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# Prosodic Feature of Focus in Korean Speech

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## Abstract

A focus being defined as the part in a sentence where new information is given, it is assumed that foci in verbal communications show distinctive prosodic features as well as semantic ones. Sentences were given in pairs and each pair contained a question inducing a certain focus and an answer to it. Suprasegmental features were investigated in priority to detailed physical features of separate sounds.

Generally, a narrow focus didn't show any special correlation with stress. An accentual phrase before a focus showed longer duration in the ratio of 1:1.5, and 75% of accentual phrases were actualized as intonational ones. It is suggested that a focus in Korean sentences becomes distinct not by being embodied with stress, but by remarking an accentual phrase before it as pause in an intonational phrase, which is quite different from the cases in Indo-European language.

## Methods and Analysis

### Materials

1. 'What's up?'
  2. 'Who give the TV to her mother?'
  3. 'What is given by Sumi to her mother?'
  4. 'To Whom Sumi give the TV?'
- 'Sumi give the TV to her mother.' (in Korean)

### Participants

20 persons, male and female university students who were born in and grew up at Seoul, Korea.

### Analysis

- Pitch tracks were made with the Praat program.
- A K-ToBI transcription was made by the author of the recorded sentences. Analyses of break indices were confirmed by other listeners.

## Results

In this paper, there is no correlation between focus and accent. If an AP become focus, the AP and a AP in front of

the AP is extended. And, in length, a length of the last syllable in the AP is very extended than a total length of the AP. Especially, at the front of focus, it is revealed IP(ex. complex tone etc.)

Therefore, it could be assumed that in stead of accent, focus appeared through breaking speech in Korean.

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