

Prosodic Phrasing and Focus in Korea

Judy Yoo-Kyung Baek

Purpose: Some of the properties of the prosodic phrasing and some acoustic and phonological effects of contrastive focus on the tonal pattern of Seoul Korean is explored based on a brief experiment of analyzing the fundamental frequency(=F0) contour of the speech of the author.

Data Base and Analysis Procedures: The examples were chosen to contain mostly nasal and liquid consonants, since it is difficult to track down the formants in stops and fricatives during their corresponding consonantal intervals and stops may yield an effect of unwanted increase in the F0 value due to their burst into the following vowel. All examples were recorded three times and the spectrum of the most stable repetition was generated, from which the F0 contour of each sentence was obtained, the peaks with a value higher than 250Hz being interpreted as a high tone (=H). The result is then discussed within the prosodic hierarchy framework of Selkirk (1986) and compared with the tonal pattern of the Northern Kyungsang dialect of Korean reported in Kenstowicz & Sohn (1996).

Prosodic Phrasing: In N.K. Korean, H never appears both on the object and on the verb in a neutral sentence, which indicates the object and the verb form a single Phonological Phrase (=Ø), given that there is only one pitch peak for each Ø. However, Seoul Korean shows that both the object and the verb have H of their own, indicating that they are not contained in one Ø. This violates the Optimality constraint of *Wrap-XP* (=Enclose a lexical head and its arguments in one Ø), while N.K. Korean obeys the constraint by grouping a VP in a single Ø. This asymmetry can be resolved through a constraint that favors the separate grouping of each lexical category and is ranked higher than *Wrap-XP* in Seoul Korean but vice versa in N.K. Korean; *Align-X^{lex}* (=Align the left edge of a lexical category with that of a Ø).

- (1) nuna-ka manll-il mEk-nIn-ta ('sister-NOM garlic-ACC eat-PRES-DECL')
 a. (LLH) (LLH) (HLL) ----Seoul Korean
 b. (LLH) (LLL) (LHL) ----N.K. Korean

Focus and Phrasing: Two major effects of contrastive focus on phonological phrasing are found in Seoul Korean: (a) the peak of an Intonatioanl Phrase (=IP) falls on the focused element; and (b) focus has the effect of deleting all the following prosodic structures. A focused element always attracts the peak of IP, showing an increase of approximately 30Hz compared with the peak of a non-focused IP. When a subject is focused, no H appears either on the object or on the verb and a focused object is never followed by a verb with H. The post-focus deletion of prosodic boundaries is forced through the interaction of *Stress-Focus* (=If F is a focus and DF is its semantic domain, the highest prominence in DF will be within F) and *Rightmost-IP* (=The peak of an IP projects from the rightmost Ø). First *Stress-F* requires the peak of IP to fall on the focused element. Then to avoid violating *Rightmost-IP*, all the boundaries after the focused element should delete, minimizing the number of Ø's intervening from the right edge of IP.

(2) a. [Subj Obj Verb]	<i>Stress-F</i>	<i>Rightmost-IP</i>	<i>Align-X^{lex}</i>	<i>Wrap-XP</i>
(S) (O) (V)	√	**!	√	√
(S) (O) (V)	√	*!	*	√
---> (S) (O) (V)	√	√	**	√
b. [Subj Obj Verb]	<i>Stress-F</i>	<i>Rightmost-IP</i>	<i>Align-X^{lex}</i>	<i>Wrap-XP</i>
(S) (O) (V)	√	*!	√	√
---> (S) (O) (V)	√	√	*	√
(S) (O) (V)	√	√	**!	√
c. [Subj Obj Verb]	<i>Stress-F</i>	<i>Rightmost-IP</i>	<i>Align-X^{lex}</i>	<i>Wrap-XP</i>
---> (S) (O) (V)	√	√	√	*
(S) (O) (V)	√	√	*!	√
(S) (O) (V)	√	√	**!	√

Conclusion: In general, there seems to be no direct alignment constraints between the syntactically focused element and the edge of Ø determined in phonology; all the alignment effects come from a single requirement that the peak of IP projects from the rightmost Ø as proposed in Truckenbrodt (1995).