Contents

Preface xiii

1 Introduction **1**
1.1 What is information structure? 1
1.2 The place of information structure in grammar 6
1.3 Information structure and sentence form: a sample analysis 13
1.3.1 Three examples 13
1.3.2 A note on markedness in information structure 15
1.3.3 Analysis 19
1.3.4 Summary 24
1.4 Information structure and syntax 25
1.4.1 Autonomy versus motivation in grammar 26
1.4.2 The functional underspecification of syntactic structures 29
1.4.3 Sentence types and the notion of grammatical construction 32

2 Information **36**
2.1 The universe of discourse 36
2.2 Information 43
2.3 Presupposition and assertion 51
2.4 The pragmatic accommodation of presuppositional structure 65

3 The mental representations of discourse referents **74**
3.1 Discourse referents 74
3.2 Identifiability 77
3.2.1 Identifiability and presupposition 77
3.2.2 Identifiability and definiteness 79

3.2.3 The establishment of identifiability in discourse 87
3.3 Activation 93
3.3.1 The activation states of referents 93
3.3.2 Principles of pragmatic construal 101
3.4 Summary and illustration 105
3.5 Identifiability, activation, and the topic–focus parameter 113

4 Pragmatic relations: topic 117
4.1 Definition of topic 117
4.1.1 Topic and aboutness 117
4.1.2 Topic referents and topic expressions 127
4.2 Topic and subject 131
4.2.1 Subjects as unmarked topics 131
4.2.2 Non-topical subjects and the thetic–categorical distinction 137
4.2.3 Topical non-subjects and multiple-topic sentences 146
4.3 Topic, presupposition, and semantic interpretation 150
4.4 Topic and the mental representations of referents 160
4.4.1 Topic relation and activation state 160
4.4.2 The Topic Acceptability Scale 165
4.4.3 Unaccented pronominals as preferred topic expressions 172
4.4.4 Topic promotion 176
4.4.4.1 Presentational constructions 177
4.4.4.2 Detachment constructions 181
4.5 Implications for syntactic theory 184
4.5.1 The Principle of the Separation of Reference and Role 184
4.5.2 The PSRR and the canonical sentence model 189
4.5.3 The syntactic status of detached constituents 192
4.6 Topic and pragmatic accommodation 195
4.7 Topic and word order 199

5 Pragmatic relations: focus 206
5.1 Definition of focus 206
5.1.1 Focus, presupposition, and assertion 206
5.1.2 Focus and sentence accents 218
5.2 Focus structure and focus marking 221
5.2.1 Types of focus structure 221

5.2.2 Predicate-focus structure 226
5.2.3 Argument-focus structure 228
5.2.4 Sentence-focus structure 233
5.2.5 Summary 235
5.3 Prosodic accents: iconicity, rule, default 238
5.3.1 Accent, intonation, stress 238
5.3.2 Iconic motivation versus grammatical rule 241
5.3.3 Default accentuation 248
5.4 Focus and the mental representations of referents 257
5.4.1 Focus relation and activation state 257
5.4.2 Predicates versus arguments 264
5.4.3 Focus relation, activation, and presupposition 269
5.4.3.1 Complete presupposed propositions 270
5.4.3.2 Open presupposed propositions 277
5.4.4 Focus and information questions 282
5.5 Contrastiveness 286
5.5.1 Contrastive foci 286
5.5.2 Contrastive topics 291
5.6 Marked and unmarked focus structure 296
5.6.1 Predicate focus and argument focus 297
5.6.2 Sentence focus 307
5.6.2.1 The theoretical issue 307
5.6.2.2 Previous approaches 311
5.6.2.3 Prosodic inversion 318
5.7 A unified functional account of sentence accentuation 322
5.7.1 Activation prosody revisited 323
5.7.2 Topic accents and focus accents: some examples 326

6 Summary and conclusion 334

Notes 341
References 362
Index 376