The Intonation of Different Information States in English

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In the course of exploring the interfaces of pragmatics and prosody, studying the interdependence of intonation and givenness has been a major research interest. Drawing on *Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg*'s assumption that the type of pitch accent conveys information about the status of discourse referents (1990: 286), it is commonly assumed that, in general, new (active) information is marked by a pitch accent, while given (inactive) information is deaccented. Empirical studies on German took this distinction a step further by overcoming the dichotomous approach to givenness and taking into account "accessible" (semi-active) information as an intermediary information state, as proposed by *Chafe* (1994):

In a perception experiment, conducted by *Baumann and Grice* (2006), participants judged the appropriateness of three different accent patterns (*H**, *H+L**, deaccentuation) for different types of accessible information in sentence final position. To this effect, they identified the *H+L** (early peak) accent as felicitous for conveying accessible information, although deaccentuation was found to be more commonly used. However, more recent production experiments on read (*Röhr and Baumann* 2010) and spontaneous (*de Ruiter* 2015) German speech have shown a clear overall preference of early peaks for producing accessible and even new information. Moreover, instead of the three types of accents provided to the participants by *Baumann and Grice* (2006), up to seven different types of accents were elicited for accessible referents. Based on these findings, it is assumed here, that within the category of accessible information, there is more inter-subjective agreement on the presence or absence of accents than on the types of accents to be used.

The present study, which is a work in progress, closely replicates the experimental setup of *Baumann and Grice*'s perception experiment, albeit applying it to English. Due to the quantity of accent types to be found in production experiments, a high tolerance towards different pitch accents is expected. Consequently, it is hypothesised that English participants will prefer an *H+L** accent for denoting accessible information over H*, although the *H+L** accent is rare in English (*Cruttenden* 1997: 111; *Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg* 1990: 297). The results of the English participants will be compared to a control group of L2 speakers (German being their L1); the hypothesis being that they will transfer the intonation habits of their L1 to the L2 and thus achieve higher appropriateness values for the *H+L** accent than the English participants. It is hence further hypothesised that the group of L2 speakers will prefer the *H+L** accent over the *H** accent, even if the *H+L** accent should be rejected by the L1 speakers. In consideration of the overall objective and previous research, scenarios of unambiguously given and new information have been added to the original setup so as to depict the entire assumed continuum of givenness.

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