The study of the interaction between prosody and syntax in the expression of new information in Spanish has received limited attention in the literature. Some theoretical studies (Contreras, 1978; Zubizarreta, 1998; Gutierrez-Bravo, 2002) argue that new information, that is, the focus of a given utterance, comes in final position, where it receives prosodic prominence in Spanish. Nevertheless, experimental studies (Gabriel, 2010; Vanrell and Fernández-Soriano, 2013) show that other strategies such as clefting or prosodic marking in-situ are also acceptable in the expression of informational focus. These studies report that the prosodic realizations associated with the focused constituent follow a general trend: rising pitch accents are found in pre-nuclear position while falling pitch accents are found in nuclear/final position. Other strategies such as the use of intermediate boundary phrases have been reported (Nibert, 2000; Hualde, 2002, 2005).

This study aims to determine whether Asturian Spanish, a dialect that has not been studied before, shows the same intonational contours described for Castilian Spanish. The analysis focuses on the prosodic realization of the three most common configurations reported for the expression of informational focus in Castilian Spanish (p-movement, clefting and prosodic marking in-situ). The experimental design avoids the use of question-answer pairs in an attempt to elicit full and natural sentences. Twelve speakers of Asturian Spanish were asked to perform a contextualized sentence completion task (see example 1) targeting utterances with informational focus on the subject or the direct object (3 per function and syntactic strategy), as well as contrastive focus (2 per function and strategy, focus in situ and clefting) and broad focus (3). The realizations were analyzed using Praat (Boersma and Weenink, 2005) and transcribed using the latest version of the Sp_ToBI (Hualde and Prieto, 2014).

Based on the generalizations presented in previous studies, the hypotheses are: a) in utterances with p-movement, speakers will use a falling contour; b) when speakers use clefting, the focused constituent will be realized with the pitch accent, L+H*, followed by a high intermediate boundary tone; c) if focus is marked in-situ, speakers will also use L+H*.

The analysis reveals that the intonational contours produced by speakers of Asturian Spanish do not differ from the ones found previously for Castilian Spanish in sentences with p-movement. Nonetheless, when focus was prosodically marked in-situ or in a cleft-sentence, the most common pitch accent was L+<H*, the same pitch accent found in broad focus statements (see figure 2). Continuation tones were extensively used at the end of the constituents conveying both old and new information. These results indicate that the pitch accents marking focused constituents in different syntactic structures as produced by speakers of Asturian Spanish conform to the general trend found in other dialects. This analysis also points to the consideration of additional acoustic features associated with said pitch accents (peak height, peak alignment, duration of the rise) and boundary tones that could be playing a phonological role.
(1) Tu jefe te comenta que alguien pasó la noche en la oficina. No puedes ayudarle porque no sabes quién fue pero después, tu compañero te comenta que fue Andrea así que vuelves a la oficina del jefe y le dices:

(Your boss tells you that someone spent the night in the office. You cannot help him, because you do not know who it was but later, your colleague tells your that it was Andrea, so you go back to the office and tell your boss…)

• Pasó la noche en la oficina… (Spent the night in the office…): P-movement
• Fue… (It was…): Clefting
• Andrea… (Andrea…): In-situ

(2) Armando hid the wallet in the car –Narrow focus on the object (la billetera)

REFERENCES