The prosody of presupposition projection in naturally-occurring utterances

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Does prosodically-marked focus influence projection in naturally-occurring speech?

In lab speech, prosodically-marked pragmatic focus has been shown to influence projection of clausal complement contents:
- Factive predicates: narrow focus within complement (vs. matrix) → less projection (Tonhauser 2016, Vaikšnoraitė et al. 2018)
- Non-factive predicates: narrow focus within complement (vs. matrix) → more projection (Djärv & Bacovcin 2017)

![Graph showing the relationship between focus location and projection rating](image)

Participants read target utterance with factive predicates in two contexts:
- Context supporting a projecting interpretation
- Context supporting a non-projecting interpretation
Participants were more likely to focus the final content word of the complement in the non-projecting context: Perhaps she knew that he was WRONG.

Data: Switchboard portion of CommitmentBank (de Marneffe et al. 2019)

CommitmentBank: naturally-occurring text, annotated for the projectivity of clausal complement contents.

Adding projection annotations for spoken Switchboard utterances
Participants listened to the utterances, annotating the projectivity of the clausal complement content.
350 utterances, at least 8 annotations per utterance

Adding focus annotations:
- Indicated the location of the most prosodically-prominent constituent: the complement vs. matrix subject/predicate
- 3 annotators, each utterance annotated by 2 people
- Annotators agreed for 219 utterances

Distribution of focus annotations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Matrix</th>
<th>Complement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Factive</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

1) A: Yes, And, oh, yeah, it’s very expensive.
   B: I didn’t realize it was that EXPENSIVE. -0.55
2) A: [The Taurus is] a stylish car both inside and out. It’s comfortable to drive.
   B: […]I didn’t REALIZE that they were putting dual, uh, air bags in that car now. 2.0
3) A: Your turn.
   B: Okay. Uh, I don’t think they should ABOLISH it. -1.46
4) A: Yeah. How about MISTER ROGERS, is he still around?
   B: Yes. Yeah. They still show MISTER ROGERS. I don’t THINK he’s making new ones. -1.63

The projection of clausal complements in naturally-occurring utterances is influenced by both prosodically-marked focus and the factivity of the clause-embedding predicate.

• Consistent with previous experimental findings showing that prosody influences factive presupposition projection.

Analysis:
Prosodically-marked focus evokes propositional alternatives (=QUD addressed by the utterance)
- Complement focus → the complement is at-issue
- Matrix focus → the attitude relation is at-issue
Our results follow the Projection Principle (Beaver et al. 2017), i.e. at-issue content doesn’t project, if we assume:
- Factivs evoke veridical alternatives wrt the complement by default → can be overridden by context/QUD
- Non-factives evoke some alternative that contradicts the complement → difficult to override by QUD

An analysis of projection must account for the behavior of complements of both factives and non-factives.
Future work: What is the nature of the alternatives evoked by factives?
Operationalize the notion of “focus” in terms of information-structure