence of Discourse. *Computational Linguistics* 21.2: 203-225.

In the next two subsection, I take up two specific cases (Classifiers in Bangla and Cleft questions in Meiteilon) and look at them from the point of view of Interface pressure points. In particular we ask the simple, minimalist question: why these constructions are there in the language in the first place.

1.4.2 Why classifier?

Consider the fact that the following is ungrammatical in Bangla:

- (9) *e boi
this book
'this is a book'

This is so because you need an abstract representation and the substantive part (an "equal to" sign), i.e., there should be some way to express the thought that *it* represents/ stands for *book* but is not *book* itself. The copula in English does this job. However, in Bangla, the following is possible:

- (10) e-Ta boi
this-CLA book
'this is a book'

How/ why is (10) possible? The classifier *-Ta* has to be used with the representation of the thing (book). On the other hand (11) is inappropriate for this expression since it is merely an NP, and thus *not* a complete thought.

- (11) e boi-Ta

The interface question that I wish to raise here is as follows: Why is it the case that a language chooses to use a nominal element (classifier) to complete a thought? The answer is not so simple. First, syntactically the copula in Bangla existential sentences can be dropped in the present tense. This is merely a syntactic observation, it does not approach the interface question at all. However, we can still argue on the basis of this syntactic observation that it is not the case that a nominal element completes a thought in this language, there is always an underlying verbal element. This underlying verb shows up in the past:

- (12) e-Ta boi chilo
this-CLA book was

‘this was a book’

However, the observation with regard to requirement of a classifier in this language to aid manifesting a thought can also be approached in a more minimalist manner. Is it possible that there is an intricate relationship between the absence of the copula and the presence of the classifier? In other words, is it the case that either (i) the classifier is needed to express the distinction between the thing and its representation *because* the *be* verb can be dropped in certain cases, or (ii) is it the case that the presence of the classifier triggers that deletion of the copula because they are both performing the same function? Given minimalist assumptions, these hypotheses seem quite likely.²³ Moreover, the same function referred to above could easily be the job of maintaining the distinction between the two nouns, so that the hearer can distinguish in the message that one element is a representation of the other. The situation is somewhat like the following:

- (13)a. X = *book* Intended message
 b. *is* (X, *book*) English, Hindi-Urdu; X = *it/ yah* ‘this’
 c. X-DEF/SPEC *book* Bangla

That is, English and Hindi-Urdu convey the intended message by inserting something between the two nouns (equivalent to an “equal to” sign) and Bangla does it by making one of them more definite/ specific. From the Interfaces point of view, the narrow syntax (the computation to LF) readjusts to break the symmetry between the representing and the represented in response to the demand of the C-I Interface by inserting either a copula (in English and Hindi-Urdu) or a classifier (in Bangla).²⁴

1.4.3 Why cleft?

In connection with the Interface issue, the specific empirical case that is taken up in this subsection is with regards to cleft questions in Meiteilon. In particular, in the course of the following discussion, it will emerge that in Meiteilon a specific interface requirement of *de-emphasizing* governs the functioning of the cleft question strategy. The strategy of clefting, as a part of the FL in Meiteilon, is a response to this particular requirement at the interface. The work reported here is the striking result

²³ See Bhattacharya, Tanmoy 2005. The Myth of Areal Linguistics: A View from the Interface, talk delivered at Nanzan University (12th March) for a technical demonstration of the connection between the idea of *Phases* and copula/ classifier connection.

²⁴ This is a plausible explanation also because neither *is* nor *hE* plays the role of marking time on the sentence but rather of equivalence between the two nouns. In case of the past tense, the time information is required and therefore Bangla must resort to the copula to indicate purely the time information.

obtained in Bhattacharya and Thangjam (2003)²⁵ with regards to cleft questions in Meiteilon exemplifies dramatically the importance of interface phenomena.

Consider the following example of a cleft *Wh*-questions in Meiteilon:

- (14) a. Tombi-nA kAna ukhi-ge?
Tombi-Nom who saw-Q
'Whom did Tombi see?'
- b. tombi-nA ukhi-bA Adu kAna no?
Tombi-Nom saw-Inf/Nzr Det who Q
'Whom was it that Tombi saw?'
- c. tombi-nA ukhi-bA mi Adu kAna no?
Tombi-Nom saw-Inf/Nzr person Det who Q
'Whom was it that Tombi saw?'

Since questions have focus semantics and clefting is a form of focussing plus the fact that *Wh*-words in interrogatives normally attract phonological focus, it seemed rather strange that the element which attracts phonological focus (the *Wh*-word) be again marked for focus syntactically by clefting. Such a reiteration of the same information (i.e., of emphasis) is unlikely and does not follow the kind of logic that languages seem to follow. In this light, it was conjectured whether it is really a doubling of information. This led to the intonation experiments conducted and the discovery that the language lacks phonological focus entirely.

Without going into the details (to be found in Bhattacharya and Thangjam 2003), the conclusion that the language lacks phonological focus marking, led to the logical hypothesis that the language therefore compensates for this lack by marking it morpho-syntactically via the cleft strategy. From the experimental results it was concluded that absence of focus contour (phonological focus) is the reason that the language uses clefting to assign focus syntactically to the question word in cleft *Wh*-questions.

Questioning can be thought of as a part of the C-I interface that imposes certain restrictions on the FL as to how a question is to be formed and uttered. Of importance is the latter point about utterance. C-I, as per these terms, seems to impose a requirement on the A-P interface as well, namely, to apply a special question intonation onto the expression to be uttered to ask a question. To elaborate

²⁵ Bhattacharya, Tanmoy and Thangjam Hindustani Devi. 2003 [2004]. *SALA XXIII Proceedings*. Doug Bigham, Mark Brown, Q Wan Kim and Sadia Rahman (eds.), Stanford: CSLI Publications.

further, question semantics seems to be coming from C-I and question intonation is a diktat of the A-P interface that is involved in crucial ways with the requirement at the C-I interface.

We suggested that the requirement at the AP interface, namely, *De-emphasize* is the *raison d'être* for the clefting strategy of question formation. That is, because the obligatory requirement of layering a proposition by question intonation in order to turn it into an interrogative is met with a sudden block in Meiteilon at the A-P interface in the form of a larger global requirement to de-emphasize every proposition, the narrow syntax of Meiteilon reacts by devising the cleft strategy to convey emphasis. This, we propose, is how the requirement that a proposition be marked for emphasis to turn it into an interrogative is met with in Meiteilon. In short, because Meiteilon imposes the AP restriction that no proposition be marked phonologically for emphasis, it nevertheless maintains the CI restriction to mark a question by emphasis *syntactically* by clefting.

1.5 A Final Word

Finally, it is hoped that that the cases discussed above show why these very typical syntactic constructions in each language (Classifiers in Bangla and Cleft Questions in Meiteilon) are a result of some tectonic movement within the language concerned and nothing to do with parameters or observable (and therefore merely listable) differences between neighbouring or genealogically related languages. In particular, it is claimed that these movements within a language are a result of pressure at the Interfaces. In other words, the Interfaces put requirements on the FL which result in turn to observable phenomena in that language.

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