

## 1. Dutch

- Dutch is spoken by about 23 million speakers. The standard language is used in schools and in administrative communication. Dutch is widely written and spoken in The Netherlands and in the northern part of Belgium. It is also an official language in Surinam, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. Dutch is a West-Germanic language descending from Low Franconian and developed as an independent language in the 17th century.
- Data collection:
  - recording and annotation of spoken translations
  - place: Rijswijk & OTS, Utrecht
  - time: July, 2005 – May, 2006

## 3. Empirical observations

- From the collected data it can be observed that Dutch sentence topics, depending on their information-structural meaning, have different phonological realizations.

*Sentence topic*: a non-pronominal constituent preceding the finite verb in main clause assertions.

Two main types of sentence topics and their subtypes:

- Noncontrastive topics*: anaphoric topic (repeated/hypertonic) bridging topic
- Contrastive topics*: changed topic  
parallel-partial topic  
implicational-partial topic

Different phonological realizations of sentence topics:

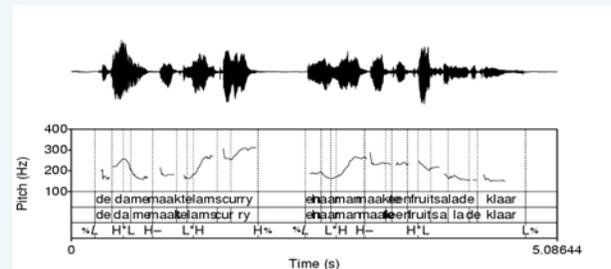
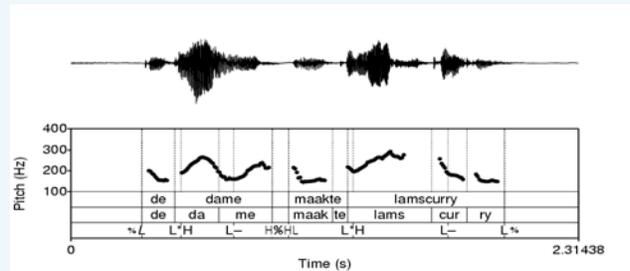
- Anaphoric topic: **L\*** cf. (1)
- Bridging topic: **L\*H** or **H\*L** cf. (2)
- Changed topic: **L\*H L-H%** cf. (3)
- Parallel-partial topic: **L\*H H-** or **H\*L H-** cf. (4)
- Implicational-partial topic: **L\*H L-H%** cf. (5)

Examples:

- A: Wat deed je grootmoeder?  
`What did your grandmother do?`  
B: De dame maakte lamscurry.  
%L L\* L\*H L-L%  
`The lady made lamb curry.`
- Ze werd naar het ziekenhuis gebracht.  
`She was brought to the hospital.`  
De dokter vertelde haar dat het niets ernstigs was.  
%L L\*H H%L H\*L H\*L L%  
`The doctor told her it was nothing serious.`
- We hadden een echt heerlijk diner.  
`We had a really delicious dinner.`  
De dame maakte lamscurry.  
%L L\*H L-H%HL L\*H L-H%  
`The lady made lamb curry.`
- De Jones weten hoe men een heerlijke maaltijd bereidt.  
`The Jones know how to prepare a delicious meal.`  
De dame maakte lamscurry, en haar man ...  
%L H\*L H- L\*H H%L L\*H H- ...  
`The lady made lamb curry, and her husband ...`
- Hebben die mensen allemaal iets gekookt?  
`Did those people all cook something?`  
De dame maakte lamscurry.  
%L L\*H L-H% %HL L\*H L-H%  
`The lady made lamb curry.`

## 2. Information Structure

- Both intonation and word order play a crucial role in determining the Information Structure of Dutch utterances.
- The following main pitch accents are relevant for Dutch intonation: **L\***, **H\***, **L\*H**, **H\*L** (cf. Gussenhoven (2005))
- Word order: Scrambling of object—adverb order (cf. Neeleman & Reinhart (1998))
- Special constructions: Clefts, Left Dislocation, Topicalization (cf. Zwart (1998))
- No morphological means



- As far as I am aware, the intonation of sentence topics in Dutch has not been investigated yet. The study of German intonational patterns by Fery (1993), which also deals with *rise-fall* intonation contours, was taken as a point of departure for my investigation.
- The *rise-fall-rise* intonation contour, as in (3) and (5), has been described for English by Ladd (1996) and the references therein. The emphatic variant of this contour can trigger an adversative implicature in German and Dutch (cf. Van Hoof (2001)).
- Van Hoof (2003) argues in favour of a grammatical distinction between contrastive foci and contrastive topics in German and Dutch. However, no significant prosodic difference could be found between parallel-partial topics and parallel contrasts in the Dutch data so far.

## 4. Summary/Future Work

The different intonational topic contours identified here, which indicate different types of sentence topics, have to be tested with respect to more Dutch data in the future. We also have to identify the intonational realizations of different focus types.

## References

- Fery, C. (1993): *German Intonational Patterns*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.  
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