

**The processing of Italian nuclear and non-nuclear accents
by L1-German-L2-Italian listeners**

Jacopo Torregrossa

Goethe University (Frankfurt am Main)

(joint work with Martine Grice, Diana Kolev and Petra Schumacher)

The present study investigates whether L1-German-L2-Italian listeners differ from Italian native listeners in their sensitivity to nuclear (narrow focus) vs. non-nuclear (prenuclear broad focus and post-focal accents) accents during sentence processing.

We use listeners' speed of detection of semantic incongruence during sentence processing as an indicator of processing depth. In particular, we test if listeners detect semantic incongruence more easily when the associated constituent carries a nuclear accent than when it carries a non-nuclear accent.

The results show that among native speakers, nuclear pitch accents, but not non-nuclear accents, speed up the detection of incongruent information. For L2-listeners, by contrast, nuclear accents do not facilitate the processing of incongruent information: L2-listeners' judgements are faster with semantically congruent than semantically incongruent information, across all accent types.

The results will be discussed in view of the mechanisms that affect L2-processing, including shallow processing, language proficiency and cross-linguistic effect. With respect to the last point (cross-linguistic effects), we will discuss the difference between German and Italian in the extent to which the two languages attenuate given information, especially post-focally.