

## **Mapping focus across European languages: prosodic and syntactic strategies in native and non-native speech**

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This presentation offers an overview of my research on the prosodic and syntactic marking of focus across Romance and Germanic languages, based on data from both native and L2 speakers. Experimental results from Italian and French illustrate how melodic contours, phrasing, and syntactic structures interact to encode information-structural categories such as narrow and contrastive focus. These patterns are further shaped by cross-linguistic influence and individual variation in L2 production.

The comparison between Italian and French is particularly revealing: despite their genealogical proximity, the two languages differ significantly in syntactic constraints, prosodic organization, and phonological systems. These structural differences make focus realization especially challenging for learners, while also offering a rich domain for observing L2 acquisition dynamics and prosodic transfer.

In the second part of the talk, I will present ongoing work involving additional language typologies (e.g., L1 Russian and German), and outline the upcoming data collection within the CRC 1252 “Prominence in Language” project in Cologne. This new phase extends the investigation to native and non-native German and Italian, aiming to identify which prosodic features are used to mark focus, and how these interact with syntactic and discourse structures in typologically diverse contexts.

The study builds on the methodology developed in previous projects, while introducing refined tasks and new experimental designs that emerged from earlier findings. The integration of new German data with the existing French, Italian, and Russian L1–L2 corpus is expected to provide a robust empirical basis for typological modeling and a deeper understanding of L2 prosody in multilingual settings.