

Shifting Prominence: Grammatical Factors, Cross-linguistic Differences

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Germanic and Romance languages differ in how prosody is affected by information structure. Ladd (2008), e.g., observes contrasts between English and Italian that reveal differences in how argument structure and information structure affect prosody. These differences seem to generalize to other Romance and Germanic languages (see Swerts et al. 2002, Swerts 2007 for experimental evidence on Dutch, Italian, and Romanian). Using experimental evidence (mainly from English and French), this paper explores the semantic, syntactic, and phonological underpinnings of the prosodic differences, and their repercussions in grammar, including their influence on what types of rhyme are considered artistic in poetry.