Metrical prodosy: A template-and-constraint approach to phonological phrasing in Italian. Based on the poetry of Giuseppe Ungaretti and Eugenio Montale

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1 Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Proposals

This study proposes a metrical theory of phonological phrasing, which is based on an analysis of the poetry of the Italian poets Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1970) and Eugenio Montale (1896-1981). The language of the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale constitutes a variant of Standard Italian, in which poetry-specific as well as general properties of Italian are combined in a particular way. The aim of this thesis is to account for the prosodic properties of the verse data. Necessarily, this account involves the prosodic properties of Standard Italian in general, as well as the prosodic properties of the relevant poetry.

The poetry of Ungaretti and Montale, which is highly representative of the Italian poetic tradition of the first half of the twentieth century, constitutes an extremely rich and interesting source for the purpose of a formal account of phonological phrasing. In Generative Linguistics, and especially in Generative Phonology, poetry often served a general theoretical goal.1 Besides metrically bound verse forms, the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale contains metrically free verse forms which add to the amount of phonologically interesting phenomena. The level of phonological organization that will be analyzed in this thesis, is the level of the phonological phrase. Consequently, the line of verse is selected as the domain of analysis. Groups of lines will be taken in consideration when phonological phrasing applies across a line boundary. And the poem as a whole will be taken in consideration in order to account for the phonological properties of lines which occur in highly specific positions, like poem-initial or poem-final lines.

A metrical theory of phonological phrasing implies a departure from the standard approaches to phonological phrasing. Standard generative views assume the syntactic surface structure to provide the primary information on the basis of which prosodic constituency is construed (cf. Selkirk 1980, 1986, Nespor & Vogel 1979, 1986, Kaisse 1985, Hayes 1989a). This thesis disputes this assumption. I shall argue in favor of an autonomous phonological module which constructs phonological

phrasing by its own principles and imperatives. Yet interactions between phonology and syntax do occur, just as interactions between phonology and morphology, phonology and semantics, and phonology and pragmatics (among which versification).

The metrical theory to be proposed in this thesis is captured in a template-and-constraint framework. The templates represent structural conditions on the metrical well-formedness of phonological phrases, and the constraints ensure optimization of phonological phrase outputs, in the sense of Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky 1993, McCarthy & Prince 1993). A theory of metrical phrasing based on the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale involves properties of (a) Universal Grammar, (b) Italian, (c) versification in general, and (d) the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale in particular. In what follows I shall introduce these properties one by one.

Metrical Phrasing and Universal Grammar. In line with prosodic phonology (cf. Selkirk 1978, 1980), I consider the phonological phrase to contain syllables, feet and prosodic words, and phonological phrases themselves to be contained by the intonation phrase. In line with metrical phonology (cf. Liberman & Prince 1977, Hayes 1981, 1995), I consider phonological organization to be structurally binary.

The first claim of this thesis is that phonological phrases are allowed to contain a minimal as well as a maximal amount of subphrasal prosodic constituents. Minimality and maximality are defined in terms of binary branchingness. The minimal phonological phrase involves binary branchingness at the foot and word level, and the maximal phonological phrase at the foot, word and phonological phrase level.

Phonological phrase minimality/maximality presupposes an account of the subphrasal prosodic constituents in terms of minimality and maximality. In the literature, an abundance of evidence has been provided in favor of both foot and prosodic word minimality (cf. McCarthy & Prince 1986, Prince 1990, Kager 1994a, 1995a, Hayes 1995). The minimal shape of the foot is either disyllabic or bimoraic. And the prosodic word minimally corresponds to a wellformed foot. Perhaps somewhat more controversial is the assumption that the foot and, even more so, the prosodic word are characterized by maximality requirements. In languages with a bounded foot system, the maximal shape of the foot is argued to be ternary branching (cf. Dresher & Lahiri 1991, Kager 1994b, Rice 1992). The maximal shape of the prosodic word has not been studied cross-linguistically.

The second claim made by this thesis concerns the grammatical function of prosodic templates. In contrast to the assumptions made in Optimality Theory (cf. Prince & Smolensky 1993, McCarthy & Prince 1993a), I propose that phonological phrase templates are part of the grammatical input. That is, prosodic templates are neither filters that are placed on the output, nor constraints which mediate between
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input and output. By placing prosodic templates in the input, I assume that the input consists of two sources, a metrical one and a textual one. Prosodic templates belong to the metrical source of the input, while the textual source of the input consists of linguistically distinctive information. Phonologically distinctive information involves for instance segmental specifications and main stress location.

A Generator freely produces candidates that are characterized by metrical as well as textual information. The constraint families PARSE and FILL evaluate these candidates: PARSE exclusively evaluates parsing of phonologically distinctive features (text), and FILL exclusively evaluates filling of prosodic template features (templates):

(1) INPUT | text > PARSE
         | templates > FILL

The Generator freely produces output candidates in which textual inputs and templatic inputs are matched. On the basis of the relative ranking of PARSE and FILL constraints, the optimal output candidate is selected. That is, lower-ranking constraints may be violated in order to satisfy higher-ranking constraints, but not the other way around. The optimal candidate is the one that best satisfies the constraints.

(2) INPUT
    | text
    | templates
    GENERATOR
    (free generation of output candidates)
    ↓
    EVALUATION
    (ranked FILL/PARSE constraints)
    ↓
    OUTPUT
    (optimally parsed text)

In addition to phrasal optimization, I also assume two notions of prosodic markedness. The first notion is meant to be phonologically dynamic. That is, it is a theory-internal distinction based on the amount of constraint violations. If the relevant FILL and PARSE constraints are satisfied, unmarked phonological phrase outputs emerge. Relatively marked outputs emerge if either a FILL or a PARSE constraint is violated in order to satisfy a higher-ranking FILL or PARSE constraint. FILL violation implies addition of prosodic values, and PARSE violation implies deletion of prosodic values. Below, I shall exemplify these constraint violations.

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1 See Steriade (1988), in which templates are seen as structural conditions imposed on the output. In Optimality Theory, templates are rather seen as structural constraints.
properties on the basis of a number of phonological facts. The second notion of prosodic markedness refers to a statistically determined distinction between marked and unmarked phonological phrases.

The third claim I would like to make in this thesis concerns the interaction between phrasal phonology on the one hand, and other components of grammar on the other. Two questions are raised here: (a) which are the non-phonological linguistic properties that are involved in prosodic phrasing, and (b) how do these properties interact with prosodic phrasing.

With respect to the first question, most theories of phonological phrasing assume a morpho-syntactic distinction of lexical word vs. grammatical word (cf. Selkirk 1984a, Nespor & Vogel 1986, Hayes 1989a). Lexical words are typically associated with phonological phrase heads, and grammatical words with phonological phrase dependents. In addition, syntactic properties involving heads or edges of maximal projections are assumed to determine phonological phrasing (cf. Selkirk 1978, 1980, 1986, Nespor & Vogel 1979, 1982, 1986, Kaisse 1985, Selkirk & Shen 1990, Zec & Inkelas 1990). In this thesis, I shall argue that default phonological phrasing of Italian involves the distinction lexical word vs. grammatical word alone. This implies that phonological phrases are not considered to be mapped from the syntactic surface structure. However, when supramaximal or subminimal phonological phrases emerge syntax, semantics or pragmatics appear to be crucially involved.

Polymorphemic words, Vocatives, Fronting, Enumeration and Enjambment are some examples of categories and/or constructions which are typically associated with supramaximal or subminimal phonological phrase outputs. I shall account for these interactions in terms of either textual or templatic alignment specifications. Like other phonologically distinctive features, alignment features must be properly realized in the output. It is the hierarchical ranking of PARSE and FILL constraints by virtue of which supramaximal/subminimal phonological phrases must be considered to form the optimal output.

With respect to the second question, i.e. of how phonological and non-phonological properties interact with one another, I shall argue in favor of the assumption that the components of the grammar are simultaneously present (cf. Zec & Inkelas 1990). The components are allowed to interact with one another at various levels of linguistic organization. No component is entirely dependent on the other.

To illustrate the point, let me consider an instance of phonology-semantics interaction. Each member $X$ of an enumeration $X_1 X_2 X_3$ is generally realized with
focus. I formally account for this focus by means of a sequence of phonological phrase templates (\( [{\phi}] \)) associated with the members of the enumeration:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
{\phi} & {\phi} & {\phi} \\
X_1 & X_2 & X_3
\end{array}
\]

The relevant constraint ranking is responsible for the fact that enumeration members may surface as subminimal phonological phrases. The example from Montale in (5) contains a sequence of three members of an enumeration, each of which is realized as a phonological phrase (indicated by square brackets).

\[(5) \quad [\text{voce}], [\text{leggenda}] [\o\text{ destino}]...\]

When the prosodic output of the enumeration gives rise to a sequence of three or more subminimal phonological phrases, two members will be realized as a single phonological phrase. This is illustrated in (6).

\[(6) \quad [\text{strada}] [\text{portico}] [\text{mura specchi}]\]

That is, metrical well-formedness conditions imposed on the level of the intonation phrase will be satisfied at the cost of focus realization. Focus may trigger marked phonological phrase outputs, but not unconditionally. In a constraint-based approach this multi-layered interaction can be insightfully accounted for.

The above proposals concerning (a) minimally and maximally defined prosodic templates, (b) FILL/PARSE constraint interaction, and (c) interaction between phonology on the one hand, and morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics on the other, are considered now in light of Italian, and of Italian verse.

**Metrical Phrasing and Italian.** In this thesis, a variety of phonological phenomena will be considered in favor of the claim that Italian is characterized by phrasal prosodic minimality and maximality. Before I discuss some of these phenomena, let me present an overview of the assumptions already made in the literature concerning the metrical properties of Italian.

In addition to the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale, earlier analyses of non-poetic Italian have alluded to the existence of conditions on the metrical complexity of phrasal phonological domains. For instance, Beccaria (1964) shows that Italian prose consists of melodic units which range in size between six and eleven syllables.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Beccaria (1964:131): "le unità [...] di 6-7-8-9-10-11 sillabe sono le costanti melodiche della prosa italiana". Similar results are found by Navarro Tomás (1939) in English, Spanish and German prose.
And Voghen (1992) shows that spoken Italian consists of tonal groups which have an average length of eight syllables.\footnote{It should be noted that melodic unit and tonal group rather coincide with the intonation phrase than with the phonological phrase. In fact, the average number of syllables of these domains is about two times higher than the average number of syllables of the phonological phrase as found in the verse data.}

With respect to subphrasal Italian prosodic constituents, the rhythmic domain of secondary stress, i.e. the foot, is generally considered to be either disyllabic or trisyllabic (cf. Camilli 1965, Muljačić 1972, Bertinetto 1981, Nespor 1993). That is, the foot has a minimal (disyllabic) as well as a maximal (trisyllabic) shape. As for the prosodic word domain in Italian, minimality and maximality have not been studied in depth. But consider the following issue concerning word minimality.

If every lexical word constitutes a prosodic word, as generally assumed, we expect monosyllabic lexical words to be problematic in light of the universal principle which says that a prosodic word minimally corresponds with a minimal foot. Indeed, the Italian lexicon contains a (small) set of monosyllabic lexical words. Since Italian feet are minimally disyllabic, a proper prosodic word must contain two syllables and not one. As I will show in this thesis, monosyllabic lexical words are not necessarily problematic in phrasal contexts. That is, the foot of the word may be properly filled by virtue of immediate adjacency of an unstressed syllable. This cross-lexical-word foot formation is empirically attested on the basis of syllabification, blocking of synaloephe and the perception of stress. In another context, however, either deletion of the word stress or addition of segmental material will be observed. In short, some relevant examples are presented concerning polysyllabic stress-final words.

As for the maximal shape of the prosodic word in Italian, in Helsloot (1993) I provided some evidence in favor of a two-foot maximum of prosodic words. As argued by Vogel & Scalise (1982), undervived lexical words in Italian also give rise to maximally two feet.

In addition to minimality and maximality, headedness must also be established in order to properly define the metrical templates of Italian. Prosodic headedness in Italian is argued to involve the right side from the word level up (cf. Nespor & Vogel 1986). That is, prosodic dependents precede prosodic heads. For instance, secondary stress precedes main word stress (cf. Vogel & Scalise 1982), and main word stress precedes phrasal stress (cf. Nespor & Vogel 1986). The Italian foot, by contrast, is considered to be left-headed, i.e., it constitutes a trochee (cf. Helsloot 1988/1992, 1995a, Nespor 1993). Although the Italian lexicon contains words with final stress, stress generally falls on either the penultimate or antepenultimate syllable of the word.

Let me illustrate now the function of PARSE and FILL constraints involving foot and prosodic word templates on the one hand, and main stress of lexical words on the other. The lexical item armonía properly fills the structural positions of the Italian prosodic word template: main stress is on the right and is preceded by a
secondary stress, ármonía, and each foot head is followed by a weak syllable, 
(dr.mo)(lu.a). If a lexical item has final stress, a FILL-foot violation occurs: the foot 
head is not followed by a weak syllable. In fact, stress-final words are often 
accompanied by phonological phenomena like consonant doubling 
(Raddoppiamento Sintattico) or vowel doubling (cf. Camilli 1965, Muljačić 1972, 
Nespor & Vogel 1979). That is, a FILL-foot violation is interpreted as epenthesis of 
length:

(7) a. part [p]:résto
b. part[i] présto

Instead of a FILL-foot violation, we may find a PARSE-word violation in the same 
context. That is, the main stress feature of the word is not parsed as such in 
the output. Traditionally, this deletion is referred to as Destressing or Stress Retraction:

(8) parti présto > parti présto

In this thesis, I shall account for addition and deletion phenomena in terms of the 
hierarchical ranking of FILL and PARSE constraints. 
As for the interaction between non-phonological properties and phonological 
phrasing, the relation lexical word = prosodic head ss. grammatical word = prosodic dependent is considered to constitute the basic interaction underlying phonological phrasing in Italian (cf. Nespor & Vogel 1986). In addition to this morpho-phonological relation, syntactic information involving heads and/or edges of maximal projections has been argued to be relevant for prosodic phrasing in Italian (cf. Nespor & Vogel 1986, Ghini 1993). In this thesis, I shall demonstrate that prosodic phrasing based on these syntactic properties wrongly excludes as well as wrongly predicts a series of phrasal prosodic outputs. For instance, Nespor & Vogel (1986) predict that modifier-head sequences are parsed into one phonological phrase. However, the verse data provide numerous examples in which modifier-head sequences are parsed into two phonological phrases (φ). In particular, this occurs when the total sequence would be too long (in number of syllables) to constitute a single well-formed phonological phrase:

(9) [d’inviolabili lontananze]φ > [d’inviolabili]φ [lontananze]φ

'of unviolable distances'

Vice versa, Ghini (1993) argues that syntactic heads that are separated from each other by the right edge of a maximal projection cannot be phrased together. Again, the verse data provide numerous examples which show that such syntactic configurations may be parsed into a single phonological phrase. For instance, although the right edge of an AP occurs between an adjoined sentence adverb and a following verb, the adverb and verb are parsed into a single phonological phrase. In
particular, this occurs when both of the constituents would be too short (in number of syllables) to form well-formed phonological phrases on their own.

\[(10) \ [\text{ora}]_{AP} [\text{è finito}]_{VP} > [\text{ora}]_{\Phi} [\text{è finito}]_{\Phi} > [\text{ora è finito}]_{\Phi}\]

'now is finished'

The attested phrasal outputs in (9) and (10) give rise to what I shall call default phonological phrases. This default phrase consists of two prosodic feet. A theory of phonological phrasing based on metrical well-formedness conditions straightforwardly accounts for the attested parsings in (9) and (10). The phonological phrase is minimally and maximally bounded in terms of prosodic constituency. No reference to syntax is required in order to account for default phonological phrasing. Moreover, syntax wrongly excludes certain phonological phrase outputs to surface.

**Metrical Phrasing and Versification.** Poetic meter displays a variety of metrical conditions that are defined in terms of minimality and maximality. In traditional descriptive metrics as well as in generative metrics, the structural properties of a poem are often defined in terms of number of metrical positions, metrical feet, cola, lines and stanzas (cf. Halle & Keyser 1971, Bertinetto 1973, Elwert 1973, Kiparsky 1975, 1977, Di Girolamo 1976, Piera 1980, Hayes 1989a). A metrical foot contains two or three metrical positions, a colon contains two or three metrical feet, and so on.

Structural properties concerning headedness are also found in metrical accounts of meter. Italian meters involving verse lines are right-headed in the sense that the strongest position of the line occurs close to its right edge. More precisely, the penultimate position of the line is always strong. For instance, the tenth position of the hendecasyllable is strong, and the sixth position of the septenarium is strong. Only in run-ons, or enjambed lines may this pattern be violated. Within the line of verse too, traditional accounts of meter recognize the manifestation of structural headedness. For example, a metrical foot gives rise to either an iamb or a trochee if it contains two metrical positions, a colon contains two or three metrical feet, and so on.

In other words, weak-strong alternation, or binary branchingness, as well as headedness are notions that are shared by both prosodic templates and poetic meter. Hayes' (1989a:224) *Hypothesis of Phonological Metrics* is a direct expression of this correspondence: meter is essentially a phonological phenomenon.\(^5\) This thesis still makes a stronger claim. That is, much like the claim embodied in McCarthy & Prince (1986) for prosodic morphology, the meters occurring in the poetry of Montale and Ungaretti will be defined in terms of the units of prosody. This approach, dubbed *Prosodic Metrics* by Golston & Riad (1994), implies that the

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\(^5\) See also Cureton (1992) for an extension of this hypothesis in rhythmic terms.
abstract domains of meter are hardly required to be referred to. The line of verse constitutes the sole domain of versification which is crucially involved in the phonological phrasing of poetry.

Metrical Phrasing and the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale. In this thesis, I start from the null-hypothesis that poetry, like prose or spoken language, is a variant of natural language, c.q. Standard Italian. Whether prosodic phenomena found in the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale are typical for Italian in general or not, is a question that must be interpreted as a matter of graduation. Prosodic properties like the relation lexical word = prosodic head and grammatical word = prosodic dependent, are basic in Italian poetry just as they are basic in non-poetic Italian. Distribution and concrete timing are two crucial notions which allow us to establish the gradual deviance of poetry from non-poetry. The notion distribution is intended as follows: a prosodic phenomenon α occurs in poetry as well as in non-poetry, but in poetry it occurs more often than in non-poetry, or vice versa. And with respect to concrete timing, in readings of poetry there appears to be more variation in timing than in prose readings (cf. Lehiste 1985). In chapter 2, I shall address these notions in more detail.

Like non-poetic Italian, the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale is characterized by metrical minimality/maximality. This becomes manifest at various levels of organization. For instance, lines of verse, stanzas or poems can be characterized in these terms. Regarding the line of verse, it is observed that the minimal line in Ungaretti is metrically shorter than the minimal line in Montale, and the maximal line in Montale is metrically longer than the maximal line in Ungaretti. I will show that length of line and phonological phrasing are intricately related to one another. That is, the relationship is partially proportional: the number of phonological phrases increases with the length of the line, but not completely, since there seems to be a maximum of three phonological phrases.

With respect to phonological phrase minimality/maximality, versification-specific phenomena can be observed. For instance, the opening and closing lines of a poem may give rise to subminimal phrase outputs. This is found in both Montale and Ungaretti. Ungaretti-specific, moreover, is the occurrence of poem-internal subminimal phrases, and Montale-specific, the occurrence of supramaximal phrases. These latter are typically related to long lines of verse, narrativity and enjambment.

In sum, a metrical theory of phonological phrasing based on the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale must include prosodic properties that are language-universal, Italian-specific as well as poetry-specific. The template-and-constraint approach to be developed here allows us to distinguish these properties by virtue of the separation of structural well-formedness conditions, i.e. templates, from violable and rankable constraints.
1.2 Corpus of Analysis

The corpus on the basis of which I make the above mentioned proposals comprises well over 5000 lines of verse composed by Giuseppe Ungaretti and Eugenio Montale. Appendix A presents the titles (or first lines) of the analyzed poems, as well as the information about the consulted editions and the reported translations. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Ungaretti and Montale are two of the most representative poets of the twentieth century poetic tradition in Italy. Their poems have a lyrical character, and the meters underlying their poetry are relatively free. The presence of metrically free verse forms implies a decrease of metrical conventions which may deform the normal patterns observed in other variations of Standard Italian. Hypothetically, the more a poem is free with respect to metrical conventions, the more its phonological structure approximates the phonological structure of spoken language. A verification of this hypothesis requires, however, an analysis of the phonological phrasing of a substantive corpus of spoken language. Such an analysis has not been carried out as yet, as far as I know.

The entire corpus of poetry is first analyzed on the basis of the phonological phrase-formation definitions proposed by Nespor & Vogel (1986). This analysis is hypothetical in nature. In addition, I present an empirically attested analysis which is based on the perception of recordings of the poems. The recorded poems comprise about 10% of the entire corpus, which amounts to more than 500 lines of verse (titles/first lines of these poems are also presented in Appendix A). The analysis of the recorded poems thus constitutes a representative sample survey of the entire corpus. The recordings, containing readings by Ungaretti and Montale of their own poetry, were submitted to five subjects of which four Italian native speakers and one a Dutch native speaker unacquainted with Italian. The objective of asking the Dutch informant was to obtain a parsing which was based on acoustic signals alone, unaffected by native speaker intuitions. Syntactic, semantic and pragmatic interference was minimized as much as possible.

The subjects were asked to indicate loci of prominence as well as loci of breaks in the continuous stream of speech. Three of the five subjects (the Dutch speaker plus two Italian speakers) analyzed all recorded lines, and the other two analyzed only a part of them. The details of the analyses are given in chapter 2.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 2 comprises (a) a presentation of the theoretical notions and frameworks to which I refer in this thesis, (b) an overview of the phonological aspects of Italian, including word-juncture phenomena as well as phonetic properties of stress, and (c)
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an outline of the research method. Regarding (a), special attention will be given to theories of metrical and prosodic phonology as well as to principles of versification. Regarding (b), especially the phonological arguments advanced by Nespor & Vogel (1986) in favor of phonological phrase constituency in Italian will be considered. Relevant phenomena are Raddoppiamento Sintattico, Stress Retraction, Troncamento and Final Lengthening. Concerning Italian stress properties, I shall refer to various contributions concerning the phonology of Italian. In particular, I refer to Avesani’s (1990) model for speech synthesis in which an account of pitch accents is presented. Finally, the research method will be set out.

Chapter 3 presents the analysis of the verse data. The hendecasyllable and the septenarium, i.e., the most frequently occurring line types in the poetry of both Montale and Ungaretti, will be treated in detail. The form of the most unmarked phonological phrase is established on the basis of a statistical analysis. Evidence in favor of this unmarked phonological phrase is provided by both Nespor & Vogel’s syntax-to-prosody parsing and the perceptually determined parsing. Differences between the two parsing modes can be explained in the light of metrical conditions on the phonological phrase. The evaluation metric based on the unmarked phonological phrase (= default ϕ) enables us to distinguish unmarked line parsings from marked line parsings. The notions prosodic underparsing and prosodic overparsing will be introduced in order to distinguish unmarked parsings from marked parsings. Triggers of prosodic under-/overparsing are either morphological, syntactic, semantic or pragmatic (versificational) in nature.

Chapter 4 proposes a templatic account of the phonological phrase outputs observed in chapter 3. Special attention is given to the structural principles underlying these phrasal templates. The chapter also deals with the structural properties of the Italian subphrasal constituents. The syllable, the foot and the prosodic word will be defined in terms of metrical minimality and metrical maximality. The third issue of this chapter concerns the prosodic prespecifications of lexical and grammatical words. The proposal is that all and only lexical words are prosodically prespecified in the input by a prosodic word-head feature. Grammatical words, by contrast, are prespecified by either a syllable-head feature or a foot-head feature. The former is assigned to monosyllabic grammatical words, and the latter to polysyllabic grammatical words. The prosodic prespecification of compounds is separately dealt with.

Chapter 5 deals with the realization of the default phonological phrase template. PARSE and FILL constraints account for the proper parsing of the prosodic head features, and for the proper filling of the templatic prosodic features, respectively. A number of constraint violations will be considered, referring to the syllable, foot and prosodic word level. The relevant constraints with their hierarchical ranking positions allow us to account for phrasal syllabification, phrasal footing, and phrasal prosodic word formation.
Chapter 6 focuses on phonological phrase minimality. A number of textual inputs are addressed which may give rise to minimal phrase realization. The results of the metrical approach developed here are compared with the standard approaches to phonological phrasing. The parsing predictions made by Nespor & Vogel's relation-based account, Selkirk's end-based account and Zec/Inkelas' arboreal account are confronted with the prosodic parsings obtained by the perceptually tested recordings of the poems. The final part of chapter 6 is dedicated to subminimal phonological phrase outputs. An account is provided in terms of constraint interaction. PARSE and FILL constraints, ensuring the proper realization of textual and templatic alignments, outrank the constraints ensuring metrical well-formedness.

Chapter 7 focuses on phonological phrase maximality. A number of stress deletion and stress addition phenomena will be considered, providing evidence in favor of the Light-Heavy organization of the phonological phrase. The maximally conditioned phonological phrase is compared with the phrasing predictions made by the syntax-based accounts to phonological phrasing. Neither the relation-based, nor the end-based, nor the arboreal theory can account for all and only the attested outputs. A metrically defined maximal condition imposed on the phonological phrase appears to have a greater predictive and explanatory power. The final part of chapter 7 is dedicated to supramaximal phonological phrase outputs. Like phrase subminimality, phrase supramaximality is accounted for by the higher ranking of PARSE and FILL constraints which ensure the proper realization of textual and templatic alignments, with respect to the constraints which ensure metrical well-formedness.

Chapter 8 deals with the phrasing of stress-final words. Classical phenomena of Italian external sandhi, like Raddoppiamento Sintattico and Stress Retraction, allow for a straightforward analysis by virtue of the relative ranking of the relevant PARSE and FILL constraints. FILL-1 (fill-foot) is the core constraint on the basis of which the presence/absence of the relevant sandhi phenomena can be explained.

Chapter 9 generalizes and extends the earlier proposals into a theory of Prosodic Metrics. The meters adopted by Ungaretti and Montale are defined in terms of phonological phrase templates. Sample verse fragments will be analyzed in full detail.

In Chapter 10, the conclusions are drawn.