

Givenness perception in declaratives vs. exclamatives

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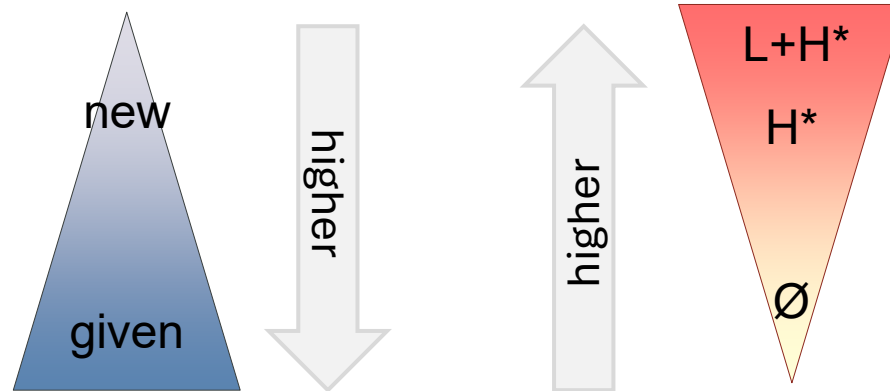
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SFB 1252
PROMINENCE
IN LANGUAGE

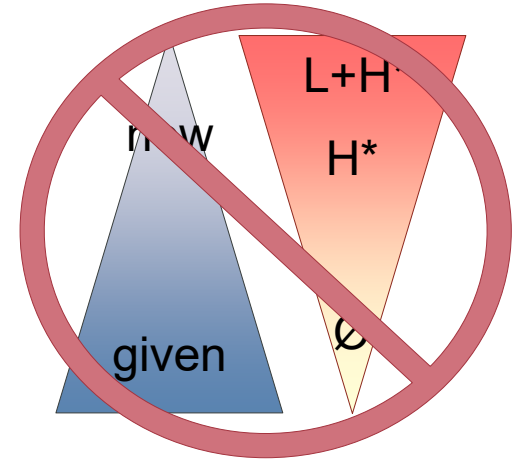
Prosodic prominence in statements

West Germanic languages: Inverse relationship between
discourse prominence and prosodic prominence



Exclamatives in German

Hat **die** scharfe **Suppen** gegessen!
 has she spicy soups eaten
 '(Boy,) did she eat spicy soups!'



Production studies

- **Exclamative accent**: early, prominent accent, often on **given material** (e.g., pronouns like *die*)
- Given material: **no deaccentuation**, little phonetic reduction

Exclamatives in German

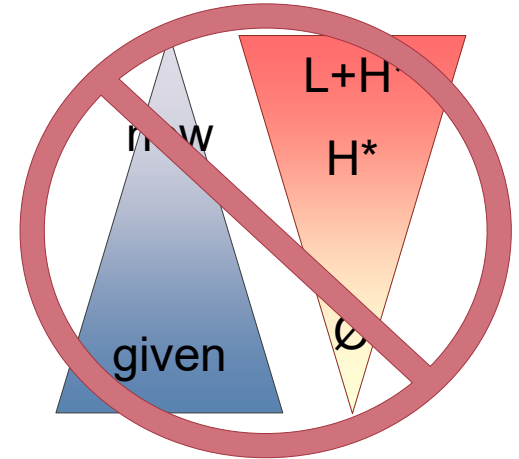
Findings from

- multiple production studies
- different exclamative types (polar, *wh*)

Prosodic **constructional default** of exclamatives

- longer duration
- prominent pitch accent(s)
- strong pre-nuclear accent preferred: double-accent structure

↪ Default **overwrites** givenness marking



Research Question: differences in *production* → differences in *perception*?

The present study

Context-free presentation of declaratives and exclamatives

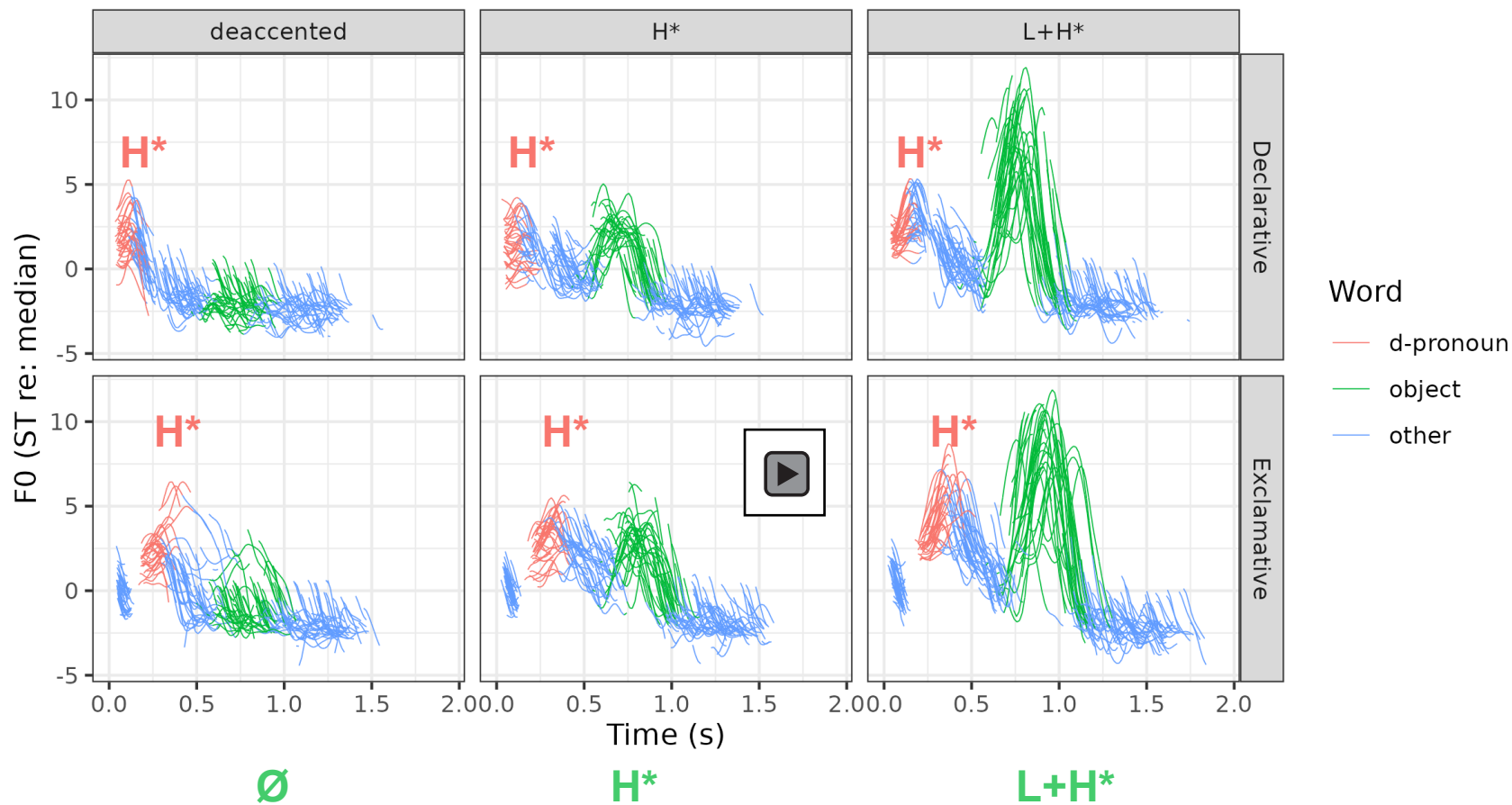
- (1) Die hat scharfe **Suppen** gegessen.
- (2) Hat die scharfe **Suppen** gegessen!
- has she spicy soups eaten

*cf. Röhr & Baumann
(2011) for declaratives*

Three prosodic conditions

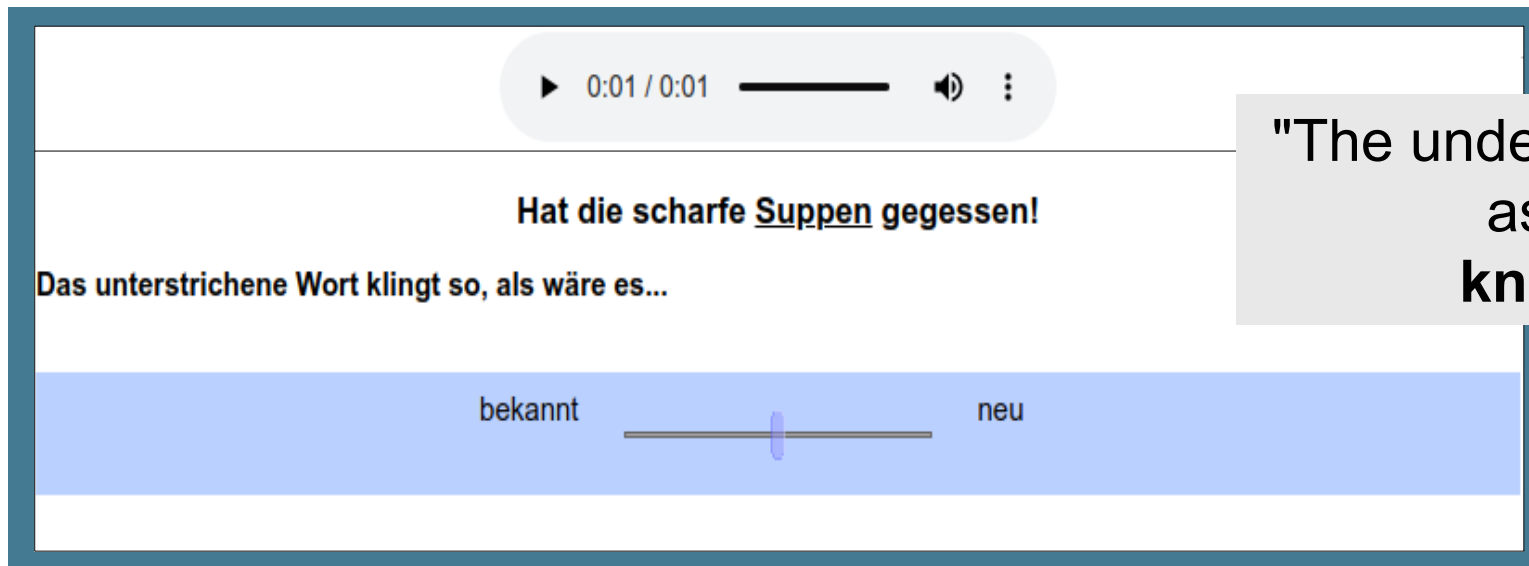
- i. Object **deaccented**
- ii. Object with **H***
- iii. Object with **L+H*** (or extra emphasis, if you prefer)

The stimuli



Method

- 34 participants (11 female, mean age: 36.7; from Prolific)
- 36 target sentences in six conditions (Latin Square)
- Task: Givenness judgment on continuous scale



0:01 / 0:01

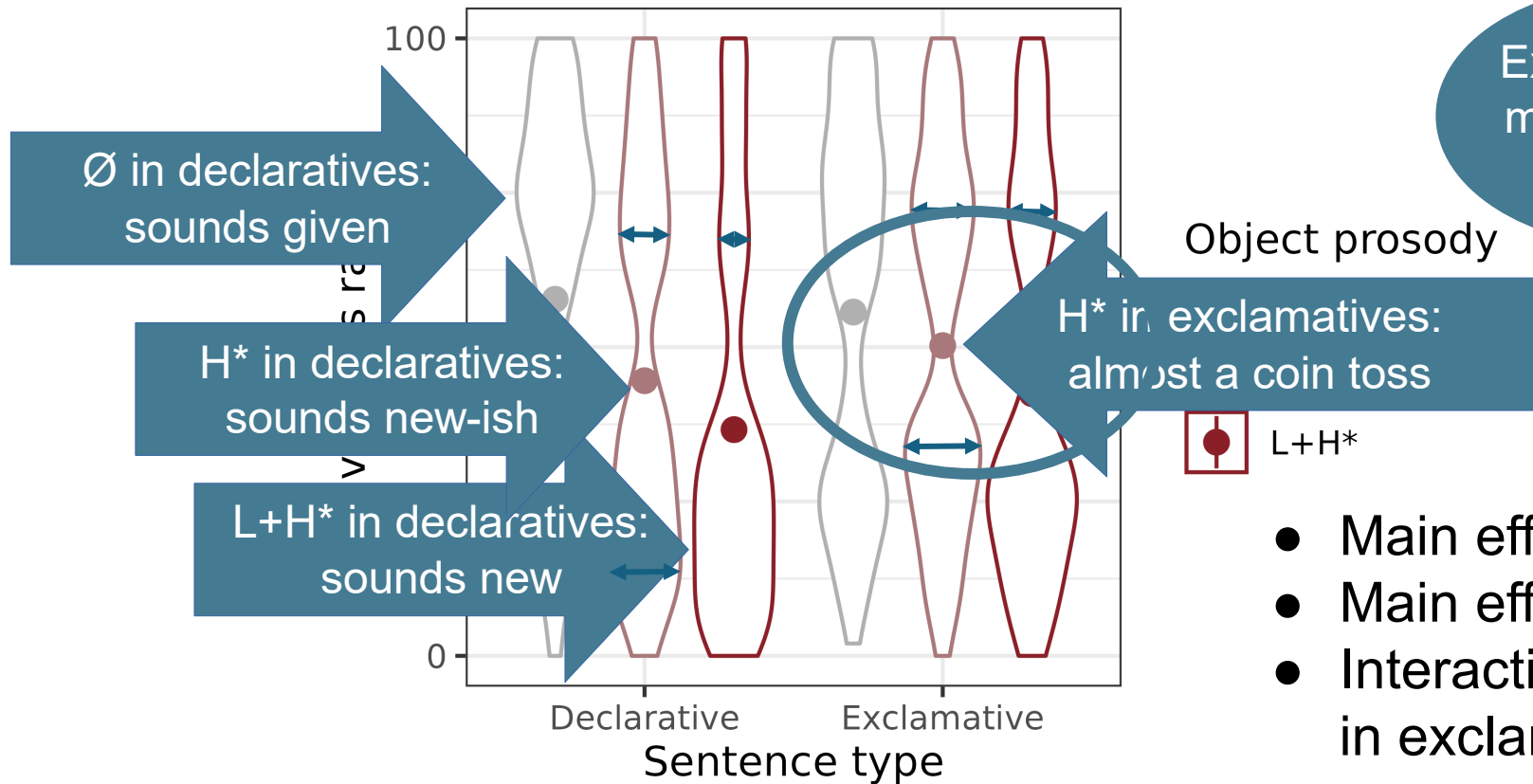
Hat die scharfe Suppen gegessen!

Das unterstrichene Wort klingt so, als wäre es...

bekannt ————— neu

"The underlined word sounds
as if it was...
known – new"

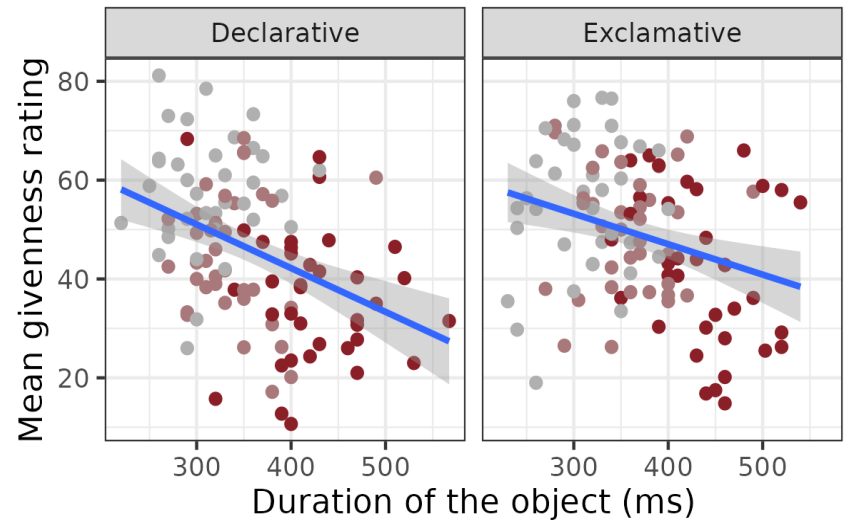
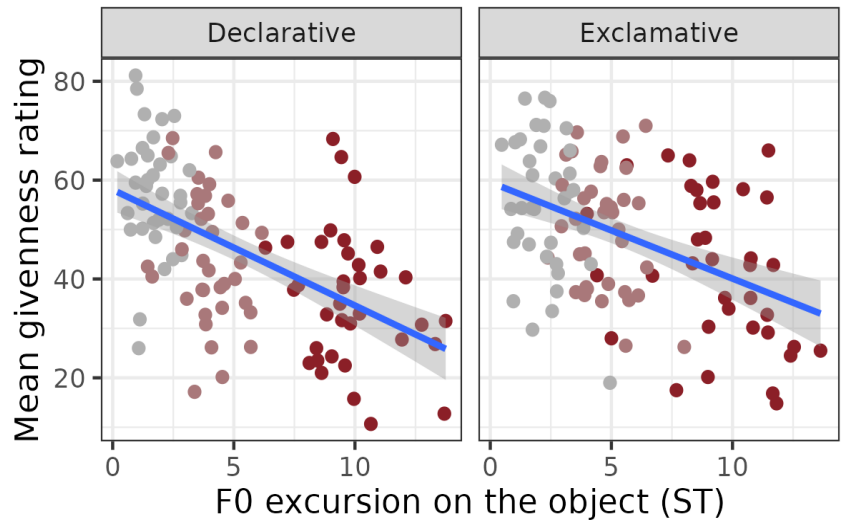
Results



Exclamatives:
means closer
together

- Main effect 1: $L+H^* < H^*$
- Main effect 2: Accent $< \emptyset$
- Interaction: ME 2 smaller in exclamatives

Results in relation to acoustics of stimuli



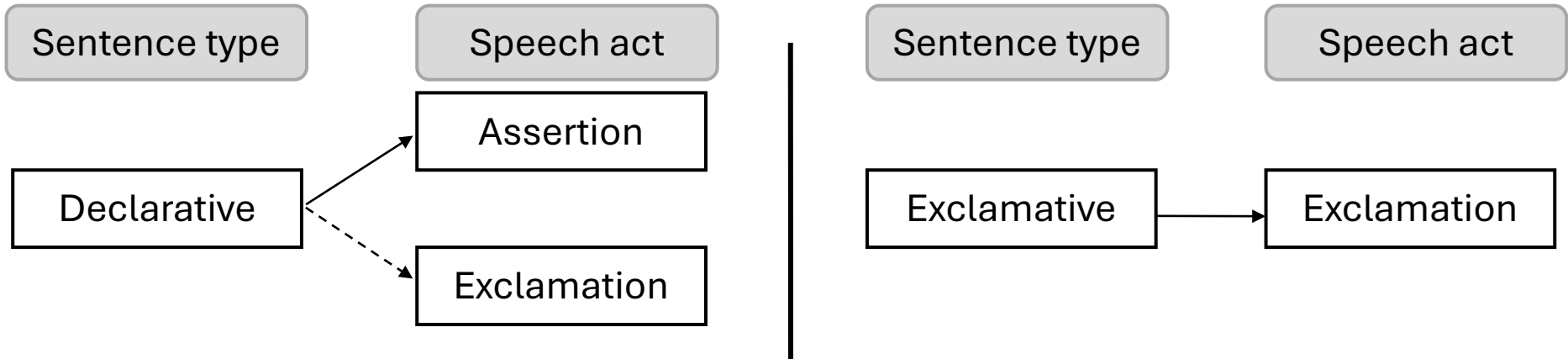
Object prosody ● deaccented ● H* ● L+H*

Object prosody ● deaccented ● H* ● L+H*

Discussion

Why are differences in production larger than in perception?

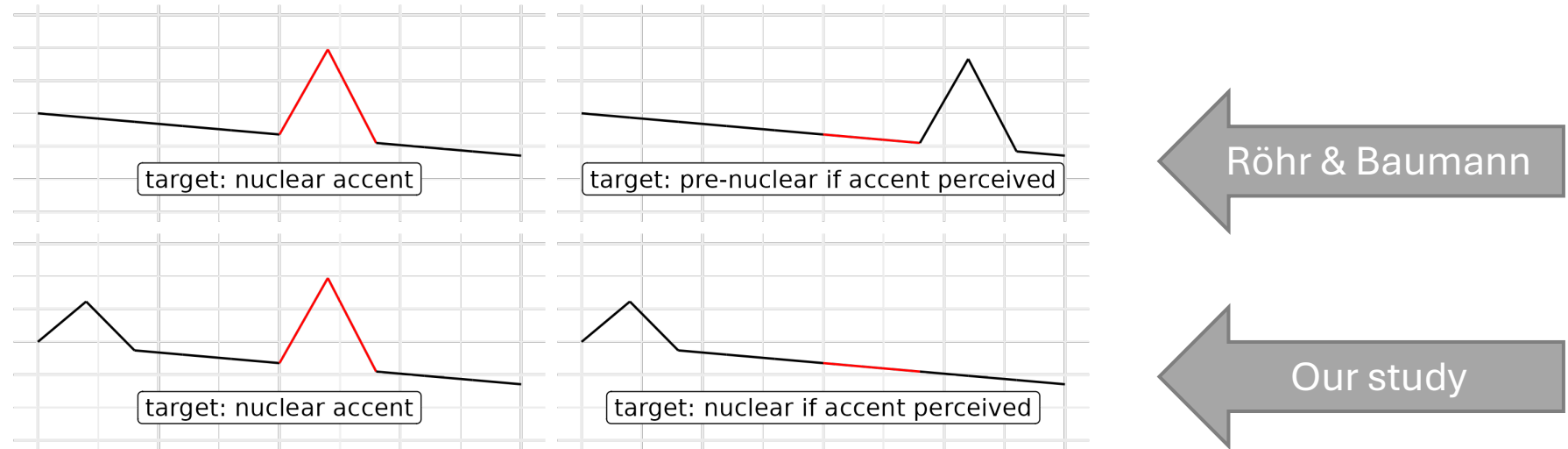
- Declaratives can be used as **exclamations**.
- **Accent on pronoun** strengthens this reading.
- Smaller differences between sentence type conditions?



Discussion

Lower givenness ratings than in Röhr & Baumann (2011)?

- **Bare plural** (here) vs. definite article (R&B)
- Deaccented object **followed** by nuclear accent (R&B) or not → clearer **accent shift** & givenness signal in R&B



Conclusion & Outlook

- **New–given scale**

- Same general order of $L+H^* < H^* < \emptyset$ in exclamatives as in declaratives
- But **accentuation** is **more compatible with givenness** in exclamatives

- **Multifunctionality of prosody**

- Competitive requirements of **different pragmatic functions**

Prosodic prominence in exclamatives also marks the speech act (constructional default) → less clear signal for information structure

- **Implications**

- Other pragmatic interactions?
- Cross-linguistic observations?

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