Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure Vol. 8

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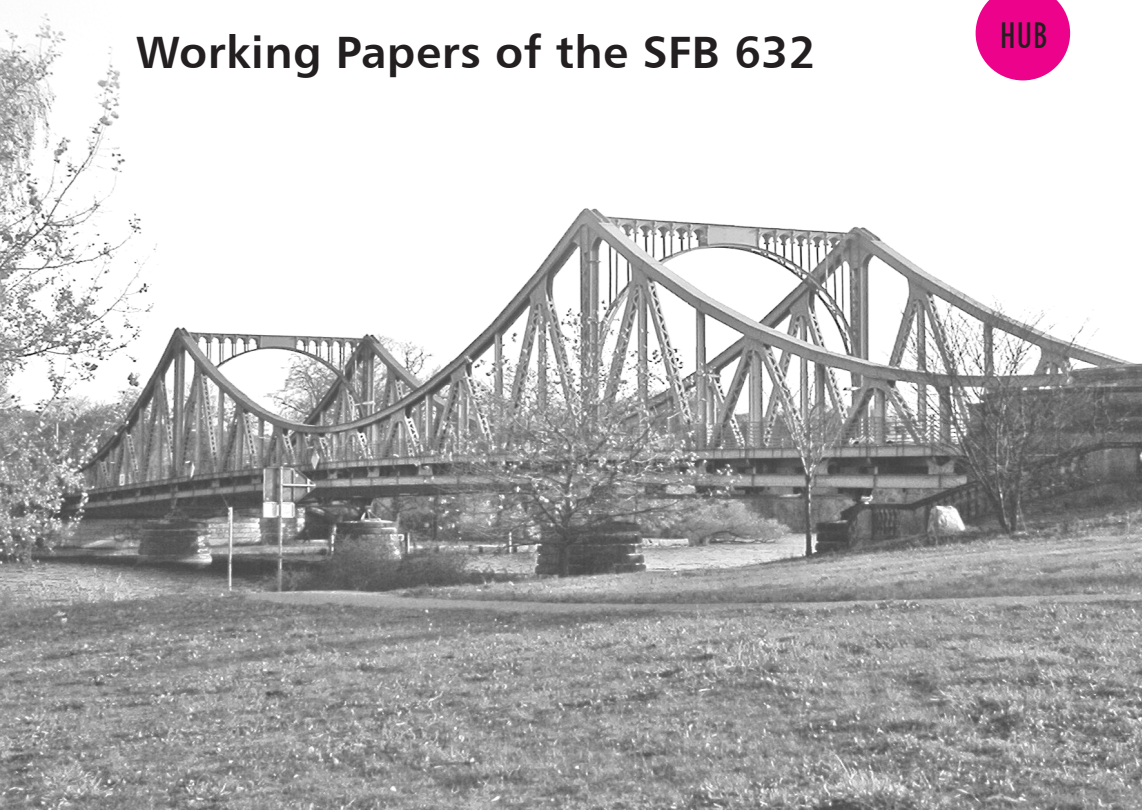

Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure

ISIS | Working Papers of the SFB 632 | 8 (2007)

Bibliografische Information Der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über http://dnb.d-nb.de abrufbar.

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Published by Universitätsverlag Potsdam
Am Neuen Palais 10, D-14469 Potsdam
Fon +49 (0) 331 977 4517
Fax +49 (0) 331 977 4625
E-Mail: ubpub@uni-potsdam.de
http://info.ub.uni-potsdam.de/verlag.htm

Printed by Audiovisuelles Zentrum der Universität Potsdam
und GS Druck und Medien GmbH Potsdam

Published 2007

Volume 8 (2007)
ISSN 1614-4708
ISBN 978-3-939469-72-8

Preface

The 8th volume of the working paper series *Interdisciplinary Studies on Information Structure* (ISIS) of the SFB 632 contains a collection of eight papers contributed by guest authors and SFB-members.

The first paper on "Biased Questions" is an invited contribution by **Nicholas Asher (CNRS, Laboratoire IRIT) & Brian Reese (University of Texas at Austin)**. Surveying English tag questions, negative polar questions, and what they term "focus" questions, they investigate the effects of prosody on discourse function and discourse structure and analyze the interaction between prosody and discourse in *SDRT* (Segmented Discourse Representation Theory).

Stefan Hinterwimmer (A2) explores the interpretation of singular definites and universally quantified DPs in adverbially quantified English sentences. He suggests that the availability of a co-varying interpretation is more constrained in the case of universally quantified DPs than in the case of singular definites, because different from universally quantified DPs, co-varying definites are inherently focus-marked.

The existence of striking similarities between topic/comment structure and bimanual coordination is pointed out and investigated by **Manfred Krifka (A2).** Showing how principles of bimanual coordination influence the expression of topic/comment structure beyond spoken language, he suggests that bimanual coordination might have been a preadaptation of the development of Information Structure in human communication.

Among the different ways of expressing focus in Foodo, an underdescribed African Guang language of the Kwa family, the marked focus constructions are the central topic of the paper by **Ines Fiedler (B1 & D2).** Exploring the morpho-syntactic facilities that Foodo has for focalization, she suggests that the two focus markers *N* and *nɪ* have developed out of a homophone conjunction.

Focus marking in another scarcely documented African tone language, the Gur language Konkomba, is treated by **Anne Schwarz (B1 & D2).** Comparing the two alleged focus markers *lé* and *lá* of the language, she argues that *lé* is better interpreted as a syntactic device rather than as a focus marker and shows that this analysis is corroborated by parallels in related languages.

The reflexes of Information Structure in four different European languages (French, German, Greek and Hungarian) are compared and validated by **Sam Hellmuth & Stavros Skopeteas (D2)**. The production data was collected with selected materials of the *Questionnaire on Information Structure* (QUIS) developed at the SFB. The results not only allow for an evaluation of the current elicitation paradigms, but also help to identify potentially fruitful venues of future research.

Frank Kügler, Stavros Skopeteas (D2) & Elisabeth Verhoeven (University of Bremen) give an account of the encoding of Information Structure in Yucatec Maya, a Mayan tone language spoken on the Yucatecan peninsula in Mexico. The results of a production experiment lead them to the conclusion that focus is mainly expressed by syntax in this language.

Stefanie Jannedy (D3) undertakes an instrumental investigation on the expressions and interpretation of focus in Vietnamese, a language of the Mon-Khmer family contrasting six lexical tones. The data strongly suggests that focus in Vietnamese is exclusively marked by prosody (intonational emphasis expressed via duration, f0 and amplitude) and that different focus conditions can reliably be recovered.

This volume offers insights into current work conducted at the SFB 632, comprising empirical and theoretical aspects of Information Structure in a multitude of languages. Several of the papers mine field work data collected during the first phase of the SFB and explore the expression of Information Structure in tone and non-tone languages from various regions of the world.

Shin Ishihara
Stefanie Jannedy
Anne Schwarz

Contents

Invited Contribution

Intonation and Discourse: Biased Questions
Nicholas Asher and Brian Reese 1

A2: Quantification and Information Structure

The Interpretation of Universally Quantified DPs and Singular Definites in Adverbially Quantified Sentences
Stefan Hinterwimmer 39

Functional Similarities between Bimanual Coordination and Topic/Comment Structure
Manfred Krifka 61

B1: Focus in Gur and Kwa Languages & D2: Typology of Information Structure

Focus Expressions in Foodo
Ines Fiedler 97

The Particles *lé* and *lá* in the Grammar of Konkomba
Anne Schwarz 115

D2: Typology of Information Structure

Information Structure in Linguistic Theory and in Speech Production: Validation of a Cross-Linguistic Data Set
Sam Hellmuth and Stavros Skopeteas 141

Encoding Information Structure in Yucatec Maya: On the Interplay of Prosody and Syntax
Frank Kügler, Stavros Skopeteas and Elisabeth Verhoeven 187

D3: Signal Parameters Connected to Prominence and Phrasing within Spoken Utterances in Different Languages

Prosodic Focus in Vietnamese
Stefanie Jannedy 209