

Encoding varieties of topic and focus: The role of contrast and information status

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This talk introduces into the workshop topic. It examines morpho-syntactic and prosodic phenomena where the notions *contrast* and *givenness* seem to play a role. Both contrast and givenness (or newness) have been observed to correlate with certain syntactic positions and with certain phonological markings. For instance, contrastive focus has often been associated with a left peripheral position in the clause, whereas new information focus does not appear in the left periphery. Contrastive topics, on the other hand, seem to be differentiated from non-contrastive topics primarily by intonation. These observations give rise to several questions. For instance, what is the precise semantic-pragmatic contribution of *contrast* to contrastive foci and/ vs. contrastive topics, and why do languages choose different marking strategies for contrast in these two contexts? Are these observations generalizable across languages?

Similar questions can be asked for the information-structural category *givenness*. What morpho-syntactic and/or prosodic reflexes of (*degrees of*) *givenness* can be observed in relation to topicality or focus? Are there principled differences between givenness marking on topics vs. on foci? Furthermore, givenness also seems to impact morphosyntactic/prosodic aspects of the utterance that are not associated with information structure. For instance, it has been argued that *givenness* plays a role in apparently optional agreement processes, more specifically in object agreement (*secondary topicality*, Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011). In Manyika, a Bantu language, the optional object marker on the verb occurs only when the object is interpreted as *given* (Bax & Diercks 2012). An interesting question that arises here is whether contrast can have a similar syntactic effect, i.e. whether it can induce the modification of an element that is not itself marked for contrast.

References: • Bax, A. & M. Diercks. 2012. Information structure constraints on object marking in Manyika. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 30(2), 185–202. • Dalrymple, M. & I. Nikolaeva. 2011. *Objects and information structure*. Cambridge: CUP. • Frascarelli, M. & R. Hinterhölzl. 2007. Types of topics in German and Italian. In K. Schwabe & S. Winkler (eds.), *On information structure, meaning and form*, 87–116. Amsterdam: Benjamins. • Hartmann, K. & M. Zimmermann. 2007. In place – out of place? Focus strategies in Hausa. In K. Schwabe & S. Winkler (eds.), *On information structure, meaning and form*, 365–403. Amsterdam: Benjamins. • Repp, S. 2016. Contrast. In C. Féry & S. Ishihara (eds.), *Oxford handbook of information structure*, 270–290. Oxford: OUP.