CHAPTER SEVEN

PROSODIC PROMINENCE AND THE COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, the focus is on how prosodic cues affect the flow of discourse causing it to be heard as segmented chunks and the examination of their role in the development of discourse. The conclusion is that this segmented unit does not exist as an isolated entity, but contracts relationship with other speech units in sequences.

Clearly any investigation of the role of intonation in discourse must attempt to establish the nature of this relationship and to evaluate its significance in the structure of the discourse. Nevertheless, because the focus was on segmentation and the problems associated with it, no attempt was made to examine the internal structure of the segmented parts in particular matters pertaining to the assignment of prosodic prominence to selected items of information in discourse.
7.2 Prominence and the Transfer of Information

This chapter begins with the premise that prosodic prominence is exploitable according to speaker choice based on his moment-by-moment assessment of the hearer's information requirement. It undertakes to examine the notion of prosodic prominence within the framework of language communication.

The view taken here is that the assignment of prosodic prominence to particular item(s) of information in an utterance is regarded as part of the communicative strategies employed by the speakers to get their message across. This entails the definition of its function with reference to the communication of information from the speaker to the hearer.

While the communication of content information is the primary aim of utterances, the accessory participation of non-content information should be taken into account in analysing a corpus of natural spoken data. Thus information here has to be viewed in a wider context so that it encompasses not only propositional information but also social information or interpersonal attitudes, pragmatic information and interaction management information.
The primary effect of this prosodic prominence is to draw the hearer's attention to particular parts of the message at the expense of other parts whose lack of prominence marks that the speaker chooses not to draw attention to that information (cf. Knowles:1984). In this respect, prosodic prominence has a general "watch this!" function (Brown and Yule (1983)) in the sense that it distinguishes the "focal" elements, marked by prominence from "residual" elements, unmarked by prominence.

As a working hypothesis, this chapter will take the utterance as the basic descriptive unit for the investigation of prosodic focusing rather than the tone group. In spite of its fuzziness, Vanpope (1989) considers an utterance as "the unit par excellence for an analysis of intonational meaning" (p. 268), particularly if it is regarded as "the product of context and sentence meaning" (Lyons, 1981:65) and if it is allowed to cross sentence boundaries so that the investigation can cover context as well.

Since an utterance can be made up of more than one tone group, the proposal does not preclude the possibility of an utterance consisting of two or more prominent items. The utterance will not be segmented into tone groups unless it is deemed necessary to do so.
Since the focus here is on the communication of information, no attempt will be made to identify the syllable which is assigned the peak of prominence in the prominent lexical item. The selection of lexical item as the domain of focus is motivated by the fact that it is the information contained in the lexical item which the speaker wants to foreground and he does this by accenting its appropriate syllable (see O'Connor & Arnold (1972:5). We concur with McCarthy (1992: 196) that in connected discourse "prominence though attach to syllables, gives significance to words.

In this thesis the implications of prominence are examined on the basis of words having or not having a single prominent syllable (Brazil, 1985b: 38). In Malay, one often comes across a two-word lexical item such as "orang ramai" (the public), "hamba Allah" (the servant of God), "brek kereta" (car brake), etc. which functions like a one-word lexical item in the sense that it communicates an item of information. The presence of an accented syllable in the final word which makes it auditorily prominent results in the foregrounding of the whole phrase rather than just the word which receives the prominence.

Before going on to more substantive matters, it must be made clear what this chapter intends to examine. Firstly, the chapter will look at prosodic focusing and the non-phonological entity that it applies to.
Secondly, it will look at the notion of given/new distinction and determine the actual realisation of "newness" and "givenness" in the data of broadcast interviews. Thirdly, an attempt will be made to identify the communicative strategies that the speaker employs which entail the foregrounding of presupposed information. Lastly, this chapter will look at the assignment of prosodic prominence to items of information that communicate information of pragmatic, social and interactional in nature.

7.3 Prosodic Focusing and Focused Item

7.3.1 Prosodic Parameters

The linguistic level of focus is concerned with both phonological and non-phonological entities: the former is the focus marking and the latter is the item marked.

Prosodic focusing is realised by prominence assignment which is taken to refer to auditory prominence imparted to a syllable by a combination of prosodic cues such as pitch, loudness and length. Other reliable prosodic cues which help in the realisation of syllable prominence include the following:

(1) decrescendo, i.e. a step down in perceived loudness in the constituent following the focus,
(2) tempo marking (i.e. absence of a quickening of pace of the focused item, relative to surrounding constituents)

(Wells:1986)

The results of Fo measurement in selected utterances clearly show that Malay makes use of pitch movement as a cue for focus marking. This is in line with Gimson's observation that "intonation changes are the most efficient means of rendering prominent for a listener those parts of an utterance on which the speaker wishes to concentrate attention" (1980:264).

The most common contour used is the falling contour, i.e. either a fall or a rise-fall. The less common one is a fall-rise. The other important cues are loudness and length. The prominent lexical items in Malay can easily be distinguished auditorily because in most cases the three parameters co-occur, thereby causing the words to stand out from the surrounding words which are not so accented. There is also a tendency for the speakers to increase their tempo before reaching the prominent item.

Since the concern here is the function of prosodic prominence, it is not strictly necessary to go into phonetic details.
7.3.2 Items Brought into Focus

What has been a major source of contention is the issue of what constitutes the non-phonological entities that prosodic focusing applies to. Ladd (1980) divides the treatments of prosodic focusing into two basic approaches: the first is strictly syntactic in the sense that it makes the connection between focus and prosody a grammatical rule-governed property of linguistic structures, and the other emphasises the semantic aspect of prosodic focusing, principally its association with information focus and the categorisation of information as either new or given.

The detail of the syntactic discussion may not be necessary here because its narrow framework restricts the examination of prosodic prominence within the domain of isolated experimental sentences, disregarding context (cf. Chafe (1976), Gunter (1972), Bolinger (1972), Schmerling (1976)). Suffice to say that any attempt to discuss let alone "justify" the distribution of accents in utterances based primarily on syntactic criteria is bound to limit the scope of examination. That being so one cannot dismiss the fact that lexical items are usually more acceptable than grammatical items and that nouns are usually more acceptable than other lexical items (Quirk et al (1972)).
Cutler (1983) who argues for semantic and pragmatic criteria of accent placement postulates that although in the normal case the accent will fall on major lexical items (noun, verb, adjectives, adverbs), "the semantic and pragmatic assignment operations can override lexical stress placement" and could result in the accent being on non-lexical items (see Fig. 7.1 and 7.2 in Appendix 2). Consider Extracts 1 and 2 in this respect:

**Extract 7.1**

1A  `AIDS 'NI yang paling penting dia `ATTACK ah

    <f f>  <f f>

    `SEL `SEL `DARAH `YANG (0.25)

    < > (0.36)

    < > (0.44)

    `LYMPOSAIT ,EH

    < > (0.76)

    <> (0.29)

A This AIDS what is most important is that it attacks the blood cells which are lymphatic, eh?
Extract 7.2

2B ,DAN ah (0.49) ^NI satu ^LAGI dikatakan

<>f  <>f

<al

<>(0.86)

tentang kerana pemindahan `DARAH ni

<>f<>p

al>
doktor

<LL>

<p p>

<> creaky

B And uh this eh, the other concerns blood transfusion.

In 1A above the speaker assigns prominence (indicated by capitalisation) to six lexical items "AIDS, "darah" (blood), attack, "sel sel" (cells), "penting" (important) and "limposait" (lymphacite)), a demonstrative pronoun “ni” (this), relative word "yang" (which) and an expression which requests for agreement "eh" (see Figures 1A and 1B, in Appendix C, all figures in this chapter are in Appendix C).
"ni" does not have a truth condition. It refers back to "AIDS" the lexical item with content information, which the speaker wants to draw the hearers' attention to. Its prominence is brought about by a combination of fall-rising pitch and forte loudness.

"yang" being a grammatical item, whose function is to link the preceding clause to the following noun, does not communicate content message. Presumably, the low falling contour on forte "yang" with lengthened syllable of 437 msec is used as a turn-holding device signalling to the hearer that the speaker has yet to finish his utterance. The brief pause before "limposait", a word of high lexical content which indicates word-finding difficulty, further explains the need to make "yang" prosodically prominent as a turn-holding cue. Thus the contribution of the accented "yang" to meaning is context-dependent, i.e. pragmatic.

"eh" a non-lexical item appended to the preceding clause is marked with a rise. The meaning of "eh" is also context-dependent such that it derives its meaning from the context in which it occurs. Here it invites the hearer to agree with the speaker's preceding assertion.

Likewise in Extract 7.2, the speaker (marked 2B) selects to make "darah" (blood), a content-word, "dan" (and) and "ni" (this), non-lexical items prominent (see Figures 2A and 2B). Unlike "darah", "dan" and "ni" do
not contribute to the truth conditions of the utterance. The raising of pitch height and increased loudness of "dan" in comparison with the speaker's previous pitch level signals the change of topic of conversation (cf. Brown et al (1980)), i.e., from agreeing with what B says in the preceding utterance to putting forward another cause for contracting AIDS. The accent on "ni" is a turn-keeping device deployed to prevent possible interruption from the co-interactant and its lengthened syllable of 860 msec further lends support to this assumption (see Figures 2A and 2B). The allegro tempo of the following constituents also contributes to the phonetic realisation of its prominence.

7.3.3 Information Focus and Speaker Choice

Some of the postulations put forward by Halliday and likewise those who hold the view that focus is a semantic phenomenon are of some relevance to the present chapter. First is the assumption that accent placement is associated with information focus. The intimate link between accent and information focus in English has long highlighted the significant role played by intonation in structuring information, its accentual function associated with the distribution of accent across an utterance (cf. Halliday (1967), Couper-Kuhlen (1986), Cruttenden (1986)).
Halliday's principal contribution is the explanation of the function of accent within a broader framework of a linguistic theory that incorporates information structure. He defines the focus of information as "what the speaker decides to make the main point or burden of the message". This formulation is of course similar to those found in other studies on focus.

Although there are inadequacies and weaknesses in the model of information structure (cf. Brown et al (1980); Brown & Yule (1983); Couper-Kuhlen (1986)), one cannot disregard the important point that it brings into language communication, i.e. the role of speaker choice in the distribution of prosodic prominence across utterances.

Bolinger postulates that accent marks the major focus of interest and is perceived as an independent entity reflecting the speaker's intent (1989: 236). According to him, most often a speaker indicates the relative importance and information of an individual portion in an utterance by accenting it. Unlike Halliday, he prefers the term "focus of interest" rather than "focus of information" because in his opinion an item which does not add to the truth conditions of the utterance can be accented, if that suits the speaker's purpose. The examples that he quotes include information which is predictable or anaphorically recoverable from context.
Examples 1A (in Extract 7.1) and 2B (in Extract 7.2) above illustrate how the speaker exploits the potential of prosodic prominence to convey information, which in this case is of pragmatic in nature, to the hearer.

To further illustrate how the speaker manipulates prominence system to realise his communicative goals, there follows an analysis of the interviewee’s response to the interviewer’s request for her comment on a newspaper report regarding a person who has not slept for sixteen years (see Extract 7.3). Figures 3A-3C show the pitch contour of the prominent lexical items.

**Extract 7.3**

3B ah ah ^SEBENARNYA perkara ^NI `SUSAH, JUGALAH

```
<f   f>   <>f   f   f>
< >(0.66)   <>(0.34)
<   >>(0.45)
```

saya nak ^KOMEN Cik ^ZAINAL sebab kita

```
<f   f>   <f   f>
<   >>(0.42)
```

tak `TAHU `KEBENARAN cerita `TU

```
<p>  <f   f>
(0.39)<   >   <   >>(0.78)   <>(0.22)
```
B uh uh actually it is difficult to give my comment on this matter Mr. Zainal because we do not know whether the story is true.

From B's response, A can make the pragmatic inference that B cannot or would rather not comply with A's request. B begins his responding move with "sebenarnya" (actually) which implies that the speaker may not fulfil whatever is requested of him. The choice to accent "sebenarnya", a speaker/listener oriented adverbial indicates that the speaker wants to draw the hearer's attention to it. "sebenarnya" is made prominent by the assignment of a rising falling intonation and forte loudness.

Instead of accenting "perkara" (the matter) a lexical item which contains truth conditions, the speaker selects to accent "ni" (this), a discourse deixis which introduces "perkara", the referent. The choice to accent "Ni" can be interpreted as involving an implicit "polarity contrast" with its counterpart "itu" which is not present in the discourse. Likewise, the speaker selects to accent "tu" (that) a reference word which refers to what was mentioned before instead of "cerita" (arrowed), the content word.

"susah" (difficult) being a new content word just introduced into the discourse bears the accent with the nuclear accent on "sah"(see Figure 3A). It expresses how the speaker feels about giving her opinion on the
matter, i.e. that she finds it difficult to do so. Prince (1981) classifies this as "a brand new entity" which is assumed not to be in anyway known by the hearer and should therefore be accented.

Speaker B chooses to accent "komen" (comment) giving it a fall-rise tone, although its synonym "pendapat" (opinion) has been mentioned earlier in A's elicitation move. This "given" entity is referred to as "textually evoked entity" since it has already been introduced in the preceding discourse and is now being referred to for the second time (Prince:1981).

According to Brown (1983) "evoked expressions" are usually not accented. In this instance, the speaker chooses to make it prosodically prominent, thus drawing the hearer's attention to the item probably for the purpose of emphasis, i.e. to emphasize that commenting on such matter is not easy.

The use of "Cik Zainal", a proper name, to address the addressee communicates information as regards the relationship between the speaker and the referent, the addressee. By uttering forte "Zainal" with a rise-fall tone, the speaker makes it auditorily prosodically prominent, thus drawing the hearers' attention to it.
In Malay, particularly in a formal setting such as this, addressing the addressee in such a manner is considered polite and the name of the person so addressed is usually preceded by a title of address, which in this case is "cik" (refer to section 7.3 for further discussion).

The speaker next chooses to accent "tahu" (know) instead of "tak" (not) a negative particle which seems to have pitch-prominent and intensity-prominent in a laboratory setting (cf. Allen (1972a & b), O'Shaughnessy and Allen (1983)). The choice not to accent "tak" could be motivated by the conversation context in which the utterance is made. "tak" is embedded in the part of the utterance that questions the truth of the story.

Raising the issue of the truth of the facts presented by the addressee as a reason for non-compliance can be a possible threat to the "face" of the person being addressed. Thus in order not to affront him the speaker resorts to using two linguistic devices: lexical choice - using the pronoun "kita" (we) instead of "saya" (I) and using prosodic means by accenting "tahu" and deaccenting "tak".

According to Yaeger-Dors (1985:199) there is a tendency among speakers not to accent a negative particle in a given utterance "where negative in this context might be inferred as a disagreement with some other conversational participant's position". Although Yaeger-Dors's
findings are restricted to the relationship between prosodic prominence and negative particle, she raises a pertinent point, i.e. that in a "polite", "formal" or careful social context, there is a tendency for the speaker to waive linguistic rules in favour of interactive rules if the former conflicts with the latter.

Finally the speaker selects to accent "kebenaran", a lexical item that indicates implicit contrastiveness with its opposite, i.e. "kepalsuan" (false).

As can be seen from the above analysis, unlike the written language which proceeds linearly, there is a great deal of variation in the spoken language as the speaker exploits the resources of prosody for his own conversational ends. In a brief discourse, e.g. Extract 3, the speaker is able to convey information pertaining not only to the propositional content of the utterance but also matters concerning the social relationship between speaker and addressee, the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse and other specific interactive considerations. Presumably, by allocating prominence to particular items, lexical or non-lexical, the speaker can convey to the hearer the information that he wishes to convey.
According to Couper-Kuhlen (1986:45) "once the information focus is viewed as exploitable according to speaker intention, then the accent placement comes to depend on the motives behind speaker choice".

The reasons why the speaker selects to assign a certain lexical item prosodic prominence and leaves the other unaccented are many. However, they may not be found in the syntax or semantics of the utterance. Given the interactional setting, the speaker has the freedom to exercise his choice for the communication of information, just as in the same way as there is considerable choice in the selection of syntax and lexis.

7.3.4 Context

The other contribution is the consideration given to the influence of linguistic and non-linguistic situational factors on accent placement. The assumption is that context determines the placement of accent. The use of terms like "new", "informationally relevant" as compared to "given", "old", "discourse background", or "presupposed matter" implies a recourse to the context, verbal and/or situational in order to determine the status of the vocalised information in the utterance.
If one accepts the premise that it is the speaker who decides how the information is to be presented to fulfil his own interactional ends, then there is therefore no necessary connection between focus choice and context predictability. This issue is raised by Schmerling (1976) in his criticism of Bolinger's predictibility criterion which predicts the allocation of accent based on "relative semantic weight", i.e. the more "semantic weight" an item has the less predictable is its occurrence in the context.

To support his argument, Schmerling brings to light the problem of accounting for the early placement of accent in "all new sentence", e.g. JOHNSon died. Based on Bolinger's predictability criterion, one would expect the speaker to accent "died". Given the situational context that Johnson was in a relatively good health, his death was highly unexpected.

Likewise Halliday's information focus rule which predicts that in the unmarked, neutral case the accent falls on the last stressed item under focus, could not also account for the fall of accent on "Johnson" in this highly unexpected news coming "out of the blue".

Schmerling argues rightly that any context at all involves assumption which may affect accent placement (Ladd 1980). That being so one cannot discount the fact that one can usually point to factors of the context to provide some kind of explanation as to why speakers select to accent
some items and leave others unaccented. The issue that Schmerling questioned concerns the predictability of prosodic allocation based on certain preestablished criteria, be they syntactic or semantic.

Indeed, it is difficult to predict what a person intends to say, as Schmerling hypothesises "you have to be a mind reader to predict accent". Obviously one does not really know what prompts an interlocutor to assign or not to assign prosodic prominence to an item of information. Nevertheless, the context in which they occur be it verbal or situational, will to some extent help in elucidating why such a choice is preferred.

7.4 New/Given Distinction

There appears to be general consensus in the literature that accent placement is a prosodic device for indicating the "newsworthiness" of the various items of information. It is typically used to signal what the speaker perceives as new information in the discourse. According to Halliday (1985a:55) "information is a property of connected discourse, involving the interaction of two complementary parts: what is given and what is new". The internal organisation of the information units relates to the way in which the speaker distributes given and new information in the units.
According to Halliday (1967), new information is that part of the information which is marked by tonic prominence. The information is new "not in the sense that it cannot have been previously mentioned" (1967:68). It is simply that part of the message block which "the speaker wishes the listener to attend to" (1985:55), i.e. the part which he chooses to be interpreted as the most "informative" (1967:204). Consider the following exchange in this respect (see Fig. 7.4 in Appendix 2):

**Extract 4**

4A a: mereka nampak seolah-olah mereka 'INGIN
supaya pilihanraya diadakan secepat mungkin

5B bermaknalaha sudah hampir, PILIHANRAYA
'NAMPAKNYA

A They appear as if they want the election to be held as soon as possible.

B Meaning that the election is going to be held soon.

In the above extract, the newly introduced " ingin" (want) is presented as new by the assignment of prominence realised by a combination of falling tone and forte loudness. Unlike " ingin", "pilihanraya" and "nampak" are anaphorically recoverable, yet the interviewer attaches prominence to them, thus presenting them as new in the sense of deserving attention.
In this thesis, the term "new" is adopted to refer to information presented by the speaker to the hearer as requiring to be paid attention to or particularly deserving attention. The speaker does this by making the information prosodically prominent.

Given information is that which the speaker treats as being "recoverable either anaphorically or situationally" (Halliday 1967:204), or which the speaker assumes to be "on stage" in the hearer's mind. The speaker indicates this by not assigning it prominence.

7.4.1 Introduction and Reintroduction of Topics

In broadcast interviews, questions are often used by speakers to get responses that develop the nominated topic to a greater or lesser extent (Button and Casey 1982). The nominated topic of the utterance can either be introduced into the discourse for the first time, e.g. "driving" and "jalan" ([road], Extracts 7.5 and 7.6 respectively). Figure 5 in Appendix B shows the assignment of prominence to "driving", which is uttered with a rising pitch and Figure 1A in Appendix A shows the "non-assignment" of prominence to "jalan".
Extract 7.5

5A    ah:macamana hari ni  DRIVING  OK
       <f  f>  <>f
       <al al>

6B    apa kereta 'ROSAK tengah jalan
       <f  f><  DEC >
       <  al >

A    How's the driving, OK?
B    Well, a car broke down in the middle of the road.

Extract 7.6

7A    jalan tak 'JAM ya' DOKTOR
       <f  f>  < f>  <f  f>

8B    a: 'NAMPAK pagi'NI 'BAGUS
       < CRES>  <f  f>

A    The road is not congested, is it doktor?
B    a: It looks good.

or reintroduced into the question after its first mention in the preceding discourse, e.g. "iklan" (advertisement) in 9A and "raya" (a Muslim celebration) in 6A:
Extract 7.7

9A  ^INI (0.35),^IKLAN ni pun  `BERKESAN juga
   <f>  <f f>  <f f><pp>
   < >(0.38)  <  >(0.28)  <  > (0.42)

datok YA
   <>(0.21)

A  This advertisement is effective too, yes datok

Extract 7.8

10A  so: bila datang¬RAYA macam¬NI
    <f f>  <f
    <  >(0.53)  < > (0.45)

  `MACAMANA doktor
    <p p>

A  so when raya celebration comes like this how is it doctor?

Being a newly introduced topic, the speaker accentuates "driving" (driving) in 5A by producing it with forte loudness and giving it a rising pitch; thus, presenting it as new to the hearer. However, "jalan" which is also new, is not so accented. Instead the last lexical item "jam" is made prominence with the assignment of falling pitch and forte loudness.
On the other hand the information expressed by "iklan" (advertisement) in 9A and "raya" (Muslim celebration) in 10A is "textually presupposed" in the sense that the two items have already been mentioned in the preceding discourse. However, the assignment of prosodic prominence to "iklan" and "raya" indicates that the speaker wishes this information to be attended to by the hearer regardless of their previous mention.

According to House (1988) the simple fact that a lexical item has been mentioned before in the discourse does not mean that the speaker must necessarily repeat it low in pitch, treating it as given. The very use of the items themselves instead of the pro-form elements "ia" (he/she), "nya" (his/hers) or "dia" (he/she), which are normally used for given individuals, already seems a surface indication of their importance in the utterance.

In 9A besides using prosodic means to highlight "iklan" the speaker also uses lexical devices to mark the focussed element, i.e. the use of "pun", a marker of emphasis and, a demonstrative "ni".

Likewise certain types of structure leave what is clearly new information unaccented, e.g. "satu" (one) in Extract 7.9:
Extract 7.9

11A DATOK ada 'ANAK ambil SPM

12B 'ADA

13A ha 'MACAMANA

14B 'ALHAMDULILLAH dapat 'GRED satu

A Datok, have you got any children have taking SPM?

B Yes

A How?

B Praise be to God. She's got grade 1.

The problem with 14B is the assignment of prominence to "gred" instead of "satu", the rightmost lexical item which is the unmarked position of the accented word. "satu" (one) is new information and based on Halliday's information-focus rule, being the last lexical item "satu" should receive a nuclear accent. However, in this instance only "gred" (grade) is accented and "satu" (one) is deaccented. "satu" and "gred" are so closely semantically and syntactically unified that they form a conceptual unit (a noun phrase) with "gred" receiving the nucleus. In this instance new information is non-prominent prosodically since the new element has merged so that accent falls on one only.
7.4.2 Comment

In an utterance, the topic or subject of an utterance is usually accompanied by the comment which the speaker makes about the topic. This comment is important as it is the real content load of the message, the information about the topic. For example, the speaker highlights "berkesan" (effective) in 9A, "jam" (congested) in 7A, "rosak" (broke down) in 6B and "bagus" (good) in 8B syntactically by being the comment in a topic-comment structure, and prosodically by the heavy final falling "emphasis" on them.

"berkesan", "jam", "rosak" and "bagus" are technically new in the sense that they are not "textually presupposed". Their informational contribution to the utterance lies in the fact that they assign a new truth condition, i.e. "jam", "berkesan", "rosak" and "bagus" to the already existing information, i.e. "jalan", "iklan", "kereta" and "pagi ni" respectively, thus justifying the assignment of prosodonic prominence.

Likewise "perlu" (essential) in Extract 7.10 which is the speaker’s comment about the topic "tidur yang cukup" (sufficient sleep) is assigned prominence, the realisation of which is brought about by a combination of a rise fall tone, forte loudness and lengthened final syllable of about 316 msec. It carries the real content load of the message since it gives
information about the topic, thus assigning a new truth condition to the given information. "Tiap-tiap orang" which is an additional information is also presented as deserving to be paid attention to with the assignment of a rising pitch to the last lexical item, i.e. "orang". Figure 6 clearly shows that the two lexical items are assigned prosodic prominence.

Extract 7.10

15B sebab `TiDUR yang cukup ^NI adalah

\[
\langle f  f\rangle < p \quad p > <\rangle < f \\
<\rangle (0.30)
\]

\[
< a l > (0.22)
\]

`SANGAT ^PERLU untuk tiap-tiap ORANG

\[
\langle f  f\rangle \quad < \rangle (0.32) \quad \langle f  f\rangle
\]

\[
< \quad > (0.36)
\]

7.4.3 Textually Recoverable Information

In answering the speaker's question, the addressee usually reintroduces the information which the speaker wants him to respond to in his answer. In informal conversation this presupposed information is seldom repeated as it is taken for granted that such information would have by then become shared knowledge. Since the talk in broadcast interviews is primarily produced for overhearing audience, it is normal for the
addressee when assuming the role of a speaker to make reference to this information in his reply.

Whether this textually recoverable information should be assigned prosodic prominence or not indeed lies in the hand of the speaker. For instance, in Extract 7.11 below:

Extract 7.11

16A ^JADI a: Datok `sri (0.74) ^BAGAIMANAKAH
   <f f>   <f f> <f>   <f>
   <  > (0.65)
   <   > (0.47) <   > (0.61)

a-> agaknya `SAMBUTAN orang ^RAMAI pada lawatan
   <f  f>   <f  f>

Datok Sri `SEHINGGA ni
   <al  al> (0.35)

b-> (1.78) `NAMPAK (0.17) a: SAMBUTANNYA adalah
   <f  f>   <   > (0.69)
   <   > (0.53)
BERIKAN.

<  > (0.33)

mereka nampak seolah-olah mereka INGIN

-> b supaya pilihanraya supaya DIADAKAN secepat mungkin

<al al:

18A bermakna sudah hampir PILIHANRAYA nampaknya

A How was your visit received by the people so far, Datok.

B It looks good. They look as if they want the election to be

A as soon as possible

B It looks as if the election is going to be soon?

although "sambutan" (arrowed a) is recoverable anaphoric
interviewee chooses to accent it, thus presenting this in
deserving to be paid attention to (see Figure 7). However, the public made prominent in its first mention (arrowed a) being on stage in its second mention (arrowed b). It is repli
pronoun "nya", a form used for given individuals and become sambutan. Likewise, the interviewer who wants the response on whether the election is going to be held gives prominence to "pilihanraya" (election), in 18A the topic, although mention in B's discourse (arrowed 6) it is not so marked.
In Extract 7.12 below:

**Extract 7.12**

->a 19A ^JADI bukan MAKAN telan-telan 'PIL

<ff> <f> <f>

->b 20B telan-telan’y PIL ‘NI tak berapa ‘ELOKLAH

A So one should not consume pills

B Taking pills is not that good

speaker B (marked 20B) makes reference to "telan-telan pil" (consuming pills), the information introduced in the prior discourse (arrowed a) and assigns this reintroduced information (arrowed b) a fall-rise intonation accompanied by forte loudness. The importance of the information "telan-telan pil" is further enhanced by the presence of accented "ni" which refers back to it. Being the core information, as it communicates what the speaker feels about "telan-telan pil", "tak berapa eloklah" ((not that good) arrowed b) is marked prosodically prominent by a falling intonation and syntactically prominent by the assignment of "lah" a marker of emphasis (see Figure 8A). Unlike "telan-telan pil", "tak berapa eloklah" is not textually presupposed.
The reactivation of the already presented information is motivated by the need to seek further clarification of the information introduced. In Extract 7.13, for example, the interviewee sensed a "side effect", (arrowed a) the reactivated item of information is deaccenting it. Instead the question word "macamana" (accented and the word "doktor" is uttered with a high rising pitch) the utterance as a question (see figures 8B and 8C).

Extract 7.13

A21 kita kena 'INGAT 'UBAT-UBAT tidur tu 'ADA

<f f>

'SIDE-EFFECT dia

<p>
< > (0.45)

a-> B22 ya side effect yang 'MACAMANA tu ,DOKTOR

<f f> <p p>
< > (0.32)

A We must remember that sleeping pills have their s

B Yes, What kind of side-effects?
One of the common communicative strategies used by the interviewer in order to get information on a particular topic of interest is to introduce it at the beginning of his discourse and reintroduce it by addressing with a question. The assertion in the prior discourse provides the addressee with the background information which may be relevant for his response to the speaker's question. The new information thus becomes "textually presupposed" in the subsequent act since the latter refers to a fact which is already known to the addressee.

Based on his moment by moment assessment of the hearer's information requirement, the speaker can select to assign this "anaphorically recoverable" information prosodic prominence (e.g. "iklan" and "raya" in 9A and 10A respectively) if he still wishes to draw the hearer's attention to it. Alternatively, he can choose not to accent it, presenting it as given, or choose not to accent it the first time it is introduced but accent it when it is reintroduced, presenting it as new. For instance in the following discourse,

Extract 7.14

23A  *DALAM a: beberapa ucapan Datuk 'SERI ya
        <al                          al>(0.73)

        penekanan yang 'BESAR diberi pada
        <                                     > (0.42)
pertumbuhan ^EKONOMI

JADI saya ingin tahu kami sekelian

(0.38)

ingin 'TAHU (0.32) ^BAGAIMANAKAH a

SEKARANG ni?

A In several of your speeches Datok Sri great emphasis is given to economic development So I would like to know all of us would like to how is the development at present?

the speaker introduces "pertumbuhan ekonomi" ((economic development), arrowed a) into the interviewee's consciousness. The assignment of prosodic prominence to "ekonomi" (i.e realised by a combination of rise-fall tone, forte loudness and lengthened duration) indicates the wish to present "pertumbuhan ekonomi" (a noun phrase) as new. Once this information is in the forefront of the hearers' mind, the interviewer proceeds to request for interviewee's response on the now "given" information (arrowed d). The very use of anaphoric "nya" (its) to refer to the presupposed "ekonomi" (economy) and the decision not to accent "nya" and "pertumbuhan" (development) in the discourse are a surface indication that the speaker regards the information as being "on stage" (given) in the interviewee's mind because of its prior mention in the discourse.
The word "tahu" ((know), arrowed b) is not accented in its first mention but is accented in its second mention (arrowed c). This could be a slip of the tongue on the part of the speaker since in the subsequent part of his utterance he repairs the mistake by changing "saya" to "kami" and accenting "tahu". The assignment of prominence to "pertumbuhan ekonomi" in its first mention and the assignment of prominence to "tahu" is its second mention can be clearly seen in the pitch contour display in figures 9A and 9B.

What the speaker assumes as given is not necessarily the same thing as "previously mentioned", for an information can be assumed to be given based on shared background knowledge, e.g. "saudara pagi ni" ((gentlemen this morning) in 26A) in Extract 7.15:

Extract 7.15

24A teknologi `LOGAM `SIRIM saudara pagi ini
   <f f> <p p>
    <| |

A Metal technology SIRIM gentlemen this morning

has a relatively low pitch and piano loudness. The speaker selects to accent "SIRIM" (the name of an organisation) instead, a new item of information which is not recoverable textually or situationally.
In this short utterance which makes up topic announcement it is sufficient to make a distinction between what is offered as shared and what is offered as new. Since the hearers are fully aware of the part of day, the speaker chooses not to make "pagi ini" (this morning) - a temporal phrase - prosodically prominent. Similarly, the "audience honorific", "saudara" (gentlemen), which refers to hearers is not accented probably because being shared knowledge, the speaker assumes that it is unnecessary to bring it into prosodic focus.

What, on the other hand the listeners do not know is the topic of discussion which is "teknologi logam" (metal technology) and so this new information is brought into focus with the accent on the "logam". SIRIM, the organisation whose work on metal technology will be the subject of discussion, is presented as new marked by the assignment of accent.

As regards the issue that "given" information is "recoverable anaphorically", a further question that should be addressed is how far back in discourse may an item be located and still be "on stage" in the hearer's mind. Sometimes an item of information which is accented when it is first introduced into the discourse is regarded by the speaker as "given" in the subsequent utterances and is therefore not accented. For instance, in the following:
Extract 7.16

25B ^DAN juga kita `BOLEH (0.24) `SADURkan
dengan `LOGAM umpamanya GALVINISING
(0.31) DAN ELECTROPLATING

->a jadi dia memberi satu lapisan ... 

->b yang sebenarnya dia tidak seratus peratus ...

->c tapi dia melewatkan ...

B And we can also plate with metal, for example, galvanising and
electroplating so it gives one layer --- actually it is not --- but it
delays ---

The speaker introduces new content information, i.e. "sadurkan
dengan logam" ((plate it with metal), 25B) and makes reference to this
foregrounded information in the following three successive utterances using
the pronoun "dia" and deaccents it. The information has been the
"hypertheme" of the discourse for some time and is thus placed in an
informationally weak position whereby, in Malay, it usually does not receive
a nuclear accent unless it is semantically contrastive.

The speaker obviously judges the information to be "given" for the
hearers and this assumption is supported by the fact that he refers to the
information using an anaphoric pronoun "dia", indicating its "downgraded"
importance in the discourse. "dia" presupposes the prior establishment of
the referent as available within the discourse.

On the other hand, the speaker may decide to accent the same item
of information in a sequence of utterances, eventhough the latter is
identifiable from the immediately preceding verbal context, e.g. "GSP" in
26A (arrowed a), and "Ramadhan" in 27B (arrowed b):

Extract 7.17

26A  `TAPI kadang-kadang `TIMBUL ISU ISU yang mengganggu GUGAT
keyakinan kita `UMPAMANYA `TIMBUL a: tuntutan supaya pihak
Amerika `MENARIK balik apa ni `GSP
a-> TETAPI dalam pada itu ia MENAMPAKKAN seolah-olah kita
bergantung SANGAT kepada `GSP
b-> GSP

A  But sometimes some issues arise which affect our confidence, for
example, as regards the motion that the US should withdraw the
GSP. But at the same time it appears as if we are too dependent on
the GSP.
Extract 7.18

27B kita ^BIASAKAN dengan amalan-amalan 'SUNAT bukan bulan

->a 'RAMADHAN sahaja kalau boleh di bulan lain daripada

->b bulan 'RAMADHAN

B We acquaint ourselves with the optional practices not only during the month of Ramadhan. If possible in other months as well.

Here, it is obvious that the speaker regards "GSP" in Extract 7.17 (arrowed b) and in Extract 7.18 (arrowed b) "Ramadhan" as "new", although after the first mention they are no longer technically so (Halliday, 1980:17). Syntactically, the "repeated items" (i.e. "GSP" and Ramadhan") are placed in an informationally strong position (i.e. the end position in a clause) and in unmarked neutral cases such as this, the last accented items naturally receive special prosodic prominence in the form of nuclear accent or separate tone group. (cf. Asmah, 1980:362)

The speaker can also select to accent a given item which is "recoverable anaphorically" and then deaccent it in the following utterance for the purpose of drawing attention to another item in the discourse. In the following utterance, the speaker gives "neraka" ((hell), arrowed a) a high falling intonation and forte loudness to mark it as newly presented information, maintains the accents in its second mention (arrowed b) when
the utterance is partially repeated as a "self-corrective repair" strategy and deaccents it when mentioned again for the third time (arrowed c):

Extract 7.19

-\( a \) 28B  ditutupnya pintu `NERAKA sehingga kane ...  
-\( b \) ditutupnya pintu `NERAKA bukan"BERMAKNA kita boleh buat `JAHAT kerana pintu  
-\( c \) kerana pintu neraka `TUTUP  
  
B  The entrance to hell is close till ... the entrance to hell is close but this does not mean that we can do bad because the entrance to hell is close

By the third mention, the speaker obviously judges "neraka" (hell) to be subjectively "given" and chooses to shift the accent to "tutup" (close), an item which is contextually given but new by a semantic contrast, i.e "pintu neraka tutup 'bukan buka'" ("the entrance to hell is close 'not open' ").

Although the accent placement does not deviate from the norm such that the accent falls on the last accented syllable (regarded as the "normal" position of accent placement), the selection of accent placement on "tutup" here is based on the semantic notion of contrast "close" ("not open") but with normal accent placement. The above discourse illustrates how the speaker's focus shift may be expressed by the assignment of phonological
prominence and that this change is not only motivated by the "newness" or "givenness" of that information but also by its semantic contrast.

The analysis of the given data illustrates that the notion of "new" and "given" information does not coincide neatly with the distinction that the former is recoverable from the text or situation and the latter is not. As can be seen above the correlation between accented syllables and new, and between unaccented and given is not absolute. The fact that a piece of information "has been mentioned before" does not constrain that it will be deaccented. As Halliday points out (1970:44) a speaker may wish to give an item of given information "prominence as essential information".

Since it is the speaker who decides how the information is to be presented, the division between new and given information cannot therefore be directly predictable from the discourse or situational context. (Halliday:1967) Likewise Brazil et al (1980) considers information focus as something negotiable: to a certain extent, the speaker himself determines whether an item should be treated as new or given. In the following section, the foregrounding of presupposed information will be the focus of examination.
7.5 Accented Given Information

As pointed out in section 7.4, "textually presupposed" information may be assigned prosodic prominence in spite of its prior mention in the immediate discourse. This section aims at identifying the communicative strategies employed by the speaker to get his message across which entails the use of the "already evoked" information from the preceding discourse.

Being the dominant participant, the interviewer can propose a direction for the interviewee's subsequent contribution by inviting the interviewee to respond to what is formulated. One communicative strategy that the interviewer often employs is to refer to previously introduced facts at the beginning of his discourse followed by newly introduced facts. This change in semantic focus is accompanied by a change in pragmatic focus or interactional purposes with the shift from mere information in the former to a request for information in the latter.

Consider the following exchange:

**Extract 7.20**

\[\text{\textasciitilde}a\quad 29A\quad \text{itu mandi mandi ^SUNAT}\]

\[30B\quad (0.24)\quad \text{YA -}\]
31A 'MEMANG ada HADISNYA
32B a ya
33A ni yang mandi tolak BALA eh eh
33A mandi doa `SELAMAT. ^MACAMANA?
A That's spiritual body cleansing which is not obligatory
B Yes.
A The Hadith supports it.
B a: ya
A What about spiritual body cleansing that pushes disaster
away, one that asks for blessing. How is it?

Prior to the above exchange, the interviewee gives several examples of "mandi sunat" (commendable not obligatory by Islamic law) as
mentioned in the "al-hadith".

Here the development of topic follows an analytic development in
the sense that there is a movement from the general to the more specific.
The speaker initiates this exchange with a reference back to the
interviewee's prior talk about "mandi sunat" (arrowed a) a generic term
used for "body cleansing" whose practice is urged in Islam and this is
supported by "hadis" (al-Hadith). Subsequently, he initiates a subcourse
of development by introducing into the discourse specific examples of
"body cleansing" (i.e. "mandi tolak bala", "mandi doa selamat") and uses
this new information to prompt the interviewee to give his comment. In thus establishing a renewed topical focus the interviewer provides the interviewee with something new to respond to.

Analysing it from a given/new perspective, the speaker presents the given information (given in the sense of being anaphorically recoverable from the preceding discourse) as new indicating his choice by accenting the final accented syllable of the last item "sunat" and assigning the utterance one tone group delimited by a pause of 240 msecs. After receiving a positive response from B, A proceeds to support his earlier assertion by advancing another piece of information, i.e. "hadis" also mentioned earlier in the interviewer's prior utterance. Again this information is presented as new with the accented syllable of the last item receiving the prominence.

Being factually new and being the items which the interviewer wants the interviewee's comment on, "mandi tolak bala" (spiritual body cleansing that pushes disaster away) and "mandi doa selamat" (body cleansing that asks for blessing) are therefore accented. Figures 10A through 10C show the assignment of prominence to the mentioned lexical items.

Thus, what is given in the interviewee's prior discourse can be presented as new to fulfil the pragmatic purpose of the interviewer at that locus of occurrence.
The interviewer can also reintroduce into his discourse the information introduced much earlier in the interviewee’s talk for the purpose of bringing this information into the hearer’s consciousness which by now may not be present in the hearer’s store of knowledge. The mention of this given information is important because the question advanced by the interviewer makes reference to this background knowledge. By bringing in information which is presumably not "on stage" (though textually given), it is as if the interviewer is establishing a common ground on which to build the new-shared knowledge before any newly informing items.

Consider the following exchange:

**Extract 7.21**

34B  ^SEBENAR^nya yang terlibat ^HANYA^lah seratus tiga puloh ribu daripada LEBIH lima juta `PEKERJA` yang `ADA` di Malaysia —

<al  al>

a->A TADI datuk Seri `SEBUT` ada lima `JUTA` pekerja dalam `NEGRI` dan
b->  ^HANYA^ seratus tiga puloh ribu pekerja yang terbabit dalam `SOAL`
c-> mengenai industri yang berkaitan dengan `GSP`. Jadi apakah kerajaan bercadang untuk menyedarkan para pekerja mengenai HAK-HAK mereka yang `SUDAH` `DILINDUNGI`

B Actually those involved are only one hundred and thirty thousand out of five million workers in Malaysia.
Previously Datuk Sri said that there are five million workers in the country and only one hundred and thirty workers are involved in the issue concerning industries connected with GSP. So does the government intend to make the workers aware of their rights which are already protected.

In the above discourse, the speaker makes reference to the information which has already been mentioned much earlier in the discourse and signals this by "tadi" (arrowed a) an adverb indicating a reference to something which comes before. The assignment of prominence to items which have been given in the preceding discourse like "juta" ((million), arrowed b), "hanya" (only, arrowed b)) and "negri" ((country), arrowed b) and "GSP" (arrowed c) indicates that the speaker still wishes to present this as new as deserving attention. After presenting this information, the speaker proceeds to actuate the actual pragmatic purpose of his discourse which is to solicit further information.

Although both "lima juta" and "seratus tiga puluh ribu" are referred to in the speaker's discourse, the speaker selects to accent "lima juta" only, thus drawing the hearer's attention to it. From his subsequent discourse, it is clear that he is more interested to solicit the addressee's comment on the former rather than the latter and that explains why the lack of accent in "ribu" (thousand). The assignment of prominence to "hanya", an
anaphorically recoverable item, which functions as a marker of emphasis also indicates the wish to highlight the fact that not many workers will be affected by the withdrawal of GSP, i.e. "hanya seratus tiga puluh ribu" (only one hundred and thirty), which is considerably small.

The investigation of how the "Referent + Proposition" structure can be used to organise and focus a recipient's attention has recently become the subject of interest of students of discourse (Duranti and Ochs 1979; Ochs and Schiefflin 1983) and such an investigation entails regarding the structure as discourses (i.e. sequences of communicative acts) rather than as syntactically bound units. Such a pragmatic function is quite consistent with the analysis developed here.

The reintroduction of given information can also be motivated by the wish to ensure that the transfer of information to the overhearing audience, who are the primary recipients is made successfully in the sense of it becoming part of hearer background knowledge. This is particularly so in cases where the information thus introduced is one which most people are not expected to have as background knowledge or one which the interviewer thinks the audience might be interested in. Hence the given information is reactivated in the subsequent discourse and accented, again bringing it to the hearer's attention, e.g. "brake pad" and "asbestos" in 34A:
Another communicative strategy used by the interviewer in order to ensure the receipt of interviewee's discourse content, is to summarise the gist of the prior talk and use it as a means to prompt the interviewee either to deny or confirm the interviewer's representation of the interviewee's discourse.

In the discourse cited below, the interviewer's summary of the gist of the interviewee's preceding discourse reactivates the information already presented. This enables the interviewer to seek confirmation or denial of the interviewer's representation of the interviewee's prior talk. The formulation is made in one clause with the last lexical item "taqwa" (fear of God), a word already mentioned in the interviewee's preceding discourse, accented. The selection to assign "taqwa" (arrowed) prosodic prominence indicates the speaker's wish to draw the addressee's attention to it for "taqwa" encapsulates the gist of the interviewee's prior talk which describes the characteristics of person who has reached the state of "taqwa":
Extract 7.23

36B ^JADI (0.52) apabila seseorang itu 'BERPUASA (0.34) ikut
'SYARATNYA dia 'PATUH dengan 'DISPLIN puasanya (0.40)
a: 'INSYAALLAH dia akan MEMPEROLEHI taqwa ---

37A ^JADI (0.21) 'TUJUAN berpuasa itu untuk
-> mengujudkan 'TAQWA

38B YA taqwa kita sebagai hamba 'ALLAH (0.34)

<al al>

^JADI sesuai SANGAT puasa dengan 'MANUSIA
'CUKUP sesuai sebab binatang dia 'TAK puasa

A So if a person fasts according to the conditions of fasting, he abides
by the rules of fasting, God willing he will acquire "taqwa", i.e. total
submission to God ---

B So the purpose of fasting is to instil taqwa

A Yes our taqwa as servants of Allah. So fasting is suitable for man
because animals do not fast.

The interviewer's formulation is elaborately confirmed by the
interviewee. At this point the interviewee who by now regards "taqwa" as
being on stage does not accent it; the accent falls on "hamba Allah", a
lexical item which is technically new.
In supplying the requested information, the interviewee may introduce certain words or terminologies which may not be part of the hearer's background knowledge, e.g. "sleep centre" in 38B:

Extract 7.24

39B SEBAB kita ni ada sleep 'CENTRE
dekat kepala 'KITA dekat 'OTAK kita ya
40A sleep CENTRE
41B sleep 'CENTRE

[Apa TU

B because we have sleep centre in our head near our brain.

A Sleep centre?

B Sleep centre.

A What is that?

A common communicative strategy used in cases such as this is to reintroduce the part which causes difficulty into the following discourse by echoing it and gives it a rising intonation to signal that it is a request for explanation. The interviewee (marked 39B) assigns prosodic prominence to a newly introduced item, i.e. "sleep centre". To request for further explanation, the interviewer (40A) echoes the textually given item assigning prosodic prominence to "centre" presenting it as new. The interviewee
wrongly classifies the interviewer's preceding contribution. Believing that
interviewer's response is a request for confirmation, proceeds to confirm
(41B), hence advancing the information as new. The interviewer (42A)
rectifies the situation by forwarding a more direct way of eliciting
information, i.e. by using a wh-question, "apa tu?".

The above exchange reflects one type of communicative strategy
that the interviewer's employ through which given information can be
treated as new and maintained as a topical focus until a
"misunderstanding" is resolved.

A's decision to present "sleep centre" as the phonologically focused
item is perfectly "acceptable" here since this eliciting move which aims at
seeking clarification does not only fulfill his informational requirement but
that of the overhearing audience who may not have such information as
background knowledge. Although B's response does not fulfill A's
requirement, the presentation of the "sleep centre" as new is also
"acceptable" for at that point when the utterance was made B believed that
she fulfilled A's informational requirement - confirming a request for confir-
mination - which is information of a pragmatic nature.
As regards this issue, Halliday himself states that the new information need not necessarily be cognitive content, it may be a feature of mood, as when a speaker confirms an asserted information.

The speaker may seek clarification of the addressee's prior discourse by repeating part of the given information which needs clarification, e.g. "ghosak" ((broke down) marked 43B) in Extract 7.25 below:

**Extract 7.25**

43A macamana haghi ni,DRIVING,OK
44B apa kereta `GHOSAK tengah jalan
45A kereta doktor `GHOSAK
46B tidak tidak kereta orang ghosak tengah `JALAN

A How's driving today, OK?
B A car broke down in the middle of the road.
A Your car broke down?
B No no someone else's car broke down.

In the above exchange, B (marked 44B) responds to A's question about driving by saying that a car broke down in the middle of the road. Speaker 45A who does not seem to catch what B says seeks clarification by asking whether the interviewee's car broke down. Instead of accenting "doktor", a
technically new information, the speaker accents "ghosak" (arrowed), an item just mentioned in the preceding discourse. The interviewer's formulation makes explicit what was previously implicit in the interviewee's prior discourse.

Another example which illustrates that given information can be assigned prosodic prominence is in cases whereby the echoing of the preceding utterance is a feature of mood whose pragmatic function is to indicate that the speaker is following the discourse and is confirming the asserted information. The speaker repeats the addressee's prior utterance verbatim and what more with exactly the same intonation pattern. Consider "logam" and "mencantikkan" in Extracts 7.26 and 7.27 respectively:

**Extract 7.26**

47A  KUMPULAN teknologi `LOGAM
48B  teknologi `LOGAM
49A  `SIRIM ya
50B  `SIRIM ya

A  Metal technology group
B  Metal technology
A  SIRIM, yes
B  SIRIM, yes
In order to be given, information need not necessarily be anaphorically recoverable from the discourse. Given information can be derivable from common knowledge that the speaker and the hearer have about their world. This situationally given information can also be assigned prosodic prominence although being shared knowledge it is not "newsworthy" anymore.

In broadcast interviewee's greetings are usually followed by the interviewer's initial enquiries on matters which are already on stage due to common knowledge, such as informing the interviewee what day today is and at the same time inviting him to response, e.g. "hari ni hari jumaat ustadz ya" in 52A or requesting the interviewee to confirm that today is the ninth day of fasting, e.g. "hari ni sembilan haghi doktor ya in 54A:
Extract 7.28

53A hari ni hari 'JUMAAT ustadz YA
54B 'Ya -
   A Today is Friday, isn't it ustadz?
   B Yes

Extract 7.29

55A selamat berpuasa DOKTOR haghi NI 'SEMBILAN haghi 'YA
56B sembilan 'HAGHI 'YA
   A Happy fasting doctor. Today is the ninth day, isn't it?
   B Nine days, yes.

The assignment of accent to "jumaat" ((Friday), 52A) and "sembilan" ((nine), 54A) draws the hearer's attention to them although their propositional content is already given in the sense of it being mutual knowledge shared by speaker and addressee. This kind of "social" talk aims at establishing and maintaining social bonding with the interviewee and setting the tone for the development of the interview.

The examination of the selected exchanges illustrate that the foregrounding of presupposed information is an effective strategy employed by the speaker not only for the purpose of soliciting new information from the interviewee but also for establishing relationship with the interviewee.
Thus prominence placement, when viewed in these relational terms, allows the tracing back of speaker's thought processes, and their strategies in developing their discourse.

7.6 Accented Non-factual Information

In broadcast interviews as in other natural spoken discourse there are lexical items, expressions and particles which do not convey factual content but contribute information of a social or pragmatic nature. The term information here thus cannot be understood in a narrow sense as "informative in content".

7.6.1 Phatic Communion

Halliday himself states that "new information" is not confined to the communication of facts, the "message" may be of any kind, e.g. "how do you do" where the information is simply that the speaker is well-disposed and acting within accepted social conventions. Likewise accented items, e.g. surely, actually, etc. may communicate only what Brazil refers to as "social information", i.e. information on the state of relationship between speaker and hearer.
After the programme announcement, broadcast interview openings usually begin with the interviewer greeting the listening-in audience, e.g. and the interviewee. The letter usually responds with a similar greeting:

**Extract 7.30**

57A  selamat `PAGI `DOKTOR  
58B  selamat `PAGI cik `ZAINAL  
    A  Good morning doctor.  
    B  Good morning Cik Zainal.

**Extract 7.31**

59A  assalamualaikum `USTADZ  
60B  `WAALAIKUMMUSALAM  
    A  May peace be with you.  
    B  May peace be with you too.

**Extract 7.32**

61A  selamat tahun `BARU  
62B  selamat tahun `BARU  
    A  Happy New Year  
    B  Happy New Year
The primary aim of greeting is not to convey information in terms of its propositional content but to fulfil the social requirement when people first make contact. This function of social bonding or "phatic communion" is important in order to establish and maintain contact with cointeractants. Usually the addressee echoes what was said earlier maintaining the accent on the same item.

7.6.2 Social Deixis

The use of referent honorifics as address forms when addressing the addressee is quite predominant in the data of Malay broadcast interviews examined. The speaker acccents the addressee honorifics (namely the title of address) as a sign of respect or as a polite way of addressing, e.g. "doktor" in (56A), "ustadz" in (58A) and Datuk in (62A) below:

Extract 7.33

63A ^DATUK (0.21) ^MUNGKIN datuk dapat MEMBERIKAN `PUNCA yang menyebabkan `KEJAYAAN kita kali `NI

A Datuk probably Datuk can provide the reasons for our success this time
The vocative "Datuk" is given a separate tone-group and is separated from the other part of the utterance by a brief pause of 210 msec. The allocation of prominence to "Datuk" can be treated as a means of securing the addressee's attention before advancing the question to him.

The prior talk provides the listening-in audience with the background knowledge on the topic to be discussed which is LIMA 1995. The speaker marks this shift of attention from the audience to the addressee by accenting "Datuk" an address form used for a person of a higher social rank.

Address forms are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the arguments of the predicate; thus, they are prosodically set apart from the body of the sentence which accompanies them. When used to address an addressee, they indicate whether the addressee is socially superior to the speaker, e.g. Datuk, Datuk Seri, Datin, or the addressee is socially distant to the speaker, e.g. cik, encik, saudara.

In Malaysia, the titles "Datuk", Datuk Seri", "Tan Sri" etc., are ranks of honour given by a Malaysian king because of special achievements and the wives are automatically addressed as Datin, Datin Sri and Puan Sri respectively. Protocol would require that those conferred be addressed as such.
Take for example "Cik Zainal"; what a choice of "Cik Zainal" over "zainal" or "nal" or "abang" conveys is not difference in truth conditions but just a difference in the expressed relationship between speaker and addressee moving from the formal to the intimate, Cik Zainal being the most distant and "abang" being the most intimate.

Levinson restricts this kind of "social deitic information" to "those aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants, or the social relationship between them" (1983:89). These items do not of course belong to the core of the message, but they communicate "social information", i.e. information on the state of the relationship between speaker and addressee as regards social rank or respect.

7.6.3 Discourse Deixis

Being a kind of social talk whose primary aim is to solicit information, broadcast interviews therefore regularly exhibit a sequence of question-answer and the internal relationship between question and answer is that given the former, the latter is expected. That being so, the speaker may of course decline to give the requested answer.
Since non-compliance can be considered as an affront to the person requesting for information, the vocalisation of this "dispreferred sequence" is often marked by (1) a delay in responding signalled by the filled pause (2) a preface which in this instance is an adverbial ("sebenarnya") indicating its "dispreferred status" (3) an account for the failure to give the required response (Levinson:1983).

In Malay, this non-compliance sequence is usually preceded by "sebenarnya" ((actually), in 65B) and "yang sebenar" ((actually), in 66B) which signals to the interviewer that the interviewee is not able to comply with the former's request:

**Extract 7.34**

64A a: harga besi bughuk sekarang macamana ya

65B (0.2)^SEBENARANYA saya tak pernah `BERTANYA tak pernah bertanya pulak

A What is the price of scrap iron nowadays?

B Actually I've never asked. Never asked.

**Extract 7.35**

66B ^MAKNANYA (0.52) yang `SEBENAR kita ada kontrak dengan syarikat ni
Actually, we have a contract with this company so we cannot reveal their formula.

In 65B, the speaker implies that he is not able to supply the requested information by advancing the reason why he is not able to do so. By accenting "sebenarnya" the speaker creates expectation that the subsequent discourse is not the preferred sequence to the interviewer's question.

Likewise, the assignment of prosodic prominence to "sebenarnya" signals that the speaker is unable to elaborate on the facts presented by the interviewee in the preceding discourse. "yang sebenar" which in this context functions as the conventional announcer of the dispreferred sequence implies that B does not wish to continue with the discussion initiated by A. Followed by the reason for the failure to comply "yang sebenar" creates in the hearer expectations about the probable consequence.

Unlike the response which begins with "yang sebenarnya", the response which begins with "jadi" (arrowed) states explicitly the wish of non-compliance. "jadi" signals the consequence of the causal relation
between the preceding and subsequent discourse and by accenting it the speaker puts emphasis on the consequence, i.e. "kita tak boleh ceritakan dia punya formulasi".

As seen above, the speaker uses "yang sebenar" or "sebenar" and "jadi" to fulfill different pragmatic purpose: the former indicates how the speaker is going to respond to the interviewer's preceding discourse, the latter indicates the relationship between the preceding and the subsequent discourse. According to Levinson (1983) these words, phrases and expressions which he calls discourse-deictic items contain a component of meaning "which resists truth conditional treatment. What they seem to do is to indicate ... just how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of some portion of the prior discourse" (pp. 87-88).

In a sequence of two speech acts, the deictic items like "jadi" (so), "tetapi" (but), "kerana" (because), "walaupun" (although), "dan" (and), "makananya" (what is meant) which precede the second speech act express the relation between this act to the previous, i.e by indicating whether the latter is a conclusion, contradiction, reason, addition, explanation. Located utterance-initial, the use of these items generate expectations about what is to come.
Here not only are the facts and their relations represented, but also the way this relation is interpreted by the speaker, and presented and evaluated in the context of occurrence. The change to a new illocutionary act marked by the sentence initial discourse deixis enables the speaker to shift the focus of his discourse, e.g. from the points of view of the events or persons referred to, to his own view or comment about these.

For instance in Extract 7.36 below, the change to a new sentence and a new assertion beginning with "walaupun" (although) enables the speaker to change the perspective of the discourse, i.e. from giving the fact that only hundred and thirty workers are involved to expressing his view about the welfare of the workers referred to. The accented "walaupun" draws the hearer's attention to the information he wants to transmit, i.e. that despite the small number, the welfare of these workers, who may lose their job if GSP is withdrawn, cannot be set aside.

**Extract 7.36**

67B  "SEBENAR NYA yang terlibat HANYALAH seratus tiga puluh RIBU
->  "WALAUPUN" bilangan ini KECIL kita tidak BOLEH

"MENGENAPIKAN kepentingan seratus ribu pekerja kita yang
"MUNGKIN kehilangan kerja "MEREKA jika GSP ditarik" BALIK
B. Actually, those involved are only hundred and thirty thousand. Although the number is small we cannot set aside the welfare of these one hundred and thirty thousand workers who may lose their job if the GSP is withdrawn.

The above sequence of speech acts respects the structure of presupposition and introduction distribution of information, i.e. reference is made to previously introduced facts and then reference is made to facts inaccessible to the hearer. The ordering of information as such and the assignment of prosodic prominence to "walaupun" convey to the hearer the attitude of the speaker with respect to these facts.

The utterance initial "dan" (and) in Extract 7.37 expresses relatedness of facts and indicates to the hearer how the preceding and following assertions are to be connected with each other. The accented "dan" draws attention to the subsequent assertion by additioning. The presence or absence of "dan" does not in any way affect the content message of the utterance containing "dan".

Extract 7.37

68B JADI kena ada dia PUNYA networking JUGALAH

-> DAN (0.34) kebanyakkan PEMBELI-PEMBELI scrap NI dia ada dia punya NETWORKINGLAH
B So they must have their network. And most of the scrap buyers have their own network.

In example 69B below, the speaker signals the division of discourse into two propositions whose relations with each other is signalled by "sebaliknya" (Instead). In this context, "sebaliknya" (arrowed) does not only indicate how the facts talked about are related to the presupposed information but also how the speaker interprets them, that the country depends on export.

Extract 7.38

69B ^INI `JELAS menunjukkan bahawa GSP cuma `MEMAINKAN peranan dalam satu bidang yang `KECIL saja

-> ^SEBALIKNYA negara Malaysia `BERGANTUNG kepada `EKSPOT dan kita tidak `BOLEH `MENGABAIKAN sektor ekspot walaupun kecil

B This clearly shows that the GSP only plays a role in one small sector only. Instead our country depends on export, and though small we cannot ignore the export sector.

Analysis of these discourse deictic items fall within the domains of pragmatics as it directly concerns the relationship between structure of language and the contexts in which they are used.
7.6.4 Response Particles

In this thesis, response particles is defined as brief responses made up of one word such as ha, oh, ah uhm, saya, ya, etc whose primary function is to signal the receipt of prior information. Although these response particles in themselves have no propositional content which could be analysed truth-conditionally, they are important in the sense that within their context of occurrence they do not merely communicate receipt and recognition of content information in the prior talk but also signal how the speaker receives the addressee's contribution. What pragmatic information they communicate as regards the speaker's response to the addressee's preceding discourse depends to a large extent on prosody and their context of occurrence.

There follows an examination of some selected exchanges in order to illustrate how the speaker uses these response particles to convey information by varying the prosody. It is observed that confirmation of a request for confirmation is often preceded by "ha", "ya" and "ah" which is followed by a repetition of the utterance or part of the prior utterance, e.g. "ha brake kereta" (yes, the car brake) in 71A, "ah jenis itu" (ah that type) in 73B and "ya masuk haghi kesepuloh dah" (yes, it's already the tenth day) in 74A:
Extract 7.39

70A (0.52) brake `KERETA=
71B =`HA brake `KERETA=

<>f  <f  f>
A car brake
B yes, the car brake

Extract 7.40

72A yang `JENIS tu
<res < > <>p
73B  `AH jenis tu
A of that type?
B ah of that type.

Extract 7.41

74A insyaallah haghi ni sepoloh haghi kita puasa ya
75B  `YA masuk haghi ke sepoloh dah
A God willing it's the tenth day of fasting, yes?
B Yes. It's the tenth day.
Located at utterance-initial, these response particles which carry a positive meaning of "yes" are an initial indication that the factual content advanced in the prior talk are accepted and confirmed by the speaker. For example, "ha" in 71B, produced with a low fall tone and "ah" with a low level tone in 73B confirm that the assertion advanced in the prior discourse is correct and this confirmation is further supported by the assertion following it.

"Ya" (in 75B) which is uttered with a falling tone is also a confirmation of A's invitation to confirm which is signalled by a fall on "ya", the tag. The high fall and accompanied forte loudness makes B's "ya" (in 74B) to A's utterance sounds more emphatic than "ha" in 71B and 73B which have low pitch and are relatively less loud.

Response particles are also used to indicate speaker's receipt of information in the sense of grasping the factual content of the preceding discourse. The particles most often used to fulfil this pragmatic purpose is "oh" and "ah". For instance, in 76A below:
Extract 7.42

76A  (0.4) AH ini KILANG keluarkan brake 'PADLAH 'NI

77B  brake 'PADLAH

A  Oh this is a factory producing brake pad then
B  brake pad

the interviewer signals that he finally gets what the interviewee is trying to tell him by uttering "ah" with a mid-level tone. The interviewer's subsequent talk, i.e. "ini kilang keluarkan brake padlah ni" which summarises what he understands from the interviewee's preceding discourse further supports this assumption.

In Extract 7.43 below, B responds to A's correction of his mistake in not giving the information requested with utterance-initial "oh" (arrowed) followed by "itu" an anaphora referring to B's prior utterance. Uttered loud and with a pitch that stays at a relatively high level "oh" communicates that B now realises what factual information A requires and thereon proceeds to do so. The pause before "oh" indicates that B needs time to register what A is telling him and when it does register he immediately responds with "oh" which is made prominent by a mid level pitch, forte loudness and long duration.
Extract 7.43

78B  MAKNANYA "BOLEH (0.32) ^JADI (0.24) YANG mengatakan bahawa:: bila kita TERTIDUR kita tidak boleh, APA SEMBAHYANGKAN a

79A  dak dia tidak "DIGALAKKAN "TIDUR selepas maghrib

80B  (0.64) ~OH itu

< >f

< > (0.54)

A  Meaning it can be done. So what is said as regards that we cannot pray if we sleep, is not right.

B  No, we are not encouraged to sleep after "maghrib", i.e. a prayer carried out at dusk.

A  Oh that

Receipt, comprehension and acceptance of prior talk can also be indicated by producing accented "oh" which is uttered with a level tone and followed by an echo of the preceding utterance, e.g. "oh brake pad" in 81A, to further confirm receipt and acceptance:

Extract 7.44

81B  brake padalah

82A  (0.23)"OH BRAKE PAD

ah ah ah ah ha ha ha
B  Brake padlah

A  Oh brake pad ah ah ah ah ah ah ah

In Extract 7.44 above, Speaker B confirms A's request for confirmation that "brake kereta" is brake pad. This prompts speaker A to communicate to B that he now realises that brake pad is actually "brake kereta" by initially responding with forte "oh" which has a mid level pitch followed by "brake pad". This acceptance is further reinforced by his "ah ah ah ah ha ha ha" response. B responds with a low falling "ah" to confirm A's prior talk.

Besides expressing receipt and comprehension, "oh" can also express the speaker's immediate reaction to something unexpected. For instance in Extract 7.45, "oh" (in 86A) which is uttered with a high fall and forte loudness and accompanied by a wide pitch range expresses B's initial surprise at the fact that SIRIM is involved in the production of brake pad without asbestos. B's low fall "ah" (in 87B) reconfirms A's previous assertion, i.e. "ini kilang keluarkan brake pad" (this is a factory producing brake pad):
Extract 7.45

84A  Ini kilang brake padlah ni=
85B  brake padlah
86A  (0.21) 'OH
87B  'AH

A  This is a factory producing brake pads then.
B  Brake pads.
A  Oh
B  Ah

This initial reaction to something unexpected can also be signalled by "eh". For instance, the falling "eh" (in 90B) which has forte loudness indicates A's immediate reaction to what B says in the preceding discourse which A finds rather unexpected and it seeks further elaboration from B. This response prompts B to reassert what he has said earlier with a low falling and lengthened "ah" (91A) which means "yes", following which is the justification for his earlier assertion that there are cars using brake pad without asbestos.

Extract 7.46

88B  ^JADI sekarang `NI DAH ADA kereta menggunakan tu `Doktor
89A  `ADA yang `SEBENARNYA
Where the interviewee's response to the initial question is designedly a suggestion of further elaboration, the interviewer's beginning response is usually in the form of expressions such as "ya", "saya" which are sometimes made prominent by a combination of prosodic cues such as loudness, duration, pitch height and pitch obstrusion. In cases such as these the response particles are more than mere acknowledgement of facts; they display that the prior talk is newsworthy. In other words, "ya" and "saya" receipts in their context of occurrence signals receipt and acceptance of the interviewee's initial formulation of his discourse and prompts him to proceed.

Consider the following extract:
Extract 7.47

92B  dia `SEMUA apa yang kita buat ada `TUJUANNYA
93A  `SAYA
94B  ah kalau kita boleh buka `SIKIT
95A  mm
96B  dia macam `MAKAN dia ada `TUJUAN `DIA
97A  ya
    B Whatever we do there is a purpose.
    A Yes.
    B If I can elaborate a little
    A mhm
    A For example, eating. There is also a purpose for it.

Extract 7.48

98B  dalam hadith ada disebutnya maknanya apabila
datang bulan ramadhan
99A  `SAYA
100B  pintu syurga dibuka
101A  saya
102B  maknanya jadi bulan ramadhan ni bulan bulan kebaikan
103A  mm
104B  a: pintu syurga
In the al-hadith it is mentioned that when the month of Ramadhan arrives.

A Yes

B The entrance to heaven will open

A Yes

B Meaning that So the month of Ramadhan is a blessed month.

"saya" in 92A and 98A can be distinguished from the other acknowledgements or continuers (e.g. 96A, 100A, 102A, 94A, etc.) in that they are assigned prosodic prominence. While the other acknowledgement forms are uttered low and have piano loudness, "saya" being the initial indication of receipt and acceptance are uttered relatively loud and have falling pitch.

7.6.5 Boundary markers

It is also observed that speakers assign prosodic prominence to certain markers to signal information on such matters as the shift of topic or the introduction of a new topic within speaker turn (cf. Lehmann (1977), Abdul Ghani (1978) and Yule (1980). In this thesis such markers are referred to as boundary markers.
In the broadcast interviews examined, both prosodic prominence and lexical devices are used to set off digression from topic at hand. In Malay, "jadi" is a discourse marker basically for a change of topic. The assignment of prosodic prominence to it draws the hearer’s attention to the information content which comes after it. This change of topic is sometimes defined with corresponding change in interactional purposes, for example changing from transmission of information to requests for information.

"jadi" in (104A) and (105A) is accented to demarcate the boundary between what is said in the preceding discourse and what follows for the purpose of drawing the hearer's attention to the latter:

Extract 7.49

104A  ^JADI bersama saya pagi ini Datuk Radhi Manan selaku penganjur LIMA sembilan puluh tiga

-> a  ^JADI (0.23) Datuk mungkin Datuk mungkin datuk dapat memberi apakah punca yang boleh menyebabkan kejayaan kita kali ini

A  So with me today is Datuk Radhi Manan who is the organiser of 1993 LIMA. So Datuk probably Datuk can give the reasons for our success this time round.
Extract 7.50

105B berat mahallah ni dia kata (0.63)

->b  ^JADI penglibatan bumiputra dalam industri ini macamana doktor

B heavy must be expensive he said So how is the involvement
of Bumiputra in this industry, doctor?

The first "jadi" (arrowed a) marks the boundary between a speech
act that provides information on LIMA and an act that introduces the
interviewee to the overhearing audience. This sequence of speech acts
which conveys different propositional content is uttered with the same
pragmatic implication, i.e to change the knowledge of the hearer, as in
assertions.

The second "jadi" (arrowed b) functions as a boundary marker
between the latter and a request for information on the success of LIMA.
"jadi" indicates a shift of topic from talking about the price of scrap iron to
enquiring about the involvement of bumiputra in steel industry. The change
of topic here is accompanied by a change in the speaker's purposes
expressed by the different illocutionary acts.
Similarly, the accent on "ni" in (106A) and (107A) is not motivated by the communication of content since in itself "ni" does not have content information. Rather "ni" functions as an "attention-seeking" marker or a generalised "watch it" marker for the hearer:

**Extract 7.51**

106A  Nila doktor YA
    A  This doctor yes

**Extract 7.52**

107A  NI macamana `HARGA ni pun doktor YA besi `BURUK `NI
    A  What is the price of scrap iron like doctor, yes?

Located initially, "ni" in the above two exchanges has what Traugot (1979) calls its "discourse meaning" rather than its lexical meaning in the sense that it points to what the speaker is going to say. The assignment of prosodic prominence and a single tone group draws the hearer's attention to that part of the discourse which the speaker wants him to pay attention to, which is what he is about to say. In Extract 7.52, the use of the vocative "doktor" and the tag "ya" (an implicit request for agreement) further supports this assumption.
7.6.6 Planning Units

Another common feature of natural spoken discourse is the use of certain expressions which do not belong to the core of the message but are important in the sense that they are used as a device for "buying time". These expressions which reflect the presence of planning strategy in spontaneous speech for the regulation of interaction are referred to as "planning units". In this sense, the assignment of prominence to these planning units can be viewed as being influenced by discourse-regulatory or organisational principles.

Consider the following exchanges:

**Extract 7.53**

108B yang sebenar bukan besi saja aluminium
109A ya
110B a: APANI (0.25) tembaga
111A DAN APANI:: (0.53)

**Extract 7.54**

112B kita tengok copper wirelah
113A mm
114B (0.43) dia dari segi APA NI (0.3)
Extract 7.55

115B kita buat satu package dimana kita akan (0.22) membuat APA NI (0.24) rekabentuk peralat-peralatan

The accented "apa ni" in 110B, 111B and 114B expresses a secondary communication the fact that the speaker has yet to finish his discourse and is in search of the right words to express his thoughts. Since "apani" is in some significant way external to the utterance, it is prosodically separated from the rest of the utterance which is wedged in. It interrupts the prosodic flow of the primary utterance. Typically "apani" is lower in pitch than the matrix utterance, it is usually sets off by pause or lengthening of its final syllable and has a slightly rising or level terminal (see also Chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis).

The analysis of selected exchanges above punctuates the fact that prominence is exploitable according to speaker intent and that information conveyed is not restricted to that of propositional content only. Thus, while the primary aim of interaction is to convey information of factual content, one should not disregard the communication of information which though ancillary is required for successful communication.
7.7 Conclusion

Attempt has been made to examine the notion of prosodic prominence within a framework in which two kinds of context are systematically related: discourse and the structure of information and interaction. It has been shown that speakers can exploit the prominence system for the pursuit of his communicative purpose. Based on his assumptions about the hearer's awareness of things and motivated by specific interactional considerations, the speaker then selects the item(s) that he wants to draw the hearer's attention to by assigning it prominence.

Given that the assignment of prominence is regarded as a consequence of speaker choice, the distinction between given and new cannot be based on a fixed relationship that the latter is textually or situationally recoverable and the former is not.

While it is generally true given information is unmarked for accent, when its actual realisation is examined in the data of broadcasts interviews, it is discovered that speakers present presupposed information with prosodic prominence. This reactivation of presupposed information is a common communicative strategy that the speaker employs in order to obtain new information from the addressee or convey new information to the addressee by making reference to information known to the hearer. In
this perspective, the foregrounding of given information by prominence assignment should be viewed as part of a referential act, i.e. as that part of the act of reference in which the speaker refers to facts already introduced in the preceding discourse for the purpose of advancing new propositional content.

The second issue concerns the perception of utterance as a vehicle not only for the transmission of ideational content but through which relationships between participants are socially constructed and relationships between sequences of acts are pragmatically constructed in their context of occurrence.

As illustrated in the data examined, besides assigning prominence to lexical items, speakers also assign prominence to non-lexical items (e.g. oh, ah, ha, eh), terms of address (e.g. Datuk, Ustadz, Cik Zainal, Doktor), greetings, discourse-deictic items (e.g. sebenarnya, walaumacamana pun, tetapi), boundary markers (jadi, ini, ni) to communicate information of pragmatic or social nature. Although this information does not belong to the core of message, its contribution to the success of communication cannot be disregarded.
It has become clear that the notion of prosodic prominence requires explication in this broader perspective of information, an insight which has received too little weight in previous research on discourse. While it is true that the assignment of prominence signals semantic, pragmatic and social information, it involves a degree of optionality which is much greater than that associated with sentence level grammatical phenomena. It is because of this that the semantic processes involved are perhaps best examined at the level of discourse.

To summarise, it has been argued with the help of broadcast interview data that Malay speakers facilitate the communication of information by allocating prosodic prominence to what they consider to be more or less the informative parts of their utterance. The selection of which information to be thus foregrounded depends on the speaker's on-going assessment of the hearer information requirement.

On the part of the hearer, it can be assumed that the identification of prominence assignment is an effective way of arriving quickly at the informative parts in the utterance. The success of this communication will to a large extent depend on the addressee/hearer recognising the implication of such uses of prominence to interpret the way the speaker is handling his information.