Topic-focus controversies[1]

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Abstract

The topic of an utterance is typically said to be 'given' in relation to the focus (or new information) of the utterance, but other terms are often introduced (e.g., ground-focus, theme-rheme), leading to considerable terminological confusion in the literature. The purpose of this paper is to compare different researchers' attributions of these two sets of information-structure labels to different linguistic phenomena, with a view to ascertaining where attributions of the two major categories are made differently. English L+H* pitch accent marking, English clefting and Japanese/Korean morphological topic marking are considered, and it is concluded that these aspects of structure can mark either topic or focus in Gundel and Fretheim's (2004)'s relational sense. Gundel and Fretheim's notion of topic and focus is concluded to be empirically distinct from Steedman's (2000) theory of theme and rheme pertaining to L+H*, and Lambrecht's (2001)'s theory of topic and focus pertaining to clefting.

1. Introduction

While the study of information structure or information packaging has sometimes been called a 'terminological minefield' (Vallduvi and Engdahl 1996), recent years have seen the development of broad agreement on terminology. The primary distinction between 'relationally given' vs. 'relationally new' information (Gundel and Fretheim 2004) is typically termed 'topic' versus 'focus', 'theme' versus 'rheme', or 'ground' versus 'focus', depending on the researcher. What are more interesting than terminological distinctions, however, are cases where different researchers classify certain phenomena as falling into the 'relationally given' category as opposed to the 'relationally new' category. Insofar as the different researchers have

principled reasons for classifying such phenomena differently, there is reason to conclude that their information structure categories are empirically distinct.

This paper discusses seven cases of such topic-focus controversies with a view to elucidating both the phenomena in question and the conflicting theories of information structure. Facts about intonation in English and topic-markers in languages like Japanese and Korean will be brought up when relevant. For data from English, I rely on approximately 15 hours of videotaped episodes of the McLaughlin Group, a weekly half-hour political discussion program aired on the Public Broadcasting Service in the United States.

2.   Intonation marking in English

The intonational category most discussed in this paper is the pitch accent L+H* or the tune L+H*LH%. This intonational contour (the "B accent" of Jackendoff 1972) is widely considered to mark topics as opposed to foci. For example, Vallduvi and Engdahl 1996 say that "links" can be marked L+H* and that contrastive links are obligatorily so marked. Steedman (2000) associates L+H* with his category of 'theme,' and Gundel and Fretheim (2004) say that contrastive topics are marked L+H*. The latter also say, however, that L+H* is used for functions other than marking topic, such as marking contrast.

This latter suggestion corresponds closely to Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg's (1990) characterization of the L+H* pitch accent as conveying 'that the accented item—and not some alternative related item—should be mutually believed." Interestingly, all five examples that they give contain the entire tune L+H*LH%. Some of their examples would clearly be treated as marking focus rather than topic according to Gundel and Fretheim, for example (1) and (2):

(1)   Mother: It's Raymond and Janet on the phone.
                      They want to know if we can come for **din**ner.
                                                                                      L+H*LH%

(2)   A: But how does it [the desk lamp] stand up?
         B: Feel that base.

It **weighs** a **ton**.
L+H*   L+H*LH%

While there is no explicit contrast evoked by these utterances, Pierre-humbert and Hirschberg suggest that in (1) "an invitation to dinner is implicitly related to a space of possible invitations, possible ways to spend the evening, or perhaps simply possible queries." Similarly, in (2), 'weighing a ton' is "one of many possible means by which the lamp might stand up. B commits herself to this from the set of such means."

Hedberg and Sosa (to appear) conducted a pilot study which attempted to ascertain the pitch accents and tunes correlated with different information structure categories. We were primarily interested in whether we could find support for the idea that the pitch accent L+H* marks topic in English, whereas H* marks focus. We studied 210 phrases from the McLaughlin corpus, and found L+H* distributed across five information-structure categories as shown in Table 1.

 Ratified topics are those topics that have already been established as topics, and unratified topics are topics that are just being established with the utterance. These terms come from Lambrecht and Michaelis (1998). The distinction between topic and focus encoded here was intended to correspond to the distinction made by Gundel and Fretheim.

Table 1. Percentage of L+H* in different information structure types

	L+H*	% out of 42
Ratified Topic	1	2%
Unratified Topic	10	24%
Contrastive Topic	13	31%
Contrastive Focus	11	26%
Plain Focus	6	14%

Hedberg and Sosa concluded that L+H* cannot be said to be a topic accent since it is used to mark foci almost as many times as it is used to mark topics, and accented topics are most frequently marked with other pitch accents, as shown in Table 2.

The fact that the five occurrences of the L*+H pitch accent mark topics fits with Steedman's (2000) characterization of L+H* and L*+H as serving the same information-structure function, specifically marking themes. He

also predicts that L* should mark rhemes. 75% of L* items were coded as foci, supporting Steedman's claim.

Table 2. Pitch accents by information structure type.[2]

	H*	H*+L	H*+!H	L+H*	L*	L*+H	H+L*	o
Rat. Topic	10	1	0	1	4	0	0	26
Contr. Topic	23	1	0	10	1	2	0	5
Unrat. Topic	19	4	0	13	0	3	1	2
Contr. Focus	22	1	0	11	7	0	0	1
Plain Focus	26	1	1	6	8	0	0	0
TOTAL	100	8	1	41	20	5	1	34

It can be seen that most phrases coded as topics were marked H*. This conflicts directly with Gundel and Fretheim's claim that H* is used only for foci. There are, however, some possible counter-explanations for the relevant data in Hedberg and Sosa's study. One such explanation is simply that some of the examples were miscoded, that we didn't successfully tease apart topic-focus utterances from all-focus utterances. It is likely that such an explanation can be offered in the case of (3):

(3)   PB: I'll remind you of one thing. [**Ei**sen**how**er[3]] [re**fused** to
                                    H*   H*H-L% H*
                apologize for the **U-2**] and even blew up a summit, and
                !H*   H*!H*H-L%
                we were a lot more at fault then. [contr. top., 4/6/01].

Rather than concluding that 'Eisenhower' is a contrastive topic as we had originally coded it,[4] it is perhaps preferable to interpret it as the subject of an all-focus sentence, since it is the entire event of Eisenhower apologizing that the speaker wants to remind the hearers of.

There are, however, some examples, that do seem to be topics marked by H* (actually !H*), such as the subject of the sentence in (4): Here, the subject of JM's sentence is included in the question, hence it passes the 'question test' for topicality. A pitch track for this utterance is shown in Figure 1. The exclamation mark (!) stands for downstep.

(4)   JM: Tony, what was his best move?
        ...
        JM: Do you see his best move as the tax cut's tenacity?

LO: Yes, I do. I agree with Eleanor it's not a good tax cut, it's not a good policy; but it is an amazing accomplishment to come from where it's come from….

JM: [**Ac**tually**,** his **best move**] [was the **hand**ling of the
     H*   !H* !H* L-   H*
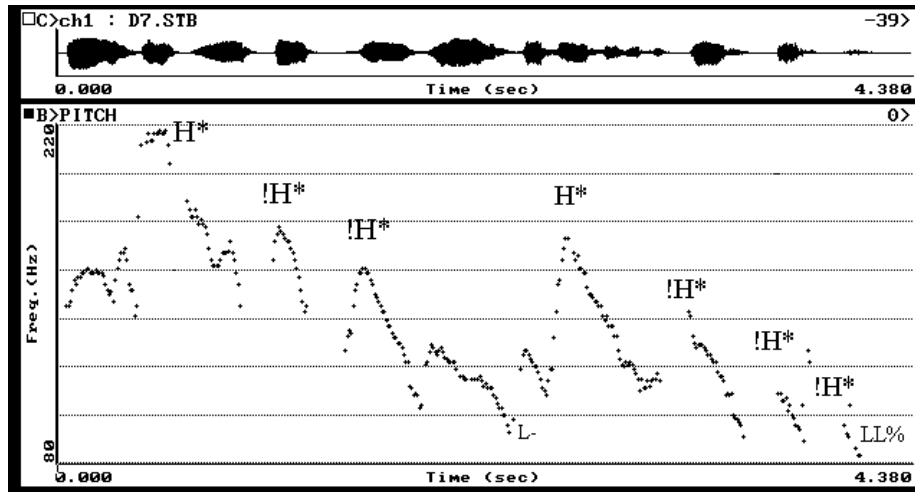**Chi**na **spy plane**].   (unrat. top, 4.7)
!H*   !H* !H*L-L%

Figure 1: **Ac**tually his **best move** was the **han**dling of the **Chi**na **spy plane**.
          H*   !H* !H* L-   H*   !H* !H* !H*L-L%

An important methodological problem that arises in attempting to tag natural corpora for information structure categories is that the categories may be indeterminate. Gundel and Fretheim assert that "rela tional given-ness notions like topic, …, may be constrained or influenced by the dis-course context (as all aspects of meaning are in some sense), but they are not uniquely determined by it." The speaker's intentions with regard to the topic-focus articulation of his utterance thus cannot necessarily be deter-mined by the context. Perhaps they are revealed only in the prosody he chooses to put on his utterance. Thus in the Hedberg and Sosa data, all the instances of H* on what we coded as topics were perhaps really instances of all-focus sentences.

Another possibility is that the phonological target in these cases is L+H* but the phonetic realization is (a variant of) H*. Something a bit similar to this apparently arises in German. According to Büring (1997), relying primarily on the work of Féry (1993), topics in German are marked by a rising pitch accent L*H. The nuclear focus is associated with a falling H*L tone. However, pre-nuclear foci are also associated with a rising tone in running speech, as shown in (5) and Büring (p. 58) emphasizes that these must be distinguished from topic accents:

(5) a. What happened?
      b. [**Peter** hat dem **Mädchen** das **Buch** gegeben]F
          L*H   L*H   H*L
          Peter has the   girl   the book given
          'Peter gave the book to the girl.'

The rising accents in (5b) have a smaller pitch range than true topic accents. True topic accents, can have their range extended, but pre-nuclear focus accents cannot. Perhaps something similar is happening in the English topic cases. The only difference between L+H* and H* accents is an extended range, steepness of the rise, and perhaps a delayed peak in the L+H*, so in running speech these features might get restricted, resulting in an H* accent phonetically.

Another possibility is that L+H* marking of topics is optional, just as syntactic topic fronting is optional. Note that if we try substituting an L+H* pitch accent for the !H* on *best* in (6), we do seem to get a felicitous result.

In addition to the distinction between topic-focus and all-focus articulation, the signaling of contrast has also been claimed to be a matter of speaker's choice rather than contextual determination. Hetland (2003) suggests that even in the absence of explicit alternatives, in English the speaker may signal through intonation (specifically the fall-rise contour) that he or she is implicitly contrasting a given phrase with other alternatives. The "unratified topics" and the "plain foci" marked L+H* in the Hedberg and Sosa study could thus have been miscoded as "plain" rather than "contrastive". One such case is shown in (6).

(6) LK: I have a different view, with all respect. [I **think** it **turns**
                                                         L+H*   !H*

this **guy** into a ce**le**brity], and I think
      L*   L+H*LL%
that actually encourages more of these heinous actions.
[plain foc., 4/20/01]

'Celebrity' was coded as a plain focus, and concluded to contradict the claims both that L+H* can't mark focus and that L+H* marks contrast. Gundel and Fretheim and Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg could, however, perhaps claim that *celebrity* in (15) is implicitly contrastive, i.e. that the speaker is contrasting the proposition Timothy McVeigh is a celebrity with the previously assumed proposition that he is a criminal.

    L+H* can also clearly mark contrastive topics, as for example in (7):

(7)   LK: And we need to drill oil and gas in the Rockies. And [**Jeb**
                                                L+H*

              Bush is **wrong**] [and **George Bush** is **right**]; we need
              !H*   L* H-H%   L+H* !H*   L*L-L%
              to drill in the Gulf of Mexico. [4/20/01]

A pitch track for (7) is presented in Figure 2. Notice here that the focus is marked L*, supporting Steedman's claim that L* is a rheme accent.
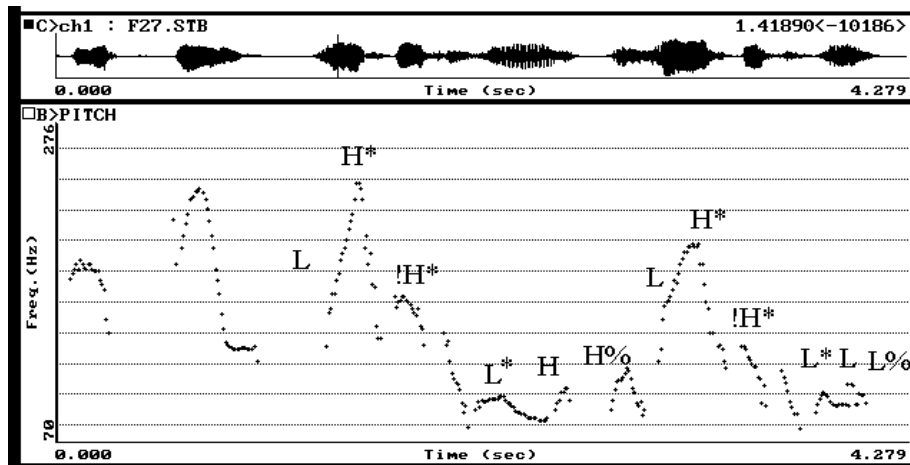
Figure 2 And **Jeb Bush** is **wrong** and **George Bush** is **right**
              L+H* !H*   L* H-H% L+H* !H*   L*L-L%

L+H* can also occur on seemingly clear contrastive foci, as on the word *individual's* in (8):

(8)　　LK:　　I agree with Cardinal McCarrick of Washington. You
　　　　　　　know, [**ven**geance] is [**God's** re**spon**sibility, **not** the indi-
　　　　　　　　　　　L+H*L-L%　　H*　　　　L*+H　　　　H*
　　　　　　　vidual's responsibility].　　(cont. foc., 4/20/01)
　　　　　　　L+H* L-H%

Because there are clear examples of L+H* marking contrastive topic and also clear examples of L+H* marking contrastive focus, and it is perhaps always possible to interpret an unratified topic or plain focus phrase as implicitly contrastive, it seems reasonable that L+H* in English marks contrast rather than topic. We can thus perhaps conclude that L+H* in English marks Vallduvi and Vilkuna's (1998) category of 'kontrast' rather than topic or focus, and that both topic and focus constituents can be 'kontrastive'. We can thus follow Molnár (2002:160) in concluding that contrast is a "further category of information structure, superimposed on topic and focus."

We thus suggest that the English intonation data supports a two-dimensional theory of information structure along the lines of Valludivi and Vilkuna and Molnár as mentioned above, or of Steedman (2000) or Krifka (1991), both of whom propose that themes and rhemes or topics and comments, respectively, can themselves consist of focus-background structures. In other words, a theme or topic with a focus constitutes in my terms a contrastive topic, and a rheme or comment with a focus constitutes a contrastive focus.

3.　　Contrastive topic in Japanese and Korean.

Because I am going to rely on examples from Korean in subsequent sections of this paper, I will here briefly introduce the topic marker in Japanese and Korean and attempt to show that it can mark either topic or focus in the relational sense. Kuno (1973) suggests two functions for the topic marker *wa*. Thematic *wa* clearly marks topics in the relational sense. They have the familiarity property of topics claimed in Gundel (1985). Unfamiliar NPs, as in (9) and (10), cannot be marked with thematic *wa*.

(9) ***Oozei   no   hito   wa**   party   ni   kimasita.
many   people   party   to   came
'*Speaking of many people, they came to the party'

 (10) ***Ame wa** hutte imasu.
 rain   falling is
'*Speaking of rain, it is falling' [i.e. 'It is raining', without previous discussion of the rain]

However, there is a second function for *wa*, the so-called 'contrastive *wa*'. Kuno reports that contrastive *wa* can place even non-familiar noun phrases in contrast, as shown in (11) and (12).

 (11) **Oozei no hito wa** party ni kimasita ga, **omosiroi   hito   wa** hitori
many   people   party to came but   interesting people   person
mo   imasen   desita
even   interesting   was.not
'Many people came to the party indeed, but there was none who was interesting'.

(12) **Ame wa** hutte imasu ga, **taisita koto wa** arimasen.
rain   falling is   but serious matter   not.exist
'It is raining, but it is not much.'

The examples in (11) and (12) could be taken to express contrastive foci rather than contrastive topics in the relational sense. Contrastive *wa* may also mark contrastive relational topics. This is perhaps the case in Kuno's example in (13):

(13) **John wa** sono hon o yonda ga, **Mary wa** yomanakatta.
John   the book read   but Mary   did.not.read.
'John read the book, but Mary didn't.'

Kuno reports that "phrases preceding the thematic *wa* do not receive prominent intonation, [while] those preceding the contrastive *wa* do."
    Lee (1999), writing now about Korean, specifically equates the Contrastive Topic[5] marker *-nun*, in Korean, with the B accent in English. He reports that the *-nun* marker is realized with a high pitch contour just in case it marks a Contrastive as opposed to a thematic topic. He concludes that

Contrastive Topics in Korean are focussed, assuming a two-dimensional model of information structure following Krifka 1991. According to Lee, some Contrastive Topics fall within the restrictive clause part of the tripartite structure in semantics and others fall within the nuclear scope. I would suggest following Hajicova et al. (1998) that the former would be topics in the relational sense, while the latter would be relational foci.

The morphological Topic markers in these languages thus appear to be able to mark unratified topics, contrastive topics, and at least some contrastive foci in Hedberg and Sosa's (to appear) terms.[6,7] Interestingly, example (8) above, which was marked L+H* on *individual's* and which I concluded was a contrastive focus, can be marked either with a nominative marker or a Topic marker in Korean, as (14) shows (Chung-hye Han, p. c.):

(14) pokswu-nun   sin-uy   chaykim-i-ci,
     vengeance-Top God-Gen responsibility-Copula-Decl,

     kyain-uy   chaykim-i/**un**   ani-ya
     individual-Gen responsibility-Nom/**Top** not-Decl

     'Vengeance is God's responsibility, not the individual's responsbility.'

This should be the contrastive *-nun*, since there is already a thematic *-nun* in the sentence on "Vengeance'. (Kuno says there can only be one thematic *wa* per sentence—any subsequent *wa*'s are contrastive.)

Since it still isn't entirely clear that Contrastive *wa/-nun* can mark relational foci as well as relational topics, I consider them to be a second topic-focus controversy.

4.   Questions

The third case of a topic-focus controversy is question words in constituent questions. Such words are widely considered to be the focus of the question. This conclusion is argued for recently in Lambrecht and Michaelis 1998. However, Steedman 2000 analyzes them as 'themes', since the question word evokes but does not restrict a presupposed alternative set. Gundel and Fretheim would presumably treat the question word as focal, since question words in information questions are never marked by Topic mark-

ers in languages such as Japanese (Kuno 1973). Thus we have a topic-focus controversy here.

Steedman predicts that the pitch accent marking 'themes' in English is L+H*, and it is interesting that question words do appear to frequently get marked by this pitch accent. Hedberg and Sosa (2002) found that out of the 35 wh-questions in a corpus of spontaneous speech in television political discussions, 60% had the wh-word marked with the L+H, for example the questions in (15) and (16):[8]

(15)   Mr. Duffy: [**Why** is it going to **take** a **year**] [to **put** it into
                   L+H*   !H*   ¡H*L-L%   H*+L
                   place?]
                   H*L-L%   [11/16/01, Washington Week]

(16)   JM: [**When** is the Af**ghan**istan of**fen**sive **go**ing to **end**]?
             L+H*   !H* !H*   !H*   !H*   !H*L-L%
             (11/2/01)

If the question words in (15) and (16) are foci, they are counterexample to the prosodic claim that L+H* marks only topics. A pitch track of (15) is shown in Figure 3.
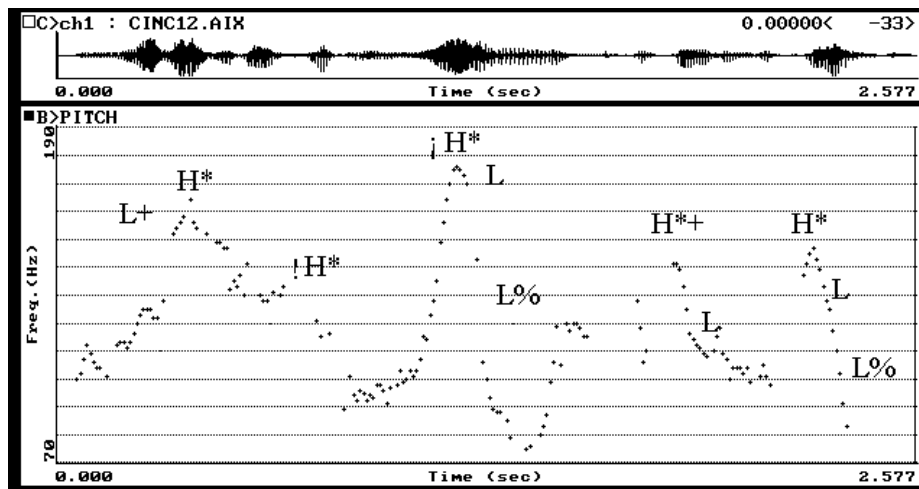
Figure 3. **Why** is it going to **take** a **year** to **put** it into **place**?
                   L+H*   !H*   ¡H*L-L% H*+L   H*L-L%

However, in Korean, as in Japanese, the Topic marker cannot occur on the wh-word in an ordinary information question—c.f. (17), although it can occur in a rhetorical question, as in (18) (Chung-hye Han, p.c.).

(17)   *rwukwu-**nun**/ rwuk-**ka** party-ey wa-ss-ni?
        Who-Top/who-Nom party-to come-Past-Q
        'Who came to the party?'

(18)   nwukwu-**nun** cohase   kongpwuha-ni?
        who-Top   like-because study-Q
        'Who studies because he likes to?'
        i.e., 'Nobody studies because he likes to.'

Hedberg and Sosa (2002) also investigated yes/no questions. Here we were interested in the fronted auxiliary verb since it constitutes the "locus of interrogation" as does the wh-word in a constituent question. Positive yes/no questions turned out not to be marked with a preponderance of any given pitch accent on this element. In fact the auxiliary verb was most frequently unaccented. However, fronted negative auxiliaries in negative yes/no questions were most frequently marked with L+H* (8 out of 9 cases, or 88.9%).

An example of one of these negative cases is given in (19), with its pitch track shown in Figure 4.

(19)   JM: [**Is**n't **that kind** of **un**der**hand**ed]?
                L+H* !H* ¡H*   H*+L H* H-H%   (11/10/01)

Romero and Han (2004) argue that fronted negative auxiliaries bear 'verum' focus, or focus on the polarity. Steedman would presumably claim, on the contrary, that the fronted auxiliary is the theme of the yes/no question, and thus would predict the L+H*. It may be the case that the L+H* that appears on fronted wh-words and fronted negative auxiliaries is due to the inherent contrastiveness of these phrases.
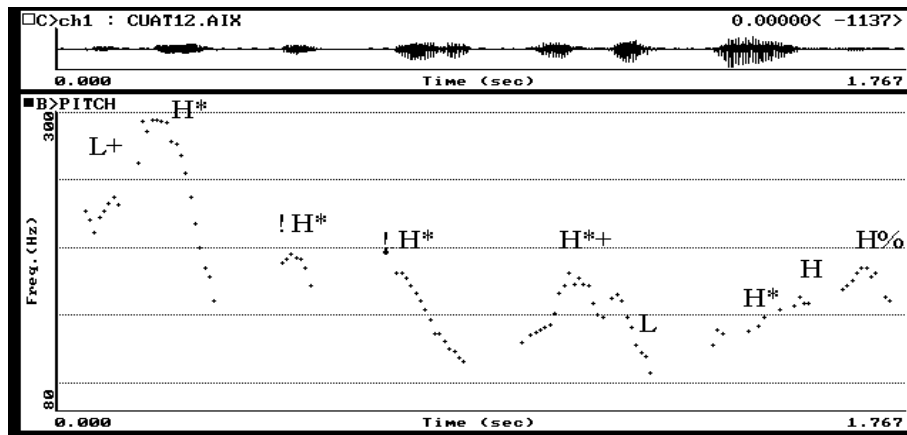
Figure 4. **Is**n't **that kind** of **un**der**hand**ed?
L+H* !H* ¡H*   H*+L H*H-H%

Vallduvi and Vilkuna (1998: 86) suggest that the wh-word in a wh-question marks kontrast rather than rheme which explains why it need not receive nuclear stress in wh-questions. They conclude that the wh-word makes up only part of the structural rheme in the wh-question.

5. Fall-rise only sentences

Steedman (2000: 662) allows for theme-only sentences, as in (20), but most researchers would claim that every sentence has a focus because every sentence produces some change in the common ground, and thus conclude that 'musicals' in (20) is the focus. According to Steedman's analysis, in sentences like (20A), the speaker is offering a new theme, "and hence a new rheme alternative set, replacing the one established by the question, without stating a rheme at all" (p. 663).

(20)   Q: Does Marcel love opera?
       A: Marcel likes **mu**sicals**.**
                    L+H*L-H%

Examples like (20) were analyzed by Ward and Hirschberg (1985) as signaling a conventional 'implicature of uncertainty' as to the relevance of the response, and were characterized as involving an L*+HL-H% tune

rather than an L+H*L-H% tune. Steedman acknowledges Ward and Hirschberg's analysis, but claims that the two contours are difficult to distinguish, and that both serve to establish a theme-only utterance.

Hetland (2003) cites a similar sentence to that in (20), shown in (21), taken from Ladd (1980), but says about it that 'the cat' in (21A) is new in the relational sense.

(21)   Q: Did you feed the animals?
        A: I fed the ˅cat.

It is interesting that (according to Hetland) in German, such sentences would be produced with two pitch accents, a fall-rise on 'cat' and a fall on 'fed', as in (22).

(22)   Q: Hast du   die Tiere   versörgt?
                Have you the animals looked-after

        A: Die √KATze habe ich ge\FTtert.
                The cat   have I   fed

According to Hetland, the information-structure organization of this utterance differs between English and German: In German, *die Katze* expresses a topic, whereas in English *the cat* expresses the focus. Büring (1997) also says that German doesn't permit fall-rise only sentences.

Possibly related to such sentences are sentences in Korean that contain only a topic marker, as in (23b), from Lee (1999). he concludes that this Topic marker is not a thematic topic marker but a Contrastive Topic marker, and characterizes the Contrastive Topic as falling within the nuclear scope and thus as a focus in my terms. Hetland (2003) also concludes that the subject in (23b) is actually a focus.

(23)   a.   pi-ka [Nom] o-n-ta
                'Rain is coming' = it's raining.

        b.   pi-NUN [CT] o-n-ta
                'Rain-CT is coming' [rain in contrast to snow, or other events]

Steedman recognizes that it is tempting to conclude that the L+H*L-H% contour in (20A) signals rheme. I don't have a solution to this controversy here. However, I believe it is consistent with other uses of L+H* to conclude that the L+H* or L*+H signals contrastive focus.

6.   Negative contradictions

Another case of a topic-focus controversy concerns negative contradictions marked by L+H*L-H%. For example, (24) and (25):

(24)   EC: Well, I think definitions of beauty or handsomeness change
                   over the years, and I, frankly, think this guy is
                   pretty attractive. [I **don't find** him unat**trac**tive]**.**
                                           H*   L*+H   L+H* L-H%

 (25)   JM: Well, he's been a successful politician, and he's been a
                    successful statesman, has he not?
           LO: He's done – the only thing – he was in a box with China**.**
                    He did the only thing you could do. [He **has**n't done
                                                          H*

                    anything ex**traor**dinary].
                    L+H*   L+H* L-H%

A pitch track for (25) is shown in Figure 5. It shows the characteristic steep rise on the L+H* accented syllable, then the dip of the phrase accent and the rise to H% boundary tone.

In Hedberg and Sosa (2002a) these two phrases were analyzed as contrastive foci, but the question was raised at the conference where these results were first presented, as to whether these phrases should instead be analyzed as topics/themes. Again they are marked with the so-called 'topic' pitch accent L+H*, and even more completely with the so called 'topic tune' L+H*LH%. Thus we have a fifth topic-focus controversy.

The rationale for treating these phrases as topics, could be that we can paraphrase the sentences containing them with the following: "As for whether he is unattractive, I don't find him so," and "As for whether he has done anything extraordinary, he hasn't," utilizing the "as for" test of Gundel 1974. Büring (2003) could claim that the primary contextual question here is 'Has George Bush been successful in his first 100 days?' and that

the complexly strategic question actually evoked is 'Has he done anything extraordinary" with the word 'hasn't ' in the answer functioning as the focus and the phrase 'anything extraordinary' functioning as the contrastive topic.

Figure 5. He **has**n't done **an**ything ex**traord**inary.
          H*   L+H*   L+H*L-H%

But we could also paraphrase these sentence as "As for how I find him, I don't find him unattractive" and "As for how he's done, he hasn't done anything extraordinary," which would indicate the opposite topic/focus assignment. However, because Steedman 2000 associates the L+H*LH% contour exclusively with themes, he concludes that the relevant phrases are themes.[9]

In Korean, interestingly, we do find the phrase in (24) marked with the Topic marker (Chung-hye Han, p.c.), as shown in (26):

(26)   na-nun [ku-ka mos sayngkyess-tako-**nun**] saygkakhaci anha-
        I-Top   he-Nom un attractive-Comp-Top think   Neg-
        yo.
        Decl
        'I don't think that he is unattractive.'

However, since the *-nun* marking on the clause here is the second *nun* marker of the sentence, it is presumably an instance of Contrastive Topic,

which doesn't tell us anything about whether the clause is a topic or a focus in the relational sense.

In both examples discussed in this section the L+H*LH% seems to tie the phrase so marked back to the context, lending a particularly argumentative air to the utterance. It could be that the contrastiveness of these phrases is expressed by the L+H* pitch accent, and that this tying back to the context is lent by the H%, following Steedman's suggestion that H% marks the utterance as 'the responsibility of the hearer.' The speaker implicates a lack of commitment on his own part, which is appropriate if the speaker is contradicting the hearer.

I now turn to a quite different area of English grammar: cleft and reverse pseudocleft sentences. In my own work, I have claimed that the clefted constituents in these constructions can mark topics as well as foci, but Lambrecht (2001) disagrees, concluding that they can only mark foci. We thus have a sixth and a seventh topic-focus controversy.

7. Reverse pseudoclefts

Hedberg (1988) claimed that the cleft clause in a pseudocleft always expresses the topic of the sentence, but in both clefts and reverse pseudoclefts, the clefted constituent can express either the topic or the focus.

Lambrecht (2001) takes issue with this analysis of some reverse pseudoclefts as topic+focus constructions, claiming that the clefted constituent always expresses the focus in a reverse pseudocleft. The example in question is shown in (29):

(29)   JM: Number two, is it not true that Nancy Reagan is always right? … This is not a bash Reagan session. I just want to know whether or not her instincts are invariably correct. I ask you.

        MK: No, they're not. I mean, **SHE was the one who wanted to keep Reagan from appearing anywhere in PUBLIC.** That was–

        JM: But she also has the concern about he man's health. She– he lived through an assassination attempt, remember that. (McLaughlin Group, 3/6/87)

Lambrecht (p. 481) acknowledges that the accent on *public* is stronger than that on *she*, which I had used to argue that the accent on *she* is a secondary, topic accent, and acknowledges that MK's entire reply "is clearly ABOUT Nancy Reagan in the sense that it is meant to answer [McLaughlin's] request for information about the First Lady." Nevertheless, he rejects the topic+focus analysis of this reverse pseudocleft. He claims that the accent on the cleft clause is an unratified topic accent, and that it is stronger than the accent on *she* because the last accent in a sentence with multiple accents always tends to be the strongest (Ladd 1996).

He states that the cleft clause is presupposed, which I also agree with. But he says that if the sentence were to receive a topic+comment interpretation that an uncleft variant would have sufficed, and that the sentence in (29) is an argument-focus sentence, not a predicate-focus sentence attributing a property to the subject. For me, a cleft or pseudocleft sentence always has a contrast-presupposition organization, with the clefted constituent representing a contrastive argument and the cleft clause presupposed. But, unlike Lambrecht, I believe that clefts and pseudoclefts also have topic-comment (focus) organization, which is independent from the contrast-presupposition organization.

As well as 'aboutness' and primary stress on the cleft clause, Hedberg (1988) argues that the possibility of the clefted constituent in reverse pseudocleft fulfilling the topic function can be seen in the fact that reverse pseudoclefts can be relativized as in (30) and the material denoted by the clefted constituent can be right-dislocated as in (31). Both of these constructions have been considered to mark topics.

(30)   RC: And you have to first have an open mind, saying, "Let's start the process," **which is what PERES is saying.** (12/26/87)

(31)   PB: Gallup shut down before the Bush thing swept through.
       JM: And **that's what's WE'RE going to do, SHUT DOWN.** (12/1988)

8.   Clefts

Hedberg (1990, 2000) claimed that cleft sentences can have topic+focus organization, as in the cleft in (32). This statement says about the referent

of *he* that he knew where to find the body. It also has a contrast+presupposition organization, since the referent of *he* as opposed to other people is being asserted as being the one who knew where to find the body. Again I believe that primary, focus stress would go on the cleft clause, 'the body' in this case.

(32)   The Member for Hertfordshire North East despite his fascist tendencies, is a notable liberal when it comes to women's rights. But perhaps women should beware; proximity to this elegant baronet can be lethal. His first wife was killed in a car accident; he was driving. Theresa Nolan, who nursed his mother and slept in this house, killed herself after an abortion. **It was he who knew where to find the body.** [P.D. James, A Taste for Death, p. 21].

Lambrecht (2001) again argues that the clefted constituent in a cleft sentence always represents the focus of the sentence, never the topic, so we have our seventh and final topic-focus controversy.

Hedberg (1990) and Hedberg and Fadden (to appear) discuss a class of of cleft sentences which behave differently from canonical cleft sentences and attribute the difference to a topic+focus organization. It is generally understood that only 'exclusive' as opposed to 'additive' focus particles can modify the clefted constituent in a cleft, to use the terminology of König (1991). Horn (1969) gives the examples in (33):

(33)   a.   It's only Muriel who voted for Hubert.
         b.   *It's also Muriel who voted for Hubert.
         c.   *It's even Muriel who voted for Hubert.

Kiss (1998) reiterates this claim. However, Hedberg (1990) reports on a few examples of clefted constituents that are modified by *also* or *even*, but these are only of the topic+focus type. The examples with *also* are the clearest. Examples are given in (34) and (35).

(34)   Rough location work is nothing new for Sheen. When he was young, the family traveled to location with his father, actor Martin Sheen.…
         It was also location work that gave Sheen his first acting break. He was nine and his dad was filming *The Execution of Private Slovik.…* (*Northwest Airlines Magazine*, July, 1990)

(35)   It was the President, in a rare departure from the diplomacy of cau-
          tion, who initiated the successful Panama invasion. **It was also
          Bush who came up with the ideas of having an early, informal
          Malta summit with Gorbachev and a second round of troop
          cuts in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall**. (M. Dowd and T.
          L. Friedman, 'The Fabulous Bush and Baker Boys.' *The New York
          Times Magazine*, 5/6/90, p. 64).

In (34) location work is continuing to be discussed, and in (35) Bush is
continuing to be discussed. Thus, these are topic+focus clefts. The cleft
form is chosen in order to express a contrast and presupposition.

    If we turn to Korean again, we can also find some evidence that clefted
constituents in reverse pseudoclefts and/or cleft sentences can have
topic+focus organization. Jhang (1994) distinguishes inverted pseudoclefts
as in (36) from clefts as in (37). The clefted constituent in an inverted
pseudocleft takes nominative case, even though semantically it can serve as
the object in the cleft clause. In the cleft sentence the clefted object takes
accusative case. He analyzes the cleft as internally headed, with the clefted
constituent scrambling to the beginning of the clause. The copula clause
has a null expletive pro as its subject. Inverted pseudocleft clauses but not
cleft clauses can also be headed by lexical nominals such as *salam* 'per-
son'.

(36)   **John-i**   [nay-ka ecey __   manna-n **kes/salam**]-i-ess-ta
          J.-NOM I-NOM   yesterday meet-adn comp/person-be-pst-ind
          'John was the one that I met yesterday.'

(37)   pro [**John-ul** nay-ka ecey __   manna-n **kes/*salam**]-i-ess-ta
                J.-ACC I-NOM yesterday meet-adn comp/person-be-pst-ind
          'It was John that I met yesterday.'

          The case marker can also be replaced by a topic marker as in (38)
but because the case is obliterated here it is impossible to tell whether it is a
reverse pseudocleft or a cleft sentence. Whichever it is, however, the
clefted constituent is topic-marked.

(38) **i   say cha-nun** nay-ka __sa-n   kes-i-ta
      this new car-TOP I-NOM buy-adn comp-be-ind
      'This new car is what I bought' OR
      'It is this new car that I bought.'

Example (39) shows 'case stacking' where the topic marker is added onto the dative marker, so that this sentence is unambiguously a cleft.

(39)   pro [**Tom-eykey-nun** -John-i   chayk-ul __ ewu-n kes]-i-ta
            T.-DAT-TOP   J.-NOM book-ACC give-adn comp-be-ind
         'It is Tom that John gave a book to.'

This Korean data thus shows that clefted constituents can sometimes be marked as topics in languages with morphological topic markers. Jhang didn't discuss whether these topics have the thematic interpretation or the contrastive interpretation.

9.   Conclusion

To conclude, we have seen seven cases of topic-focus controversies, where different researchers classify particular phenomena as falling into the relationally given versus relationally new category of information structure. I suggest that Steedman's notion of 'theme' is broader than Gundel and Fretheim's notion of 'topic' since it includes wh-question words and possibly fronted auxiliaries in yes/no questions and also includes certain phrases in the scope of negation. For him anything marked with the L+H* pitch accent should be a theme, whereas for Gundel and Fretheim, L+H* can mark contrastive foci. Turning to cleft sentences, we saw that the notion of "topic" for Lambrecht is narrower than the notion of topic that I have applied in my work on clefts since for him clefted constituents can never be topics. Topic-comment simple sentences for Lambrecht are distinct from argument-focus cleft sentences, whereas for me, contrast-presupposition cleft sentences can be overlaid with independent topic-comment (focus) organization. I conclude that at least some topic-focus controversies are more than merely terminological.

Notes

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2. Note that the H*+L pitch accent in Table 2 is not a pitch accent recognized by the ToBI standard (Beckman and Ayers-Elam 1997). It was used for a high peak followed by a rapid fall on the same syllable. In this table, we also didn't distinguish between H* and !H* (downstepped H*).
3. The reason that a single word, *Eisenhower*, receives two pitch accents in this example is that it is emphatic speech with a preponderance of pitch accents and phrase accents. The same can be said of the McLaughlin Group examples later in this paper. In addition, many of them contain multiple intermediate phrases or intonational phrases. Multiple phrases are also due to complex syntactic structures, and thus there are more prosodic phrases than would be needed just to mark information structure.
4. 'Eisenhower' was coded as a 'contrastive topic' because it was contrasted with 'Bush' in context, i.e. it referred to a member of an evoked set whose other members were excluded from the predication.
5. To minimize confusion, I capitalize the initial letters of 'Topic marker' and 'Contrastive Topic' for Korean –(*n*)*un* when it isn't clear that the relational topic interpretation holds.
6. Marandin, et al. (2002) report that the 'C-accent' in French, which they equate with the B-accent in English (Jackendoff 1972) and the T-accent in German (Büring 1997) can occur on either the 'ground' (i.e. topic) or the 'focus'.
7. Han (1998) argues that -(*n*)*un* in Korean can receive either a topic or contrastive topic reading, or else a contrastive focus reading.
8. The symbol '¡H*' is used to represent 'upstep', i.e. a pitch accent which is higher than previous H* accents in the same intonational phrase.
9. As an anonymous reviewer points out, Steedman (2000) does allow accommmodation to adjust the context to fit the information structure indicated by the sentence. This flexibility in assignment of information structure categories is similar to the flexibility discussed above by Gundel and Fretheim and Hetland.

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