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## Background / Introduction

### Syntax and Prosody in Information Structure (IS) in child L2

- Mostly work on syntax-pragmatics interface, but not on syntax-prosody interface
- Mostly work on adult L2 learning, not on child L2
- Topic early prominence in L2 [1]
- Transfer from L1 characteristics [2,3] & Difficulties acquiring the syntax-pragmatics interface [4,5,6]
- Full acquisition of L2 properties and functions [7, 8, 9, 10]

### In Albanian

- Clitic doubling of accusative objects marks Topics, while its absence marks Rheme and Kontrast [11, 12]
- In addition, it has been claimed that IS constructs are also differentiated by prosodic means [13]

### Research Question

- Which prosodic and syntactic means are used by children to encode Information Structure?
- Are some means (clitics vs pitch) acquired earlier than others?

## Syntax Experiment

Truth Value Judgment/Elicited Production task

- 40 grammatically/ungrammatically primed Topic, Rheme, Kontrast items
- Subjects answered questions/corrected statements made by a marionette



### Subjects:

- 2 English-Albanian late bilingual adults (mean age 43)
- one 5-6 year old and one 9-10 year-old English-Albanian early bilingual child

## Prosody Experiment

Truth Value Judgment/Elicited Production task

- 36 grammatical Topic, Rheme, Kontrast items
- 3 sonorant accusative object words x 4 times: 'lulen', 'mollen', 'murin'
- subjects answered questions/corrected statements made by a marionette

### Subjects (same as in Syntax Experiment)

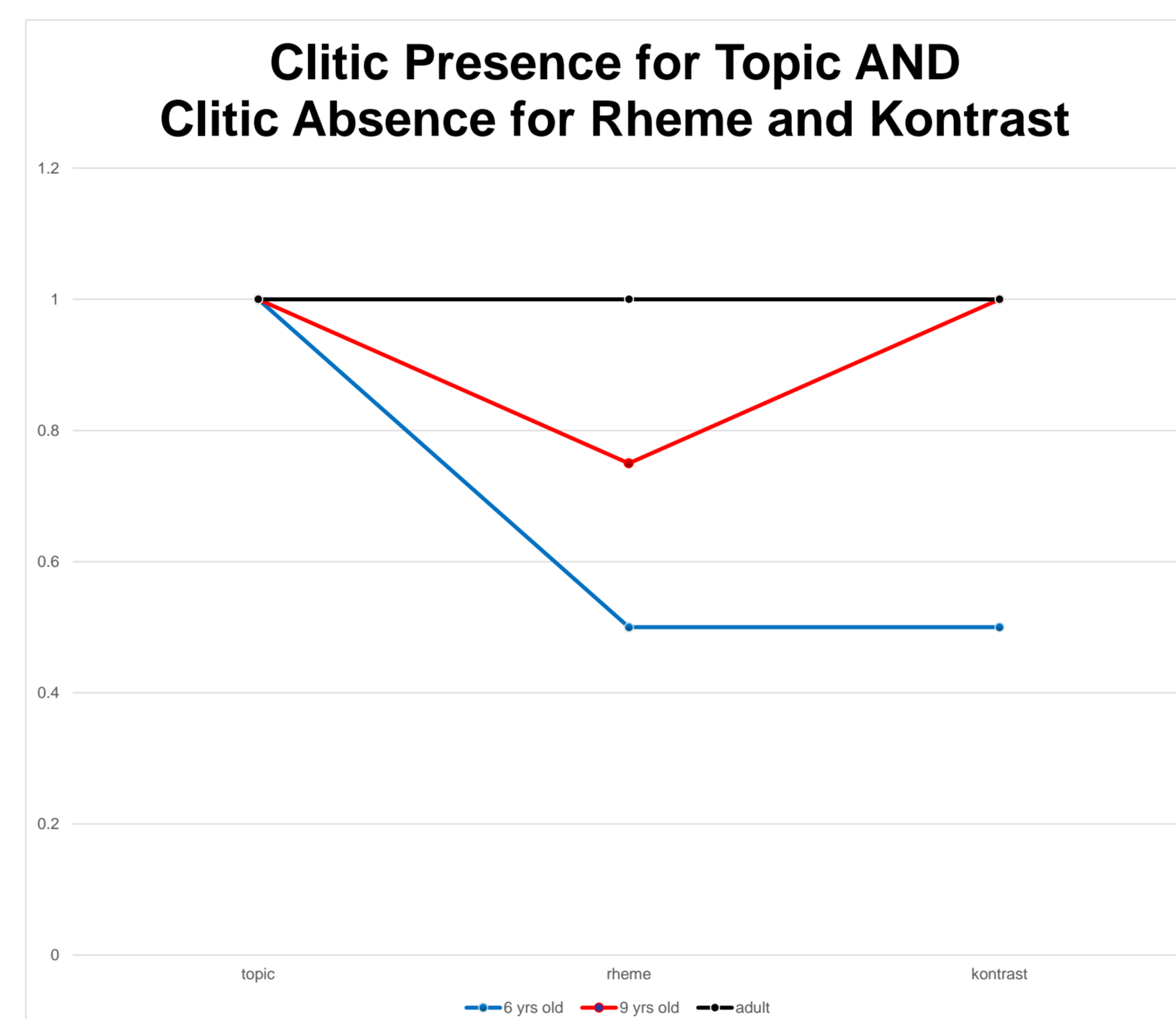
- Experiment was recorded using Speech Recorder [18]
- Target sentences were analyzed and labelled using Emu [14]
- Statistical analyses for aggregated f0 values were conducted using R [15], specifically the "EmuR", "fractal" and "tidyverse" packages.
- F0 was analysed by applying FDA approach for independent curves [19]
- The ToBI framework (for Tones and Break Indices) was used to transcribe tonal events of the intermediate phrases in which target objects occurred.

### References

[1] Fuller, J., & Gundel, J. K. (1987). Topic-prominence in interlanguage. *Language Learning*, 37, 1-17.; [2] Jin, H.G. (1994). Topic prominence and subject-prominence in L2 acquisition: evidence of English to Chinese typological transfer. *Language Learning* 44, 101-122; [3] Jung, E.H. (2004). Topic and subject prominence in interlanguage development. *Language Learning* 54 (4), 713-738; [4] Sorace, A. (1993). Incomplete vs. divergent representations of unaccusativity in nonnative grammars of Italian. *Second Language Research*, 9, 22-47.; [5] Sorace, A., & Filiaci, F. (2006). Anaphora resolution in near-native speakers of Italian. *Second Language Research*, 22, 339-368.; [6] Alvaro, 2018; [7] Reichle et al, 2013; [8] Hughes, 2010; [9] Dominguez et al, 2010; [10] Donaldson, 2011, 2011; [11] Pěrnaska, 1976; [12] Kapia, 2014; [13] Dodi, 2004; [14] Winkelman, 2017; [15] R Core Team, 2014; [16] Christophe et al, 2013; [17] Kapia & Brugos, 2016; [18] Draxler & Jaensch, 2004. [19] Gubian et al (2014).

## Results

### Syntax



- Children & adults use clitics at adult-like rates with Topic;
- Children perform at non-adult-like rates with Rheme, with 5-6 year old child being worse
- But the 9-10 year old performs adult-like with Kontrast.

### Prosody

#### Aggregated f0 as a Function of Normalized Time



- Children and adults differ in the way they encode Topic, Rheme & Kontrast prosodically
- Children differ from one another in Rheme & Kontrast
- Children overlap somewhat in their pitch contour for Topic

## Summary & Conclusion

- Syntax is acquired earlier than prosody for Topic accusative objects in child L2 Albanian
- Syntax is acquired earlier than prosody for Kontrast for the 9 year old child, but not for Rheme accusative objects for either child
- Results parallel findings from topic early prominence studies in L2 [1], with syntax being fully adult-like in Topic conditions since 5 years of age.
- However, these findings contradict previous work [16], which shows that prosodic information bootstraps acquisition of syntax.
- Results also align well with previous ToBI work on Albanian [17], which suggests that Kontrast and Rheme are two distinct syntactic and prosodic categories.

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