Talks on "Topic and Focus in Italian"

at the SFB632 on "Information Structure"
Universität Potsdam and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Frau Frascarelli wird drei Vorträge zur Syntax/Phonologie Schnittstelle halten
Die Vorträge finden in der Woche vom 27. Juni bis 1. Juli statt:
Mo und Mi 17h und am Freitag um 14h im Raum 045 (kleiner Senatssaal)
im Haus 24
Monday, 27th June 2005

Focus Interpretation and Information Structure

Though "Focus" is a discourse notion, it is also unquestionably a *product of grammar* and many studies have been dedicated to the analysis of its *formal correlates.*
This talk is concerned with the intonational properties of Focus in Italian, in its diverse realizations (broad vs. narrow, informational vs. contrastive), in order to show the connection between syntactic properties, phonological interpretation and discourse requirements. The analysis of pitch accents and tone boundaries will provide evidence for a systematic relation between syntax and prosodic mapping in the identification of Focus, especially in the definition of extraposed (i.e., non-focused) constituents and the scope of focussing operators (like *solo* "only" and *anche* "also").

Wednesday, 29th June 2005

Different types of Topics

This talk focusses on the correlation between the syntactic and phonological realization of Topics in Italian and their discourse properties. In particular, I will analyse the connection between discourse roles and formal properties in sentences containing multiple Topics. Evidence will be provided that different types of Topics show different *intonational properties* and are realised in a *specific order in the CP-system.* A "free recursion analysis" will thus be refuted and a hierarchy will be proposed in which *different functional projections* are distinguished in terms of prosodic and syntactic properties.

Friday, 1st July 2005

Pronominal Subjects in a pro-drop Language: Discourse requirements and interface interpretation

The Null Subject parameter and general Economy requirements ("Avoid Pronoun") lead to the expectation that, in a pro-drop language like Italian, overt subjects are only realised to guarantee recoverability in the discourse. However, the study of spoken corpora show that this is not the case and overt pronouns are often realised, even when coreference interpretation is not at stake. This talk will show a crucial connection between intonation and discourse requirements in the realization of pronouns, when an analysis in "different types of Topics" is assumed.