**Givenness and stress rejection in Optimality Theory**

*Fabian Schubö, University of Stuttgart*

This paper discusses the specification of the constraint DESTRESS-GIVEN (Féry & Samek-Lodovici 2006), here employed as *STRESS-GIVEN (*SG). This constraint accounts for the rejection of stress by a given element that is part of the focused constituent. Such a case is illustrated in (1) with an SVO sentence from German in which the verb receives stress although German has default stress on the rightmost argument. In its original formulation, the constraint requires that a given constituent be "prosodically non-prominent" (2006: 135). This formulation is rather vague, not specifying which level of prominence in the Prosodic Hierarchy is affected (*e.g.*, phrasal stress or nuclear stress). The present paper argues that the constraint militates against nuclear stress (*i.e.*, ι-prominence), but not against phrasal stress (*i.e.*, φ-prominence) and lower categories. The argument is based on evidence from German and English, which show the aforementioned stress rejection effect, but also allow for phrasal stress positions (implemented as pitch accents) on pre-focal given elements (*e.g.*, Féry & Kügler 2009). The latter is illustrated in (2) with another SVO sentence from German (phrasal stress is indicated by single and nuclear stress by double underline). In this case, the subject (*Peter*) is assigned phrasal stress although it is given. This would be unexpected if *SG militated against phrasal stress or lower categories. The object NP (*Bild*) rejects phrasal stress because it is a given element in post-focal position. This stress rejection effect does not require *SG, but can straightforwardly be accounted for by ranking the constraint assigning nuclear stress to the rightmost phrasal stress position, here employed as RIGHTMOST, above the constraint that derives the phrasal stress positions from syntactic structure, here employed as MATCH-XP (requiring that each lexical XP has a corresponding φ-phrase, which in turn bears a beat of phrasal stress, see Selkirk 2011). Thus, the constraint ranking for German and English is as follows: *SG, RIGHTMOST >> MATCH-XP (see the tableaux below for an OT analysis of the cases at hand). The restriction of *SG to nuclear stress is more elegant than the alternative proposal to restrict the constraint to "post-nuclear given phrase[s]" (Féry 2013: 719). This is because, first, such a restriction cannot straightforwardly account for the case in (1), where the assignment of nuclear stress depends on *SG, and, second, the identification of post-nuclear material would require some sort of marking in phonological representation, an assumption that is not needed elsewhere in the formation of prosodic structure.

(1) *Was macht Peters Mutter?* — *Sie [$_{FOC}$ [$_{V}$ <u>lobt</u>] [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter]]*
'What is Peter's mother doing?' — 'She is praising Peter.'

(2) *Wem zeigt Peter ein Bild?* — *[$_{NP,GIV}$ <u>Peter</u>] zeigt [$_{NP,FOC}$ <u>Maria</u>] ein[$_{NP,GIV}$ Bild]*
'Whom is Peter showing a picture?' — 'Peter is showing Maria a picture.'

**Tableau 1.**

| | Sie [$_{FOC}$ [$_{V}$ lobt] [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter]] | *SG | RIGHTMOST | MATCH-XP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | ( x )$_{\iota}$ | | | |
| ☞ | ( x )$_{\varphi}$ | | | * |
| | Sie [$_{FOC}$ [$_{V}$ lobt] [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter]] | | | |
| (b) | ( x )$_{\iota}$ | | | |
| | ( x )$_{\varphi}$ ( x )$_{\varphi}$ | | *! | |
| | Sie [$_{FOC}$ [$_{V}$ lobt] [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter]] | | | |
| (c) | ( x )$_{\iota}$ | | | |
| | ( x )$_{\varphi}$ | *! | | |
| | Sie [$_{FOC}$ [$_{V}$ lobt] [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter]] | | | |

**Tableau 2.**

| | [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter] zeigt [$_{NP,FOC}$ Maria ] ein [$_{NP,GIV}$ Bild] | *SG | RIGHTMOST | MATCH-XP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | ( x )$_{\iota}$ | | | |
| ☞ | ( x )$_{\varphi}$ ( x )$_{\varphi}$ | | | * |
| | [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter] zeigt [$_{NP,FOC}$ Maria ] ein [$_{NP,GIV}$ Bild] | | | |
| (b) | ( x )$_{\iota}$ | | | |
| | ( x )$_{\varphi}$ | | | **! |
| | [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter] zeigt [$_{NP,FOC}$ Maria ] ein [$_{NP,GIV}$ Bild] | | | |
| (c) | ( x )$_{\iota}$ | | | |
| | ( x )$_{\varphi}$ ( x )$_{\varphi}$ ( x )$_{\varphi}$ | | *! | |
| | [$_{NP,GIV}$ Peter] zeigt [$_{NP,FOC}$ Maria ] ein [$_{NP,GIV}$ Bild] | | | |

**References:** ◆Féry, C. & V. Samek-Lodovici. 2006. Focus projection and prosodic prominence in nested foci. *Language* 82: 131–150. ◆Féry, C. & F. Kügler. 2008. Pitch accent scaling on given, new and focused constituents in German. *J. Phon.* 36(4): 680–703. ◆Selkirk, E. O. 2011. The syntax-phonology interface. In *The Handbook of Phonological Theory*, 2nd edition, eds. J. A. Goldsmith, J. Riggle & A. C. L. Yu, 435–484. Oxford: Blackwell. ◆Féry, C. 2013. Focus as prosodic alignment. *NLLT* 31(3): 683–734.