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Generalizations across languages

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Types of topics in German and Italian

Mara Franceselli and Roland Hinterholzl

This paper investigates the phonological and syntactic realization of topics in German and Italian. Based on a detailed information and syntactic analysis of the focus data, it is shown that topics are not fully recursive (contra Rizzi 1997), but fall into three types that are distinguished phonologically and realized in different syntactic positions. We argue that there is a systematic correlation between discourse roles and grammatical properties of topics which is encoded in a strict hierarchy of functional heads in the C-domain.

1. Introduction

This paper investigates information structure (henceforth, IS) in Italian and German, focusing on the correlation between the syntactic and phonological realization of topics and their discourse properties. In particular, we will analyse the connection between discourse roles and formal properties in sentences containing multiple topics. A comparative analysis of the properties of topic constituents in German and Italian is particularly interesting from a typological point of view: these languages differ in a number of parameters (head complement parameter, V2 property, pro-drop, clitic resumption and morphological Case marking) that make the identification of discourse-related common properties an important issue for the definition of language universals.

According to current assumptions, topics are licensed in a specific extra-sentential maximal projection, the Topo Phrase (TopP) - for which different locations have been proposed in the literature. Rizzi (1997) indicates two topic fields in the left periphery of the sentence, one above and one below the Focus Phrase (FocP). As for right-dislocated topics, Coelho (1999) and Belletti (2004) support the existence of a lower TopP node, just above the V1 Topic positions are indicated in (1) below:

\[
\text{1. } \left[ \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \text{ntp } \right]
\]

Though movement is generally assumed to derive topic constructions, we claim following Franceselli (2000, 2004b) - that an analysis of topicalization in terms of movement cannot be maintained for clitic-resumed topics, which are merged directly in
Types of topics in German and Italian

Types of topics in German and Italian

at the beginning of the text and then repeated several times. On the other hand, the
topicalized subject 10 has a contrastive value, since the teacher wants to stress that, as
for him, he is not going to tell anything to his students (since he was asked to keep it
secret). Finally, the DO topic questo displays aboutness and, in particular, it marks a
shift in the conversation to focus the addressee's attention on that particular point.

In this paper we will show that discourse properties have structural correlates both
in phonology and in syntax. In other words, evidence will be provided that different
types of topic show different intonational properties and are realized in a specific order
in the CP-system. A free recursion analysis will thus be refuted and a hierarchy will be
proposed in which different functional projections are distinguished in terms of
prosodic and syntactic properties. In particular, we will argue that the following types
of topics are distinguished systematically in the syntax and phonology of both languages
and are hierarchically ordered as given in (3):

(3) Topic hierarchy

Shifting topic > aboutness topic > Contrastive topic > Familiar topic

Shifting topics can be best characterized following Givón's (1983) definition as topics
that are newly introduced or newly changed to, contrastive and familiar topics are
defined as given above.

In the following sections, we will show that shifting topics can unequivocally be
characterized as aboutness topics. A question arises concerning the status of continuing
topics which, according to Reinhart's (1981) definition, should also count as aboutness
topics, but, as we will see, are realized as familiar topics. The tricky issue of the proper
treatment of continuing topics will be discussed in section 5.3. We will also show that
a movement approach is not tenable for some types of topic and discuss the relevance
of clitic-resumption in this respect. Finally, the examination of contexts will also show
that topics are not always given elements (66% in the LIP Corpus cf. Frascarelli
2000). So, drawing on Chafe's (1987) activation states, topics will be distinguished in
terms of a) active, b) semi-active and c) inactive expressions (cf. also Prince 1981 for a
discussion of degrees of givenness).

2. The intonation of topic constituents in Italian

In this section we examine the particular intonational contours that are associated
with different types of topics to convey different discourse meanings. The pitch accent
types that will recur in the course of this paper are based on Perlmutter's (1978) work and
further developments in which tones are described as sequences of low (L) and
high (H) tones determining the shape of the FO contour. In this perspective, all
pitch accents render prominent the material with which they are associated, regardless
of the type of the accent in question. Tones are also assigned to phrase final syllables.
These are the so-called **boundary tones**, marking the end of Intermediate Phrases (indicated by the symbol ‘‘’’ after the relevant tone) and Intonational Phrases (indicated by ‘‘’’). While pitch accents have a prominence-lending function on stressed syllables, boundary tones delimit prosodic edges. In this paper we focus on the question of which pitch-accents are associated with topics.

The intonational analysis of Italian topics is based on a corpus of spoken data: 100 minutes of conversations among friends and interviews with language students (corpus Bonvino, 2003), from which we have extracted a total of 103 sentences. The acoustic analysis has been developed using the Winpitch program, on Windows NT. The corpus includes six speakers (five women and one man), aged 20-35 (Roman variety), whose tone properties are given in Table 1 below (MMV and MXV indicate, respectively, the minimum and maximum mean value of F0)

### Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline (MMV)</th>
<th>Peak (MXV)</th>
<th>Pitch Range</th>
<th>Out of (NR Sentences)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (FEM)</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (FEM)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (FEM)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (FEM)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (FEM)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (MEN)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.4 The interpretation of tonal events

Our corpus shows that topic constituents in Italian are always made prominent by pitch accents, which differ according to their discourse roles. In particular, we can identify three tonal events associated with topic expressions, namely L*+H, H* and L*. 

##### 2.4.1 The L*+H contour

Every time a new topic is introduced in the conversation, it is signalled by a rise in the F0 contour that is aligned with the tonic vowel in its full extension and reaches its peak on the post-tonic syllable. According to the specific framework we are using, this kind of tonal event can be described by means of the complex tone L*+H. We therefore associate this tone with aboutness topics that mark a shift in the ongoing conversation.

In order to provide an illustration of this contour and the discourse function associated with the relevant topic, let us consider example (4) below. Here, a student (speaker A) is giving her opinion about the material of a self-learning course she applied for in the Language Center. For quite a long time she talks in general terms (also lamenting about the amount of work included in the course). Then, at a certain point, she interrupts this kind of narration and proposes a new topic (i.e., an element that was not previously mentioned). The new topic is the DO *l'ultima unit* ('the last unit') which is resumed by the clincher in the sentence. The speaker introduces this topic in order to announce that, despite the general difficulty, she is working on it at the moment.

(4) *Il materiale era tantissimo quindi all'inizio l'ho fatto tutto di corsa cercando di impiegare il tempo che dicevamo voi magari facendolo un po' superficialmente pur di prendere tutto. L'ultima unit la sto facendo l'ho lasciata un po' da parte perché ho incominciato il ripasso...*

The material was quite a lot, so at the beginning I did it in a rush, trying to do it all in the time that you had fixed, maybe a little superficially, so as to do everything. I'm doing the last unit now, I put it aside before because I had started to go through the program again...?

*L'ultima unit la sto facendo.*

the last unit it(CL) be:ISO do GER

I'm working on the last unit.'
2.1.2 The $H^*$ contour

The $H^*$ tone characteristic is a contrast between two (or more) topics as far as some specific (new) information is concerned. A line illustration of this particular topic type is given in (5), in which a student (speaker 1) is talking about her skills with foreign languages, overtly contrasting English with French.

(5) Le lingue in particolare non c'ho un metodo particolare perché ho avuto una storia travagliata soprattutto con l'inglese [...] col francese benissimo. ho fatto tre anni di medie avevo raggiunto un buon livello secondo me riuscire a vedere un film in inglese ho avuto sempre problemi con i professori.

'I don't have a particular method with languages because I had a troubled story, especially with English [...] with French, it was perfect. I studied it for three years at school, I reached a good level I think. I could also see movies in original version, while in English I always had problems with professors.'

in inglese ho avuto sempre problemi con i professori.

in English I always had problems with the professors

'In English, I always had problems with professors.'

![Figure 2.](image)

Observe the intonational contour associated with the PP-topic in inglese. Similarly to l'ultima unit in (4), it is marked by a prominent rise and followed by a low boundary tone. The alignment, however, is very different from that which we saw on l'ultima unit in Figure 1: in the latter the highest F0 point is reached on the post-tonic vowel, while in Figure 2 the pitch accent extends all over the tonic vowel obtaining a typical $H^*$-contour. The rest of the sentence forms a separate intonational phrase, with a peak on the adverb sempre.

2.1.3 The $L^*$ contour

The $L^*$ tone is present with familiar topics, that is, with elements that are part of the already established information. They are introduced at some point of the conversation and then repeated for topic continuity or as an afterthought.

Consider, for instance, example (6) below. As the context makes clear, the DO la conferma represents a familiar element, which is introduced by the student (speaker B), resumed by the interviewer and finally repeated, as a right-hand topic by the student:

(6) B: io dovevo studiare le regole qui e li fare solo esercizio, invece mi aspettavo di trovare dei punti a cui far riferimento ogni volta per vedere la regola, questo mi è mancato praticamente per avere la conferma di ricordare tutto insieme; A: comunque quelle domande ti davano la conferma che avevi capito; B: ma... magari non me la non riesco a darmela da sola la conferma.

'B: I was supposed to study rules here and do the exercises there, while I expected to find some outlines I could refer to, at any point, to check the relevant rule, this is what I missed, to check that I could remember everything; A: however those questions gave you the possibility to check your understanding; B: well, maybe I cannot make this check on my own.'

non riesco a darmela da sola la conferma.

not can.iss to give.to.me(ct) it(ct).alone the.check

'I cannot make this check on my own.'

![Figure 3.](image)

As we can see, the tonic vowel of the DO-topic la conferma is realized with a low tone (170Hz), which is very close to the speaker's baseline (cf. Table 1). Nonetheless, it is superior to the lowest value of this utterance, that is reached before the topic itself, i.e. on the post-tonic vowel of sola -160Hz - which marks the end of the comment. The right-hand topic, therefore, is not a part of the intonational phrase constituted by the preceding sentence, but an independent intonational unit with its own $L^*$ pitch accent.
It is important to underline that, though familiar topics are typically realized in Italian as right-hand topics, the L\textsuperscript{+} tone characterizing them is not to be considered as a (physiological) consequence of their final location. Familiar topics are low in any position, as is shown in the example to be discussed in the following section.

2.1.4 A case of multiple realization

To conclude the presentation of the different tonal events, let us consider sentence (7). A student (speaker D) is talking about English courses in general and, at the very end, about her relation to English in particular:

(7) Era tutto molto nuovo nel senso che comunque la lingua inglese attraverso i programmi sul computer diciamo [...] comunque l'inglese risultava anche facendolo da solo più interessante [...] io inglese non premetto non l'avevo mai fatto.

'Everything was very new to me in the sense that I had never studied English through computer programs [...] and through self-learning English appeared more interesting to me [...] I must say that I had never studied English before.'

I inglese [...] non l'avevo mai fatto.

1 English not (cl) have PAST.ING never done

'I had never studied English before.'

The intonational contours associated with the constituents io and inglese show that they are completely different topic types though they are both located in the left periphery. Inglese, a DO resumed by the clitic io, is a familiar topic: it is introduced very early in the interview and then repeated as a continuing topic. The subject-topic io, on the other hand, marks a shift in the conversation: the speaker is still talking about English, but, at that point, she changes the aboutness topic. She wants to comment on her personal relation to that language. Accordingly, io is characterized by an intonational rise that reaches its highest point on the post-tonic vowel (like the topic illustrated in Figure 1). The F0 on inglese, however, stays on a low range and is rather flat (like la conferma in Figure 3).

2.2 Tonal events on topics: conclusions

The examples discussed show that the tonal event associated with a topic does not depend on its category; diverse constituents including pronouns can be merged in Topic position and be marked by an intonational rise when they indicate a shift or a contrast in the discourse (cf. also the sample sentences in section 3). On the other hand, full DPs can be realized with a low tone if they are familiar topics. Sentences (4) to (7) also show that the realization of a topic is neither influenced by its prosodic weight - io is lighter than inglese in (7) - nor by its position within the sentence - a familiar topic is marked as L\textsuperscript{+} in either periphery of the sentence. We can thus conclude that the tonal event of a topic is only dependent on its discourse role.

As for boundary tones, the intonational contours illustrate that shifting topics as well as contrastive ones are always marked by a final lowering which typically signals the end of a prosodic phrase with a declarative illocutionary force. In general, F0 resetting and rhythmic/tonal breaks show the presence of an intonational phrase boundary between the topic and the rest of the sentence.

Comparing these results with other intonational analyses for different languages, it is interesting to note that the H-tone is generally associated with items that are new in the discourse. This is perfectly consistent with its presence in topics marking a shift. On the other hand, the L-tone normally marks items the speaker wants to be salient, "but not to form part of what the speaker is predicating in the utterance" (Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg, 1990: 291). In other words: L-marked items are not used to add information to the hearer's beliefs. This also fits with their present association with familiar topics.

As for their analysis in terms of activation states, our corpus shows that shifting topics can be newly introduced or semi-active constituents. Contrastive topics are generally active elements, even if the contrast can also be raised by accessible elements. Only familiar topics are always connected with active referents. This is consistent with their status of given/accessible elements that can serve for referential continuity.

3. The syntax of topics in Italian

In section 2, evidence has been provided for a specific and systematic correlation between discourse and intonational properties of topic constituents. According to the intonational (and discourse) properties we have distinguished, the 103 topics of our Italian corpus can be divided into 38 shifting topics (ST), 25 contrastive (CT) and
40 familiar topics (FT). Their location in either periphery of the sentence, their rigid order in multiple topic constructions, and their interaction with other types of constituents in the CT system (i.e., focus and wh-constituents) will be discussed below.

Consider the following sample sentences:

i. per esempio il CD-rom invece non l' avevo mai visto. ST
   'So, for instance, I had never seen a CD Rom before.'

ii. Brava non me lo dirà mai. ST
    'He will never say 'brava' to me.'

iii. Io, una cosa che ho trovato positiva, è stata la comprensione. ST
    'One thing that have I found positive be 3SG been the comprehension.'

iv. Rispetto agli altri materiali, come ti sei trovata? ST, WH
    'As for the other materials, how did you like them?'

v. Quello che ha scritto che mi ha scritto. ST, FOC
    'What he wrote that also on the questionaire it(CL) have 3SG written.'

vi. Io tutto pensava fuorché di parlare alla radio. ST, FOC
    'I all think PAST.1SG except of to speak at-the radio.'

vii. Io, inglese non l' avevo mai fatto. ST, FT
    'I never studied English before.'

viii. Ciò il senso generale lo capisco. CT
     'That is to say, the sense general it(CL) understand 3SG.'

ix. Invece la lei non l' ha presa come speaker. CT
    'On the contrary he didn't choose her to be the speaker.'

x. Io francamente questa attività particolare non me la ricordo. CT, FT
    'Frankly, I don't remember that particular activity.'

As we can see, in multiple realization, the three topics types we have identified are located in a specific order. This means that sentences can host multiple topics which are located in different peripheral positions. However, it is not the case that just any kind of topic can occupy any position.

In particular, shifting topics occupy the highest topic position in the left periphery. Note specifically that this type of topic is located in a higher position with respect to what-and focus constituents, which compose the so-called operator field (Rizzi 1997) in the left periphery of the sentence — cf. (iv) to (vi). Familiar topics, on the other hand, occupy the lowest Top-projection. They are located lower than contrastive and focus constituents and can be realized in either periphery — cf. (x) to (xiii), while the right periphery seems to be excluded for shifting and contrastive topics. Contrastive topics finally are located between shifting and familiar topics and, like the former, precede operators.

As far as topic recursion is concerned, our corpus clearly shows that shifting and contrastive topics are not recursive — a sentence can only contain one shifting and one contrastive topic — and they can only be located in the left periphery. Familiar topics, on the other hand, allow multiple realizations in either periphery, consistent with the fact that different elements can be part of the accessible information. Given that shifting topics represent aboutness topics, this means that a sentence, though it may contain several topics, can license at most one aboutness topic. In the light of the examined Italian data, we propose the following hierarchy for topic constituents in the CT system:

(8) [NP Tp AdvP] [CompP] [AdvP] [Vp] [AdvP]

3.4 Merge, move and clitic resumption

In recent works Frascarelli (2000, 2004a) has argued for extra-sentential merge of clitic-resumed topics restating (with some major differences) a hypothesis originally put forth by Cinque (1990). According to this analysis, a topic is base-generated in the t-domain and connected with its thematic role (if any) through binding an IP internal pro. Several pieces of evidence is given in Frascarelli (2004a) to support this claim.
ent, theory internal considerations, which exclude right-adjunction in principle (cf. Kayne 1994), a right-adjunction analysis can be shown to be inadequate also from an empirical point of view. An analysis predicts that a right-hand topic c-commanded IP internal material in the rest of the sentence. This prediction, however, is not borne out as is shown by sentences like (15), in which coindexing between the right-hand topic and the IP subject Maria does not yield a violation of Principle C.

(15) Si un amico Maria partirà presto, lei, certamente Maria lo farà presto soon she.

For sure, Maria will leave soon.

Additional support for IP-inversion to derive right-topicalization is given by minimality effects (cf. Frascarelli 2000, 2004b), scope and binding properties. In this respect, let us resum e sentences (13)–(14). In (13) both the quantified IO ad ogni ospite and the familiar (non clitic-resumed) DO-topic il suo vicino di tavola are merged in the VP in this construction the possessive suo can be bound both by the subject DP Maria and by the QP ad ogni ospite. This is expected since both constituents c-command the object DP hence they qualify as possible binders. Binding and scope properties, however, are completely different in a construction that presents the DO il suo vicino di tavola as a clitic-resumed right-hand topic (cf. (14)). In this case the subject DP Maria is the preferred (and, for some speakers, the only possible) binder for the possessive suo. This is strong evidence that a right-hand topic is not moved to a "lower TopP" projection and then reconstructed for interpretation since, in that case, scope properties should be the same as in (13), contrary to facts (see note 9).

Scope properties of right-hand topics, on the other hand, are immediately explained in the light of an analysis merging topics in the left periphery and inverting the IP. After IP-inversion the topic is c-commanded by the whole sentence containing both the subject Maria and the QP ad ogni ospite. Since Maria is the highest nominal constituent within the sentence, it is the only element that c-command out of the frontal clause (cf. Kayne 1994) and thus induces the preferred reading on suo:

(16) [a Maria, lo ha presentato ad ogni ospite [e il suo vicino di tavola] t_{j+k}].

As for the specific functional projection in which right-hand topics are located, intonational evidence shows that it must be FamP: right-hand topics are always marked by a L' tone. This implies that IP inapposition must target a projection that is higher than FamP and called GP (cf. Poletto and Pollock 2004) for Ground Phrase (GP) in (17): \footnote{11}

(17) [a Maria, lo ha presentato ad ogni ospite [[e il suo vicino di tavola] t_{j+k}].[a Maria, lo ha presentato ad ogni ospite [[e il suo vicino di tavola] t_{j+k}]].]

We propose that an FPP feature in the C-domain triggers the IP-inversion which derives right-hand topic constructions. This feature must be checked by the IP to yield new interpretative options, i.e. scope or discourse-related properties. This is in line with Chomsky's (1995b, 2004) proposal that the dislocation property is implemented to satisfy some specific interface conditions. Indeed, the discourse properties of left- and right-hand topics are quite different. The ungrammaticality of (19), for instance, shows that right-hand topics cannot convey contrast (or aboutness); only familiar elements can be found in that position.

(18) Io ho due fratelli. Luigi ha visto spesso, (i = j, j = k)

I have two brothers, Luigi him(CL) see.1SG often

mentre Maria non lo ha visto mai.

while Maria him(CL) see.1SG never

'i have two brothers, Luigi, who I see often, and Maria, who I never see.'

(19) Io ho due fratelli. Ho visto spesso Luigi, mentre non lo, visto mai, Mario.

(I = j, j = k)

The crucial role of IP inversion in conveying a different meaning is also clearly shown in the following sentences (taken from the IP corpus):

(20) Non è questione che il tempo, non ci ha dato, not be-3SG question that the time not to.you(CL) have given in te il tempo, ho dato i time,

(I = j, j = k, k = l)

I to.you(CL) have given the time.

The point is not that I didn't give you time. I am not you time.'

In (20) the same constituent - the DP il tempo - is topicalized twice by the speaker, though with very different effects. In the first part of the sentence il tempo is the point at issue - the aboutness topic (the question). In the second part of the utterance, il tempo is repeated as an afterthought, i.e. it is a familiar topic. As for the predicative part of the sentence (te l'ho dato), it clearly has a broad focus meaning in the first clause, while the verb gets a contrastive value in the second part. It is thus plausible to assume that IP movement targets a projection in the C-domain to meet some interface requirement concerning focus and contrast. We can thus conclude that IP-inversion provides a connection between syntactic configuration and information structure.

3.3 Contrast: an interplay between focus and topic

It is worth noting that contrastive topics and (contrastive) focus never co-occur in the same sentence (cf. the sample sentences in section 3) and that the formal and functional categorization of contrastive topics is exactly the same as the one for (contrastive) focus in Italian (cf. Frascarelli 2004a) and other languages (Erota 2000, D’Imperio 2003), namely IP.

This similarity in IP interpretation seems to suggest that contrast is not an inherent property of either focus or topic constituents (cf. Miller 2002, Välimäki 1992), but a functional feature that is licensed in an A-position in the C-domain, where either a topic is merged in or a focus can move to. Of course, when deleting this feature, topics and focus maintain their semantic and syntactic properties. Consequently, a focus per
en its quantificational nature – identifies a variable excluding other values for it, while contrastive topics do not have quantificational properties and only need to be opposed to some other topic. Indeed, the notion of topic is incompatible with the idea of contradiction, which is typically associated with contrastive foci. Contradicting a statement entails the negation of some part of it and topics are always outside the scope of negation.\textsuperscript{22}

3.4 Rizzi (1997) and the topic-focus/wh relation

As introduced in Section 1, Rizzi (1997: 295) argues for a recursive TopP above as well as below the FocP. He claims that both the topic-focus and the focus-topic order are acceptable:

\begin{enumerate}
  \item Credo che domani, a Gianni, questo gli dovremmo dire.
  \item I think that tomorrow, to Gianni we should tell him this.
  \item Credo che domani, questo, a Gianni gli dovremmo dire.
  \item I think that tomorrow, to Gianni we should tell him this.
\end{enumerate}

The analysis of spoken corpora confirms that the two orders are indeed possible. It is important to underline, however, that the two topics in (21a-b) have different informational roles. Given the present analysis, we predict that in sentence (21a) the 10 a Gianni is a shifting topic, while in (21b) it can only be interpreted as a familiar topic. We thus conclude that the two topics discussed in sentences (21a-b) by Rizzi are not the same type of topic and that TopP is not a freely recursive projection. Rizzi (1997: 298) also excludes the co-occurrence of a contrastive focus and a wh constituent in the left periphery of the sentence. The LIP corpus supports this claim, showing that contrastive elements preceding wh-constituents must be topics. In this respect, let us consider (22):

\begin{enumerate}
  \item Accadono semplicemente per un concorso interno senza titoli senza niente non sano cos'è un quadro non sano i pigmenti che cosa sono!
  \item They get in by an internal competition without qualifications without anything they do not know what a frame is, they do not know what pigments are!
\end{enumerate}

The context makes it clear that i pigmenti, which precedes the wh-constituent, is not a genuine focus, but a contrastive topic. It does neither exclude any variable nor negate a former presupposition. It creates an oppositional pair with respect to another element – specifically with un quadro. Sentence (22) provides additional evidence that the syntactic locus for contrast is higher than the positions hosting focus and wh constituents. It also shows that contrastive topics are merged in an A'-position in the C-domain, since minimalinity effects do not arise with the operator-chain connected with the focus.

To conclude, the syntactic analysis of topics in Italian provides evidence for a topic hierarchy in the C-domain and shows that clitic resumption is crucial to distinguish between merged and moved topics. This allows for a typological connection between the derivation of topic constructions and the availability of clitic resumption in a language. These results are supported by German data, as is shown in the following sections.

4. The intonation of topic constituents in German

In this section, we report on the results of our corpus analysis of topic realization in German. As we will see in detail below the evidence from German confirms the findings based on Italian data, namely the fact that topics that serve different informational-structural roles are realized differently both phonologically and syntactically.

4.1 The corpus

The data are taken from the corpus of Irene Forsthofer (FU-Berlin), who provided the digital recordings and the transcripts of radio-conversations. The corpus consists of conversations between a caller and a presenter about different subjects suggested by daily politics. One such subject concerned the events around the wreck of the Russian submarine "Kursk" collected in the Putin file and another concerned the affair between the former CDU party leader Schäuble and the international weapon dealer Karl Heinz Schreiber collected in the Schäuble file. Out of these files, we extracted and analyzed a total of 120 sentences (utterances). In Table 2 we provide some statistical data about the pitch range of the various speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Baseline (MXM)</th>
<th>Peak (MXV)</th>
<th>Pitch range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (FEM, presenter)</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (MASC)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (MASC)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (FEM)</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (MASC)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 The analysis

Our corpus shows that topics in German also display different contours according to their informational structural contribution to the sentence. In particular, we found three different contours that express topicality, namely (a) L+H*, found in 27 sentences (30%), (b) L*+H found in 9 sentences (10%), and (c) L* found in 61 (60%) sentences. The last-named ones are realized with a flat intonation – cf. 4.2.3 below.

4.2.1 The L+H* contour

The L+H* contour is associated with constituents that figure as the topic of the subsequent passage: Thus, it can be identified as the contour that marks aboutness topics.
Recall that this type of topic is associated with the contour L+H in Italian (cf. section 2.1.1). In contrast to Italian, the German corpus only displays DPs being marked with this contour. No PPs or other categories were found marked with this contour.

In the German data, this contour is crucially connected with shifting topics. So, every time a new topic is proposed in the conversation, this is indicated by this special rise that has its peak at the end of the tonic vowel. Let us consider the two cases given in (23):

(23) C: Ich mein nich unbended dass es Putin schadet dass ma niht dasselbe sein aber ich glaube dass das der nationalstolz das ist sehr beworben abzunehmen... ich glaube dass das is aus des zarenzeit mehr oder weniger herausgeschoben wird von von den medien [...] A: Putin hat gemerkt. A: Putin has realized. da habe ich mich falsch verhalten. C: I do not necessarily mean that it should harm Putin. This need not be the same thing. But I believe that the- that the national pride in fact the much talked about sentiment of belonging together [...] which is more or less invoked out of the times of the tsars by the media. [...] A: Putin has realized. A: Putin has realized. That the national pride was... Putin has realized."

(a) dass der Nationalstolz. (b) Putin hat gemerkt...

'that the national pride. Putin has realized...'

In this passage, the conversation shifts from the previously introduced topic Putin to the national pride of Russians (speaker C) and back to Putin (speaker A). As the figures in table 5 show, each topic shift is indicated with the L+H* contour, with the peak being realized later in the tonic syllable. In conclusion, this type of topic is associated with a rise in both languages, which differs, however, in the alignment of the H tone: while in German, the H tone is associated with the tonic vowel, it is associated with the onset of the post-tonal syllable vowel in Italian.

4.2.2 The L+H contour

This contour, that in Italian is associated with aboutness topics, seems to be associated with contrastive topics in German, with the contrast often being implicit in the conversation. The PF interface thus realizes contrast in a very different manner in German than in Italian.

In fact, the intonation of contrastive topics in Italian is crucially connected with contrastive focus (cf. section 4.3 above). On the other hand, in German contrast seems to be associated with familiar topics that show an L-tone, as we will see below. The implication we can draw is that in the absence of clues, focus and contrastive topics must be distinguished intonationally, in German.

From an informational point of view, contrastive topics can either induce a topic-shift or fail to do so. To illustrate the latter, consider the following utterance (speaker E) taken from the Schauble file:

(24) dass er [Schauble] sagt, er hat das Geld bekommen und hat es der Schatzmeisterin Baumeister gegeben während Schreiber sagt er hat es der Schatzmeisterin ab Brigitte Baumeister geben an Schäuble sagt jetzt... 'That he says he has received the money and has given it to the treasurer Mrs Baumeister while Schreiber says he has given it to the treasurer - Brigitte Baumeister and Schäuble now says...'

während Schreiber sagt... while Schreiber says...'

while Schreiber says...

In this sequence the main topic of conversation is Schauble, and Schreiber is introduced with a contrastive statement. But Schreiber does not constitute the topic of the subsequent passage, which remains Schauble, as is indicated by the fact that the original topic is picked up in the following sentence by the DP Schauble with a flat intonation.

On the other hand, in the following sequence, the interviewed person (speaker B) introduces Putin as a topic in the conversation, in contrast to the topic proposed by the presenter, and Putin remains the major topic of the ensuing conversation:

(25) A: Wird die U-Boot Katastrophe die russische Gesellschaft verändern - das ist meine Frage heute - guten morgen. B: Guten morgen - ja hat Putin einen Fehler gemacht? 'A: Will the disaster with the submarine change the Russian society - this is my question today - good morning. B: Good morning - yes, did Putin make a mistake? ja hat Putin einen Fehler gemacht. yes have you thought, Putin made a mistake.'

The intonational curves of the examples (24) and (25) are given below. As we can see, the peak in the contour of contrastive topics is reached on the post-tonal vowel.
4.2.3 The \( L^* \) contour

Like in Italian, continuing topics and familiar elements are realized with an \( L^* \) tone. Often, however, elements that are previously mentioned and phonologically light, in particular pronouns, do not form an independent prosodic unit in German and are integrated into the intonational phrase of the main predicate. In this case they are realized with a flat contour. For this reason, we consider the flat realisation as a phonetic variant of the \( L^* \) tone and only refer to the latter in the phonological description of this type of topics.

It is important to note that in German only constituents mentioned in the previous context can be realised as flat, while elements that are part of the common ground of speaker and hearer but not mentioned in the previous context are typically realised with the \( L^* \) tone. This is illustrated in (26). There the topic of the conversation Putin is picked up with the deaccented pronoun er by speaker A. The topical DPs die Wetterkarten and die Norweger, on the other hand, have not been mentioned in the previous context. However, they must be considered as part of the common ground within a discussion about the events and their causes in the accident of the Russian nuclear submarine "Kursk," which happened a couple of years ago. Both DPs are realised with the \( L^* \) tone and do not change the topic, which remains Putin.

(26) er [Putin] muss sich beraten von seinen Fachleuten – die hat ihm belogen […] ich meine die Wetterkarten lassen sich nachprüfen – daß dort schlechtes Wetter herrsche… auch wenn die Norweger jetzt was anderes sagen.

‘He must accept advice from his experts; they have lied to him. I mean the meteorological maps can be checked. That there was bad weather… even if the Norwegians now say something different.’

auch wenn die Norweger jetzt was anderes sagen.

‘Even if the Norwegians say something different now.’

From a syntactic point of view, familiar topics can be located either in the left or in the right periphery of the sentence. In the left periphery, they occupy a high position in the CP-system, as is also shown by their position with respect to the sentential adverbs lediglich, tatsächlich and jetzt in (27). In the right periphery, they are extraposed constituents and typically serve as afterthoughts.

(27) a. oder hat er (\( L^* \) sich lediglich anders verhalten.

‘or has he himself only differently behaved’

b. auch wenn die Norweger (\( L^* \) jetzt was anderes sagen.

‘even if the Norwegians now say something different’

Even though monosyllabic continuing topics are typically realized with a flat contour, they may also be realized with an \( L^* \) tone when they are phrased separately for emphasis. The example (28a) below illustrates a case in which the pronoun er, that continues the topic previously introduced, is realized with a flat contour, while in (28b) the pronoun er, continuing the established topic Putin, carries an \( L^* \) tone.

(28) a. Putin (\( L^*+H^* \) ist an allem schuld […] er [er (\( L^* \) hat sich anders verhalten] differently behaved

‘Putin is responsible for everything […] he behaved differently’

b. ja hat Putin (\( L^*+H^* \) einen Fehler gemacht…

‘Yes, Putin made a mistake…'
5. The syntax of German topics

In the syntactic analysis of German topic expression we would like to concentrate on the following issues. First, we are interested in whether German topics are ordered in the same way as Italian ones. Secondly, the question arises what type of movement is involved in the derivation of German topics. Thirdly, the data discussed above raise the question of how continuing topics should be treated in a framework assuming that discourse properties are signaled uniformly phonologically and syntactically. Continuing topics are aboutness topics in terms of their discourse properties, but they are treated as familiar topics by syntax and phonology. Finally, we address the question of how the German V2 property should be accounted for in an approach assuming various functional projections in the C domain.

5.1 The order of topics

Contrary to Italian, the German corpus does not provide conclusive and sufficient evidence for a specific ordering of the different topic types. We only found three examples containing multiple topics. Furthermore, the example (32) which seems to contain an aboutness and a contrastive contour is inconclusive. It is not even clear whether the sequence *wie alle im Westen* is to be treated as a single constituent or not.

(32) *also das wichtigste wäre, dass wir alle (L+H*)
hence the most important would be that we all
im Westen (L+H) jetzt nicht in den Reflex verfallen...
in the West now not into the reflex fall
'Hence, the most important thing would be that we all in the West do not automatically behave...'

More data have to be considered before we can make any firm and reliable judgments about order restrictions of topic elements in German. However, based on the assumption that syntactic and phonological properties are not independent of each other, we assume that a particular topic contour signals a particular syntactic position of this topic. Since German topics display three different intonational contours, we conclude that they occupy three different syntactic positions which – in the absence of any direct evidence from the German corpus – are supposed to display the same order as topics in Italian do.24

5.2 The derivation of topic constituents in German

Hinterhold (2004a) argues that familiar topics undergo A-movement. It is proposed that familiarity, next to scope, is a trigger for scrambling and that this feature is checked by
movement into the specifiers of dedicated functional projections above sentence adverbs. Furthermore, it is argued that both types of features are checked via A-movement.

A prerequisite for the analysis of German scrambling as A-movement is to explain how minimality effects that block A-movement of one argument across another (cf. scrambling in Dutch and object shift in Scandinavian) can be circumvented in German. In Hinterholz (2006) a unified minimality condition is proposed that blocks movement of an argument across a categorically non-distinct argument in German, Dutch and Scandinavian alike and it is argued that the particular Case that German has, namely one that distinctively marks grammatical functions, contrary to Case in Icelandic, renders DP arguments categorically distinct. In conclusion, Case can be treated as one type of license that allows for arguments to be freely ordered according to their discourse properties (as is argued in Section 3.1 clitic pronouns provide another instance of such a license).

If scrambling is analyzed as A-movement that occurs in order to check a pragmatic type of feature, then it is necessary that A-movement is extended to check features other than Case. Hinterholz (2004a) proposes that movement checking a non-operator feature counts as A-movement. This derives the well known fact that scrambling of deaccented material is strictly clause bound, as is illustrated in (34a) below. Only contrastive topics can undergo long distance movement, as is illustrated in sentence (34b) that is taken from Hinterholz and Rosengren (1998). This implies that contrastive topics are licensed via A-movement. In the account of Hinterholz (2004a) this would follow if contrastive topics can be argued to involve an operator feature of some sort.

But we remainagnostic with respect to the operator status of contrastive topics.

(34a) *Gestern hat jemand die Maus getrieben, dass es nicht wahr.

Yesterday, someone has driven the mouse that it’s not true.

(34b) *dass meine Eltern mir Beleidigungen angedacht haben, dass sie abwesend beantworten müssten

that my parents have thought me insults, that they had to answer absent.

In contrast to Italian, German aboutness topics must be assumed to be derived through movement. Unlike Italian aboutness topics, they show Principle C effects which can be explained in terms of reconstruction. Compare the ungrammatical (34) with the parallel Italian case in (9) in which coreference is possible.56

(34) *Mein Bild von Leo hat er wahrscheinlich Maria nicht gezeigt.

My picture of Leo has he, probably has not shown Maria.

What type of movement is involved in the licensing of aboutness topics? Frey (2000) argues that the phenomenon of aboutness topics, as he calls them, has many properties in common with so-called topicals. He points out that aboutness topics cannot undergo long distance movement. In this, they resemble items like topics such as in (31).

(35) *dass Eva dem Hans wahrscheinlich glaubt, dass er helfen zu müssen

that Eva believes Hans, that he is to help

That Eva probably believes he is obliged to help.

5.3 The proper treatment of continuing topics

Let us now address the question of how continuing topics can be analyzed in our approach. According to Reinhart's definition of an aboutness topic given in the introduction, continuing topics should – like shifting accentuated topics – count as aboutness topics, since sentences containing a continuing topic are most naturally interpreted as providing further comments on the pre-established topic that is continued. However, as we have seen above, the phonology in both German and Italian and the syntax in Italian treat them differently from shifting topics, as is illustrated in (36) below. While Reinhart's definition of aboutness differentiates between elements forming the topics of utterances in the discourse and other familiar elements in the clause, syntax and phonology crucially distinguish between shifting and all other kinds of topics, whether they continue a pre-established topic or simply represent other elements familiar from the context, as is illustrated in (36):

(36) Shifting topics vs. non-shifting topics (including continuing topics)

Syntax: high topic field vs. low topic field

Phonology: rising intonation vs. non-rising intonation

In this respect, the syntactic evidence from Italian is crucial since it indicates that continuing topics are not interpreted as aboutness topics that are simply deaccented due to their familiarity. Then, we would expect them to precede wh- and focussed elements, like topics with the L*+H tone do, whereas they follow these elements, like other familiar topics do.

There are two possible solutions to this problem. The first option is to reject Reinhart's (1981) definition as too broad and to restrict the notion of aboutness to shifting topics employing Grim~s (1983) definition of aboutness as topics that are newly introduced or newly changed to. In this approach, continuing topics are to be characterized as familiar topics that refer to a pre-established aboutness topic but are not aboutness topics by themselves. This approach constitutes the simplest solution to the problem described above because it allows to assume that the presence of aboutness topics always implies the type of partition in topics and comment, while continuing topics are like familiar topics in general are typically integrated into the informational domain of the comment.

The second option is more complicated, but it allows us what it takes to assume that Reinhart's definition is relevant definition after all in this approach.
topics must be treated as familiar topics that are assigned an aboutness feature. Then, one solution is to assume that this feature assignment is a matter of interpreting the sentence as providing a comment on a pre-established aboutness topic. This process would occur in the interpretative component and would thus be inaccessible to the syntax-phonology interface. Note, however, that this account is cumbersome given that the aboutness feature must also be treated as a formal feature that is visible to the syntax-phonology interface: a shifting topic that involves an already given element and a familiar topic are only distinguished by the aboutness feature that triggers a different phonological and syntactic realization on shifting topics. A state of affairs in which a feature is, in one case, purely interpretational and has formal correlates in another case is certainly unwanted.

The solution within this approach must be to assume that the aboutness feature is a syntactic feature and that topic categories are compositional. Since the aboutness feature is intrinsically related with shifting topics, compositional topics must somehow be associated with the syntactic position of the latter. In Minimalism, the grammar provides two mechanisms to link a constituent with a feature in a higher functional head: Move or Agree.

Topics in German can now be analyzed in the following way. Familiar topics, including continuing topics, are marked with the L tone. The aboutness feature is a formal feature that is encoded in the highest topic position. This head also assigns a phonological feature – the H tone – which carries the meaning of 'new x'. This phonological feature is assigned to shifting topics, which therefore receive the interpretation new aboutness topic. Continuing topics are also associated with the aboutness feature through Agree. However, since they are realized in a lower position in the C-domain, they are not assigned the H tone and thus share the L tone with other familiar topics. Like the latter, they are interpreted as non-new topics – as topics that have a discourse antecedent.18 Evidence for this assumption is provided by contrastive topics. We have seen in Section 4.4.2 that they can induce a topic shift or fail to do so: this shows that contrastive topic can also be associated with the aboutness feature located in the highest topic head.

In conclusion, we think the second option is superior and propose the following hierarchy of topic constituents in German and Italian, in which shifting topics are analyzed as being composed of an aboutness feature and a phonological feature (H) meaning 'new x', whereas continuing topics, by being linked with the aboutness feature, are analyzed as non-new aboutness topics (the FocP projection is only relevant for Italian since there is no evidence for a left-peripheral focus position in German).19

(37) Topic Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Phonology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[H:aboutness]</td>
<td>[L:continuing; familiar]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 V2 and the functional structure in the C-domain

In this section, we address the question of how the proposed structure of the German C-domain in (37) can be reconciled with the V2-constraint. In principle, there are two types of possible solutions for this problem. A) One could assume that the verb always lexicalizes the highest functional head in the C-domain that is activated. This would mean that – depending on their information structural roles – clauses come in different sizes. In this account, a clause containing a shifting topic would be larger than a clause with a familiar topic, with the verb moving into different functional projections in each case. The other possibility is B) to assume that the verb always moves to the same functional head that has a phonological EPP-feature. This head occurs even higher than the functional projections responsible for licensing topics in (37) and can be identified with the head expressing Force. One can then assume that it is this position in which a complementizer is merged and to which the finite verb is moved in V2-clauses, as is illustrated in (38). The highest specifier in the clause will then count as an A'-position, since the corresponding head hosts an operator feature (clausal Force).

(38) V2-C - aboutness topics - contrastive topics – familiar topics – S-adverbs – subject

How can we distinguish between these two approaches? The first approach can be discarded immediately since it makes wrong predictions about word order. It predicts that in a sentence with a shifting topic, no other material can precede this topic. It is very easy to find or construct examples that prove the contrary. (39a) is a constructed and completely natural example in which a frame adverb precedes an aboutness topic marked with the L+H* tone. (39b), which is taken from the corpus, shows that a situational adverbial da may precede a familiar topic that continues the topic established in the matrix clause.

(39) a. Gestern _hat der Hans (L+H*) die Maria getroffen. Yesterday has the Hans the Maria met
   'Yesterday Hans met Maria.'

b. (Putin hat gemacht) da (L*) _hat ich (L*) mich falsch verhalten. Putin has realized here have I myself wrongly behaved
   'Putin realized in this situation I behaved wrongly.'

In the second approach, these data are unproblematic given that the highest specifier in the clause can, and must, be filled by a constituent capable of satisfying the EPP feature phonologically; that is, any single constituent that can be extracted or frontal via A'-movement.
6. Conclusions

To summarize, we have shown with a detailed intonational and syntactic analysis of Italian and German corpus data that topics are not freely recursive – contra Rizzi (1997). Alternatively, we argued that according to their discourse pragmatic roles, topics fall into three types that are distinguished phonologically and are realized in different syntactic positions. We showed that there is a systematic correlation between discourse roles and grammatical properties of topics, which is encoded in a strict hierarchy of functional heads in the C-domain, as is illustrated in (37).

Furthermore we argued that the interpretation of topics is compositional. In this approach shifting topics can be characterized as new aboutness topics while continuing topics are properly characterized as non-new aboutness topics, explaining why they are treated by syntax and phonology on a par with familiar topics. Our corpus data show that only one constituent per clause can have an aboutness function. We therefore reject Frey's (2000, 2004a) claim that a clause can contain several aboutness topics. Also the mere existence of shifting topics directly militates against the assumption that sentences can contain multiple aboutness topics: that the grammar provides a category that marks the shift from one aboutness topic to another presupposes that there is only one aboutness topic per clause.

While the two languages distinguish the same types of topic, they differ considerably in their syntactic realization. We can assume that the different topic realization in the two languages is dependent on the specific means the individual grammar provides. As to the free ordering of constituents according to their discourse properties, one requirement seems to be that the grammatical functions of constituents must be identifiable. Above we have argued German uses Case to identify the grammatical function of topics. Therefore, if there is no operator feature involved, German topics can be derived by undergoing A movement from their base positions into the respective licensing position in the C-domain. Italian displaying multiple topics which are ordered according to their discourse properties predominantly uses clitics to identify topics, as we have seen. Since clitics are related with pro in argument position (cf. Kayne 1994), a co-referent topic can only be merged in an A-position – given that a pronoun cannot be locally A-bound. However, if a topic is not clitic-resumed, it shows reconstruction effects and the properties of A-movement as in German – cf. also Hinterholzl & Pili (2004).

While we have been able to shed some light on the realization of shifting topics, continuing topics, and familiar topics and shown that they are phonologically encoded in a similar way in the two languages, the analysis of contrastive topics the realization of which also differs categorically in the two languages awaits further research.

Notes

* We thank Guglieino Cinque, Werner Frey, Giovanna Marotta, Valeria Molinar, Annamaria Puglielli, Kerstin Schwabe, Susanne Winkler, an anonymous reviewer and the audience of the ISAW Workshop in Tübingen for helpful comments and discussion.

1. For the position of topics in the left periphery, see also Benincà (2001) who slightly modifies Rizzi's (1997) proposal.

2. Here and in the following examples, we mark in boldface the constituent(s) which are later topicalized. The sentence at issue (underlined in the context) is given in detail.

3. Pierechuberts system – generally known as ToBI – was elaborated for transcribing the intonational patterns and other prosodic aspects of English utterances. ToBI transcription was subsequently extended as a general framework and adapted for different varieties and languages (cf. Marotta 2000 for Italian and Grice & Baumann 2002 for German).

4. As is argued in Frascarelli (2004a), broad focus sentences are characterized by a downgrading contour, marked by a final H*L* tone. Narrow focus, on the other hand, is marked as H+ both for its informational and contrastive value.

5. These results confirm the prosodic analysis provided in Frascarelli (2000).

6. Multiple topics are in fact rather rare in spoken corpora. Sequences of three topics have been found in only two cases (out of 1476 topics) in the LIP corpus and there is no occurrence in the Bonvino (2003) corpus. Sequences of two topics are more common, but far from high frequency. As we will show, the limitation imposed on the number of topics is not to be attributed to memory, but to discourse and structural conditions.

7. As discussed in Rizzi (1994), an A-bound pro is a pro which acts as a variable. Hence, a pro must be locally A-bound by a non quantificational element to be identified and must be formally licensed by a clitic pronoun. We thus follow Kayne (1994) in assuming that clitics enter the computation as DP heads having the pro as their sister NP. The A'-binder (i.e., the topic) may be connected with an argument clitic-headed DP, but not necessarily, as is shown by sentences like stupido, to é di certo (a stupid, he is for sure), in which the clitic pronoun re-sumes the predicative AP stupido (which is merged in topic position).

8. Note that the possibility of an object pro in (10), connected with the familiar topic, is independently excluded by the fact that null objects in Italian are only allowed for generic readings (cf. Rizzi 1986).

9. As is well known, an Operator can only be the antecedent of an anaphor in e-command. Hence, a GP must have scope over pronouns to bind them (whereas this is not necessary for non quantified DPs).

10. A binder in the extralinguistic context is, of course, also possible.

11. For the purposes of the present paper, the GP node simply indicates a functional projection in the C-domain hosting IP-movement.

12. Interestingly, in the corpora examined right-topicalization is crucially connected with verb focusing, yes/no questions and (postverbal) subject focussing, that is to say, with structures that plausibly imply IP (remnant) movement to a position higher than FamP.
13. Consider, for instance, the following contrast:
       'I didn't give a book to Gianni.'  'I didn't give a book to Gianni.'

   Sentence (ia) negates the whole predication (which is new information), while in sentence (ib) the IO-topic a Gianni is excluded from the scope of negation (meaning that I have given something to Gianni, which is not a book).

14. It is possible that contrastive topics occupying A' positions occur in a higher position than shifting topics which occupy A-positions in German (cf. Frey 2004b for some discussion). An anonymous reviewer points out that the binding properties of the Italian example in (9a) correspond to those of a hanging topic construction in German (cf. (i)). Note, however, that the anti-reconstruction effect also appears in examples like (ii), in which the DO-topic la mia foto con Leo is preceded by the hanging topic Maria. Given that a sentence can contain no more than one hanging topic (cf. Benedek 2001), the remark is mute.
   (i) Mein Bild von Leo, er, hat es Maria wahrscheinlich nicht gesehen.
   my picture of Leo, he, has it Maria probably not shown
   (ii) Maria, la mia foto con Leo, lui, non glielo ha ancora mostrato.
       Maria, the my picture with Leo he, not to her(d)-it(c) has yet shown

15. When a speaker moves a continuing topic into the position of the aboutness topic, we derive the marked option of marking topic continuity as given in (30b) above.

16. We assume that focus is realized in situ in German (cf. Hinterhold 2004b, Frascarelli 2005). If the focus constituent is displaced, this displacement is due to other factors (contrast or pronominal emphasis).

The Korean particle nun, the English fall-rise accent and thetic/categorical judgements*

Jorunn Hieland

In this paper the effects of applying the particle nun in Korean sentences are compared to the effects of using the fall-rise pitch accent in English. It is argued that both phenomena are orthogonal to the topic-comment distinction on sentence level. By using accented nun-phrases in Korean - and by using fall-rise accents in English - the speaker conveys that the addressee will find some relevant alternative to the marked constituent within his knowledge store. This function is shown to be independent of the topic-comment distinction in both languages.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the information-structural status of Korean nun-phrases and compares them to a phenomenon which has been the subject of much discussion and many controversies in modern work on information structure, the fall-rise contour of English sentences, the tone described by Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (1990) as (L1)H*LI: a rising or high pitch accent, followed by a low phrase accent and a high boundary tone. As for Korean nun-phrases, I shall argue that these are truly ambiguous in information-structural terms: there is no one-to-one relation between the so-called topic particle nun and topicality in the aboutness sense of the term. Accented nun-phrases may act as topics, as part of the comment, and even as the core of the comment in categorical as well as in thetic sentences. A similar ambiguity applies to the fall rise accent (also called the 'B-accent') of English sentences.

English has - in the tradition going back to Li and Thompson (1976) - been characterised as a subject-prominent language. English sentence structure is seen as dominated by the subject predicate dichotomy, cf. Li and Thompson's example in (1):

(1) John hit Mary.

[Subject] [Predicate]  

(1) and Thompson 1976: 459)