

## **Don't make me more prominent! Or do? Prosodic reflexes of contrast, newness and givenness in *wh*-exclamatives and *wh*-questions**

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Prosodic prominence is known to correlate with information-structural categories. In assertions, givenness is associated with low prosodic prominence (deaccentuation, less prominent accent types, shorter duration ([1, 2]), contrast correlates with increased prominence (more prominent accent types, longer duration ([3, 4]), and new information is intermediate on the prominence scale between given and contrastive information. Three-way comparisons, however, where potential additive or subtractive effects of the categories are investigated, are rare, and contrast is usually conflated with correction. In speech acts other than assertions, the seemingly basic correlation of givenness with low prominence may break down to a considerable extent: in exclamations, givenness is not marked by deaccentuation or less prominent accents [5, 6]. (Non-corrective) contrast, however, still seems to correlate with high prominence in some exclamations, which may result in (additional) prominence reduction for non-contrastive information in the clause [6]. Again, there are no three-way comparisons. The lack of deaccentuation in exclamations has been argued to arise from a prosodic constructional default requiring (very) high prominence on at least one exponent in the clause for speech act marking [7]. (Non-corrective) contrast marking can 'piggy-back' on this requirement and even increase high prominence, whereas givenness marking is suppressed.

In this study, we investigate the prosodic prominence of given, new and contrastive information in a fully crossed 3x2 design in two non-assertive speech acts, and explore the exact contribution to prosodic prominence of newness (narrow non-contrastive information focus) and non-corrective contrast (explicit focus alternative in the context) in speech acts having different illocutionary requirements regarding prominence: *wh*-exclamatives and *wh*-questions. We present data from a production experiment in German exploring potentially additive prominence marking of the two prominence-lending information-structural categories (newness, contrast) in relation to the requirements of the speech acts. (1) shows an example paradigm for questions; in exclamations the speaker did not ask but expressed amazement. The underlined antecedents in the context (contrastive alternative, given referent, superset of referents) were identical in both speech acts.

Highlighting some of the findings (Figure 1): Exclamations overall had more accents on the object and on the subject *d*-pronoun than questions, regardless of information structure. The object was accented in 89% of exclamations even when it was given and non-contrastive. The *d*-pronoun (always given and non-contrastive) was accented in >90% of exclamations in every condition. Contrast and newness had additive effects on the object in both speech acts but in the pairwise comparisons, the effects were significant only for questions. The object's main competitor for accent placement in questions was the lexical verb, showing a complementary accentuation pattern. Phonetically, the object only showed significant differences for newness: it was longer if new. None of the pitch-related measures showed differences for contrast or newness within identical accent types.

The study corroborates the previous finding for a reduced sensitivity to information structure in exclamations vs. questions: given material is quite resistant to deaccentuation in

exclamations. Surprisingly, the effects of contrast are also rather minimal in *wh*-exclamatives. The additive effects of contrast and newness especially in questions suggest that the two categories are independent of one another.

(1) Sample item: a question in all information-structural conditions

A: Have you heard? Anna has specialized in {-C *Given*: Germanic tribes / -C *New*: old European tribes / +C *Given* Etruscans / +C *New*: old European tribes} for her dissertation now.

B: [*Non-contrastive context*] Really? Then she's probably traveling a lot in order to obtain original sources from {*Given*: Germanic tribes / *New*: old European tribes}. Do you happen to know...

B: [*Contrastive context*] Yes, she is always on research trips. Just recently she was in Italy because of a necropolis of the Etruscans. But I think she is {*Given*: also traveling a lot because of her much-loved Germanic tribes. / *New*: traveling a lot not only because of Etruscans.} Do you happen to have heard...

... wo die schon überall Germanen erforscht hat?  
 where she already everywhere Germanic tribes researched has  
 'where she has already researched Germanic tribes?'

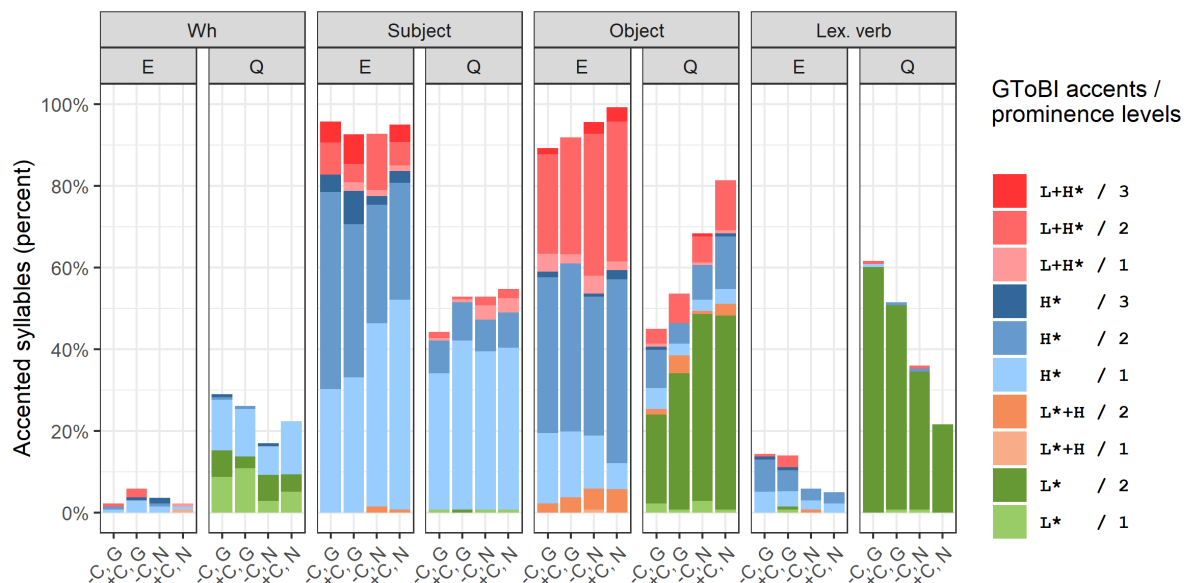


Figure 1. Accentuation per syllable across utterances. Abbreviations on the x-axis refer to the information-structural status of the object: C = Contrast, G = Given, N = New.

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