

The Swabian first person singular pronoun at the syntax–prosody interface

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HeadLex 2016

Swabian 1st person singular nominative pronoun (1SgNom)

- Dialect spoken in Southern Germany by appr. 800.000 speakers



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- In contrast to Standard German (“ich”), Swabian distinguishes between three realisations of the 1SgNom: full form [i:], enclitic form [ə] and pronoun drop
- This involves a complex interplay between the syntax–prosody interface, postlexical phonology, information–structure, and the lexicon.

Table of contents/Sources for the talk

→ Structure of the talk

- ➊ Differentiation between [ə] and [i:]
- ➋ Pronoun drop and *n*-insertion
- ➌ Analysis at the syntax–prosody interface

→ My sources for Swabian

- ➊ Literature (e.g., Bohnacker (2013) and Haag-Merz (1996)), Dialect version of *Asterix*
 - ➋ Corpus work: Zwirner corpus (IDS Mannheim)
 - not annotated – extracted relevant clauses by hand
 - 4h 48 minutes (so far) ⇒ 285 occurrences of 1SgNom
 - ➌ Online Questionnaire: still running (only preliminary results; N=31 (-6N))
- ⇒ The data in this talk is what a strong majority would agree with.

1. Distinguished by focus

Depending on focus: two realizations of the Swabian 1SgNom pronoun

- (1) jetzt koch [ə] ebbes wo bloß [i:] kenn
 Now cook 1SG.NOM something of.which just 1SG.NOM know
 'Now I will cook something of which just I know.'

⇒ True for **any type of focus!**

- (2) Den hab [i:] net gewählt
 That one have 1SG.NOM not voted for
 'I did not vote for that one!'

FOCUS defined as in Krifka (2007, following Rooth (1985, 1996)):

Focus indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions.

2. Determined by linear position in the clause

1SgNom in initial position is **always** [i:]

Question: Preverbal position in German main clause is a TOPIC position.
Is [i:] thus reserved for the TOPIC part of an expression?

(3) Heut morga wared d'Handwerker da. Dann ben [ə] eikaufa ganga.
today morning were the craftsmen there then am I shopping went
'This morning, the craftsmen were here. (Afterwards) I went shopping.'

→ [ə] is (a) topic – so [ə] is not *per se* excluded from the topic position.

⇒ Sentence-initial [i:] is rather determined by prosodic constraints: as [ə] is an **enclitic**, it cannot occur in the first position of an intonational phrase.

3. Frame setting

Krifka (2007): Whenever a FRAME is set, within which the expression should be interpreted, e.g.,

A: How is John?

B: [Healthwise]_{Frame}, he is fine.

During FRAME setting, [i:] is *preferred*:

- (4) Mir hen koine Sämaschin khet solang [i:] no en dr schul war
 We have not seeder had as long as I still in the school was
 "We did not have any seeders while I was still at school."

⇒ FRAMES are 'close' to focus, as they imply alternative sets

4. Topic shift/Givenness

[i:] is *preferred* to reintroduce 1SgNom as a topic (topic shift, inactivated discourse referent)

(5) Speaker 172 after she was asked what she did after school:

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|------------|--------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|----------|
| Nach | dr | Schul | ben | [i:] | dahoim | gwea, | da |
| After | the | school | am | I | at home | been | there |
| ha | [ə] | müssa | em | Vater | helpa | Bäum | schneida |
| have | I | must | the | father | help | trees | cut |

“After school I was at home where I had to help my father to cut the trees”

⇒ Indicates a certain GIVENNESS hierarchy among [i:] and [ə]

Givenness hierarchy

General assumption: forms that are mentally highly activated are those with the least phonetic content → unstressed pronouns, zero pronominals ... (Gundel et al. 1993 (and references therein), Baumann (2008))

Givenness hierarchy

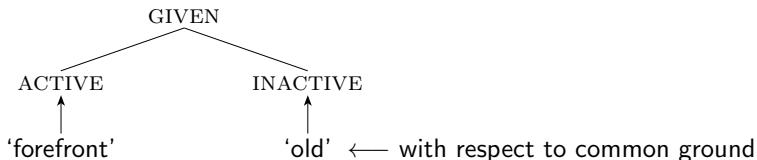
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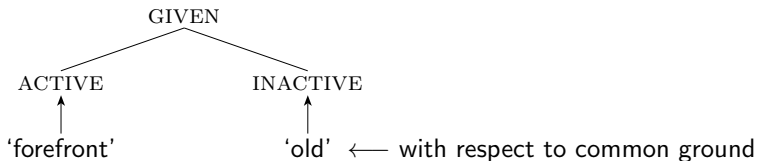
- [i:] and [ə] are lexically GIVEN: whenever they appear in a discourse, their denotation is completely identifiable
- Further distinction: [ə] means that the referent is highly activated; [i:] means that the referent is less activated.



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Note: This can be overruled by FOCUS/FRAMESETTING or sentence position.

An example from the corpus

(6) Speaker 175 answering the question if he could still work as a meat inspector

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Körperlich Physically | wär were | i _{activate} I | heut today | no still | fähig, able |
| bloß only | seha see | du do | e _{active} I | nemme no more | gut, well |
| i _{initial} I | be am | in in | oim one | Aug eye | blind. blind [...] |
| jetzt Now | het would | i _{focus} I | [...] en guda a good | Fleischschauer meat inspector | gea, be |
| [...] jetzt Now | seh see | e _{active} I | bloß only | no in just in | oim Aug. one eye |

“Physically I would still be able, but I don't see well anymore. I am blind in one eye. I would be a good meat inspector now as I can see in only one eye.”

Intermediate summary: Distinction between [i:] and [ə]

[i:] is used in

- 1 the initial position of an intonational phrase (→ syntax–prosody interface)
- 2 contexts with 'alternatives': focus/frame setting (→ information structure)
- 3 activation contexts: topic shift and first mention (→ information structure)

[ə] is used everywhere else.

What about the third option, the pronoun drop?

(Optional) Pronoun drop

Third 'form' is constrained by postlexical phonology.

Several conditions have to be met in that case:

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- 2 The pronoun has to be part of a clitic cluster
 → *jɛtst kɔx *(=ə) ɛbəs ...*

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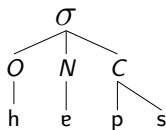
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→ *jɛtst kɔx *(=ə) ɛbəs ...*
- 3 A valid syllable structure has to be preserved

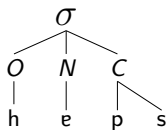
Valid syllable structure

(7) i: hep=s ufgmaxt
 1SG.NOM have.1SG.PRS=3SG.N.ACC open.PRF
 'I opened it.'

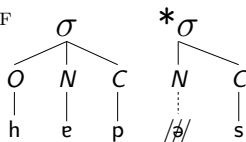


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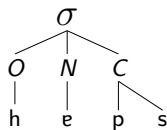


- (8) *gɛʃten hep=∅=s ufgmaxt
 Yesterday have.1SG.PRS(=1SG.NOM)=3SG.N.DAT open.PRF
 'Yesterday, (I) opened it.'

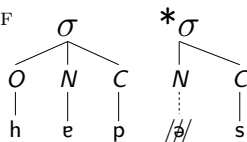


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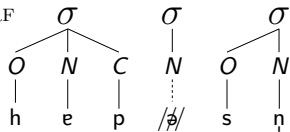
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- (9) hap= \emptyset =s= η ufgmaxt
 have.1SG.PRS(=1SG.NOM)=3SG.N.ACC=then open.PRF
 'Did (I) open it?'



Prosodic grouping of clitics: Evidence from *n*-insertion

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⇒ *n*-insertion follows *subject deletion*

Intermediate summary

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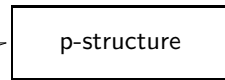
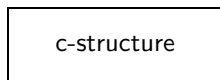
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 - a valid syllable structure has to be preserved
- The prosodic grouping is that of a nested prosodic word: ((host)_ω cl cl)_ω
 - Determined through the analysis of *n-insertion*: ((host)_ω n-cl cl)_ω

The syntax–prosody interface (as in Bögel (2015))

production →

← comprehension



Transfer of structure

lexicon

*Transfer of vocabulary
via the*

multidimensional lexicon

| CONCEPT | S-FORM | P-FORM |
|---------|--------|--------|
| ... | ... | ... |

| | | |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------|
| ↑ | ↑ | ↑ |
| PHRASING | (... ..) _ω | |
| ... | ... | ... |
| SEGMENTS | /am/ | /ra/ |
| V.-INDEX | S ₁ | S ₂ |

Analysis at the syntax → prosody interface: Production

- (14) vaɪf du: vo:(=(n-)ə)=sə nɔ̃: han
 know.2SG.PRS 2SG.NOM where(=(n-)1SG.NOM)=3SG.F.ACC there have.1SG.PRS
 'Do you know where I put her?'

Three possible surface variations of the clitic cluster:

- ... vo:=ə=sə ...
- ... vo:=n-ə=sə ...
- ... vo:=∅=sə ...

Transfer of vocabulary

s-string
... wo i sie n̄õ han

ρ

p-structure

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| PHRASING | ... | ... | $(\sigma)_\omega$ | $=\sigma$ | $=\sigma$ | $(\sigma)_\omega$ | $(\sigma)_\omega$ |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| LEX. STRESS | ... | ... | prim | - | - | prim | prim |
| SEGMENTS | ... | ... | /vo:/ | /ə/ | /sə/ | /n̄õ:/ | /han/ |
| V.-INDEX | S₁ | S₂ | S₃ | S₄ | S₅ | S₆ | S₇ |

Lexicon

| S-FORM | P-FORM | SEGMENTS | MET. FRAME |
|--|--------|----------|-------------------|
| wo | [vo:] | /v o:/ | ('σ) _ω |
| i ... ¬(FOCUS ↑ _i) (↑ _i GIVEN = _c active)} | [ə] | /ə/ | =σ |
| sie | [sə] | /s ə/ | =σ |
| n̄õ | [n̄õ:] | /n̄ õ:/ | ('σ) _ω |

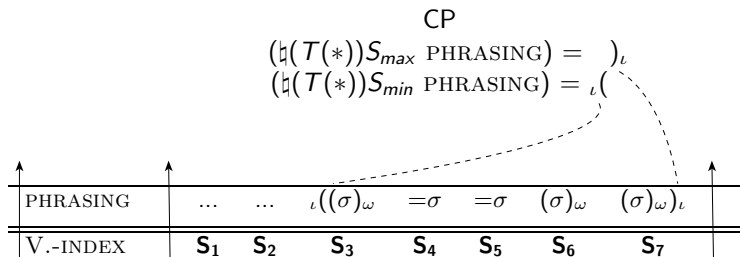
Transfer of structure

→ Syntactic bracketing:

vaiʃ du: [vo:(= (n-)ə)=sə nõ: han]_{CP}

→ Every CP matches an Intonational Phrase (ι) (Selkirk 2011):

- where $\natural(\equiv \rho(\pi^{-1}))$
- where S_{max} refers to the *last* syllable within the scope of CP
- where S_{min} refers to the *first* syllable within the scope of CP



Input to p-structure

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| PHRASING | ... | ... | $\iota((\sigma)_\omega)$ | $=\sigma$ | $=\sigma$ | $(\sigma)_\omega$ | $(\sigma)_\omega)_\iota$ |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| LEX. STRESS | ... | ... | prim | - | - | prim | prim |
| SEGMENTS | ... | ... | /vo:/ | /ə/ | /sə/ | /nɔ̃:/ | /han/ |
| V.-INDEX | S₁ | S₂ | S₃ | S₄ | S₅ | S₆ | S₇ |

- Input to p-structure: combination of *transfer of structure* and *transfer of vocabulary*

Input to p-structure

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| PHRASING | ... | ... | ${}_{\iota}((\sigma)_{\omega})$ | $=\sigma$ | $=\sigma$ | $(\sigma)_{\omega}$ | $(\sigma)_{\omega}{}_{\iota}$ |
| ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| LEX. STRESS | ... | ... | prim | - | - | prim | prim |
| SEGMENTS | ... | ... | /vo:/ | /ə/ | /sə/ | /nĩ:/ | /han/ |
| V.-INDEX | S₁ | S₂ | S₃ | S₄ | S₅ | S₆ | S₇ |

- Input to p-structure: combination of *transfer of structure* and *transfer of vocabulary*
- Further adjustments: p-structure internal postlexical phonological rules

Postlexical phonological rules

- 1 prosodic rephrasing: $\omega_j = (?+)_\alpha^n \rightarrow (\omega \omega_j (?+)_\alpha^n)_\omega \Rightarrow \mathbf{vo:=\text{a}=s\text{a}}$

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|---|----------------|----------------|
| ↑ | PHRASING | ((σ) $_\omega$ = σ = σ) $_\omega$ | | |
| ↑ | SEGMENTS | [vo:] | [ə] | [sə] |
| V.-INDEX | | S ₃ | S ₄ | S ₅ |
| | | | | ... |

- 2 optional subject deletion: $(\text{ə} \rightarrow \emptyset) /)_\omega(\sigma -)_\sigma \sigma +)_\omega \Rightarrow \mathbf{vo:=s\text{a}}$

| | | | |
|----------|----------|--|----------------|
| ↑ | PHRASING | ((σ) $_\omega$ = σ) $_\omega$ | |
| ↑ | SEGMENTS | [vo:] | [sə] |
| V.-INDEX | | S ₃ | S ₄ |
| | | | ... |

- 3 optional n-insertion: $(\emptyset \rightarrow [n]) / (\omega(\omega ?^* V)_\omega (\sigma - V \dots)_\omega \Rightarrow \mathbf{vo:=n-\text{a}=s\text{a}}$

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|---|----------------|----------------|
| ↑ | PHRASING | ((σ) $_\omega$ = σ = σ) $_\omega$ | | |
| ↑ | SEGMENTS | [vo:] | [nə] | [sə] |
| V.-INDEX | | S ₃ | S ₄ | S ₅ |
| | | | | ... |

Conclusion

The 1SgNom pronoun in Swabian:

- ⇒ All three forms can be analysed with reference to the syntax–prosody interface, postlexical phonology, information structure, and the lexicon
 - Two *lexical* forms [i:] and [ə]
- distinguished via the lexicon with reference to information-structure and by linear order at the syntax–prosody interface
 - An optional *postlexical* pronoun drop
- determined by postlexical phonology

Thank you!

Comments? Questions?

Some references

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