Introduction:

Pan’s syntactic analysis (2003) suggested that Mandarin split nominal constituent is focused. He argued that when the focus phrase that contains the empty head noun is adjacent to the topicalized noun, it can establish a predicative relation with the topicalized noun. Féry (2005) proposes that the marked tonal pattern of split structures in German triggers an additional prosodic phrase. Furthermore, there might be two information structural patterns in German: the split noun is topicalized and the remainder of the sentence is generally focused, or the split noun is focused and the remainder is a deaccented background.

Aims:

- To compare the prosodic realization of the split nominal construction in Mandarin and in German both in topic and focus context.
- To study the extent to which the split sentences are accepted by listeners and whether the prosodic characteristics are sufficient to distinguish the split sentences in a topic context from those in a focus context.

I. Production Experiments:

1.1 Reading Materials: Split sentences

20 Mandarin and 8 German target sentences were constructed.

**Chinese:**

(1a) shuqian BaoXin diu le san zhang.
(books BaoXin lost three clas. ‘Bao Xin lost three bookmarks.’)

**German:**

(1b) Birnen hat sie einige gekauft.
(pears aux she some bought. ‘She bought some pears’)

1.2 Reading Materials: Context questions

**Chinese:**

**Focus context:** Bao Xin diu le san zhang shenme?
(What did BaoXin lose three of?)

**Topic context:** Wo tingshuo baoxin diu.le shuqian he benzi, shi zhen de ma?
(I heard that Bao Xin lost bookmarks and notebooks. Is that true?)

**German:**

**Focus context:** Was hat sie einige gekauft? (What did she buy some of?)

**Topic context:** Ich habe gehört, dass sie Birnen und Apfel gekauft hat. Ist es wahr? (I heard that she bought pears and apples. Is that true?)

1.3 Participants

Six female German speakers and 7 Mandarin speakers (5 female and 2 male speakers) participated in the speech production experiments.

1.4 Recording procedures

The participants were recorded individually in a quite room. During each trial, a sentence was shown on the computer screen, and the subject was asked to say it in a natural way at normal speech rate.

1.5 Acoustic Measurement

The F0 and the boundaries of each syllable (Mandarin)/word (German) were manually labeled using Xu’s Praat script (1999, 2005).

IV. References:


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