

From ToBI Phonological Events to Functional Melodic Forms at the Information Structure Level



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Romanian Broad Focus Statements

(A+T)/(P+F)

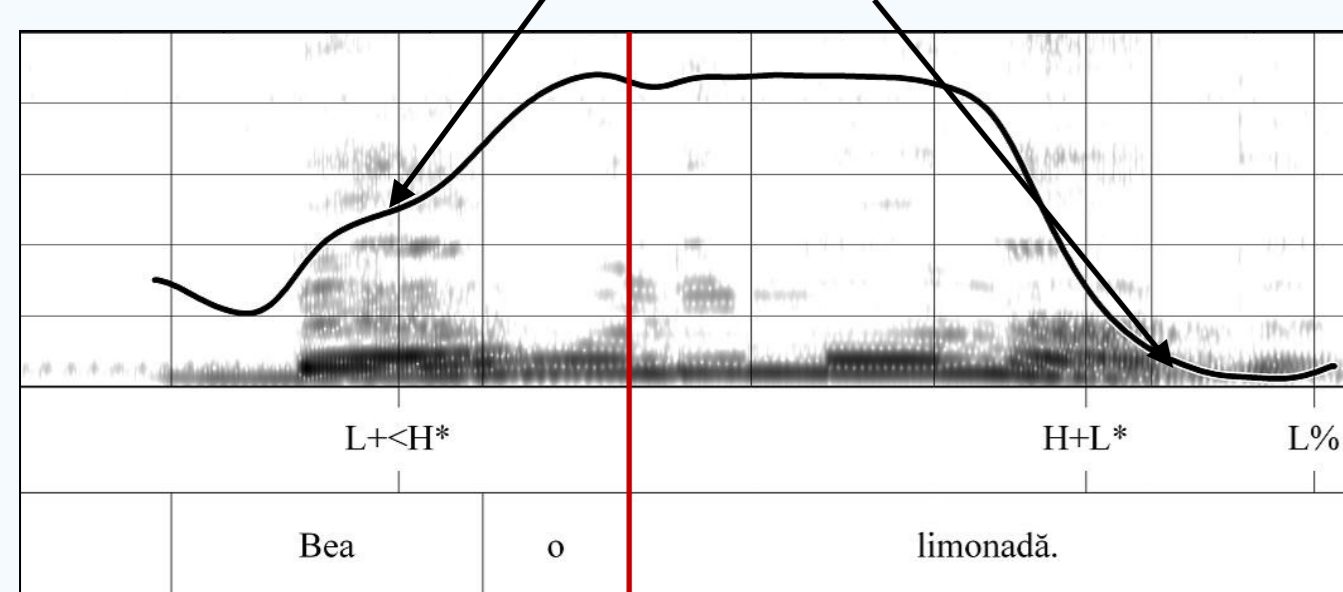


Fig 2. The F0 contour of the statement *Bea o limonadă* 'She drinks lemonade'. The left arrow targets the low part of the late rising pitch accent (T-mark) and the right arrow, the low part of the bitonal falling pitch accent which marks the focus element of the utterance.

Communicative Units

□ The utterance hierarchy can be based on a single domain type at the communicative level:

Communicative Unit (CU)

□ At the communicative level the intonation plays a role in:

➢ delimitation CUs and CU constituents by means of prosodic phrasing;

➢ marking the CU constituents as functional elements at the IS level by applying specific accentual patterns.

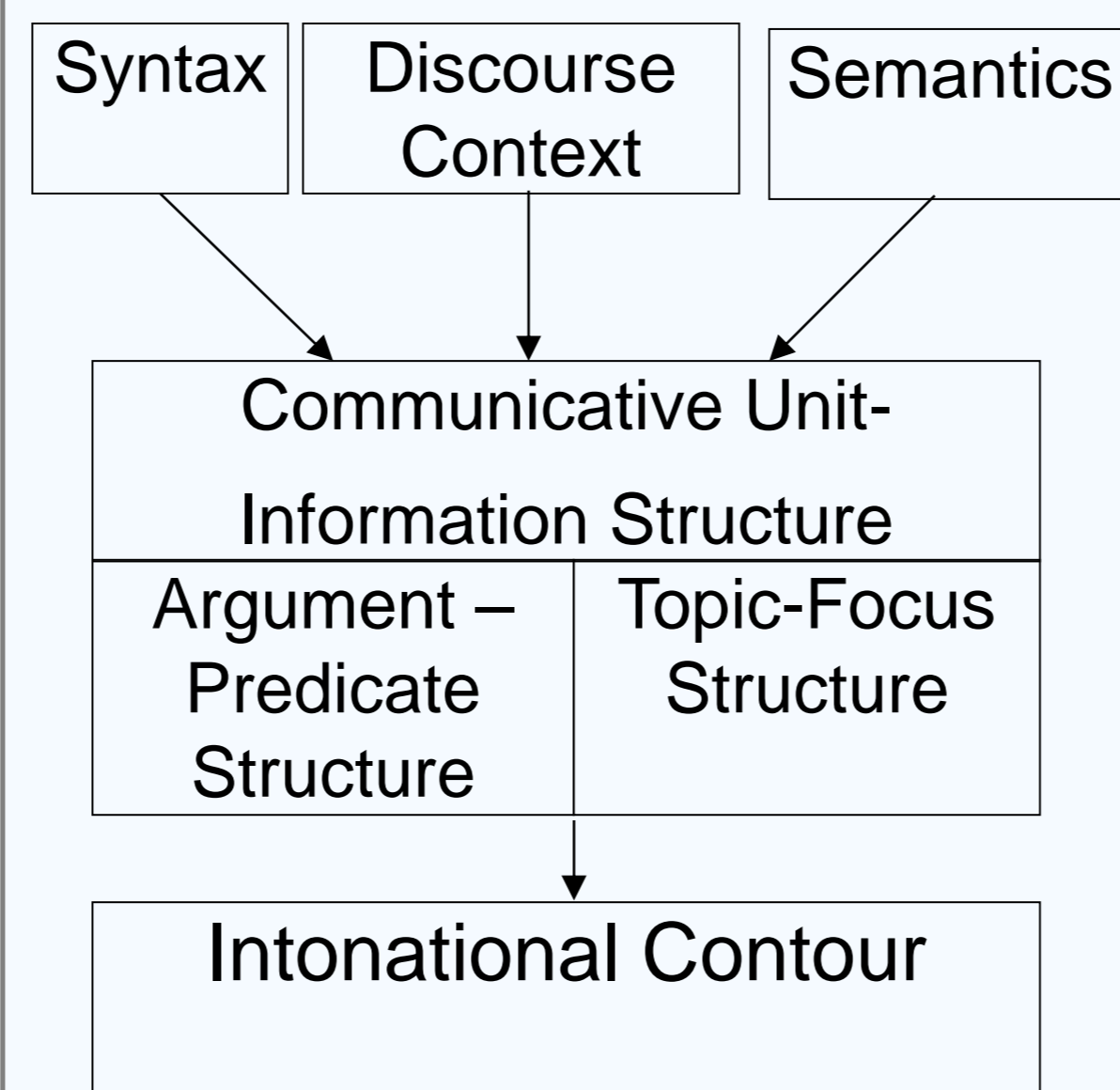


Fig 1. A communicative view on the intonational contour

Information Structure

□ Information Structure (IS) represents the CU content.

□ Information Structure has two independent levels:

➢ A *relational* "given-new" structure producing "Topic-Focus" or "Focus-Topic" partitions;

➢ A *referential* "given-new" structure with *general reference* and *added reference* elements.

Functional accentual patterns

□ Accentual patterns are elementary melodic forms which can be directly related to functions at the IS level.

□ Accentual patterns at word level may or not include pitch accents with tonal prominences.

□ Accentual patterns related to constituents of CUs have complementary functions. One of them may be prominent.

□ An embedded CU is a functional non-elementary constituent at the higher level CU.

Referential "given-new" Structure

□ The "object" of a communication unit has *general* and *added references*. The *general reference* element corresponds to the global predicate at the enounce level or to a local one at lower level CUs. It is named *predicatul enunțiativ* in Romanian.

□ The referential "given-new" structure can be modeled by using the general Predicate-Argument structure.

□ The two elements of the Predicate-Argument structure are named in this referential IS model by CU-Predicate and CU-Argument elements.

The Legend of IS descriptions:

T - Topic; **F** - Focus; **P** - CU-Predicate; **A** - CU-Argument

"+" - links the two functional labels of one CU constituent

"/" - delimits the constituents within CU partitioning descriptions

[...] - encloses the description of embedded CUs within their higher level CUs

Conclusions

□ The Intonation plays a role in implementing the mechanism of information packaging at the communicative act level by using prosodic phrasing and specific accentual patterns for marking corresponding IS elements.

□ The model proposes an utterance tree built at the communicative level by means of a single communicative domain type named *Communicative Unit (CU)*.

□ A communicative unit has an Information Structure content. At the utterance level a nested Information Structure results.

□ Information Structure has two independent structure levels: The relational "given-new" structure and the referential "given-new" structure.

□ In broad focus statements, both types of partitions are possible. We have to relate them to different type of focuses and to different semantic contexts.

□ The F0 patterns of the prosodic word and phrase level are language specific, but there are acoustic cues with a general significance (e.g. the late L+H* pitch accent always marks a topic constituent).

□ This presentation proposes an utterance partitioning description based on this two level IS model.

Epistemically-biased Statements

(P+T)/(A+F)

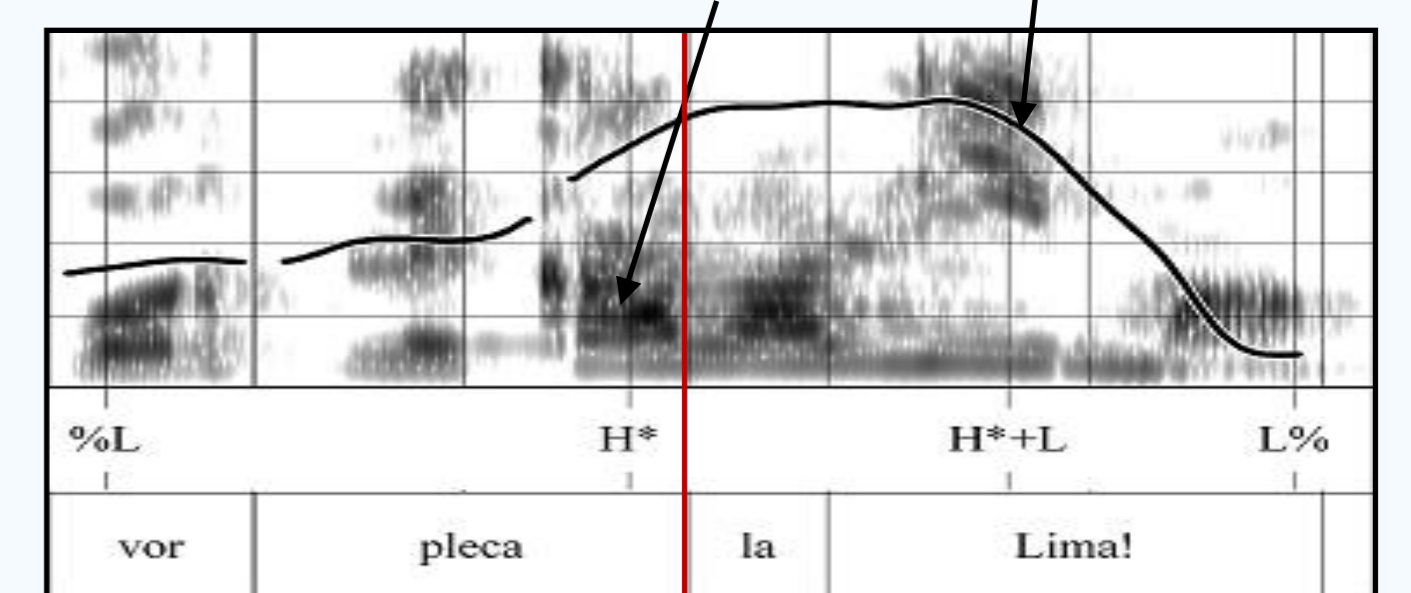


Fig 6. The F0 contour of the statement (*Banu*)*Vor pleca la Lima.* 'No, they will go to Lima!'. The left arrow targets the F2 track within the H* pitch accent. Its variation during the accented syllable is a T-mark for the first constituent. The right arrow points to the tonal prominence associated with the focus constituent in the narrow focus statement.

(A+T)/[(A+T)/(P+F)]P+F

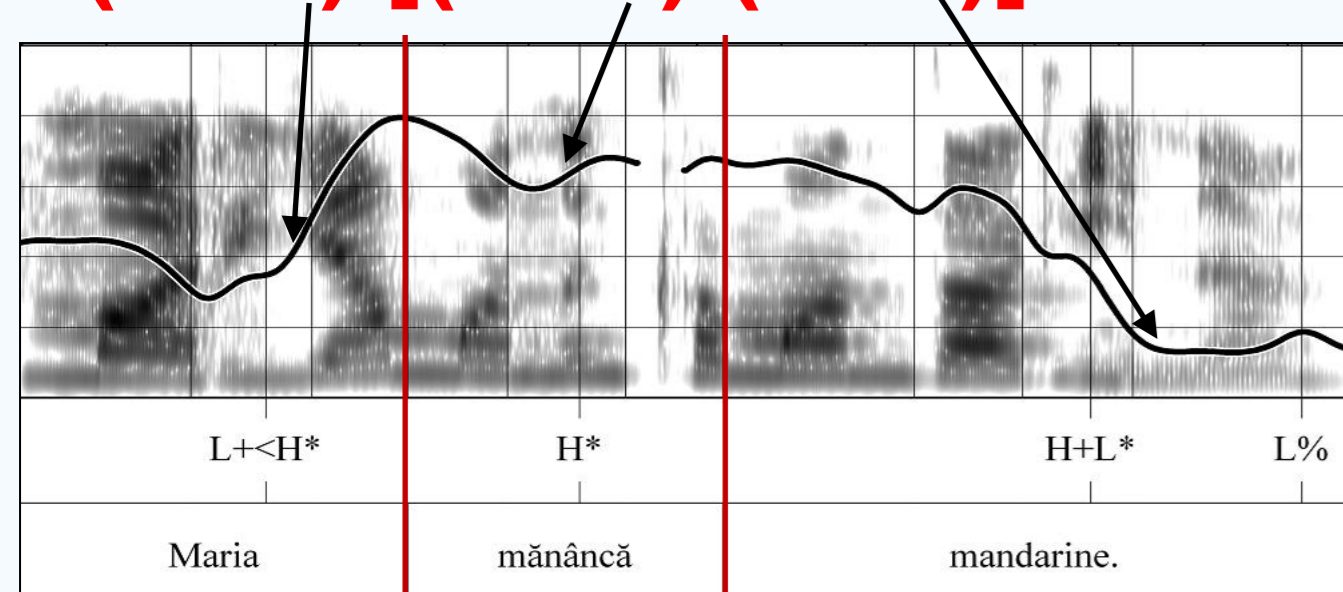


Fig 3. The F0 contour of the statement *Maria mănâncă mandarine* 'Maria eats tangerines'. The second arrow points to the H* pitch accent which occurs within a fall-rise pattern (T-mark). It marks the topic constituent of the embedded CU corresponding to the verbal phrase. This CU has the focus function at the global CU level.

(P+T) / [(A+F) / (P+T)]A+F

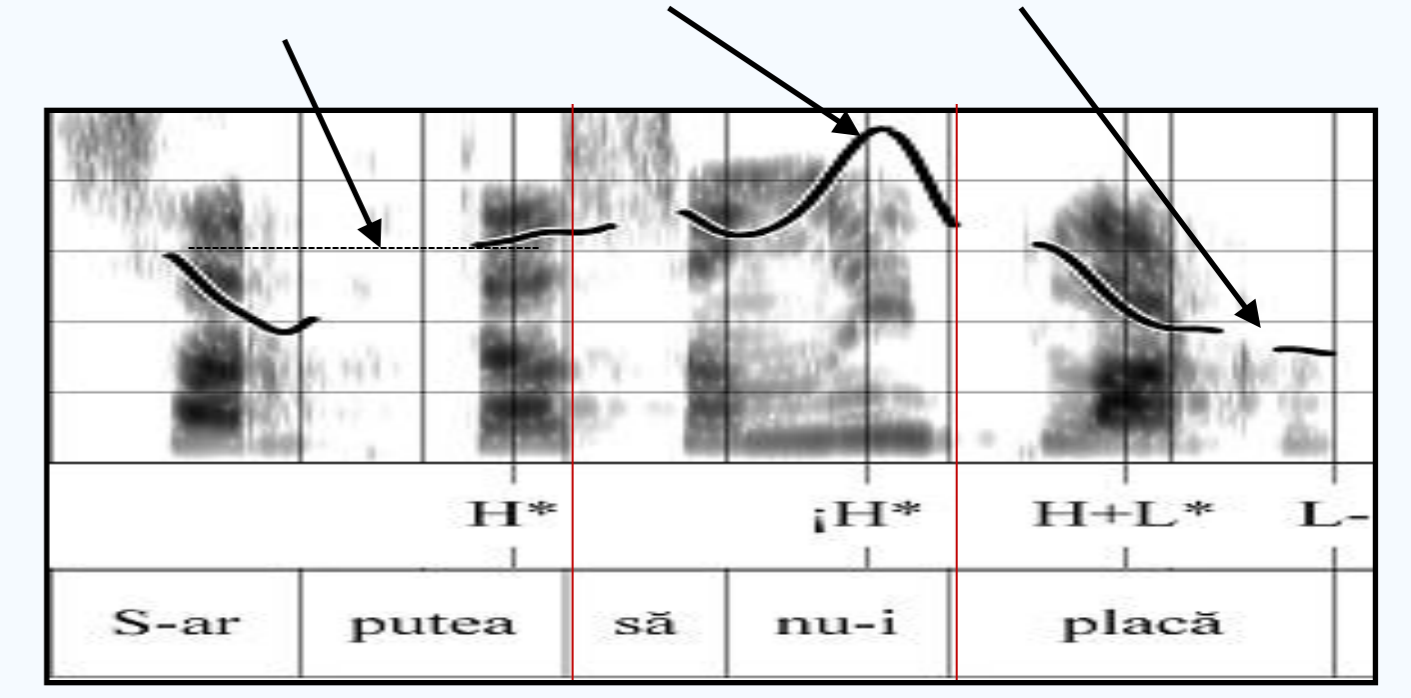


Fig 7. The F0 contour for the statement *S-ar putea să nu-i placă...* 'He might not like it...'. The left arrow points to a fall-rise pattern (T-mark) of the first constituent (of the modal verb). The second arrow indicates the tonal prominence of the global focus constituent and the third arrow, the T-mark of the topic constituent within the embedded CU.

(A+F)/(P+T)

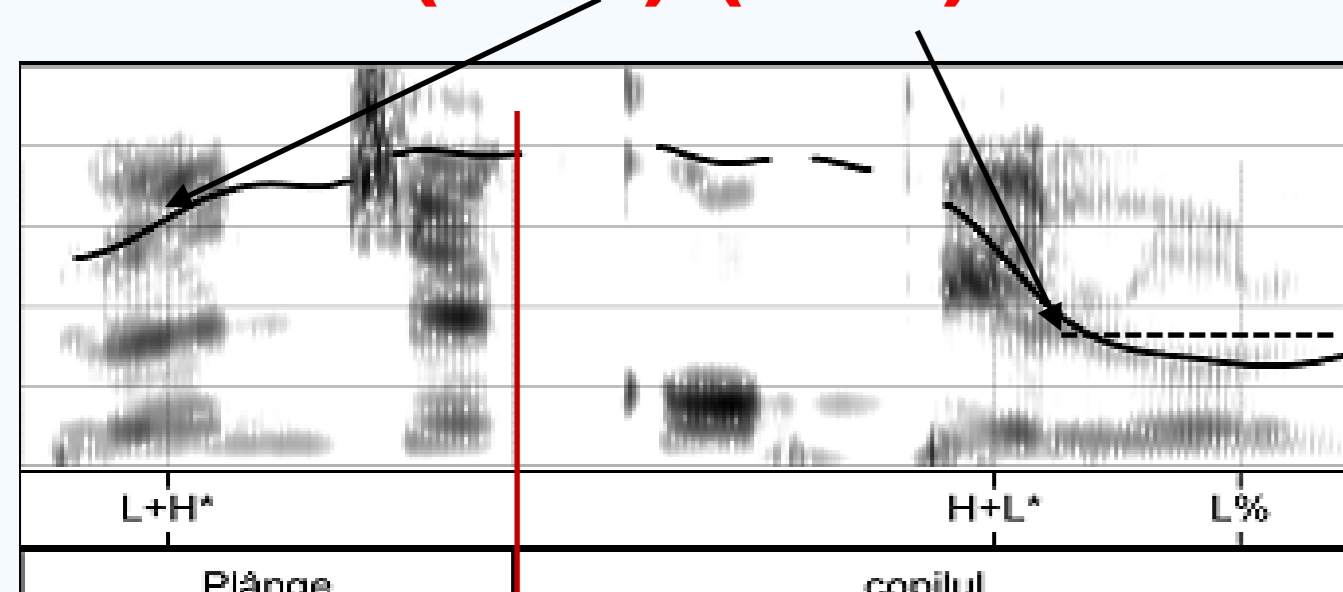


Fig 4. The F0 contour of the broad focus statement *Plânge copilul* 'The baby is crying'. The left arrow points to a rising pitch movement with a constant slope that marks the first constituent for a focus function. The contour of the second prosodic word continues to fall after the end of the accented syllable that marks the constituent for a topic function.

Romanian Exclamatives

(A+F) / [(A+F) / (P+T)]P+T

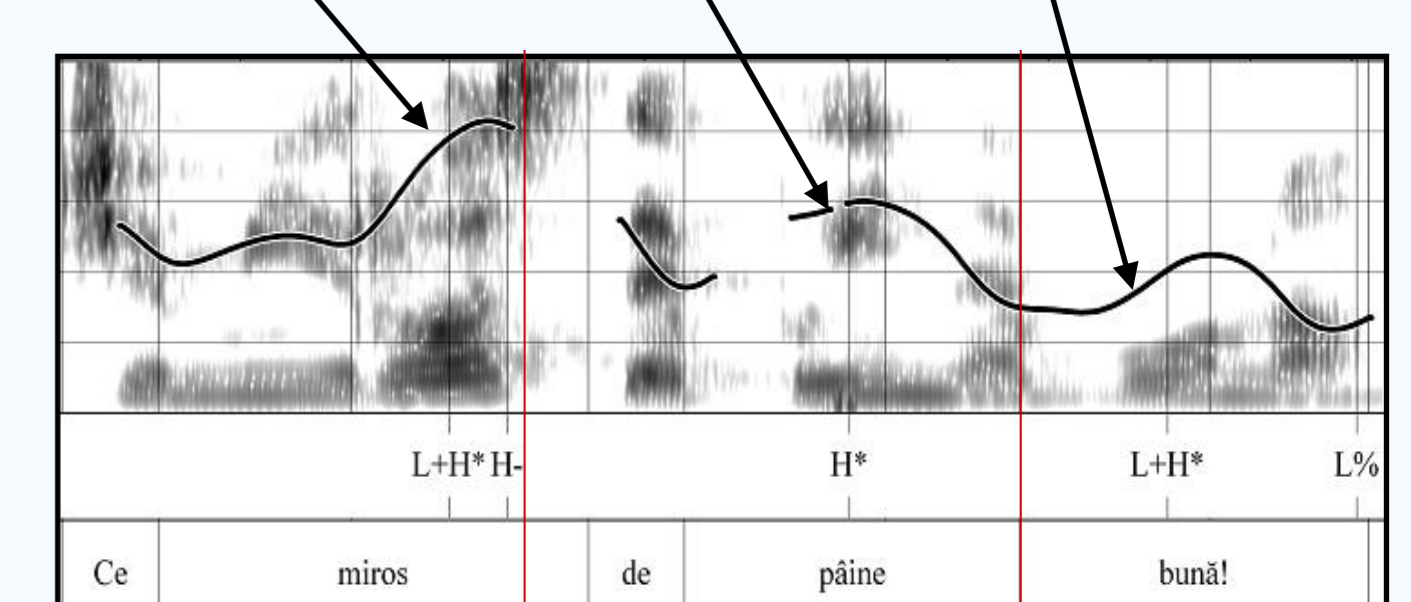


Fig 9. The F0 contour of the statement *Ce miros de pâine bună!* 'What a pleasant aroma of fresh bread!'. The left arrow targets the high part of the early L+H* pitch accent and its global prominence (F-mark). The second and the third arrows point to the local prominence (F-mark) and the late L+H* pitch accent (T-mark), respectively, within the embedded CU.

Romanian Narrow Focus Statements

(A+F)/(P+T)

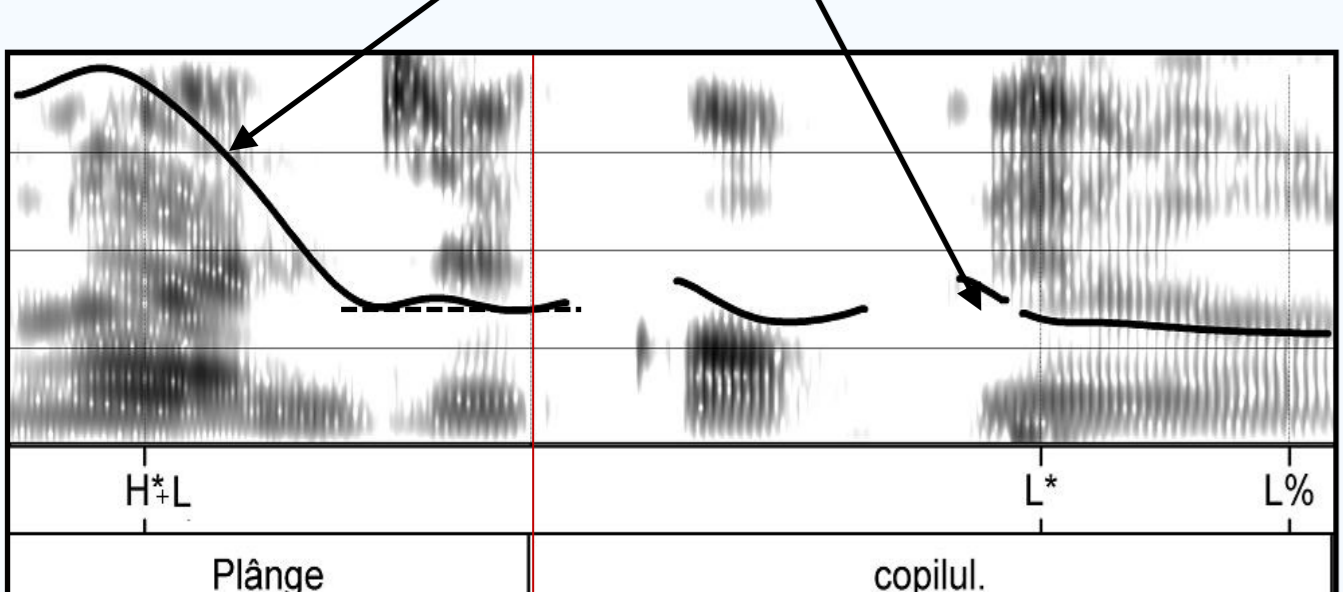


Fig 5. The F0 contour of the narrow focus statement *Plânge copilul* 'The baby is crying'. The H*+L pitch accent is a prominent F-mark which produces a CU-initial focus. The prosodic word pattern with very small pitch movement at low level marks the second constituent for a topic function.

[(A+F)/(P+T)]A+F / [(A+F)/(P+T)]P+T

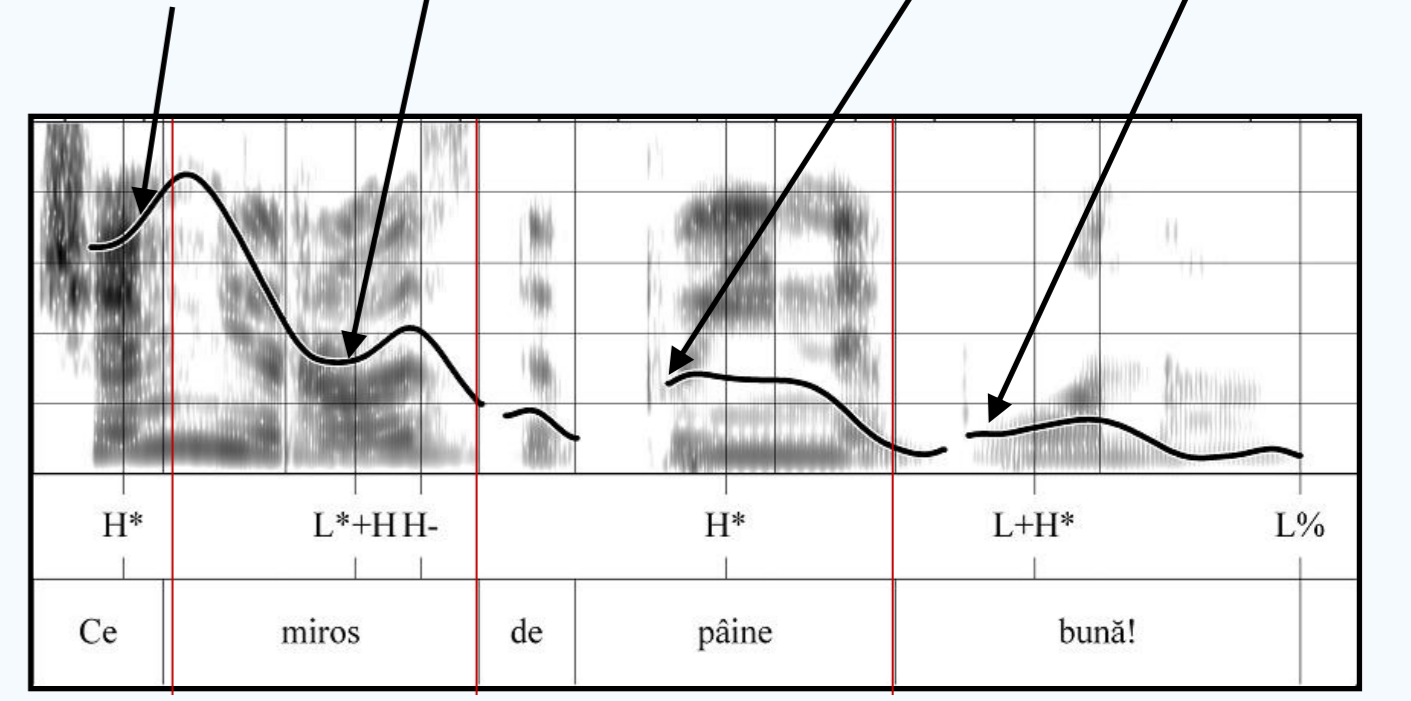


Fig 10. The F0 contour of the statement *Ce miros de pâine bună!* 'What a pleasant aroma of fresh bread!'. The first and the third arrows point to the global and the local prominences within the low level CUs. The second and the fourth arrows point to the topic constituents within the low level CUs.

CU-Predicate--CU-Argument structure

In broad focus statements the focus constituent also bears the CU-predicate function and the topic constituent also bears the CU-Argument function within the referential "given-new" IS structure.

CU-Predicate—CU-Argument structure

In statements with narrow focus and exclamatives the topic constituent also bears the CU-Predicate function and the focus constituent also bears the CU-Argument function within the referential "given-new" IS structure.