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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Citation for published version (APA):

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Conclusions

This thesis has dealt with the phonological phrasing of Italian. On the basis of an analysis of the poetry of Giuseppe Ungaretti and Eugenio Montale, a theory of metrical prosody is developed which is characterized by a multi-layered hierarchy of binary alternating strong and weak prosodic constituents. The theory extends the organizing principles recognized below the level of the prosodic word up to the level of the phonological phrase. Like the syllable, the foot and the prosodic word, the phonological phrase is conditioned by minimality requirements. And like the syllable and the foot, the prosodic word and the phonological phrase are conditioned by maximality requirements. Unarity, binarity and ternarity are the three structural properties which are crucially involved in capturing the set of phonological phrases. These structural properties are presented in terms of a restricted number of abstract phonological phrase templates.

The analytical approaches applied to the verse data consisted of (a) a mapping of the syntactic structures displayed by the verse data, into phonological phrases, and (b) a perception-based phonological parsing of the readings of Montale and Ungaretti of their own poetry. The first parsing was assigned in accordance with the relation-based syntax-to-prosody mapping algorithms proposed by Nespor & Vogel (1986) and Hayes (1989a). The second parsing was a synthesis of the perceived prominences and phonation breaks assigned by five listeners to the recorded readings. A total of 5309 lines of verse were parsed in accordance with (a), and of these, 523 lines were parsed in accordance with (b).

The results of the parsings were statistically processed. Proportionally, about 70% of the phonological phrases obtained through both analytical approaches coincide where the location of the head of the phonological phrase is concerned (optional application or non-application of $\varphi$-restructuring included). That is, 70% of the perception-based phrasal parsings display the relation between syntactic and prosodic structure that is claimed by Nespor & Vogel (1986) to be (possibly) mapped into a phonological phrase. The remaining 30% of the perception-based phrasal constituents diverge from the syntax-based phrasal constituents in either of the following two senses: the perception-based phrasal constituents are larger than the syntax-based phrasal constituents, or the perception-based phrasal constituents are smaller than the syntax-based phrasal constituents. A subpart of these constituents still can be captured in a syntax-based mapping account to phonological phrasing by loosening the mapping algorithms. Syntactic
branchingness, for instance, does not function as a blockage to uniting words into one phonological phrase. Another subpart of phonological phrase constituents, however, cannot be captured by making reference to syntactic structure. Problematic cases for a syntax-based account are the following: (a) one and the same syntactic structure is sometimes parsed into one phonological phrase, and sometimes into two (or three) phonological phrases, (b) two syntactic heads which are not in a modifier-head or head-complement relation may form a single phonological phrase, and (c) two syntactic heads which display an aunt-niece relation may form a single phonological phrase with the exclusion of the mother of the niece. Neither the relation-based theory, nor the end-based theory, nor the arboreal theory are able to predict all and only the possible phonological phrase outputs.

The theory of metrical prosody developed in this thesis claims to have more predictive as well as explanatory power where phonological phrasing is concerned. The theory involves the following informational components. Firstly, a textual component distinguishes lexical words (N, V, A) from grammatical words (pronouns, determiners, prepositions, etc.) in terms of prosodic feature specification: only lexical words are prespecified by a prosodic word-head feature. Secondly, a templatic component provides a set of metrically well-formed phonological phrase forms defined in terms of prosodically featured positions. A Generator combines the textual prosodic features with the templatic prosodic features, producing as such a number of possible prosodic outputs. Ideally, all the textual and templatic features emerge in the output. In reality, either the former or the latter are frequently constrained to be modified. Respect for the textual features is enforced by the family of PARSE constraints, and respect for the templatic features, by the family of FILL constraints. The relative ranking of the PARSE and FILL constraints establishes whether a textual feature or a templatic feature must concede.

In the poetry of Ungaretti and Montale, one phonological phrase template in particular has to be respected, namely the default phonological phrase template (Defₚ template), i.e., the phonological phrase template that consists of a two-foot, or maximal prosodic word. The textual input that best fits this template consists of one prosodic word-head feature which is preceded by minimally two and maximally three syllable-head features, and which is followed by minimally one and maximally two syllable-head features. Chapter 5 of this thesis dealt with this default phrase. Since I analyzed poetic language, I do not exclude the possibility that in non-poetic language another phonological phrase template may be selected as constituting the default phrase template.

In addition to default phrase outputs, the verse data also give rise to minimal phrase outputs and maximal phrase outputs. The minimal phrase template is identified as the loose minimal word ([σ+Σ]), and the maximal phrase template as a strict minimal word plus a maximal word ([Σ][Σ+Σ]). The textual input enforces these phonological phrase templates to be realized, i.e., the textual input may contain either more or less prosodic features than are required by the default
CONCLUSIONS

The phonological phrase template. The underlying principle is that segments cannot be deleted or added in order to fulfill the requirements of the default phonological phrase. More precisely, while prosodic features can be deleted or added, segments cannot.

The perception-based analysis of the recorded readings of the poems also gave rise to a restricted number of subminimal phrase outputs and supramaximal phrase outputs. Highly specific non-prosodic linguistic properties associate with these metrically marked phrasal outputs. The chapters 6 and 7 were dedicated to these properties. The relevant non-prosodic linguistic properties are either morphological, syntactic, semantic or versificational in nature. The proposal is that the relation between prosodic markedness on the one hand, and highly specific non-prosodic linguistic properties on the other, is accounted for by means of either textual or templatic alignments. The textual alignments typically involve items and/or (sub)categories, and the templatic alignments involve constructions and/or relations. (1) lists the non-prosodic properties involved in the alignments. The list is not claimed to be exhaustive.

(1) TextIn:      TemIn:
Imperatives      Enumeration
Vocatives        Slow Speech/Emphatic Speech
Deictics         Ellipsis
Polymorphematic Words  Fronting
Complex Prepositions Enjambment
opening and Closing Lines of Poems
Short Lines and Edge Position
Narrativity
Enjambment
Long Lines

The addition of prosodic alignments to the set of bare prosodic input features is reminiscent of the traditional distinction between automatic phonology and non-automatic phonology (cf. Donegan & Stampe 1979, Zwicky 1990), or between P1 and P2 rules (cf. Kaisse 1985). Like prosodic alignments, P1 rules and non-automatic phonology assume non-phonological properties to be crucially involved in the phonological organization, and like bare prosodic features, P2 rules and automatic phonology assume phonological principles alone to be involved in the phonological organization. The optimality theoretical non-derivational approach of phonological phrasing, elaborated in this thesis, accounts for the dominance of the prosodic alignment features over the bare prosodic features by the relative ranking of constraints. The constraints that ensure the proper realization of prosodic alignments are ranked higher than those ensuring the proper realization of bare prosodic features.
Regarding the ranking of the PARSE and FILL constraints, two tendencies are observed: (a) the FILL constraint that refers to prosodic constituent \( a \) is ranked higher than the PARSE constraint that refers to this constituent, and (b) the constraint hierarchy is ordered in accordance with the prosodic hierarchy in the sense that the constraint that refers to constituent level \( a \) is ranked higher than the constraint that refers to constituent level \( a^{-1} \). The first tendency is illustrated by rankings of the type \( \text{FILL-\Sigma} >> \text{PARSE-\Sigma} \) or \( \text{FILL-Maxm} >> \text{PARSE-m} \). Chapter 8 illustrated the former ranking on the basis of an analysis of stress-final words in Italian: \( \text{FILL-\Sigma} \) may be satisfied at the expense of a violation of \( \text{PARSE-\Sigma} \). Total Destressing is the result. The latter ranking is illustrated in chapter 5 on the basis of an analysis of two adjacent strict minimal \( \omega \)'s. The first \( \omega \)-head is often not parsed in order to satisfy \( \text{FILL-Maxm} \). Destressing is the result: the foot-head is parsed but the word-head not. In contrast to this \( \text{FILL} >> \text{PARSE} \) ranking, the PARSE constraint that ensures faithful parsing of a textual prosodic alignment, i.e. \( \text{PARSE-\varphi} \), is satisfied at the expense of a FILL constraint. This interaction is illustrated in chapter 6 on the basis of the dominance of \( \text{PARSE-\varphi} \) over \( \text{FILL-Minm} \).

The second tendency is illustrated by rankings of the type \( \text{FILL-\Sigma} >> \text{FILL-Onset} \) or \( \text{PARSE-\varphi} >> \text{PARSE-\Sigma} \). In chapter 5, I argued that adjacent vowel reduction (\( \alpha \)-synaloephe) is blocked in order to realize a well-formed disyllabic foot. \( \text{FILL-Onset} \) is violated in these cases by virtue of the higher ranking of \( \text{FILL-\Sigma} \). The ranking \( \text{PARSE-\varphi} >> \text{PARSE-\Sigma} \) is illustrated in chapter 8: rather a textually specified \( \Sigma \)-head remains unparsed than a textually specified \( \omega \)-head. That is, the intrinsic prominence of a lexical word prevails over the intrinsic prominence of a grammatical word in the context of direct adjacency.

The schema in (2) presents the part of the grammatical model that is relevant for phonological phrasing.

Chapter 9 applied the theory of metrical prosody to the domain of versification. The analysis of the verse data provided not only evidence in favor of a metrically conditioned phonological phrase, but also in favor of metrically conditioned lines of verse. More concretely, lines of verse are realized by a preferred number of phonological phrases. A line minimally contains one phonological phrase, and maximally, three phonological phrases. The canonical meters of the Italian verse tradition, the \( \lambda=7 \) and the \( \lambda=11 \), are preferably realized by two and three phonological phrases, respectively. I proposed to extend the hypothesis of Prosodic Metrics as to include the levels of the prosodic word and the phonological phrase. The result of this extension is a set of line templates (\( \lambda \)-templates). The basic \( \lambda \)-template defines a \( \lambda \) in terms of the Defcp template.
The metrical organization of free vs. bound verse was captured by \textit{poem-constraints}. Identity of line types is prohibited in the former, but required in the latter. A restricted number of line positions within a poem are prespecified by an alignment template which differs from the basic $\lambda$-templates. That is, the first line of a poem (or a stanza), as well as the final line of a poem (or a stanza) may be realized by more than three phonological phrases. Often these phrases constitute (sub)minimal phonological phrases. In Montale’s poetry, furthermore, lines that are realized by one phonological phrase mainly occur in poem-final or stanza-final position only. In Ungaretti’s poetry, 1-\(\phi\) lines are not restricted to occur in these positions.

Generally, (sub)minimal \(\phi\)'s express emphasis, and (supra)maximal \(\phi\)'s express continuance. In the light of the just mentioned relation between specific line positions and (sub)minimal phonological phrases, the following correlations are observed: (a) (sub)minimal phonological phrases typically occur in edge-positions, and (b) (supra)maximal phonological phrases typically occur in domain-internal
positions. The phenomenon of enjambment illustrates the latter correlation: across line-edges, (supra)maximal phonological phrases are frequently found. As for the prosodic properties of the poetry of Ungaretti on the one hand, and of Montale on the other, in a nutshell: Ungaretti's poetry is characterized by (sub)minimality, and Montale's poetry by (supra)maximality.

The theory of Metrical Prosody developed in this thesis is intended to account for the prosodic properties of poetic language as well as for the prosodic properties of non-poetic language, c.q. Italian. The former properties are considered to be an extension of the latter ones: poetry-specific prosodic properties are intrinsically related to the prosodic properties of the adopted language. In this respect, a framework based on templates and constraints proves to be highly insightful.