

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

In this thesis, I have proposed a new version of the Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR) which overcomes certain problems found with previous versions. Furthermore, I have also provided an explanation for the so-called preverbal focus position in Basque in terms of the new NSR and prosodic principles imposed on focused phrases.

With respect to the NSR, I have argued that certain generalizations about stress above the word level can be reduced to two basic syntactic properties of phrases: headedness and branchingness. The proposal is based on certain crucial insights found in previous work on the topic (Chomsky, Halle, and Lukoff 1956, Chomsky and Halle 1968, Liberman and Prince 1977, Halle and Vergnaud 1987, Cinque 1993, Zubizarreta 1998). The work reported in this thesis puts these insights together, resulting in a new version of the NSR, within the formalism of the metrical grid, which makes explicit reference to syntactic structure.

With respect to the preverbal focus position in Basque, I have argued, contra much previous work on the topic, that it is not a syntactically defined position. Rather, it is to be explained in terms of certain prosodic conditions imposed on focused phrases. More specifically, focused phrases need to have primary stress in the sentence. The analysis is based on insights about the relation between syntax and discourse found in Cinque 1993, Zubizarreta 1998 and Reinhart 1995. The basic idea is that, given certain independently motivated hypotheses about Basque syntax, the NSR proposed in this thesis predicts that, in many cases, sentence stress is on the preverbal constituent. Since focused phrases need to have sentence stress, it follows that they must be in the preverbal position. However, in certain cases, the analysis

correctly predicts that the focused phrase is not the one preceding the verb, but one containing the verb. I have argued that this provides further evidence in favor of this analysis, and against analyses in which the preverbal focus position is defined syntactically.

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