

Overview

Georgian, a language with a fixed structural position reserved for the focused element, also uses prosody to signal focus. The data presented in this paper shows that various types of foci – wh-questions (WHQ), yes-no questions (YNQ), and contrastive contexts – bear the same prosodic marker of focus: the phrase accent L aligned with the penultimate syllable of the predicate. The double-marking of the same feature in syntax and prosody raises questions as to why language does not rely on just one of these strategies.

Georgian: basic facts

Stress Stress placement in Georgian is a matter of debate. I adopt the view that Georgian stress is fixed on the initial syllable, based on experimental evidence in Vicenik & Jun (2014). In contrast, Robin & Waterson (1952) and Aronson (1990) argue that stress placement in Georgian depends on the syllable count.

Word order Georgian allows surface SOV and SVO, with no interpretive difference reported (Hewitt 1995). Georgian is head-final, which suggests that SOV is underlying (Skopeteas, Féry & Asatiani 2009); some embedded structures (masdars and nominalizations) must be SOV.

Focus Strong preference to place focused elements in the immediately preverbal position (Vicenik & Jun 2014). Postverbal focus placement also reported (Skopeteas et al. 2009 *et seq.*), but disallowed by some speakers. Only preverbal focus is discussed in this work.

Exhaustivity Preverbal focus is compatible with both exhaustive and non-exhaustive interpretations (Skopeteas & Fanselow 2010, Skopeteas & Féry 2011).

Data collection

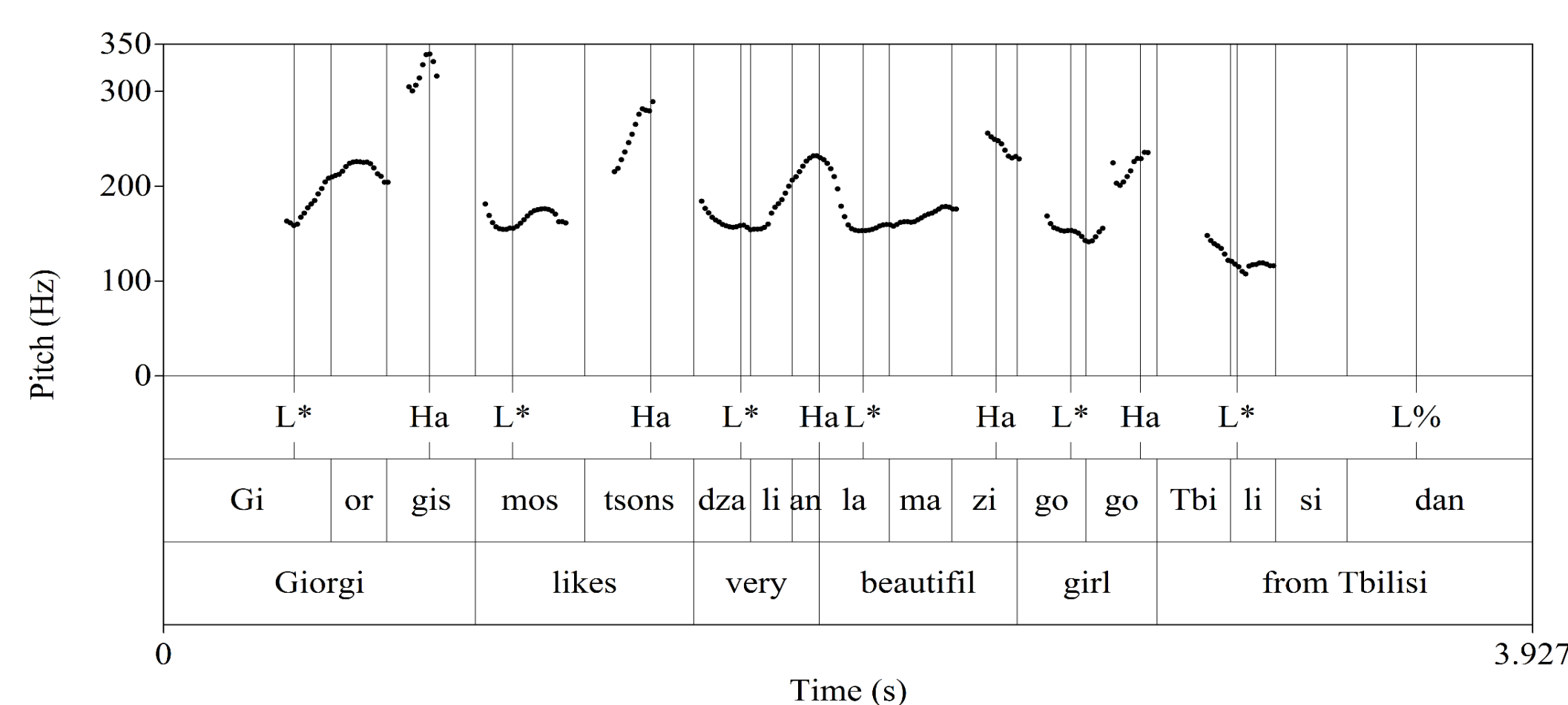
The results reported here come from a pilot study carried out with a native speaker of Georgian (MI, female, in her 50s, Tbilisi resident) in Cambridge, MA. Target utterances were recorded in the phonetics laboratory at Harvard University and analyzed using Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2016)

All-new declarative clauses

For the description of the tonal structure of Georgian, I am adopting the tonal inventory proposed in Vicenik & Jun (2014).

All-new declarative intonation: a succession of accentual phrases each bearing an L* pitch accent followed by H(a) boundary tone, with downstep throughout the utterance. Focus-marking L phrase accent is absent from all-new declaratives.

- (1) *Giorgi-s mostson-s dzalian lamazi gogo Tbilisi-dan.*
Giorgi-DAT like-3sg very beautiful girl.NOM Tbilisi-from
Giorgi likes a very beautiful girl from Tbilisi.

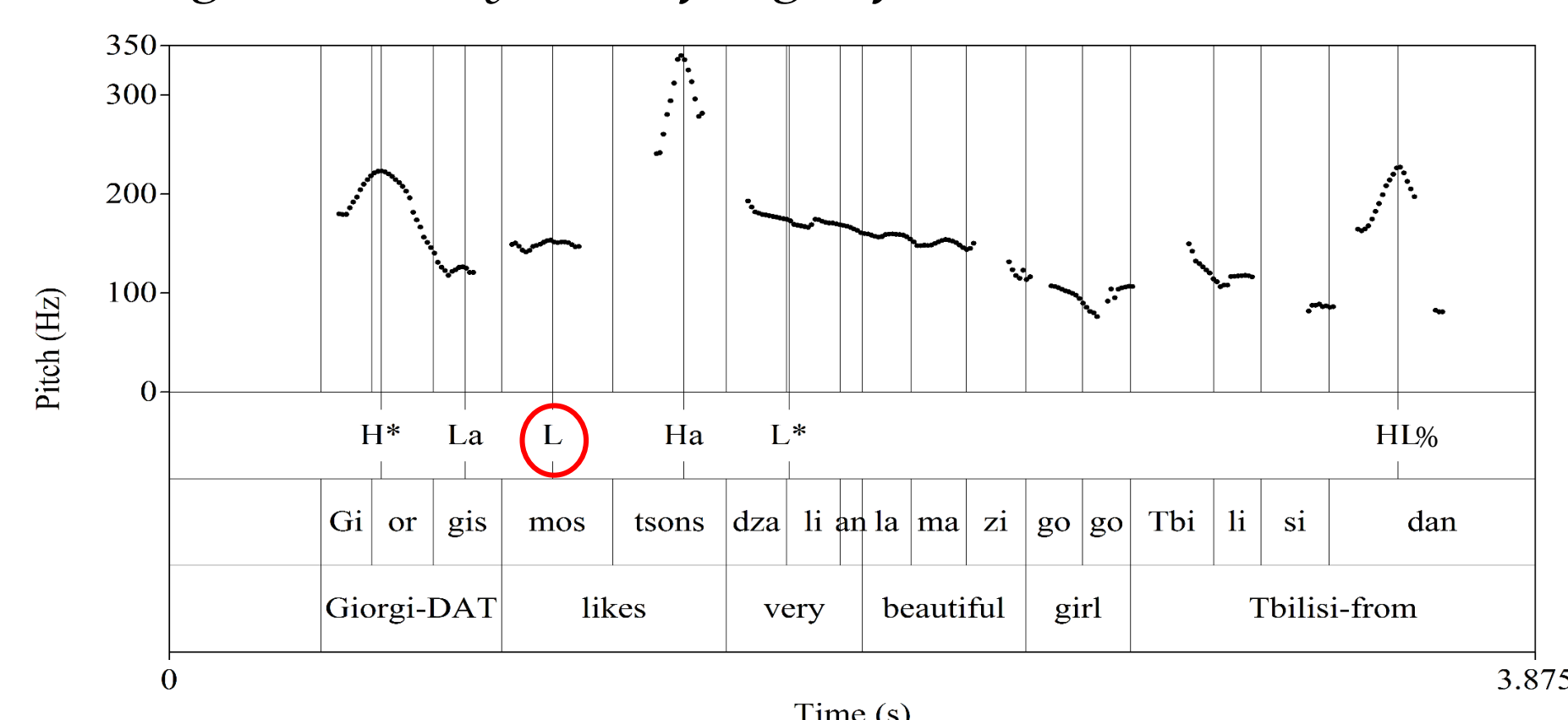


Prosodic realization of focus There are two types of prosodic focus marking (Büring 2009): introducing a pitch accent on the focused element (focus-as-pitch; English, Germanic languages), and adding/deleting phrase boundaries (focus-as-phrasing; Japanese, Korean). The data presented here shows that Georgian uses a phrase accent to mark of focus, and therefore falls into the first category (cf. Skopeteas et al. 2009 *et seq.* for the alternative view)

Yes-no questions

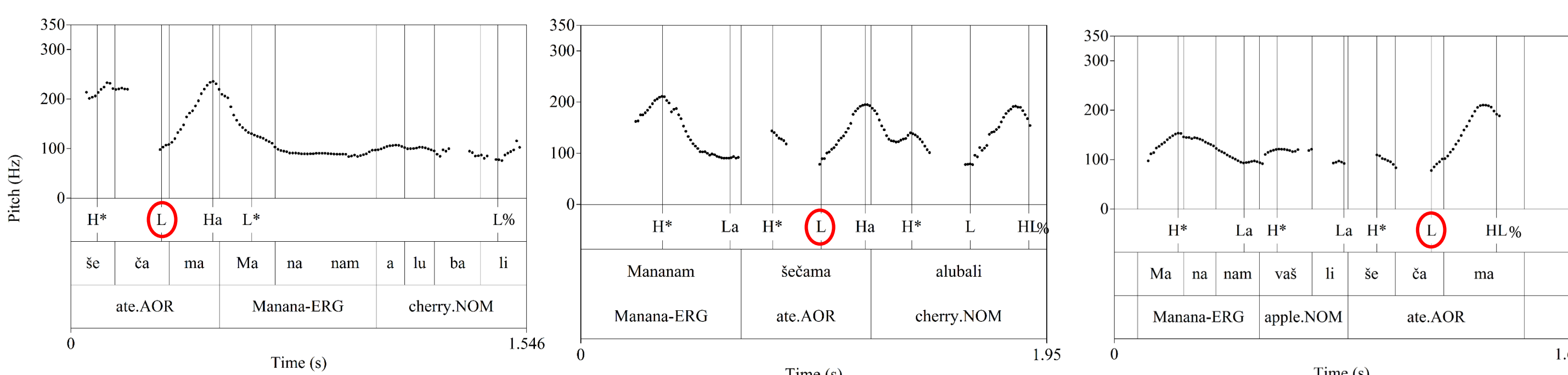
Yes-no questions (YNQ) differ from all-new declaratives in prosody only. Instead of the sequence of L* Ha-marked phrases, in YNQs L phrase accent appears on the predicate, followed by a Ha accentual phrase boundary. The rest of the clause is deaccented until the clause-final H% or HL% boundary tone.

- (2) *Giorgi-s mostson-s dzalian lamazi gogo Tbilisi-dan?*
Giorgi-DAT like-3sg very beautiful girl.NOM Tbilisi-from
Does Giorgi like a very beautiful girl from Tbilisi?



L appears on the verb regardless of whether it is initial (3), medial (4) or final (5).

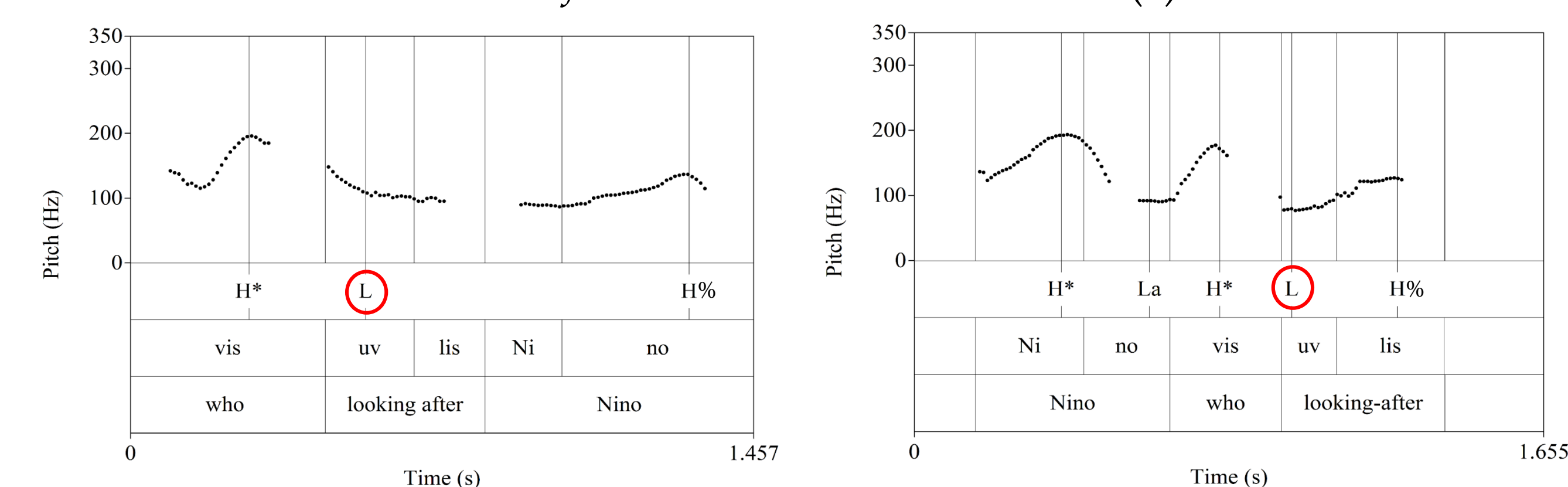
- (3) *Šeč'ama Manana-m alubali/vašli?* (4) *Mananam šeč'ama alubali?*
eat.AOR Manana-ERG cherry/apple.NOM
Did Manana eat the cherry/apple? (5) *Mananam alubali šeč'ama?*



Wh-questions

Wh-questions for arguments and adjuncts alike are formed by wh-movement, with the immediate preverbal position as landing site. The predicate of a WHQ also bears a L phrasal accent on the penultimate syllable. Focused material preceding the predicate (wh-phrase) receives a H* pitch accent. WHQs differ from YNQs in that the Ha target on the ultima of the predicate might not be realised - instead, the tone can stay low up to the H% or HL% boundary tone.

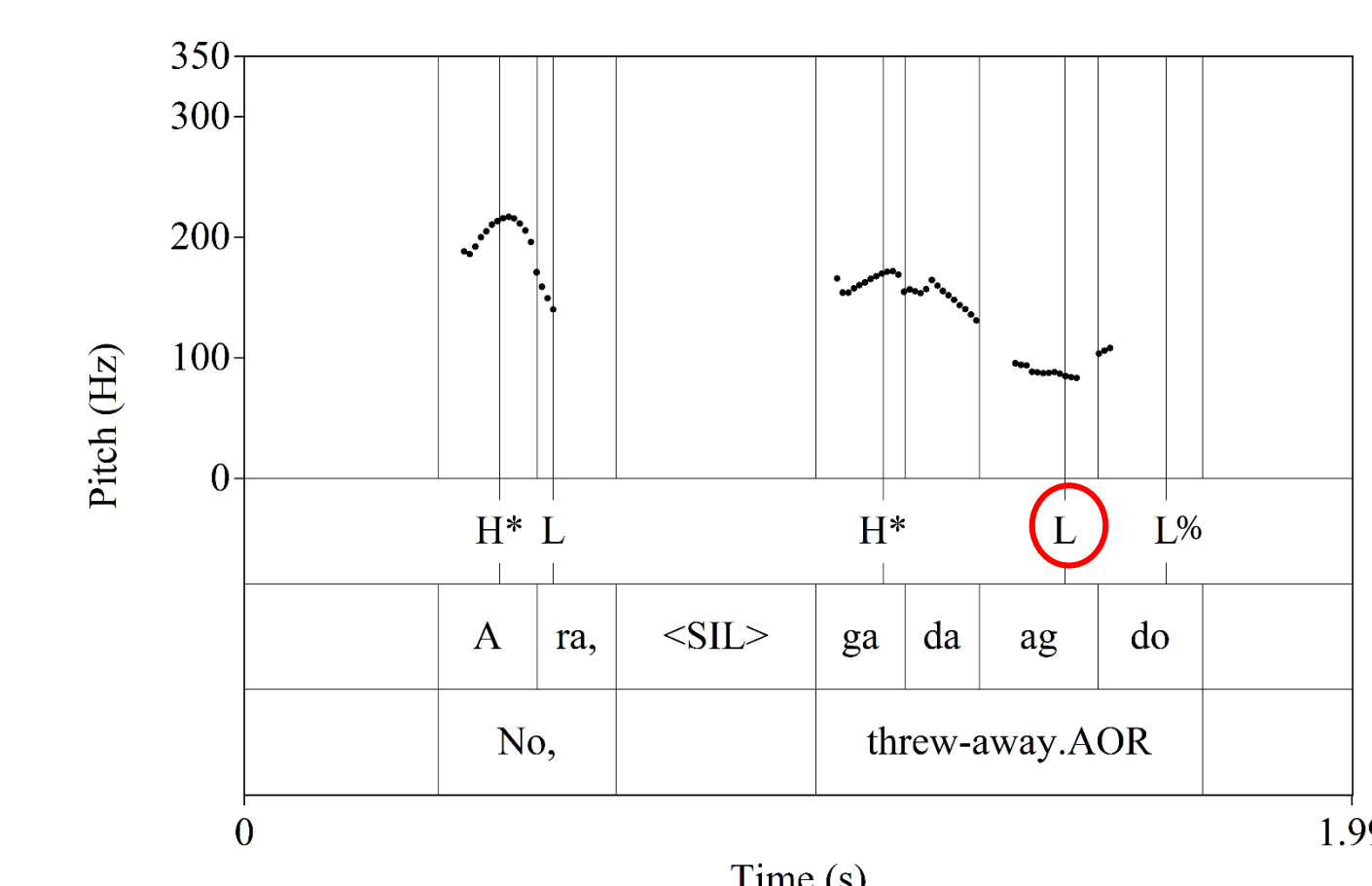
- (6) *Vi-s uvlis Nino?* (7) *Nino vis uvlis?*
who-DAT look_after-3sg Nino.NOM
Who does Nino look after? (8) **Vis Nino uvlis?*



Contrastive contexts

The prosody of corrective replies is similar to WHQs, the only noticeable difference being final L% instead of a final rise.

- (9) *Šeč'ama Manana-m alubali?* (10) *Ara, gadaagdo.*
eat.AOR Manana-ERG cherry.NOM NEG throw-away.AOR
Did Manana eat the cherry? No, (she) threw (it) away.



Improvements over previous accounts

Vicenik & Jun (2014) tentatively suggest that a phrase accent H+L (corresponds to L in the current analysis) might be associated with focus. Their account is consistent with the data, except in cases like (2), in which L appears without the preceding high target in YNQs. The current approach doesn't run into the same issue.

Skopeteas et al. (2009 *et seq.*) argue that Georgian focus is prosodically manifested in alignment with prosodic boundaries. Specifically:

- final foci are aligned with a high phrase tone at the left edge,
- initial foci are aligned with a high phrase tone at the right edge, and
- medial foci are prosodically integrated in a constituent preceding the focus and separated from the post-focal material.

No account is offered for the disjunctive conditions on focus prosody proposed.

In contrast, the phrase accent account of Georgian focus developed here offers a unified analysis of different types of focus contexts and structural configurations.

Cross-linguistic perspective

The Georgian facts are in line with the recent evidence that Hungarian, another language with a structural position reserved for focus, realizes focus prosodically in addition to syntax (Genzel et al. 2015).

The next question What motivates the positive redundancy in focus marking for Georgian, Hungarian, and possibly other languages?

Selected references: Aronson, H. 1990. *Georgian: A reading grammar*. Slavica Publishers, Inc. Büring, D. 2009. Towards a typology of focus realization. *Information structure: Theoretical, typological, and experimental perspectives*, 177-205. Genzel, S., Ishihara, S., and Surányi, B. 2015. The prosodic expression of focus, contrast and givenness: A production study of Hungarian. *Lingua* 165: 183-204. Hewitt, B. G. 1995. *Georgian: A structural reference grammar*. John Benjamins. Robins, R.H. and Waterson, N. 1952. Notes on the Phonetics of the Georgian Word. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 14 (1), 55-72. Skopeteas, S., and Fanselow, G. 2010. Focus in Georgian and the expression of contrast. *Lingua*, 120(6), 1370-1391. Skopeteas, S., Féry, C., and Asatiani, R. 2009. Word order and intonation in Georgian. *Lingua* 119.1: 102-127. Vicenik, C., and Jun, S-A. 2014. An autosegmental-metrical analysis of Georgian intonation. In: Jun, Sun-Ah (ed.): *Prosodic Typology II. The Phonology of Intonation and Phrasing*. Oxford University Press.

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