The reference of free, 3P pronouns sometimes depends on the specific prosodic pattern used.

Two distinct mechanisms have been proposed: (1) proclisis status of a pronoun interacts directly with the strategy used to establish reference, (2) prosodic patterns constrain the propositional content of an utterance by way of information structure.

Which mechanism better accounts for the relationship between prosody and pronominal reference in perception?

**Prosum and Pronominal Reference Interaction**

(1) a. Jon hit Bob, and then DAN hit him. [him=Bob]
   \[H^* \text{ L-L\%}\]
   b. Jon hit Bob, and then DAN hit HIM. [him=Jon]
   \[H^* \text{ L-}H^* \text{ L-L\%}\]

(2) a. Jon kicked Bob. He was INjured. [he=Bob]
   \[H^* \text{ L-L\%}\]
   b. Jon kicked Bob. HE was injured. [he=Jon]
   \[H^* \text{ L-L\%}\]

**Competing Approaches**

**Switching Approach**

- Reference of an accented pronoun can be predicted from the reference of some unaccented counterpart
- Key assumption: If default reference is known, accentual status is a direct predictor of reference

**Information Structure (IS) Approach**

- Effects follow from a general theory of the meaning of prosodic patterns over utterances
  - Contrastive focus presupposition (Roeth 1992)
  - Postnuclear constituents are Given (Schwarzschild 1999)
- Key assumption: Predictions for reference are independent of the notion of a default

**Issues**

- Specialized interpretive principle for accents that occur specifically on pronouns?
- Pronominal-reference interaction not limited to pronouns (Kehler 2005, Djali 2008)
- How locally are pitch accents interpreted?

**Concluding Remarks**

- Only the IS approach can account for the qualitative and quantitative effects of prosody on pronominal reference
- Pronominal reference not driven by local interpretation of pitch accents
- Proposed model (German 2009)
- Pronouns not associated with a default reference, but are fundamentally flexible to discourse-level constraints (Kehler 2002)
- Interpretation of prosody vis-à-vis information structure constrains the TCP/propositional content of utterances, and thereby reference

**Selected References**


