Structures of Focus
and Grammatical Relations

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Contents

Preface

The purpose of this book is to contribute to a better understanding of information structure on the one hand, and selected syntactic, thematic and phonological patterns of human language on the other. Although the seven articles included in the volume are different with respect to theoretical framework, core subject and the languages examined, they all take up important aspects of information structure and grammatical form.

Questions related to information structure have for more than thirty years constituted a major field of linguistic research. This complex of problems has been of key interest both to grammarians working within the generative tradition and to representatives of different functional schools. The functionalists have mainly discussed the influence of the communicative situation on utterance structure, whereas the generativists have called attention to the syntactic and phonological means of highlighting information. In the functional framework, the partitioning of utterances into *old* and *new information* (the *theme–rheme* dichotomy) was considered essential; in generative grammar, on the other hand, the structural representation of phenomena such as *focus* and *topic* was given the highest priority.

In the discussions of information structure presented in this volume, special attention is paid to the classification of topic and focus types, the description of language specific devices for the expression of topic and focus, and the typological characterisation of different languages with respect to the parameter of discourse configurationality. Further, the question is raised whether there exist any universal regularities of focusing, and if so, how these can be accounted for in a theoretically satisfactory fashion.

The phonological dimension of information structure is the main concern of the contribution by JORUNN HETLAND, who discusses the problems of defining *focus* and *contrast,* and the relation of these phenomena to specific intonation patterns in English and German. Whereas in German declarative sentences the core of the message (the "focus") is always marked by the last pitch accent, realised as a fall, the information focus of English sentences can be marked by falling *or* (fall-)rising accents. Independent of its topic or focus marking function, the fall-rise accent of both languages is shown to be well suited to induce *contrast*, especially in cases where there is no sign in the context that contrast is intended.

From a diachronic perspective, LARS HELTOFT argues for the relevance of the notion *focus* to the development of the basic Danish sentence structure. Investigating the word order changes from Old Scandinavian to Modern Scandinavian, he shows that the word order rules in Old Scandinavian languages were *iconically* coded for focus–background structure, whereas Modern Scandinavian languages are *categorical* languages, with focus no longer assigned to positions, but to sentence domains.

The notion of focus also plays a vital part in MARJA JÄRVENTAUSTA's discussion of the Null Subject phenomenon in Finnish. Comparing two influential theoretical approaches, the Theory of Valency and the Government and Binding Theory, she rejects the claim of the Valency Theory concerning the status of null subjects in Finnish, according to which the inflection of the verb is the sole carrier of the subject features. She argues that a subject must be present even in null subject cases – not as a lexical, but as a pro element – on the so-called macro-valency level. Moreover, the lexically empty subject position is motivated

by the discourse-configurational character of the Finnish sentence structure proposed in generative theory.

Discourse configurationality is also the main issue of VALÉRIA MOLNÁR's and MARJA JÄRVENTAUSTA's article, where they – from a typological point of view – investigate two types of marked positions for focusing in the Finno-Ugrian languages Hungarian and Finnish. They show that the articulated left periphery of the universal sentence structure assumed in recent generative literature – containing a designated structural position for the focus operator – must be modified to include a sentence initial position for *contrast*. The comparison of Hungarian and Finnish makes it clear that discourse configurationality must be parametrised, and that the basic concepts of information structure and their internal relations must be reexamined.

In recent linguistic literature, there has been general agreement that the information structure of a sentence is closely related to the syntactic representation of thematic roles. In addition to the traditional level of syntactic functions, a universal – semantically based – level of thematic structure has been introduced, including thematic roles like *agent, patient* and *experiencer.*

The morphological and syntactic realisation of thematic structure, however, differs across language boundaries. The choice of morphological case depends crucially on the inventory of case forms accessible in a given language and on the relevant oppositions within the respective systems of case forms. The morphosyntactic realisation of the most prominent thematic relations is the topic of JÓHANNA BARðDAL's frequency analysis of Icelandic data.

Concerning the morphological and syntactic correlates of thematic roles, a certain amount of variation is also possible due to the existence of the verbal category of voice. The articles by LANDÉN/MOLNÁR and BARðDAL/MOLNÁR focus on the marked combination of thematic roles and syntactic functions allowed for by the passive voice in different Germanic languages. In their comparative study, BARBRO LANDÉN and VALÉRIA MOLNÁR argue for the expansion of the functional domain of the passive as a universal linguistic category: in addition to the diathetical (relation-changing) properties of the active–passive alternation, they consider the aspectual dimension – the change of the aspectual properties of the verbal event – as an essential component of the category voice. Comparing German and Swedish data, they show that the passive is a complex verbal category and that the specific passive constructions present in different languages convey various combinations of aspectual and diathetical information.

The functional complexity of the passive voice is manifested in a wide range of passive constructions in the other Scandinavian languages as well. The passive voice in Icelandic is discussed and compared to the passive in Mainland Scandinavian in joint work by JÓHANNA BARðDAL and VALÉRIA MOLNÁR. Within the framework of Construction Grammar, they argue that the peripheral passive constructions of Icelandic called "New passive" and "Impersonal passive" should be integrated into the passive domain in spite of their lack of canonical passive properties. The morphosyntactic variation of Icelandic makes it possible to express a great number of aspectually, diathetically and actionally coloured passive types in this language.

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Jorunn Hetland

Contrast, the fall-rise accent, and Information Focus

In this paper I focus on two concepts that have played a key role in recent discussions of information structure: the notion of contrast and the notion of what I shall here call Information Focus (corresponding more or less to 'Presentational Focus', 'Sentence Focus', 'Primary Focus' or 'Rheme' in the literature). Special attention is paid to the intonational correlates of contrast and Information Focus, in particular to the fall-rise accent. The two Germanic languages English and German are examined closely with regard to their different strategies for marking contrast and Information Focus. Reference is made to data from Korean, Hungarian and Finnish for the sake of comparison.

0. Introduction

Modern research on information structure is characterised by comprehensive and elaborate attempts at generalisation. On the one hand, serious efforts are made to establish concepts like *topic* and *focus* as universal categories; on the other, more or less fine-grained typologies are constructed to take care of the internal differences within the main classes. As for the notion focus, one has tried to bring together related, but not necessarily identical phenomena under headings like 'Contrastive Focus' and 'Information Focus'. In fact, 'Contrastive Focus' and 'Information Focus' have been presented as *the* two main types of focus across languages.[1]

The ultimate success of generalisations and subclassifications depends crucially on the existence of exact and clear definitions of the core concepts involved. In recent literature, there have been important attempts at critical investigation of the notions serving as starting points for cross-linguistic comparisons.[2] One of the areas where there is still work to be done, will be central to my discussion in the following: the domain and the concept of *contrast*.

With *contrast* and *contrastivity* as a frame, the main focus of my paper will be on a more specific subject, on the fall-rise accent, which contributes to what has been called 'contrastive topic' and 'contrastive focus' (in one sense of the latter term) in the literature. My aim has been to find out more about the special quality of contrast associated with this accent, and to examine the relations between the fall-rise-contrast and other relevant types of

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[1] Other terms that have been used for (approximately) the same concept as 'Contrastive Focus' (Horvath 1986, Kenesei 1998) are 'Operator Focus' (É. Kiss 1995, Molnár 1998), 'Identificational Focus' (É. Kiss 1998) and 'Kontrast' (Vallduví/Vilkuna 1998). 'Information Focus' is related to 'Presentational Focus' (Rochemont 1986, Horvath 1986, Kenesei 1998) and to Vallduví/Vilkuna's (1998) term 'Rheme'.

[2] Important contributions are Molnár (1998), Roberts (1998), Vallduví/Vilkuna (1998), Gundel (1999) and Molnár/Järventausta (this volume).

contrast. The connections between fall-rise-accented constituents and the information struc-
tural categories topic and focus have been another important issue throughout.

1. On accent, contrast and possible alternatives

"There is no contrastive accent as such," Pike (1945: 45) states in his monograph *The into-
nation of American English*. A similar view is maintained by Bolinger (1961: 87): "[...] as
far as we can tell from the behavior of pitch nothing is uniquely contrastive". If contrast is
understood as "the phenomenon [...] by which two or more items are counterbalanced and a
preference indicated for some member of the group" (Bolinger 1961: 83), contrast in a broad
sense is found in every sentence. In (1), for instance, read as an out-of-the-blue utterance,

(1)   Let's have a pícnic.   (Bolinger 1961: 87)

no *explicit* contrast can be pinned down. But there *is* an inherent contrast between pic-
nicking and anything else the group might do. And this feeling of contrast becomes
stronger as the set of potential alternatives is narrowed down, see (2):

(2)   Shall we have a picnic or a dinner party?
        Let's have a pícnic.

According to Bolinger, there is no necessary and predictable phonetic difference between an
accent associated with a 'contrastive' interpretation and an accent within a sentence that
serves as an answer to a wh-question, cf. (3a) and (3b):

(3)   a.   Q: How was the job?
             A: Oh, it was éasy.
        b.   Q: Was the job hard?
             A: No, it was éasy.   (Bolinger 1961: 84f.)

The answers in (3a) and (3b) may be pronounced with exactly the same intonation contour,
e.g. with a *high fall* on *éasy*. If the accent in (3b) is called 'contrastive' as opposed to the
accent in (3a), it is obviously the *use* of the accent in this particular context that deserves
the name 'contrastive', not the accent as such.
   So, abstracting away from context, almost every pitch accent, and thus both accents in
(3a) and (3b), could be called contrastive in the widest sense of the term. This seems to hold
for English and also for the other Germanic languages.[3] In addition, an accent may – or may
not – be *used* to express contrast.
   The wide notion of contrast described by Bolinger is criticised by Chafe in his paper
Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics, and point of view (1976). Con-

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[3] There are cases where accent does not seem to induce alternatives, e.g. some accents in German
     exclamative sentences: *Bist dú aber schmutzig!* (See Jacobs 1988: 115.)

trary to Bolinger, Chafe argues that there is a qualitative difference between contrastive sentences and sentences in which new information is selected from an unlimited set of alternatives. For the sentence

(4)   Rónald made the hamburgers.   (Chafe 1976: 35)

with *Rónald* as 'focus of contrast', Chafe formulates the following interpretation from the point of view of the speaker: "I believe that you believe that someone made the hamburgers, that you have a limited set of candidates (perhaps one) in mind as that someone, and I am telling you that the someone is Ronald, rather than one of those others". And the author adds, "All contrastive sentences follow this pattern, mutatic (sic) mutandis" (Chafe 1976: 34f.).

Chafe admits that it is also possible to use the sentence (4) as an answer to the question (5):

(5)   Who made the hamburgers?

In this context *Rónald* does not function as a 'focus of contrast', but simply as 'new information'. One crucial difference between 'focus of contrast' and 'new information', as defined by Chafe, lies in the delimitation of the set from which *Rónald* is chosen in the two cases. According to Chafe, a contrastive interpretation presupposes that the speaker believes that the hearer has a limited set of candidates in mind, whereas 'new information' is chosen from an open, unlimited set of possible alternatives.

In Chafe's view, 'new information' is a cognitive 'status' of the material to be processed by the addressee, as assessed by the speaker. 'New information' is *not* a relational concept, in the sense that it involves a sentence-internal relation to backgrounded material. But 'new information' should not be understood as information "introduced to the hearer for the first time" either, rather as "what the speaker assumes he is introducing into the addressee's consciousness by what he says". Thus, in (6),

(6)   I saw your fáther yesterday.   (cf. Chafe 1976: 30)

your fáther should be regarded as 'new information' in Chafe's sense of the term, since the speaker, on uttering the sentence, "has assumed that the addressee was not thinking of his father for the moment". The referent of the noun phrase *your fáther* is introduced into the hearer's consciousness by means of the pitch accent.

Across languages, the application of pitch accents is one of the most important means of making certain parts of a sentence stand out at the expense of others. This highlighting of specific constituents involves two dimensions. On the one hand, it creates a relief within the sentence: the pitch-accented parts are singled out, whereas the parts not affected by the accent(s) serve as a background. On the other hand, the aspect of contrast – in Bolinger's broad sense of the term – is at work: the pitch accents mark sentence constituents or even whole sentences as especially important compared to relevant alternatives.

These two dimensions of highlighting, one of them involving a foreground-background-relation within the sentence, the other involving a comparison with alternatives outside the sentence, play an important part in different theories of *focus*. According to Jackendoff

(1972), focus assignment derives two formal objects from the semantic representation of the sentence, the focus and the presupposition. The first one, the focus, consists of material associated with surface structure nodes dominated by a marker F. The second, the presupposition, is a one-place predicate, formed by replacing the focus by a variable. This variable "must be chosen in such a way that it defines a coherent class of *possible contrasts* with the focus, pieces of semantic information that could equally well have taken the place of the focus in the sentence, within the bounds established by the language, the discourse and the external situation" (Jackendoff 1972: 243, my italics, JH).

The notion of contrast is discussed by Dretske in his article *Contrastive statements* (1972), where the author is especially concerned with the impact of differences in accent placement on the truth value of certain compound expressions. In Dretske's paper, contrastive statements are *not* regarded as contrastive because they are used to contrast different states of affairs, but because they *contain* a 'dominant contrast', the 'contrastive focus'. What Dretske (1972) calls 'contrastive focus' and 'contrastive differences' simply corresponds to *focus* and *differences in focus* in the theory of Mats Rooth (1985: 3). In Rooth's account, the general function of focus – in all sentences – is to signal that alternatives are under discussion (cf. Jackendoff's 'possible contrasts'). Thus, in (7b), in the context of (7a), the pitch accent indicates that the alternatives discussed belong to the semantic type matching the focus *Sue*:

(7)   a.   Who did John introduce Bill to?
        b.   John introduced Bill to SUE.   (Rooth 1985: 13)

In Rooth's dissertation (1985), the set of relevant alternatives to a focused constituent comprises the entire range of type-identical individuals. This view is modified in his 1992 paper: here the relevant set of alternatives is confined to a subset, including only contextually salient and plausible choices. Interestingly enough, Rooth (1992) ends up with a set of alternatives similar to Jackendoff's class of possible contrasts, confined by the discourse and the external situation. (Even Bolinger 1961 probably had a restricted set of alternatives in mind, in spite of Chafe's argumentation to the contrary: the inherent contrast to *have a picnic* in Bolinger's sentence *Let's have a picnic* is described as 'anything else the group might do' – a set highly restricted by (extra-linguistic) contextual factors, but – in opposition to Chafe's contrast – arguably not a *closed* set.)

Rooth (1985, 1992) concentrates on the phenomenon 'association with focus', involving sentences with focus sensitive operators like *only* and *even*. This phenomenon is also examined by Jacobs (1983, 1986). In Jacobs' work, the scalar particles are seen as operators binding the focus variable. In sentences without overt focus-binding elements, focus is bound by the relevant (invisible) illocutionary operator. To unify his two types of focus, i.e. focus bound by visible and focus bound by invisible operators, Jacobs (1988) makes recourse to Rooth's focus theory involving alternatives: the information of *every sentence* is seen as structured with reference to alternatives. Where no alternatives exist, no focusing is conceivable. Thus, the focusing of a relative pronoun, as in (8), or the focusing of the preposition of a prepositional object, as in (9), is not appropriate:

(8)   ??Ich kenne den Mann, dér dich beleidigt hat.   (Jacobs 1988: 93)
           I   know   the   man   who you   insulted   has
        'I know the man who insulted you.'

(9)   ??Er interessiert sich für Autos.   (Jacobs 1988: 93)
      he interests   himself for cars
      'He is interested in cars.'

If the context provides suitable alternatives for the focused elements in cases like (8) and
(9), as in metalinguistic corrections, the sentences will be considered appropriate, however.

   Whereas the notion of 'possible contrast' – corresponding to the alternatives referred to
by Rooth and Jacobs – plays an important part in Jackendoff's general explication of the fo-
cus-presupposition dichotomy, Jacobs takes care to distinguish between contrastive and
non-contrastive *foci*. Every focus is related to a set of alternatives, but not all foci are seen
as contrastive: a focus is contrastive if it is explicitly set up against one or more alternative
foci in the discourse context (Jacobs 1988: 113).[4] Thus, according to Jacobs, the focus of
(10B) is contrastive:

(10) A: Ich fürchte, daß wieder die Schwéden gewonnen haben.
          I   fear   that again   the Swedes   won   have
          'I'm afraid the Swedes have won again.'
      B: Keine Angst! Diesmal haben wír gewonnen.
          no   fear   this-time have   we   won
          'Don't worry! Wé won this time.'   (cf. Jacobs 1988: 113)

That of (11B), however, is not:

(11) A: Weißt du, wer gewonnen hat?
          know   you who won   has
          'Do you know who won?'
      B: Wír (haben gewonnen)!
          We   have   won
          'Wé (won)!'   (cf. Jacobs 1988: 113)

Up to now, we have concentrated on two main uses of the term 'contrast', seen in relation
to pitch accents and focus. In the first case, the case described by Bolinger (1961), accenting
is taken to imply contrast in a very broad sense of the term. This kind of implicit contrast
corresponds to Jackendoff's 'possible contrast', defining the type of the variable in the pre-
supposition part of the utterance, and it corresponds to Rooth's and Jacobs' reference to al-
ternatives. 'Contrast' related to 'possible and relevant alternatives' should be kept apart from
contrast within a closed set, of which we have seen two variants: 'focus of contrast' as de-
fined by Chafe, involving a choice among alternatives in the addressee's consciousness, and
'contrastive focus' as defined by Jacobs (1988): a focus that stands in explicit contrast to
items in the preceding discourse. The latter main type, referring to a closed set of hearer-old
(Chafe) or discourse-old (Jacobs) material, is a subset of the former – just as discourse-old
alternatives constitute a subset of hearer-old material. Undoubtedly, the implicit or explicit
reference to alternatives can be seen as the core of all notions of contrast. But the exact ex-

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4   "Kontrastiv ist ein Fokus dann, wenn er im jeweiligen sprachlichen Kontext explizit ir-
    gendwelchen Fokusalternativen gegenübergestellt wird" (Jacobs 1988: 113).

plications of 'contrast' vary in the literature – as do the opinions concerning the levels where contrast might be relevant.

I will now turn to another aspect of contrastivity, the type of contrast realised in 'contrastive topics' (and 'contrastive foci', as defined by Lambrecht 1994 and Gundel 1999). The discussion of contrastive foci in languages like Hungarian and Finnish – alias operator foci or identificational foci – is deferred until sections 12 and 13.

2. On sentences with fall-rise accents

Our attention has so far been focused on sentences with only one pitch accent, without any differentiation with respect to accent type. In the following, sentences with two or more accents are examined and compared to sentences with only one accent. The effect of different types of pitch accents on interpretation will be taken into account as well.

As argued by Bolinger (1961), some sort of contrast can be found in every sentence, and no pitch accent can be regarded as uniquely contrastive. In Bolinger's broad understanding of the notion contrast (simply corresponding to the 'identificational' function of pitch accents), this is certainly correct. But when one sets out to compare the effects of different intonation contours, there is one accent that does stand out as a very good candidate for the label 'contrastive accent': the fall-rise. This pitch accent plays a key role in the discussions of contrastive topics (and partly foci) in languages as different as English, German, Hungarian and Korean. It is of vital interest, both from the point of view of comparative phonology and from the point of view of information structure, to find out with what kind of contrast the fall-rise is associated, and to explicate the relations of the fall-rise contrast to other relevant varieties of contrast.

Fall-rise-accented constituents (or, in the case of Hungarian and to some extent German, constituents with a contrastively interpreted rise, followed by a fall) have been examined under different headings in the literature: as 'contrastive topics' (see Hunyadi 1981, Szabolcsi 1981a, b, É. Kiss 1987 and Molnár 1998 on Hungarian; Leech/Svartvik 1975 and Lambrecht 1994 on English), as involved in the 'contradiction contour' (Liberman and Sag 1974) or the 'TILDE contour' (Sag and Liberman 1975), as prototypical topics (Steedman 1991, cf. also Büring 1997 on S-Topics), as a special kind of focus (Jackendoff 1972, Ladd 1980), as topic or focus, or simply as a fall-rise-accented part of the background (Hetland 1999), with the (simultaneous) function of topic and focus (von Fintel 1994, Krifka 1998, Lee 1999) and in certain cases as a particular correlation of contrast, topic and focus (Molnár 1998, Gundel 1999). With the fall-rise accent as point of departure, Büring (1997) built up a whole theory of information structure; see also Jacobs (1996, 1997) and his discussion of the phenomenon 'I-topicalisation'.

Since so many linguists link their accounts of the fall-rise accent (or the compound pattern consisting of a rise and a fall) to information structural notions like topic and focus, an investigation of the fall-rise is exciting from the perspective of information structure. The problem is – as everywhere else in the field – the disturbing terminological confusion: notions like topic, focus and contrast cannot be taken at their face value – in each case the underlying definitions are crucial.

In the present paper, I will – for expository reasons – use the terms 'topic' and 'focus' as these are introduced in Dahl (1974). This implies that I will make a distinction between two levels of information structure, the focus-background-structure and the topic-comment-structure. Thus, in the sentence *John drank beer*, as an answer to the question *What did John drink?* the constituent *beer* will be seen as the focus, the part of the sentence which is 'new' in the relational sense (what I will here call Information Focus). *John drank* will be seen as the background. On the topic-comment level, *John* will function as (sentence) topic, as *Satzgegenstand*; *drank beer* represents the comment, i.e. what is said about the topic. It is important to note that these two levels are *not* independent of one another: the Information Focus, the core of the message, the 'new' information in the relational sense, will always have to be a part of, or – depending on the possibilities for focus projection – be identified with the comment.

In contrast to linguists like Halliday (1967), who holds that practically all sentence initial elements can function as *Satzgegenstand*, as 'what is being talked about' (Halliday's 'theme'), I assume that there are constituents on the left-hand periphery that cannot have topic status, like interrogative pronouns, sentence adverbials and the focused initial constituents of sentences with only one pitch accent.[5] Thus, I do not consider appearance in sentence initial position as a *sufficient* criterion for topichood. Whether this position should be regarded as a *necessary* condition of topic status across languages, is also a controversial issue, which I will leave open in this paper.

I do not question the relevance of syntactic constraints on what has been called 'focus projection' in the literature (see e.g. Höhle 1982, Hetland 1992, Rosengren 1993), a phenomenon that might possibly as well be referred to as 'prominence projection'. But in this paper I want to reserve the term (Information) Focus for what has figured in the literature under terms like 'primary focus' (Jacobs 1983), 'nuclear focus' (Molnár 1998), 'Rheme' (Vallduví/Vilkuna 1998), or 'semantic focus' (Gundel 1999). The reason for this is that I regard the concept underlying these terms as the most interesting candidate for a *focus universal*: the 'new' part of the utterance, "naturally foregrounded to make it the clearest and most readily understood part as well, facilitating processing and comprehension" (Roberts 1998: 148).

With this setting, I will attempt to give a detailed description of the fall-rise accent: of the positions in which it can be found, and the interpretations or implicatures with which it is associated.

I will start with the situation in German.

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5   Halliday (1967: 178) explicitly refrains from using the terms 'topic' and 'comment' "because they have tended to be used in a way which conflates what are here regarded as distinct functions, with 'topic' meaning both 'given' and 'theme'". My own use of the term 'topic' in this paper corresponds to Halliday's 'theme', with the reservations mentioned concerning specific constituents in initial position.

3. German sentences with contrastive topics

Lately, there has been a lively debate in the German linguistic literature of a two-peaked accent pattern, characterised by a rise (or a fall-rise) followed by a fall. This pattern has been discussed under different labels – it has been called the 'hat pattern' (Féry 1993, after Cohen and t'Hart 1967), the 'bridge accent' (Wunderlich 1988, Büring 1997), or the 'bridge contour' (Wunderlich 1991). The term 'I-topicalisation' (that is: topicalisation by means of intonation) for the associated construction can be traced back to Jacobs (1982). See (12)-(14) for relevant examples:

(12)   Die /WEIBlichen Popstars trugen \KAFtane.   (cf. Büring 1997: 56)
       the   female   pop stars   wore   caftans
       'The female popstars wore caftans.'

(13)   Ge/SCHLAfen hat \KEIner von uns.   (cf. Féry 1993: 129)
       slept   has   none   of   us
       'None of us slept.'

(14)   A: What did you buy on 59th street?
       B: Auf der /NEUNundfünfzigsten Straße habe ich die \SCHUhe gekauft.
           on   the   59th   street   have   I   the   shoes   bought
           'On 59th street I bought the shoes.'   (cf. Büring 1997: 53)

With respect to German, Jacobs (1996) is the first one to claim that one has to distinguish – due to subtle phonological and semantic differences – between the so-called 'root contour', consisting of a fall-rise and a fall, and the 'bridge contour', established by a plain rise and a fall. One of the characteristics of the 'root contour', as described by Jacobs, is particularly interesting, seen from the point of view of alternatives and contrast. In the prototypical case, a German sentence with a fall-rise and a fall is followed by a supplementary utterance of adversative character, naming an *alternative* to both accented constituents (Jacobs 1997: 92). The *explicit* mention of an adversative utterance is not obligatory; an *implicit* reference to alternatives, however, an *'Alternativenbezug'*, is considered absolutely necessary for the identification of the I-topicalisation construction.[6] Thus, the sentence in (15),

(15)   √PEter ist \KLUG.[7]
       'Peter is wise.'

pronounced with a fall-rise on *Peter* and a fall on *klug*, is, in the prototypical case, followed by an utterance of the form (16):

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[6] Jacobs' original wording: "Daß Alternativen im Kontext (meist in adversativen Erweiterungen) explizit genannt werden, ist ein Merkmal dieses Prototyps, aber nicht obligatorisch; daß dagegen überhaupt ein Alternativenbezug hergestellt wird, der in manchen Fällen auch implizit bleiben kann, ist [...] eine Conditio sine qua non für I-Topikalisierung".

[7] In what follows, I will use Jacobs' root sign (√) for all cases of fall-rise accents in German.

(16)   (, aber KLAUS ist DUMM).   (Jacobs 1997: 111)
        'but Klaus is stupid.'

If alternatives are not explicitly mentioned in the context, an utterance of adversative content can always be supplied.

Seen against the background of Rooth's (1985) and Jacobs' (1988) focus theories, the prominent topics of sentences like (12)–(15) clearly qualify as *foci* as well: both accented constituents are contrasted with salient (but not necessarily explicitly mentioned) type-identical alternatives. Both the topic and the Information Focus are highlighted as particularly relevant. The prominent topics in these sentences are all 'contrastive foci' in the sense of Gundel (1999).

According to Jacobs (1984), Uhmann (1991), von Fintel (1994), Krifka (1998), Molnár (1998), Gundel (1999)[8] and Lee (1999) contrastive topics are 'focused topics', or topics containing a focus. It goes without saying that all pros and cons in a discussion concerning the focus status of contrastive topics stand and fall by the definitions on which the notions of topic and focus are founded in the relevant theories. I will return to this discussion later.

In German declarative clauses, the fall-rise is very often found in the *Vorfeld*. In fact, Jacobs (1997: 92) sees the *Vorfeld* as the prototypical position for the first accent of the 'I-topicalisation' pattern. The plain rise, in contrast, as part of the intonation pattern rise + fall, can be used in a variety of constructions with two pitch accents, also in cases where the contrastive interpretational characteristics of the I-topicalisation are totally absent, cf. (17) and (18):

(17)   Jedesmal wenn es /KLINGelt bellt der \HUND.   (Féry 1993: 144)
        every-time when it   rings   barks the   dog
        'Every time when the door bell rings the dog barks.'

(18)   Ede hat den /KANZler beTRUNken\ getroffen.
        Ede has the   chancellor drunk   met
        'Ede met the chancellor drunk.'   (Féry 1993: 144)

(17) and (18) are examples of German bridge contours in the *Mittelfeld* without any obvious implication of adversative utterances.

As I see it, Jacobs' insight concerning the identification and the interpretation of the German fall-rise accent is of great importance, both for the understanding of the German system of pitch accents as such and for the understanding of cross-linguistic similarities at the interface of prosody, interpretation and information structure. I do think there is sufficient evidence in German for the assumed difference in interpretation between plain rises and fall-rises. Consequently, in the following discussion, I will regard the first accent of German bridge constructions with contrastive prenuclear constituents (i.e. where the prototypical contrastive implicature is found) as a fall-rise. I will also consider the first accent of the 'hat pattern', as described by Féry, and the 'bridge accent', as described by Büring, as a fall-rise, if a contrastive or 'adversative' implicature can be identified. The question is: how can

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8 In Gundel's (1999) terminology, the fall-rise accented topics are 'contrastive foci', not 'semantic foci'.

the contrast associated with the fall-rise accent be kept apart from other, more general notions of contrast?

At this point, some qualification is necessary concerning the use and the interpretation of the fall-rise accent. On the one hand, the phonetic differences between rises and fall-rises are subtle, and the fall-rise can be levelled out phonetically, especially in rapid speech, so that it comes to sound more or less like a plain rise. This trend may be much stronger in German and Hungarian than in English. In the case of English, there seems to be fairly general agreement concerning the difference in interpretation between the fall-rise and the simple rise. With respect to German, however, some linguists hold the opinion that a fall-rise can *always* be replaced by a rise, with identical implicatures, see Molnár/Rosengren (1997) and Molnár (1998) for this line of argumentation. According to Molnár (1998), the same goes for Hungarian. As far as I know, there has been comparatively little discussion in the Hungarian literature of the correlation between the status as contrastive topic and the type of rising accent involved.

So much for the possibility of replacing a fall-rise by a plain rise. An opposite tendency – replacement of a rising accent by a fall-rise – is at work as well, especially in English. I have myself noticed a tendency among Americans to use the fall-rise very often in subordinate clauses, followed by main clauses with a fall, also in cases where the characteristic fall-rise implicatures cannot be traced. Parallels to this have been observed in certain British dialects of the North-West Midlands, where the fall-rise is used more frequently in interrogatives than is the case in R.P., as reported by Cruttenden (1986):

> [S]ome dialects of English [...] use fall-rises on interrogatives very frequently, while R.P. uses them relatively infrequently. What does this tell us about the abstract meanings (and their different orientations) when compared across different dialects? [...] The local uses and meanings of tones are not only a product of abstract meaning plus orientation [...] but also seem to involve some purely habitual influences. It becomes a habit, for example, to use a fall-rise on interrogatives, and when this happens some of the meaning of the fall-rise is lost. This sort of process must in some way be involved in intonational change.   (Cruttenden 1986: 119)

It is undoubtedly important to keep Cruttenden's reservation in mind when discussing the interpretation of pitch accents in general and of the fall-rise in particular.

The effects of a fall-rise accent (or a rise), followed by a fall, are analysed in Daniel Büring's dissertation *On the meaning of topic and focus*, published in 1997. Büring claims that there is a one-to-one relationship between the two-peaked 'bridge accent' and the topic-focus structure of the German sentence, in that the first accent of this intonation pattern necessarily denotes the topic and the fall the focus. Consequently, in a sentence like (12), repeated here,

(12)   Die √WEIBlichen Popstars trugen \KAFtane.   (cf. Büring 1997: 56)
        the   female   pop stars   wore   caftans
        'The female pop stars wore caftans.'

√WEIBlichen, the constituent with the fall-rise (or rise), is regarded as the 'S-topic' (sentence topic) in Büring's theory, whereas *\KAFtane* (caftans), marked by a fall, is seen as the focus.

Working within an 'Alternative Semantics' frame, Büring assumes that focal accents as well as topic accents induce alternatives to the prominent constituents. The meaning of sentences with 'S-topics' is explained by means of a three-level analysis, as shown in (19):

(19) a. ^the female pop stars wore caftans   ('ordinary meaning')
      b. {^the female pop stars wore caftans,   ('focus value')
           ^the female pop stars wore dresses,
           ^the female pop stars wore overalls, ...}
      c. {{^the female pop stars wore caftans,   ('topic value')
           ^the female pop stars wore dresses,
           ^the female pop stars wore overalls, ...}
          {^the male pop stars wore caftans,
           ^the male pop stars wore dresses,
           ^the male pop stars wore overalls, ...}
          {^the female or male pop stars wore caftans,
           ^the female or male pop stars wore dresses,
           ^the female or male pop stars wore overalls, ...}
          {^the Italian pop stars wore caftans,
           ^the Italian pop stars wore dresses,
           ^the Italian pop stars wore overalls, ...} ...}   (cf. Büring 1997: 68)

(19a) is supposed to spell out the so-called 'ordinary meaning' of the sentence, the proposition proper, with its truth conditions. (19b) explicates the 'focus value', building on the focus theories of Rooth (1985, 1992) and von Fintel (1994). The focus value contains a set of propositions with alternative values for the focus: instead of caftans, the female pop stars might have worn dresses, or overalls, or something else, depending on the possibilities available in the relevant context.

The concept 'topic value' in (19c) is Büring's own contribution – it contains a set of sets, namely the alternative sets that one gets when in every proposition belonging to the focus value the topic is replaced by alternatives from the relevant context.

Büring formulates two conditions for appropriate topicalisation – one of them is particularly interesting in our context:

> Given a sentence A, containing an S-Topic, there is an element Q in $[[A]]^t$ such that Q is still under consideration after uttering A.[9]   (Büring 1997: 69)

Büring's claim is that after a sentence with a 'root contour' has been uttered, there necessarily remains a question, the so-called 'residual topic', that is still open and disputable. According to Büring, it is an essential property of sentences with contrastive topics that the issue discussed is not completely settled, see (12) again, this time triggered by a question, in (20):

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[9] Here Q represents what Büring calls the 'residual topic', a question that is still disputable after A has been uttered. $[[A]]^t$ is the 'topic value' of the analysed sentence.

(20)   Q: What did the pop stars wear?
       A: Die √WEIBlichen Popstars trugen \KAFtane.   (cf. Büring 1997: 56)
            the   female   pop stars wore   caftans
            'The female pop stars wore caftans.'

On uttering (20A), the speaker implicates a possible contrast: that there might be other con-
textually relevant persons, to whom the focus does not apply. For instance, one could think
of the *male* pop stars and phrase (21) as the still 'disputable' question:

(21)   What did the male pop stars wear?

Similarly in the case of (13):

(13)   Ge√SCHLAfen hat   \KEIner   von uns.   (cf. Féry 1993: 129)
       slept   has none   of   us
       'None of us slept.'

After (13) has been uttered, questions are still open concerning, for instance, whether some
of the people discussed had something to eat. The interlocutor might continue, *Did you
have anything to eat?*
    And in the case of (14),

(14)   Auf der √NEUNundfünfzigsten Straße habe ich die \SCHUhe gekauft.
       on   the 59th   street have I   the shoes   bought
       'On 59th street I bought the shoes.'   (cf. Büring 1997: 53)

one might for instance ask, *But where did you buy the books?*
    Büring clearly states that this open question, this disputability, is a necessary conse-
quence of *the accent pattern*: "[...] using a Topic accent *must* in fact allow for a residual
Topic" (Büring 1997: 172, the author's italics).
    Büring's explication does not qualify as a topic theory, however. The terms topic and fo-
cus, which are the cornerstones of his account, are given both a phonological and a seman-
tic/pragmatic definition, and the prosodic characteristics are taken to stand in a one-to-one
relation to the information structural categorisation (Büring 1997: 5). On the one hand,
topic and focus denote the pitch accents rise (or fall-rise) and fall, respectively. On the other
hand, and simultaneously, Büring resorts to traditional definitions of topic and focus. The
topic "is understood as 'what the rest of the sentence is about', 'the entity anchoring the
sentence to the previous discourse'" (Büring 1997: 55). The focus denotes what is new or
unexpected in the sentence – in the relational sense (Büring 1997: 28ff.).
    Trying to reconcile these two perspectives is a futile enterprise. The conflict becomes
critical when Büring discusses the possibilities of adapting his 'topic theory' to English
sentences with one fall-rise accent, cf. (22), from Ladd (1980: 153):

(22)   Q: Did you feed the animals?
       A: I fed the ˇcat.

According to Büring, pitch accents like the one in (22) "would be topics without foci in our terms" (Büring 1997: 61). 'Topics' like *the ʻcat* in (22) are said to have no corresponding counterpart in German. But indeed, operating with 'topics without foci' makes very little sense in a theory where 'topic' is (also) defined as 'what the rest of the sentence is about'. So, Büring's theory breaks down at the conceptual level: it cannot be seen as a theory of topic and focus, but must be regarded as an account of the interpretation of rising and falling accents, applied to a specific accent pattern of German.

Although Jacobs (1997) does not accept Büring's overall theory of topic and focus, he obviously does accept the tight relation postulated by Büring between accent type and status as (sentence-) topic. In Jacobs' view, Büring's analysis is the first plausible account of the pragmatic effects of the I-topicalisation pattern. Büring shows, according to Jacobs, that the first prominence of this accent pattern evokes a set of alternatives, and he also shows that this reference to alternatives has another status than the alternatives evoked by the focus. His most important finding is that "utterances that contain only a focus but not a topic *do not imply open questions*" (Jacobs 1997: 105, my translation and italics, JH).[10] This may be born out for German, but the correlation between 'openness' and topics is a result of factors that turn out to be principally independent of topic and focus status.

How can it be that German linguists associate the fall-rise accent with topic status, to the extent that the typical implicatures induced by the fall-rise accent are attributed to the status of 'S-topics' (Büring) or 'topics as part of the I-topicalisation construction' (Jacobs), respectively? On closer examination, it turns out that the connection between topic status and the fall-rise accent in German (and similarly in Hungarian) is an epiphenomenon of two factors that have little to do with topics in the first place: in German and Hungarian the sentence melody of declarative sentences is falling (or eradicating/level in Hungarian). Furthermore, the nuclear focus of normal declarative sentences has to be expressed by a falling accent. This means that in these two languages it is not possible for fall-rise accents to mark the nuclear focus, or the Information Focus, of declarative sentences.

In sections 4 and 5 below, I will go into the German and English cases in greater detail.

4. The intonation of German and English declarative sentences

The languages of the world differ with regard to the possible correlation between sentence types and intonation patterns. In the main group of languages, declarative sentences have a falling intonation. As already suggested, German belongs to this group: normal (high)

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10 Jacobs' (1997: 105) original formulation: "Damit wird m.E. zum ersten Mal eine plausible Analyse des pragmatischen Effekts der I-Topikalisierung vorgeschlagen: Es wird erfaßt, daß die erste Hervorhebung bei I-Topikalisierung einen Alternativenbezug beinhaltet, [...] aber auch, daß dieser Alternativenbezug nicht denselben Status hat wie der mit dem Fokus verbundene: Topikwert und Fokuswert spielen unterschiedliche Rollen in den Bedingungen für die Angemessenheit von Äußerungen in bestimmten Diskurspositionen. Vor allem gilt für Äußerungen, die nur Fokussierung, aber keine Topikalisierung enthalten, nicht, daß sie noch Fragen offen lassen müssen".

German declarative sentences end on a falling pitch accent. This rule – that German declarative sentences are marked by a falling pitch accent – seems to be almost without exceptions. Only in very special cases does one come across rising intonation in declaratives. There is, for instance, the phenomenon that von Essen (1956) calls 'Höflichkeitsmelodie' – 'melody of politeness' – which may have a haughty and patronising flair – see Cruttenden's example in (23):

(23)   Ich möchte   zehn Liter Ben/ZIN.   (cf. Cruttenden 1986: 159)
        I   would-like ten   litres (of) petrol

Related to this 'intonation of politeness' is probably the melody of (24), where the speaker B seems to utter the sentence as an answer to a child:

(24)   A: Was ist das?
            what is   that
        B: Das ist ein /PANdabär.   (Féry 1993: 86)
            that is   a   panda

Except for such rather special cases, patterns of intonation with a single rising last pitch accent are found only in questions and incomplete utterances in German.[11] The German speaker evidently uses the rise as a signal that the utterance has not yet been brought to a conclusion – or to signal that he expects a confirmation or some kind of action from the addressee.

The fall-rise seems to be even more restricted than the plain rise as a possible last accent of German declarative sentences. I have found one example, namely (25), in an illustration in Féry's monograph *German intonational patterns* (1993):

(25)   Das √BETT ist gemacht worden.   (cf. Féry 1993: 8, Fig. (3d))
        the bed   is   made   (passive participle)
        'The bed has been made.'

Féry does not tell us whether her illustration of (25) is meant to picture a complete utterance, however. In the chapter where she treats the fall-rise as a nuclear tone, there is not a single example of declaratives – only interrogatives. It is probably justified to conclude from this that in (high) German declarative sentences – with the exceptions mentioned – one will hardly find intonation patterns ending on a rise or a fall-rise.

This means that many accent patterns that are quite frequently found in English, are not – or very rarely – found in German, patterns like the ones in (26), for instance. As answers to the question in (26) all the sentences under (a)–(e) are normal and appropriate:

(26)   Q: What shall I buy for Grandma for Christmas?
        A: a. Don't ˌpanic. I'll ˌthink of something.   (low rise)
            b. ˋFlowers seem to be a good iˌdea.   (high fall + low rise)

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[11] They are also used for encouragement (*Nun /KOMM!* i.e. 'Come on!') and warnings (*/VORsicht!*, i.e. 'Careful!').

      c. `Flowers would be a possi˅bility.   (high fall + fall-rise)
      d. Not ˅flowers (flowers don't last long).   (fall-rise)
      e. ˅I would give her ˅flowers (if I were you). (fall-rise + fall-rise)

If one wants to use fall-rise accents in a German declarative sentence, however, the only possibility one has – due to the overall demands concerning the sentence melody of German declarative clauses – is to combine the fall-rise with a falling accent to its right, which results (in Jacobs' terminology) in a 'root contour', in the pattern of 'I-topicalisation'.

5. The structural and intonational realisation of Information Focus in English and German declarative sentences

The second important factor (in addition to the sentence melody of German) that might make it look as if the 'I-topicalisation' pattern were a typically German phenomenon, is the position and the prosodic marking of the core of the message, what I here call the Information Focus of the sentence. The term Information Focus must not be mixed up with focus in the sense of (phonological and/or syntactic) highlighting of especially relevant parts of the sentence, see Höhle (1982), Hetland (1992), Rosengren (1993), Molnár (1998) and Molnár/Järventausta (this volume), among others. Information Focus is associated with *one* such prominent constituent, and my contention is that in every language the Information Focus is uniquely marked. That is, it will always be clear *which one* of the constituents highlighted to express special relevance has to be interpreted as (part of) the Information Focus.

    In English one finds sentences like (27):

(27) Q: Do you happen to know anybody in Bristol?
       A: My father and `mother came from ˌBristol.   (cf. O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 45)
          [Inf. Focus, first accent]   [background, last accent]

There exists no German parallel to this intonation pattern, as shown in (28):

(28) Q: Kennst du jemanden in Bristol?
       A: *Meine \Eltern   kamen aus /BRIstol.
          [Inf. Focus, first accent]   [background, last accent]

(28A) is not acceptable – for two reasons: First, because the last accent is a rise (see section 4), and second, because the last accent is placed on an element belonging to the background. In German the answer to the question in (28) would have to have either the intonation in (29),

(29) Meine \ELtern kamen aus Bristol.
     [Inf. Focus, last accent]

with one falling accent, or one would have to prepose the information belonging to the background, so that the last accent would be on the Information Focus, as in (30):

(30)   Aus /BRIstol kamen meine \ELtern.   (hat pattern)
        [prominent topic,   [Information Focus,
          first accent]   last accent]

As we have seen, there is another relevant difference between English and German as well. In English, a rising or a fall-rise accent can occur in sentences with just one pitch accent. In these cases the accented constituent has to function as the Information Focus – or as part of the Information Focus, see (31) and (32):

(31)   Have you fed the animals?
       I've fed the ˇcat.

(32)   Where are you going?
       Just to post a ˌletter.   (cf. O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 160)

There seems to exist a hierarchy of accents in English, as to their capacity of representing the Information Focus in sentences with more than one pitch accent. If an English sentence has a combination of a falling and a rising accent, the falling accent seems to be given the interpretation of Information Focus, irrespective of its position, compare Jackendoff's example in (33):

(33)   Q: Well, what about the BEANS? Who ate THEM?
       A: `FRED ate the ˇBEANS.   (cf. Jackendoff 1972: 261)
           [Inf. Focus,   [background,
             falling accent]   fall-rise accent]
       A': #ˇFRED ate the `BEANS.[12]
           [Inf. Focus,   [background,
          fall-rise accent]   falling accent]

(33A) is fine – with a fall on Fred, followed by a fall-rise; (33A') is not acceptable in this context.

    So, whereas German hardly allows for the accent combination of a fall to the left of a fall-rise in a declarative sentence, this combination is fine in English, as shown in Jackendoff's example in (33A). The left falling accent denotes the Information Focus of the sentence, and the fall-rise is interpreted as a prominent part of the background.

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[12] # here indicates unacceptability in the given context.
    Jackendoff (1972) uses the terms 'A accent' and 'B accent' for falls and fall-rises, respectively, referring to Bolinger. In fact, Bolinger himself does *not* use the term 'B accent' for the fall-rise, he calls it the 'A-Rise Accent' (cf. Bolinger 1958). Jackendoff's terminology has nevertheless become well established in parts of the relevent literature. See Ladd (1980) for discussion.

If we combine these facts – i.e. the fact that German declarative clauses have a falling intonation, and the fact that the Information Focus of a German sentence has to be marked by the last accent of the sentence – with the formal properties of the 'I-topicalisation' pattern, then we can see clearly what possibilities there are for parallel fall-rise-constructions in German and English. It is easy to construct English parallels to German sentences with 'I-topicalisation' (with some restrictions due to factors like a different sentence structure, accents on German negation particles that tend to be clitics in English etc.). If one wants to construct German parallels to English sentences with fall-rise accents, however, this is evidently (with very few exceptions) only possible if the fall-rise is combined with another accent. The second accent has to be situated to the right of the fall-rise – and it has to be a fall. Consequently, the constituent marked by the fall-rise will always be a 'prenuclear' constituent in German declarative clauses, sometimes a topic. The (nuclear) fall will always mark the Information Focus. Thus, in every German declarative sentence with a fall-rise (and similarly in Hungarian) there is a fall to its right. This gives us the typical two-peaked pattern of 'I-topicalisation'.

6. German sentences with 'I-topicalisation' compared to English sentences with a corresponding sequence of pitch accents

Büring (1997) identifies three variants of fall-rise topics in German; he calls them 'contrastive topics', 'partial topics' and 'purely implicational topics'. A closer look at these three topic types, which are all subsumed under his definition of S-topics, gives us a clearer picture of the sense in which fall-rise-accented constituents can be considered *contrastive* at all. Furthermore, a comparison of German and English sentences with contrastive topics gives us a distinct impression of the striking similarities of the interpretation of fall-rise-accented constituents in these two languages.

The English material applied in the German/English comparison that follows is taken from O'Connor and Arnold's *Intonation of Colloquial English* (1973), which contains dialogues demonstrating English intonation "in the framework of everyday, conversational speech". In fact, O'Connor and Arnold's dialogues proved themselves to be extremely well suited for my purposes. The intonation in the exercise part of the book is carefully marked by diacritics, and for each example a discourse context is given: the sentence whose intonation is exemplified is always preceded by a triggering sentence, and in many cases a following sentence is supplied as well to make the interpretation clearer. Moreover, all the exercises have been recorded and are available on tape. The intonation exemplified in O'Connor/Arnold (1973) is Southern British English, but the aspects of interpretation that are relevant for this paper certainly also apply to other British dialects and to American English, with the reservations mentioned in section 3.

To start with, I will examine English sentences with an accent pattern consisting of a fall-rise followed by a fall. As expected, there are plenty of such sentences to be found in O'Connor and Arnold's collection. In (34)–(40) below, some relevant examples are quoted. The first sentence of every pair gives the context; the second sentence has the accent pattern fall-rise + fall:

(34) a. 'Aren't °vegetables `dear!¹³
      b. ˇBeans | are a ter`rific ₒprice.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(35) a. ˉWhat a 'wretched `summer!
      b. ˇAugust | was a `terrible ₒmonth.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(36) a. 'Why won't they °make up their `minds?
      b. ˇPeter's | the `obvious ₒchoice.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(37) a. 'Why do °people play ˌgames?
      b. ˇI ₒplay | for `exercise.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(38) a. 'Fred's made a°nother com`plaint.
      b. ˇSome ₒpeople | are `always comₒplaining.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(39) a. Well 'whose °fault `was it, ₒthen?
      b. ˇDad ₒsays | it was `yours.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(40) a. 'What d'you °think of `Cubism?
      b. ˇThat sort of ₒart | is 'quite be`yond me.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

All the (b)-sentences in (34)–(40) show the pattern that Jacobs, Büring and other German linguists would call 'I-topicalisation', or 'bridge accent', or 'bridge contour', if applied to German sentences.

Let us now go back to German and to Büring's three variants of 'S-topics', and let us have a look at the subtype called 'contrastive topics'. These topics function, according to Büring, by leading the conversation away from a discourse topic that has already been under discussion, and to introduce a new topic, i.e. to signal a topic shift, see Büring's example (41):

(41) Q: Glaubst   du,   Fritz würde diesen Anzug   kaufen?
          believe   you   Fritz would   this   suit   buy
          'Do you think that Fritz would buy this suit?'
      A: √ICH würde ihn sicher   \NICHT kaufen.   (cf. Büring 1997: 56)
          I   would   it   certainly not   buy
          'I certainly wouldn't'.

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¹³ I will make use of O'Connor/Arnold's (1973) diacritics in my English examples. O'Connor and Arnold mark their so-called 'word groups' by vertical dividing lines [|]. Each word group contains exactly one nucleus – or pitch accent – except for the combination High Fall + Low Rise, which is carefully distinguished from the Fall-Rise. According to O'Connor and Arnold there may be a pause between the word groups, but normally there is none. Prenuclear stress (that is: stress, but not accent) is marked by the tokens ['] for high head, [ₐ] for rising head and [ˠ] for falling head. The signs [ˉ] and [°] are used to signal high preheads, whereas [°] and [ₒ] mark syllables in the tail, i.e. stressed syllables following the nucleus. The most important diacritical signs are, of course, the pitch accents; the examples quoted in the present paper contain four of them: the fall-rise [ˇ], the high fall [`], the low rise [ˌ] and the low fall [ˌ].

√*ICH* (or I) contrasts with the old discourse topic *Fritz*. The question which remains unanswered or open after (41A) has been uttered, as demanded in Büring's theory, is – among others – the one that was posed at the start of this conversation: *Do you think that Fritz would buy this suit?*

It is easy to find English sentences with exactly the same kind of 'contrastive' interpretation as the one associated with the German sentence in (41A). Take for instance (42):

(42) a. [What did your mother say?]
      b. My ˇfather | was deˋlighted by the ₒnews.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 258)

My ˇfather is the new topic and is contrasted with *mother*. The question asked to start with remains open and constitutes the 'residual topic' in Büring's terminology.

Büring's second variant of topics, the so-called 'partial topics', have the function to delimit an already given discourse topic, see (20), repeated here as (43):

(43) Q: What did the pop stars wear?
      A: Die √WEIBlichen Popstars trugen \KAFtane.   (Büring 1997: 56)
          'The female pop stars wore caftans.'

After (43A) has been uttered, it is still open to discussion what the male pop stars were wearing. The sentence (43A), with the given intonation, implicates that the males belonging to the group may have worn something else than the females. There are plenty of English parallels to this kind of topic, see one of the relevant examples in (44):

(44) a. 'What was the °meal ˋlike?
      b. The ˇsoup | was ˋterrible.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 258)

After (44) has been uttered, it is still an open question what the other courses were like.

As an example of the third variant of S-topics, the so-called 'purely implicational topics', Büring cites (45):

(45) Q: Hat deine Frau fremde   Männer geküsst?
          has your   wife strange men   kissed
          'Did your wife kiss other men?'
      A: √MEIne Frau hat \KEIne fremden Männer geküsst.
          my   wife has no   strange men   kissed
          'My wife didn't kiss other men.'   (cf. Büring 1997: 56)

The topic accent is not obligatory in the case of the 'purely implicational topics'. If it is there, however, it calls up 'alternative topics', see (46):

(46) √MEIne Frau hat \KEIne fremden Männer geküsst.
      (Wie steht es aber mit DEIner Frau?)
      'My wife didn't kiss other men. (But what about YOUR wife?)'

The German sentence in (45)/(46) corresponds to the English examples in (47) and (48):

(47)   a.   [What was the soup like?]
       b.   The ˇsoup | was `terrible.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 258)

(48)   a.   [How was August?]
       b.   ˇAugust | was a `terrible $_{\circ}$month.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

In both cases, open questions are induced by the fall-rise. In the case of (47), one might add a question about the quality of other parts of the meal discussed; in the case of (48), about other months of the year. And in both cases, the implicated openness allows for a subsequent utterance of adversative content, as demanded by Jacobs (1996, 1997) for German sentences with 'I-topicalisation', see (49) and (50):

(49)   The ˇsoup | was `terrible.
       [B]ut in ˇother res$_{\circ}$pects, | it was an `excellent $_{\circ}$meal. (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

(50)   ˇAugust | was a `terrible $_{\circ}$month.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)
       But July was fine.

Of course one could answer a question like the one asked in (47) without using the fall-rise accent, see (51):

(51)   [T]he 'soup was `terrible.   (O'Connor/Arnold 1973: 257)

In that case one would lose the implicature that some other part of the meal was possibly *not* terrible.

The English fall-rise examples that we have seen in this section all behave in accordance with the claim postulated by Büring as a necessary condition of what he calls 'S-topics': After a sentence with a 'root contour' has been uttered, a question – a residual topic – remains open and disputable. Büring (1997) and Jacobs (1996, 1997) seem to tie this openness to the topic status of the constituent accented by the fall-rise. As I see it, one can only arrive at a proper understanding of the relationship between pitch accents and information structure if the implicature of openness or contrast is completely detached from information structure status. I will go into this in greater detail in the next section.

7. Is Büring's 'Topic Implicature of open questions' restricted to topics or to other prenuclear constituents?

Büring postulated two conditions for topichood: (i) a certain connection to the context (1997: 67), and (ii) the (necessary) implicature of an open question, a so-called 'residual topic' (1997: 69). As for the second condition, it does seem to hold for most German 'I-topicalisation' constructions. But should it be regarded as a condition of *topics*, that is, of 'what the rest of the sentence is about'?