

# On the Role of Prosody in German Subpart of Focus Fronting

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## Abstract

This paper outlines a novel account of an accentual restriction on Subpart of Focus Fronting (SFF) in German, which involves the preposing of a subconstituent of a broad semantic focus to a clause-initial position. As discussed by Fanselow and Lenertová (2011), SFF displacements differ in their properties both from ordinary operator-movements and from so-called ‘formal fronting’ operations. They also exhibit a peculiar prosodic restriction: they are limited to moving the first accented phrase in the clause, a pattern that raises non-trivial issues for the autonomy of syntax. It is proposed here that the restriction follows from the way information structural interpretations are regulated at the syntax–prosody interface. In particular, the broad (or VP) focus interpretation targeted by SFF requires default prominence relations, but movement to the left edge of the intonational phrase across an accented element introduces a deviation from these. The account crucially draws on the hypothesis that both edges of intonational phrases are associated with special, albeit not equal, phonological prominence.

## 1. Introduction

The present contribution has a single paper, Fanselow and Lenertová (2011), in its focus. That single paper, however, represents a whole strand of seminal work, pulling together of a lot of previous research both by Gisbert Fanselow himself and by others that speaks directly to a fundamental conceptual topic in syntactic theory: the role of information structure in narrow syntax. Fanselow presented and argued for his take on this question not only in this paper but in several others published before (e.g. Fanselow 2006*a*, 2006*b*) and after this

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\*The present paper is based on a talk titled “Fanselow & Lenertova (2011)”, presented at the workshop on Gisbert Fanselow’s Contributions to Syntactic Theory, held on April 27–29, 2023, in Berlin. I am indebted to the organizers of the workshop and editors of the current volume for the opportunity to make a small contribution to celebrating, and passing on, Gisbert’s lasting contributions to linguistic theory. This paper is dedicated to him.

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one (e.g. Fanselow 2012). This position is that of an ardent “autonomist”: according to the modular view he defended, information structural roles such as focus are not directly encoded in narrow syntax. Instead, syntax works autonomously, and non-neutral information structural interpretations emerge at the interfaces of syntax with prosody and with pragmatics.

This thesis is also central to Fanselow and Lenertová (2011) (henceforth F&L 2011). The paper analyzes a particular kind of fronting movements in German and Czech, illustrated in (1):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) *What did he do then?*  
 Die KÜche hat er gestrichen.  
 the.ACC kitchen has he painted  
 ‘He painted the kitchen.’

In (1) the object gets fronted to the pre-V2 clause-initial position across the subject, but unlike it usually does in such cases, in this case the fronted object does not get associated with any special information structural status in Spec,CP. Instead, the sentence may express focus on the entire Verb Phrase or it could be interpreted with sentence-wide focus. Fanselow called this construction different names over the many years he worked on it. In F&L (2011) the authors refer to it as ‘Subpart of Focus Fronting’ (SFF); this is the term I will also keep to here. Another label that designates the same thing is “partial focus fronting” (Fanselow et al. 2008, see also Zimmermann 2007).<sup>2</sup> According to the analysis F&L present, in line with the autonomy hypothesis, neither the trigger nor the locality restrictions on the syntactic fronting to Spec,CP in (1) directly involve information structural properties in narrow syntax.

Below I will first establish SFF as a class of movements that differ both from ordinary operator-movements to Spec,CP and from so-called ‘formal fronting’ operations (Section 2). Then I will review an important prosodic restriction established by F&L on what can be fronted in an SFF-construction (Section 3). My modest addition in Section 4 will be to raise the possibility of an alternative account of this prosodic restriction. This account builds on the

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<sup>1</sup>Wherever relevant, accented syllables are marked by capitalization.

<sup>2</sup>Fanselow (2003) called this ‘pars pro toto’ focusing, a term he later abandoned to avoid the possible implication that the fronting operation is a bona fide focus-marking device. I’m grateful to Denisa Lenertová for a discussion of this terminological point.

special prominence-lending role of the left edge of intonation phrases, and it is fully in the spirit of Gisbert Fanselow's general view that the relationship between syntax and information structure (IS) is mediated by prosody.

## **2. SFF and 'Formal Movement'**

F&L's starting point is 'formal movement' in German to the initial Spec,CP position (also called 'formal fronting'), a type of movement that involves the preposing of a suitable element to Spec,CP without any associated IS effect. This is unlike in the case of garden-variety A-bar movements to the same position, in which the fronted phrase is assigned pragmatically marked status, such as contrastive topic or narrow focus. A prime example of such formal fronting (on a symmetrical approach to V2) is the preposing of the subject (2).

- (2) Ein Kind hat einen Hasen gefangen.  
a child has a.ACC rabbit caught  
'A child has caught a rabbit.'

As many have pointed out, not only subjects, but also sentential adverbs and temporal adverbials can come to occupy the initial position in Spec,CP without acquiring any special discourse role there:

- (3) Wahrscheinlich hat ein Kind einen Hasen gefangen.  
probably has a child a.ACC rabbit caught  
'A child has probably caught a rabbit.'

Fanselow and others have proceeded to generalize further that any category can move to SpecCP without bearing any special discourse role, provided that it appears (or can appear, through scrambling) highest inside TP (Fanselow 2002, Müller 2004, Frey n.d.).

'Formal movements' cannot be long. This contrasts formal movement with focus- and contrastive topic-fronting, which CAN be long, at least in some German varieties. (4) – which is one of Gisbert Fanselow's many examples with birds in them – illustrates long contrastive topic fronting.

- (4) *Will we spot a European roller? Well, I do not know, but...*  
einen Brachvogel hat Derk versprochen dass alle sehen werden.  
a.ACC curlew has Derk promised that all spot will  
'Derk promised that everyone will see a curlew.'

(Fanselow 2016)

The SFF construction, illustrated in (1) above, was noted as a quirk at the syntax-semantics interface of German by a number of authors, including Höhle (1979: 428-429), Jacobs (1991: 9) and Krifka (1994: 145-146). (1) is interpreted with VP-focus (see below for examples with a sentence-wide focus interpretation), despite the fact that the object gets fronted alone, crossing over the subject on its way.

SFF is a type of movement to Spec,CP that seems to fit neither the category of ordinary discourse-related movements like narrow focus fronting, nor the class of 'formal fronting' movements. First, although SFF behaves as ordinary A-bar movement (for instance, it incurs Weak Crossover effects and it licenses parasitic gaps), it is not associated with special IS-status for the fronted phrase itself, unlike in the case of discourse-related movements. This is shown most vividly by examples in which some part of a non-compositional unit is fronted. It is important to see that the pattern works not only with what have been called 'idiomatically composing phrases' (in the sense of Nunberg et al. 1994), but also with fully non-transparent idioms as well. (5), with an otherwise non-existent word *Garaus*, is a case in point (for examples from Czech, see Lenertová and Junghanns 2007).

- (5) *Den Garaus hat er ihr gemacht.*  
 the.ACC *garaus* has he her made  
 'He killed her.'

On the other hand, SFF is also unlike 'formal movement' in that neither the clause-boundedness limitation, nor the closeness restriction apply to it. The lack of clause-boundedness is illustrated in (6) (F&L 2011):

- (6) *What has she been doing there so long?*  
 [Das AUto]<sub>i</sub> denk ich hat sie versucht zu \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> reparieren!  
 the.ACC car think I has she tried to repair  
 'I think she has tried to repair the car!'

As for closeness, the situation is complicated by the fact that Frey (2010) argues that 'formal movement' is also licensed to cross over some elements, including personal pronouns. In both (1) and (5) the subject that is being crossed over is a personal pronoun, so from the perspective Frey's (2010) analysis the fronting in those examples might fall under 'formal movement'. But as F&L argue, in SFF in German (and Czech) not only personal pronouns,

but also indefinites, definite epithets (7), and for some speakers, other given or highly inferable definite lexical NPs (8), can be crossed over.

(7) *What did Fritz do on Sunday?*

[Ein BUCH]<sub>i</sub> hat der Idiot \_\_<sub>i</sub> gelesen (anstatt schwimmen zu  
a.ACC book has the idiot read (instead swim to  
gehen).

go)

'The fool read a book, instead of going swimming!'

(Fanselow 2008)

(8) *A: ...the music at the party was really loud. B: So what happened?*

A: [Den STROM]<sub>i</sub> hat uns der Nachbar \_\_<sub>i</sub> ausgeschaltet.  
the.ACC electricity has us the neighbour switched-off

'Our neighbour has switched off the electricity.'

(F&L 2011)

F&L take the fact that in 'formal movements' non-discourse-marked elements can be fronted to Spec,CP as something that weakens the legitimacy of IS-feature-based syntactic accounts of discourse-related fronting operations. Their reasoning draws on the 'functional ambiguity' of the target position Spec,CP of A-bar fronting operations (which actually extends to several other V2 Germanic languages). Specifically, they argue that if an independent syntactic trigger must exist to license formal fronting to CP (which they take to be an unselective EPP-feature), then the motivation for a specifically IS-related trigger to drive information structurally loaded movements to the same Spec,CP position in German is not as strong as it could otherwise be.

For F&L, although SFF crucially differs from formal movement, it makes the same conceptual point. SFF shows that even in sentences containing focus, the element fronted to CP is not necessarily the constituent that is associated with a special discourse role.

### **3. The Prosody of SFF**

If we compare examples like (1) and (7)-(8) with ones in which SFF crosses over an informationally new subject, then there is a clear contrast in acceptability: new NPs cannot be crossed over in the same way (9).

(9) *A: What's the matter? Why are you calling me so late at night?*

*B: #[Den STROM]<sub>i</sub> hat uns der NACHbar \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> ausgeschaltet. (=8)*

This basic acceptability contrast was verified in several experimental studies, in work by Féry and Drenhaus (2008), as well as by Wierzba (2017). F&L (2011) adopt the following prosodic generalization to capture this difference (see also Müller 2003, Fanselow 2004):

(10) In SFF it is the linearly first accent-bearing phrase that gets moved.

(10) correctly excludes the crossing of an informationally new, and therefore accented, subject by the fronted object in SFF in sentences like (9), while also correctly allowing for object-SFF to cross over informationally given, and therefore deaccented subjects, as in (1) and (7)-(8).

The examples we have seen so far are typical in that they all involve the fronting of the otherwise immediately preverbal object. This has been linked to the fact that in both VP-focus and in sentence-wide broad focus the nuclear accent is assigned by default to the object position. Both Fanselow (2003) and Lenertová and Junghanns (2007) generalize that in VP-focus or broad focus sentences, fronting must target the element that carries the default nuclear accent of the focused VP or the clause. This generalization doesn't need revision in those cases in which the object is not originally immediately preverbal, but is followed by a directional locative PP, such as (11) (taken from Fanselow 2004), in which the object still carries the nuclear accent in the canonical order (while the PP is prosodically integrated into the predicate).

(11) a. Wir haben ihm den roten HAHN aufs Dach gesetzt

we have him the.ACC red cock on.the roof put

'We set his house on fire.'

b. OK on idiomatic meaning:

[Den roten HAHN]<sub>i</sub> haben wir ihm \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> aufs Dach gesetzt.

c. \*on idiomatic meaning:

[Aufs DACH]<sub>i</sub> haben wir ihm den roten HAHN \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> gesetzt.

However, there are cases in which what gets fronted is not the nuclear element, but a pre-nuclear phrase, as in (12) (a point also made by Frey n.d.). In (12-a) it is the immediately preverbal goal PP that bears the nuclear accent by default,

but nevertheless it is the preceding object that gets fronted (12-b); the goal PP cannot be fronted across the accented object (12-c) (see also Müller 2003).

(12) *What happened?/What did he do?*

- a. Er hat die FLINte ins KORN geworfen.  
he has the.ACC gun into.the grain thrown  
'He has given up.'
- b. [Die FLINte]<sub>i</sub> hat er \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> ins KORN geworfen.
- c. #[Ins KORN]<sub>i</sub> hat er die FLINte \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> geworfen

(F&L 2011)

It seems, therefore, that the prosodic restriction formulated in (10) is all we need: (10) does not need to be augmented with a further constraint limiting the element fronted by SFF to the nuclear accent bearing phrase.

F&L propose an elaborate account of (10) based on a radically revised version of Fox and Pesetsky (2005) concept of monotonic cyclic linearization, in which each 'structural' accent triggers a cycle of linearization of terminal nodes. Space prevents me from going into the details and evaluation of their analysis here. Instead, I would like to raise the possibility of a different, purely prosody-based account that also seems to fit the autonomy bill.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4. An Alternative Prosodic Account**

This alternative, like F&L's, is rooted in the syntax-prosody interface, but it approaches the issue more from the prosodic side. In particular, it is based on a general assumption about prosodic edges, which I state informally in (13), concentrating on intonation phrases.

(13) By default, edges of Intonation Phrases are associated with higher prosodic prominence than Intonation Phrase medial positions.

(13) is usually directionally parameterized. For most stress-accent languages in which the issue has been studied, one obvious way in which (13) reveals itself is the alignment of the nuclear accent with the *right* edge of the Intonation Phrase. Not all languages have the same directional alignment, though. Hungarian, for instance, is a language that has its nuclear prominence left-aligned within the

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<sup>3</sup>This is an alternative I also discussed with Gisbert himself during a visit to Potsdam in 2013, which is why it seemed fitting to be presented in this celebratory piece.

Intonational Phrase (É. Kiss 1994, Szendrői 2003). What I'd like to capitalize on is the assumption that even though in languages like German the nuclear stress is aligned by default with the right edge, the left edge of the Intonational Phrase is not completely 'inactive' either: it is still associated with higher prominence than Intonational Phrase medial positions.

That special prosodic strength is associated with the left edge of Intonation Phrases is backed by the fact that the left edge is strong in a variety of prosodic domains across languages. Here I briefly mention a number of findings that support this point. From a phonetic perspective, there is abundant evidence for the phenomenon of domain-initial strengthening (e.g. longer duration), which occurs cross-linguistically in typologically distinct languages with very different prosodic systems (e.g. Fougeron 2001, Keating et al. 2003). Selkirk (2011) suggests a general constraint (StrongStart) that militates against the occurrence of prosodically dependent, weak elements (smaller than a prosodic word) at the left edge of prosodic constituents above the level of the word. For instance, European Portuguese proclitic words tend to be realized in their non-reduced form when they are in an Intonation Phrase initial position (Vigário 2003, Ch. 7). The special phonological prominence of initial positions is also shown by the fact that while segmental and featural contrasts may be neutralized in non-prominent positions, they are often maintained, among others, in both stressed syllables and in initial syllables (Beckman 1998).

The left edge is also a special prosodic position in relation to the distribution of pitch accents. For instance, European Portuguese (Frota 2003) and Irish (Elfner 2012, 2015) have left-edge-related pitch accents at the level of the intonational phrase and at the level of the prosodic phrase, respectively. Initiality accents occur at the left edge of a Prosodic Phrase located at the left edge of an Intonation Phrase in Stockholm Swedish (Roll et al. 2009), a language in which the nuclear accent is otherwise right-aligned within the Prosodic Phrase and Intonation Phrase it is contained in. Initiality accents share their shape and much of their phonological behaviour with focal accents (Bruce 2005). This makes them look like prominences in these varieties (Myrberg 2013). Fant (1984) proposes that in Spanish the leftmost pre-nuclear accent is more prominent than other pre-nuclear accents.

On the assumption that in a language like German the left edge of the Intonation Phrase is associated with higher prominence than all other positions excepting the rightmost one, we can describe default relative prominence relations according to the cline in (14).



- (14) Relative prominence relations in the Intonational Phrase (*German*) right edge > left edge > non-edge (medial)

According to (14), the most prominent position is the right edge, which is more prominent than the left edge, and the least prominent are medial positions that are between the two edges. One may model this straightforwardly in an Optimality Theoretic implementation by assuming the interaction of two constraints: a higher-ranked constraint demanding the right edge position to be more prominent than all other positions in the intonational phrase, and a lower-ranked counterpart of that constraint, requiring the left edge position to be more prominent than all other positions.

The predictions that follow from the assumption of the prominence of the left edge of the intonational phrase in German would be based on a common view of the interaction of default prosody and focus interpretation that is summarized here in (15) (Truckenbrodt 1995, Büring 2006, 2016):

- (15) a. A constituent that contains no subconstituent that is interpreted as a focus is realized with default prominence relations.  
b. A deviation from default prominence relations which results in higher relative prominence on some element A than it would otherwise receive in default prosody and lower relative prominence on some other element B than it would otherwise receive in default prosody indicates the information structurally marked focus status of element A, or of some constituent that contains A (unless the reduction of B's prominence has an independent trigger, such as givenness).

Consider stress shift in English from the object noun to the noun in the subject phrase, as in (16). In a neutral sentence with default prosody, the nuclear prominence falls on the object (16-a). By deviating from default prosody in (16-b) in making the noun *mother* more prominent than it would be in (16-a) and neighbour less prominent than it would be in (16-a), either *mother* or the containing NP *John's mother* is marked as a narrow focus.

- (16) a. [[John's mother] [saw [the NEIGHBOUR]]].  
b. [[John's MOTHER] [saw [the neighbour]]].

Arguably, this effect of marked prominence relations, described in (15), also

holds if it comes about due to (optional) syntactic reordering. For instance, Büring and Gutiérrez-Bravo (2002) analyze the effect of object scrambling over the subject in German in broadly similar (though technically significantly different) terms (see also Zubizarreta 1998, Neeleman and Reinhart 1998, Szendrői 2003, Samek-Ludovici 2005). In a basic SOV variant of (17) below, the object would carry the rightmost (i.e., nuclear, by definition most prominent) accent in default prosodic realization, corresponding to both broad focus or VP-focus readings. In (17), with OSV order due to scrambling, it is the subject that carries the nuclear accent. Because in (17) the subject is more prominent than the object, whereas in the neutral order it is the object that is prosodically more prominent than the subject, the non-default prominence relations in (17) are interpreted to mark focus on the subject.

- (17) *A*: Who's in charge of nominating the foreign minister?  
*B*: It is expected that...  
 ...den Aussenminister der KANZler ernennt.  
 ... the.ACC foreign.minister the chancellor nominates  
 '... the CHANCELLOR nominates the foreign minister.'

Taking this view of how deviations from default prosody license information structurally marked focus interpretations together with the assumption of the special prominence of intonation phrase edges (13)-(14), we actually derive F&L's generalization that only the first accented element can undergo SFF. This is what I will spell out in the remainder of the paper.

First let's take the case of fronting the nuclear accent bearing element (e.g. an object, O) across another accented element (e.g. an accented, informationally new subject, S), as in (9). In canonical word order, the accented object is the rightmost accented element, whose prominence is located at the right edge of the containing intonational phrase (marked by curly brackets below). Accordingly, the object bears the phonologically most prominent, nuclear accent of the sentence, while the subject bears a less prominent, pre-nuclear accent (18-a) (object>subject). If the subject gets fronted to Spec,CP, as in (18-b), the relative prominence relations will remain unchanged. The accent of the object will still be right-aligned with the right-edge of the intonational phrase, and will therefore qualify as the most prominent, nuclear accent. Consider now what would happen if the object got moved across the accented subject to Spec,CP. In such a case the subject would become the last accented

element, whose accent would be right-aligned with the right intonational phrase edge (18-c). The accent of the subject would then qualify as most prominent, nuclear accent of the clause, being more prominent than the fronted object (subject>object). This scenario then clearly deviates from the default prominence relations holding between the subject and the object in both (18-a) and (18-b), which is object>subject. The result, by virtue of (15), is that the subject in (18-c) will be interpreted as a narrow focus. It follows that if the targeted interpretation is broad focus or VP-focus (as is the case in SFF), the object cannot be fronted across an accented subject.

(18) The fronting of the nuclear accented phrase (O) across a pre-nuclear accented phrase (S):

- a. no fronting Relative prominence:  

$$[_{CP} C [_{TP} \dots \mathbf{S} \dots \mathbf{O} \dots ] ]$$

$$\{ \mathbf{S} \quad \mathbf{O} \} \quad \mathbf{O} \text{ (right-edge)} > \mathbf{S}$$
- b. fronting of first accented XP = S (pre-nuclear)  

$$[_{CP} \mathbf{S} C [_{TP} \dots (\mathbf{S}) \dots \mathbf{O} \dots ] ]$$

$$\{ \mathbf{S} \quad \mathbf{O} \} \quad \mathbf{O} \text{ (right-edge)} > \mathbf{S}$$
- c. fronting of second accented XP = O (= nuclear)  

$$[_{CP} \mathbf{O} C [_{TP} \dots \mathbf{S} \dots (\mathbf{O}) \dots ] ]$$

$$\{ \mathbf{O} \quad \mathbf{S} \} \quad \mathbf{S} \text{ (right-edge)} > \mathbf{O} !$$

Mutatis mutandis, the same account extends to the (unavailable) fronting in (12-c), where it is an accented goal locative that moves across an accented object. As the subject is given and therefore unaccented, the accent that counts as leftmost in the intonational phrase in the neutral version in (12-a) is the object.

Let's now take a prosodically more complex case in which all three elements in the syntactic scenario in (12) (namely, the subject S, the object O, and the goal locative L, following the object in a canonical order) are each accented. This is schematized in (19-a). If we front the first accented element, S, as in (19-b), the original prominence relations do not get changed, so the originally available sentence-wide (or VP-wide) focus interpretation remains licensed the same way as in (18-b) before. Consider now what happens if we front the second accented element, O, as in (19-c). Even though this second accented element was pre-nuclear in the canonical order and remains pre-nuclear in the fronted order, the original default prominence relations of the elements

changes: the O that is fronted to the left edge of the Intonational Phrase would now be more prominent than S, which ends up as medial. By (15) this would lead to a marked focus status of O (possibly as a member of a pair-focus involving O and L as the pair of phrases in narrow semantic focus). So if we want to keep to a broad focus (or VP-focus) interpretation, we cannot front O, we can only front S.<sup>4</sup>

(19) The fronting of a pre-nuclear accented phrase across another pre-nuclear accented phrase

a. no fronting: Relative prominence:  
 $[_{CP} C [_{TP} \dots \mathbf{S} \dots \mathbf{O} \dots \mathbf{L} \dots ] ]$   
 $\{ \quad \quad \quad \mathbf{S} \quad \mathbf{O} \quad \mathbf{L} \quad \quad \} \quad \mathbf{L} \text{ (right-edge)} > \mathbf{S}$

(left-edge) > **O**

b. fronting of first accented XP = S (pre-nuclear)  
 $[_{CP} \mathbf{S} C [_{TP} \dots (\mathbf{S}) \dots \mathbf{O} \dots \mathbf{L} \dots ] ]$   
 $\{ \mathbf{S} \quad \quad \quad \mathbf{O} \quad \mathbf{L} \quad \quad \} \quad \mathbf{L} \text{ (right-edge)} > \mathbf{S}$

(left-edge) > **O**

c. fronting of second accented XP = O (pre-nuclear)  
 $[_{CP} \mathbf{O} C [_{TP} \dots \mathbf{S} \dots (\mathbf{O}) \dots \mathbf{L} \dots ] ]$   
 $\{ \mathbf{O} \quad \quad \quad \mathbf{S} \quad \quad \quad \mathbf{L} \quad \quad \}$   
 $\mathbf{L} \text{ (right-edge)} > \underline{\mathbf{O} \text{ (left-edge)}} > \mathbf{S} !$

More generally, then, it is correctly predicted that both the fronting of a nuclear accented element across a pre-nuclear accented element and the fronting of a pre-nuclear accented element across another pre-nuclear accented element are incompatible with a broad (or VP) focus reading, because they result in a deviation from the (default) prominence relations that those readings require at the prosodic interface.

<sup>4</sup>Fronting L instead of O would be a mix of (18-c) and (19-c): it would demote S from left-edge prominence to medial non-prominence, while at the same time promoting O from medial non-prominence to right-edge nuclear prominence. That pattern is therefore also correctly excluded if the target is broad (or VP) focus interpretation.

## 5. Conclusion

F&L's (2011) account of SFF in German views these movements as triggered by the formal syntactic V2 restriction, and not by any formal IS-features. For them, SFF provides evidence that A-bar movement to CP is not directly associated with any IS role for the fronted phrase. They argue that the locality properties of SFF are not narrow syntactically, but prosodically conditioned, strengthening their position that SFF involves no syntactic IS- features.

I suggested here that the prosodic restriction that F&L establish, namely that it is the leftmost accented element that can get fronted in SFF, may follow from the way information structural interpretations are regulated at the syntax-prosody interface. The broad (or VP-) focus interpretation targeted by SFF requires default prominence relations, but movement to the left edge of the intonational phrase across an accented element introduces a deviation from these, because not only the right, but also the left edge of intonational phrases is associated with special phonological prominence.

The prosodic account put forward here is only a rough outline. If it was on the right track, however, it would be a perfect fit for the approach to syntax persistently defended by Gisbert Fanselow, according to which syntax does not speak to information structure directly, but only through the prosodic interface.

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