

Alfred Toth

Topic prominence in the Latin language of the Itala and Vulgata¹

1. A topic marker is a particle which marks the topic of a sentence. The following examples, among many others, are given by Li and Thompson (1976, p. 462).

- 9 siban-in hakkjo - ga mange (Korean)
now - topic school - subject many
marker marker
"The present time (topic), there are many schools."
- 10 Gakkoo - wa buku - ga isogasi-kat-ta (Japanese)
school - topic I - subject busy - past tense
marker marker
"School (topic), I was busy."

In languages which are called topic-prominent, the informational or pragmatic notions of topic and comment/focus are considered more basic than the notions of subject and predicate. According to Öhl (2008, p. 243), topic-prominent languages show the following four main characteristics:

1. Existence of a canonic topic position (e.g., beginning of a sentence).
2. No connection between morphological marking and structural position of the subject.
3. Morphological topic marking (yet not to be found in all topic-prominent languages).
4. Constituent order is mainly SOV.

However, traces of topic prominence can also be found in languages which are usually considered subject-prominent. Cf. the following example of a so-called "double subject" construction in Non-Standard French (Lambrecht 1980, S. 337).

Moi je-mange et toi tu-bois ¹
I I eat and you you drink 'I eat and you drink'

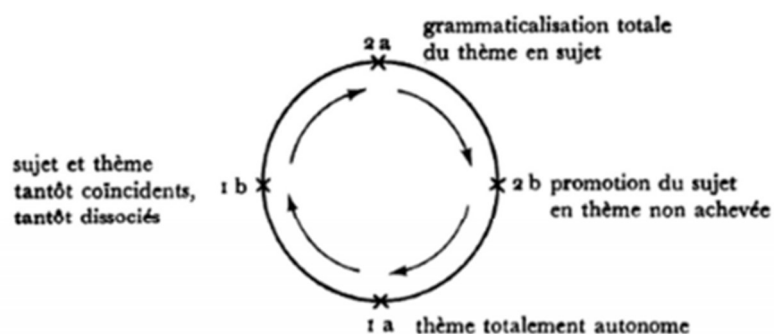
Li and Thompson (1976, S. 459) have shown, that subject prominence and topic prominence are just two out of four possible pragmatic types of language:

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prominence of the notions of topic and subject. According to our study, there are four basic types of languages: (i) languages that are subject-prominent (a term introduced by E.L. Keenan); (ii) languages that are topic-prominent; (iii) languages that are both subject-prominent and topic-prominent; (iv) languages that are neither subject-prominent nor topic-prominent. In subject-prominent (Sp) languages, the structure of sentences favors a description in which the grammatical relation subject-predicate plays a major role; in topic-prominent (Tp) languages, the basic structure of sentences favors a description in which the grammatical relation topic-comment plays a major role. In type (iii) languages, there are two equally important distinct sentence constructions, the subject-predicate construction and the topic-comment construction; in type (iv) languages, the subject and the topic have merged and are no longer distinguishable in all sentence types. In order to clarify the subject-predicate construc-

Subject-Prominent Languages	Topic-Prominent Languages
Indo-European	Chinese
Niger-Congo	Lahu (Lolo-Burmese)
Finno-Ugric	Lisu (Lolo-Burmese)
Sinitic	.
Dyirbal (Australian)	.
Indonesian	.
Malagasy	.
.	.
.	.
.	.
Subject-Prominent and Topic-Prominent Languages	Neither Subject-Prominent nor Topic-Prominent Languages
Japanese	Tagalog
Korean	Illocano
.	.
.	.
.	.

Furthermore, Hagège (1978, p. 22) has demonstrated that the four possible language types are not static, but dynamic stages in a cyclic development.



Languages therefore can change and can assume different phases concerning the codifying of subject and topic.

2. As I have shown already in Toth (1994, with older literature), first century Latin already possessed some particles which could serve as topic markers

(cf. also Bortolussi 2014, Fedriani 2017, Kroon 1994, Pinkster 1990, p. 252 ss., Rosén 2009).

nam

Philargyro etiam fundum lego et contubernalem suam, Carioni quoque insulam et vicesimam et lectum stratum. Nam Fortunatam meam heredem facio, et commendo illam omnibus amicis meis (Petron. 71,2 f.)

I am making Fortunata my heir, and I recommend her to all my friends. (Rouse, Loeb)

Meine Fortunata setze ich ja als Haupterbin ein (Ehlers)

enim

Et facinus indignum, aliquis ovillam est et tunicam habet. Apes enim ego divinas bestias puto ... (Petron. 56,5 f.)

It is a gross outrage when people eat lamb and wear shirts. Yes, and I hold the bees to be the most divine insects ... (Heseltine)

Die Bienen halte ich ja für geniale Tiere (Ehlers)

autem

Dumque loquimur, sera sua sponte delapsa cecidit reclusaeque subito fores admiserunt intrantem. Mulier autem erat operto capite ... (Petron. 16.2 f.)

It was the veiled woman ... (Heseltine)

Nun, es war eine verummte Frau, und sie sagte: ... (Ehlers)

vero

"Videris tamen, inquit, non ero tui similis. Si quid vis, fac iterum". Ego vero deposita omni offensa cum puero in gratiam redii (Petron. 87,5 f.)

Ich, ja ich vergaß alle Kränkung und schloß mit dem Knaben wieder Frieden (Ehlers)

In all these examples, *nam*, *enim*, *autem* and *vero* mark a certain NP as topic. Generally, examples, in which these four particles (and probably a few others, cf. Kroon 1989) serve as topic markers, are rather scarce and colloquial (cf. Lindsay 1907, 92 ss., Hofmann 1978, *passim*). Latin is thus considered a subject prominent language. Nevertheless, the Latin which shows up in the bible translations between the 2nd and ca. the 4th century, the language of the Itala or Vetus Latina, shows topic markers and other topic strategies (cf. Toth 1994) in such an amount that the language appears to be

topic prominent. The following examples are collected from the different volumes of the Itala-edition by Jülicher (1963 ss.).

2.1. enim

2.1.1. enim = vero

Luc. 1, 18

18 { Ego enim sum senex et uxor mea processior in diebus suis.
vero r^1 senes f praecedens d
~ senex sum $[a]$ b processit r^1 cet
sum senior d

2.1.2. enim = autem

Marc. 1, 16

16 eius iactantes retiam in mare. Erant enim piscatores.
Simonis a r^1 mittentes r^1 cet -tias $[a]$ d mari r^1 autem d
-tia aur l r^1 vg
retia iactantes c

2.1.3. enim = et

Joh. 3, 14

14 { 14. Et sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in deserto,
Quemadmodum enim a Moses vg serpente ff^2 solitudinem b
[solitudo]ne r^1
 14. Sicut enim „ „ „ „ „ „

enim cannot only follow its NP, but also precede:

Joh. 5, 7

7 { [lac. in $[r^1]$ piscinam; dum venio enim ego , alter ante me descendit].
-na f q ego inter lin. aur alius j cet descendet l q
natatoriam d ff^2 autem ego venio d
~ enim ego venio $[a]$ b f q
du(m e)nim <ven>io ego j
 natatoriam; ego enim dum venio, alius „ „ „ descendit .

2.2. autem

2.2.1. autem = vero

Luc. 2, 19

19 { 19. Maria autem conservabat omnia verba haec [lac. in $[r^1]$ conferens in corde suo.
vero $[a]$ c intuebatur r^1 x β r^1 (?) [ista] a committens $[a]$ d
 19. „ „ observabat omnes sermones istos „ „ cor suum.

2.2.2. autem = ergo

Luc. 3, 7

7	{	7. Dicebat ergo	×	ad turbas, quae exiebant, ut baptizarentur
		autem <i>d f r¹</i>	Iohannes <i>f¹ q</i>	qui <i>q</i> exhibant <i>c</i> × baptizari <i>d</i> veniebant <i>f</i>
7.	{	„ autem	×	×
				prodeuntibus turbis, cum „

2.2.3. autem = enim

Matth. 3, 10

9	{	9. Iam	×	autem	×	securis ad radicem arborum posita est;
		quid <i>a</i>		enim <i>cet</i>	et <i>c</i>	radices <i>aur c f r¹ (vg)</i>
9.	{	„	×	„	×	radices „ „ „ ;

autem = enim = ∅:

Joh. 1, 9

9	{	9. Erat	×	lux vera, quae	inluminat omnem hominem
		autem <i>f</i>		lumen verum, quod <i>[a] f q</i>	inluminabat <i>b</i>
9.	{	Est	×	lumen verum, quod	„ „ „

2.2.4. autem = nam

49	{	49. [Nam qui	aud]it	×	×	et non facit	×	similis est homini
		Qui autem <i>a aur c d f eg</i>	audivit <i>d f eg</i>	verba mea <i>c</i>		fecit <i>d f eg</i>	ea <i>c</i>	×
49.	{	Qui autem	„	×	×	„ „ „	×	„ „ „

iam autem = cum autem iam = iam cum = et cum iam:

Joh. 7, 14

14	{	14. × Iam autem	die festo mediante	×	ascendit Iesus in templo
		×	dies festus medius esset <i>[a] b d [r¹]</i>		templum <i>cet</i>
14.	{	Cum autem iam <i>b</i>	„ solemnis ad medium pervenisset <i>q</i>		
		Iam „ cum <i>d r¹</i>			
14.	{	Et cum iam <i>[a] q</i>			
		×	medio die festo	×	„ „ „ templum

In the following text, *autem* first marks Maria as new topic (by preceding the NP) and then Elisabeth in the topic change-construction (by following the NP):

Luc. 1, 56 ss.

56	{	56. ^{lac. in r¹} Mansit autem Maria cum illa ^{ea [a] d quasi c f vg} × mensibus tribus ^{hact. lac. in r¹} et × reversa ^{menses tres d}
		56. Remansit „ „ apud illam × „ „ „ tunc „
56	{	est ^{lac. in [a]} × domi ^[b] suae × ×. in domo sua ^{aur l q} magnificans Deum c in domum suam ^{[r¹] cet}
		„ in domum suam × ×.
57	{	57. × Elisabeth autem impletum est tempus ^{hact. lac. in [a]} × pariendi, et ^[b] genuit filium. Et f -bet ^{aur d} × f -tus q ut pareret f peperit ^{r¹ cet}
		57. × Elisabet „ templus impletum est, ut pariret, „ peperit „ .

2.2.5. autem = et

Luc. 1, 34

34	{	34. Dixit autem Maria ad angelum: Quomodo fiet istud, quod virum non novi Et dixit d erit hoc quoniam ~ [non novi virum] a [Et ait] a [illi × Maria] a [[a] d f q [a] aur c f l r ¹ vg virum non cognovi quia d aur l virum non cognosco c f vg ego enim nescio virum f ³
		34. „ „ „ „ : „ erit hoc, cum „ × nesciam? Post v. 34: Ecc[e ancil]la Domini, [contin]gat m[ihi secun]d[um verbum tuum]. b(~ v. 38a)

2.2.6. autem = etiam

Luc. 1, 62

62	{	62. Adnuebant autem × patri eius, quem vellet vocari eum. Innuebant d f q r ¹ vg [etiam] a et f q r ¹ patrem l m. l quid d vult d quomodo f
		62. „ „ × „ „ , quid eum vellet vocari.

atNP = NP autem :

Luc. 5, 33

33	{	33. At illi dixerunt ad eum : Quare discipuli Iohannis [× Qui] a [illum] a Iohannes b Illi autem c f
		33. Illi autem „ „ illum : „ „ „

etVP = VP autem:

Luc. 4, 32

32 { 32. Et stupebant × in doctrina eius, quia in potestate
Stupebant autem ff² omnes r¹ super ff² -nam ff² l m. r quoniam a d -tem l m. r
Et mirabantur d f
32. „ admirabantur × super doctrinam „ „ „ „ „

Marc. 1, 9

9 9. Et factum est, in diebus illis venit Iesus a Nazareth Galilaeae
Factum est autem aur ff² ~ in illis diebus a c d ff² Nazaret a b d f
× × × a Nazareth r¹
<Et> × × r¹ a aur b d t a b d t

Luc. 5, 3

3 { 3. Ascendens autem × in unam navem, quae erat Simonis,
Iesus q × q naviculam [a] f qui f
3. Et ascendit × „ × „ „ „ fuit „ „
3 { Et sedens docebat de navicula turbas.
[[Sedens autem]] a in nave turbas docebat d
„ „ in navi docebat populos.

Inversion *est autem/autem est* can be found in:

Joh. 3, 19

19 { 19. Hoc est autem iudicium × , quia lux
× c Dei aur ff² l quoniam b d q[r¹]
19. „ autem est „ × , quoniam „

Cf. also the inversion in:

Luc. 5, 4

4 { 4. Ut cessavit autem loqui, dixit ad Simonem: Duc in altum et
~autem cessavit f Adduc d
[[Cumque desiit loqui]] a [[Leva in alto]] a
Cum autem cessasset loquens d
4. Cum cessaret „ loquendo, „ „ „ : Recede „ „ „

et ipse = ipse autem

Luc. 6, 20

20 { 20. [Et ipse] elevatis oculis × in discipulos suos × dicebat:
Ipsa autem c levatis ff² oculos a d [r¹] suis c [ad] r¹ discentes a × d ff²
× d adlevans a suos d [discip]ulis suis b
lac. in [r¹] [....aus] r¹ (?)
20. „ × levavit oculos × ad discentes „ et dixit:

In the following examples, *et* has pretty much the function of a dummy (expletive):

Luc. 4, 33

33 { 33. Et erat^{a [b] f} in synagoga homo habens daemonium immundum, et
 ~erat homo in synagoga ff^a × aur c
 ~in syn. erat homo aur c l q r¹ vg
 Erat autem d
 33. Erat autem „ „ „ „ „ immundum, „

Luc. 5, 29

29 { Et erat turba multa publicanorum et aliorum, qui cum illis erant
 ~multa turba l × × q
 magna c ~[[<e>rant cum illis]] a
 [[ingens]] a simul f
 „ „ „ magna „ „ „ × × × × d
 „ „ „ magna „ „ „ × × × ×

The following example shows resumptive topic changing, marked by *et*, where one would expect *ille autem* (which is actually used when the topic changes again).

Luc. 1, 63

63 { 63. × Et accepit pu^{lac. in [a]}gillarem et scripsit dicens: Iohannes est no^{hact. lac. in [a]}men eius.
 postulans pugillare l m. i × -nis aur [r¹] (vg)
 aur f vg pugillares ff^a aur c f vg
 [[accepto pu . . .]] a
 Et cum petisset tabulam × d × d
 63. Ille autem petit pugillaris „ „ × : Iohannis „ „ „ eius.

et tu = tu autem

Luc. 1, 76

76 { 76. Et tu × puer propheta Altissimi vocaberis. Praeibis enim ante faciem
 autem infans d profeta β q r¹ (vg) Antecedes d facie ff^a
 76. „ „ × „ profeta „ vocaveris. „ „ „ „

NP *autem* = *et* NP

Luc. 2, 8

8 { 8. Pastores autem erant in illa regione vigilantes et custodientes vigilias
 Et pastores c vg ~ regione illa d cantantes d custodias d
 eadem regione f
 regione eadem vg
 8. „ „ „ „ regione illa pernoctantes „ „ nocturnas

*et*VP = VP *autem*

Marc. 1, 9

9	9. Et factum est, in diebus illis venit Iesus a Nazareth Galilaeae	
	Factum est autem <i>aur ff^a</i> ~ in illis diebus <i>a c d ff^a</i>	Nazaret <i>a b d f</i> Naiareth <i>r¹</i>
	× × × <i>a</i>	
	⟨Et⟩ × × <i>r¹</i> <i>a aur b d t</i> <i>a b d t</i>	
18	18. Et erant discipuli Iohannis et Pharisei ieiunantes. Et veniunt et	
	× <i>i</i> Farisei <i>q [⟨r¹⟩]</i> venerunt <i>a f l</i>	
	Erant aut(em) <i>a</i> Phariseorum <i>a l</i> venientes × <i>c ff^a</i>	
	18. „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ venerunt „	

Greek καί is translated by *autem*:

Marc. 2, 17

Καὶ ἀκούσας ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς

17	17. Iesus autem hoc audito ait ×: Non egent × fortes ×	
	Et cum audisset Iesus <i>a b q</i> dixit illis desiderant <i>d r¹</i> qui sani sunt <i>d</i>	
	Iesus autem cum hoc audisset <i>c [a] c ff^a aur f l v g</i> opus habent <i>f</i> × sani × <i>r¹ cet</i>	
	Et hoc audit Iesus <i>d</i> necesse „	
	× Hoc audito Iesus <i>aur f l v g</i> <i>aur l v g</i>	
	× Hoc audito ait Iesus <i>r¹ super lin.</i>	
	17. Et cum audisset Iesus, dixit illis: „ est opus × sanis ×	

Marc. 1, 28

καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἀκοὴ αὐτοῦ

28	28. Et exiit rumor iste × in omnem	
	Exiit autem <i>f</i> hic <i>[b] q</i> statim <i>aur d f l v g</i> ubique <i>[b] q</i> circa <i>b q</i> × <i>b q</i>	
	processit <i>aur c d l r¹ v g</i> eius <i>aur f l v g</i>	
	28. „ exivit fama haec × ubique „ „	

autem in topic introduction. Note that in cases like this the Greek text has neither καὶ nor any other particle, so that the topic marking used is genuinely Latin:

Ἦν Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς Σίμωνος Πέτρου

Joh. 1, 40

40	40. Erat × Andreas frater Simonis Petri, unus ex duobus] , qui	
	autem <i>r¹ cet</i> de <i>q</i>	
	40. Fuit autem „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „	

et ipse NP *erat* = *erat autem* NP

Luc. 3, 23

Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος

23 { 23. Et ipse Iesus erat incipiens fere annorum triginta × × ,
 ~erat Iesus ff² × [[a]] d f quasi aur d r¹ vg XXX incipiens [[a]] d
 Erat autem Iesus d [[a]] c d ff² r¹ (vg) [[filius]] a
 23. „ „ „ „ × quasi „ „ × × ,

ipse autem = ille vero

Marc. 1, 45

ὁ δὲ ἐξελθὼν ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν

45 { 45. Ipse autem egressus coepit praedicare et diffamare sermonem, ita ut
 Ille vero ff² diffamatum ff²
 At ille [r¹] cet
 45. Ille „ exiens „ „ „ „ „ verbum, „ „

2.3. ergo

2.3.1. ergo = vero

Luc. 4, 7

σὺ οὖν ἐὰν προσκυνήσῃς ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ

7 { 7. Tu ergo si procidens adoraveris × ante me, erunt tua omnia ×.
 vero c ff² procedens r¹ coram aur c vg [eri]nt a omnia tua haec b
 × aur c d vg × f l r¹
 in conspecto meo d
 7. „ „ si prostratus „ in conspectu meo, erit „ omnes ×.

2.3.2. ergo = itaque

Luc. 3, 8

ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας

8 { 8. Facite ergo × fructus dignos paenitentiae et ne coeperitis
 [[ita]]que a -tos aur b l (vg) dignus ff² -tia r¹ [[×]] a incipiat d f
 -tum dignum d r¹ [[vellit]] a
 ×
 8. „ „ vobis fructum dignum „ „ „ „

Cf. also the following synopsis ap. Toth (1994, p. 204):

Matth. 22, 25: Vulg. erant autem apud nos septem fratres

Vet. Lat. ergo

Marc. 12, 20: Vulg. septem ergo fratres erant

Vet. Lat. a erant autem

Vet. Lat. c septem igitur fratres fuerunt

Vet. Lat. aur/l vg ergo

Luc. 20, 29: Vulg, septem ergo fratres erant

Vet. Lat. ff² autem

Vet. Lat. d Ø,

where *autem*, *ergo*, *igitur* and Ø are mutually exchangeable. Although in these cases, the Greek original text uses topic markers, too, the exchangeability of them which shows up in Latin is again genuine.

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