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## Prosodic rendering of conflicting information structures

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Gerrit Kentner  
*Goethe-Universität Frankfurt*  
[kentner@lingua.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:kentner@lingua.uni-frankfurt.de)

Michael Wagner  
*McGill*  
[chael@mcgill.ca](mailto:chael@mcgill.ca)

Tag  
Datum  
Zeit  
Raum

In narrative texts, the narrator may introduce referents that subsequently appear in the direct speech of a literary character. Such referents are therefore given for the reader but not (necessarily) for the character whose discourse may remain unaffected by the narrator. This conflict is exemplified in (1): while *gold coin* is a new referent within Pippi's speech (and should therefore be accented), it is mentioned by the narrator and thus, for the reader, given information, which is generally de-accented.

- (1) Pippi went off to hunt for her purse, which was full of gold coins.  
"Spink," she said. "It sounds as if it might be expensive. I'd better take a gold coin along."

We tested how readers handle this conflict by assessing the prosodic realisation of transitive verb phrases in short narratives. The critical verb-object sequences appeared in A) either direct or indirect speech. We varied B) previous mention; C) the salience; and D) definiteness of the object.

De-accentuation was clearly more likely for objects that had been aforementioned within the direct speech when compared to objects mentioned in the narrator's text. Regarding indirect speech, aforementioned objects were likewise more likely to be de-accented. Importantly, readers still differentiated between previous mention by the narrator and previous mention within the indirect speech of the character. The experiment suggests that readers can handle two conflicting discourse representations in parallel. When encountering direct speech, readers temporarily de-activate (and, accordingly, accent) discourse referents that are given in the narrative, but which are new within the discourse of the character. Interestingly, the coexistence of different discourse representation is still reflected in indirect speech. We submit that, beyond reflecting the discourse structure, the prosodic rendering of (given) referents in direct and indirect speech conveys the degree to which the reader identifies with the text and the character(s) within it.