



The Interaction of Focus, Givenness, and Prosody: A Study of Italian Clause Structure (Oxford Studies in Theoretical Linguistics)

Vieri Samek-Lodovici

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This book provides an in-depth investigation of contrastive focalization in Italian, showing that its syntactic expression systematically interacts with the syntactic expression of discourse-given phrases. Vieri Samek-Lodovici disentangles the properties genuinely associated with contrastive focalization from those determined by highly productive operations affecting discourse given phrases in Italian, namely right dislocation and marginalization. Based on a vast aggregate of evidence, he shows that in the default case contrastive focalization occurs in situ and that left-peripheral focalization patterns arise from the interaction with right dislocation and generalize well beyond the familiar cases examined in Rizzi (1997) and most literature since. In the final chapter, the author examines how the key properties unveiled in the previous chapters, such as focalization in situ, follow from the prosodic constraints governing stress placement, thus reinterpreting and extending Zubizarreta's (1998) insight about the role of prosody in shaping syntax.

Overall, the book offers an evidence-backed radical departure from current views of focalization that posit a high, fixed, focus projection at the left periphery of the clause. It also provides the most comprehensive study of Italian marginalization and right dislocation available to date.

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