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Title: *Prosodic focus in a language with focus particles*
Research Question: Is focus marked prosodically if a language has focus particles?

Garo, an understudied Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Northeast India has been impressionistically described as a stress-final language with very little information about its intonation (Burling, 2003). The present study investigates how the language expresses information status and its effect on word-prosody. Specifically, we study the use of prosody and the focus particle *-sa* in the expression of narrow focus. Overall, we find minimal use of prosody in the expression of information status in Garo.

Information status or focus can be expressed through syntactic structures (e.g., fronting), morphemes (e.g., focus particles), or prosody (e.g., nuclear pitch-accent and phrasing; Frota, 2000). The use of syntactic structures or morphemes does not prohibit the use of prosody, and we often see the combination of two in languages (Frota, 2000). So, Garo may use prosodic focus in addition to focus particles. Phonologically, prosodic focus adds a prosodic boundary at the edge of the focused item and the location or type of nuclear pitch-accent on the focused item (Gussenhoven 2004; Jun 2005; Ladd, 2008; Nespor & Vogel, 2007). Phonetically, prosodic focus enhances and adds to the phonetic properties of word stress (Gordon & van der Hulst, 2020; Sluijter & van Heuven, 1996; van der Hulst, 2010; Vogel et al., 2017).

The design of the study follows Athanasopoulou et al. (2015) and Vogel et al. (2017). We elicited target words within carrier sentences in positions isolated from the prominent positions of higher-level prosodic domains. The carrier sentences were primed by questions to elicit three focal conditions: pre-focal (PreF), focal (Focus), and post-focal (PostF). PreF is the baseline where the correlates of word stress are investigated, and the Focus and PostF conditions test whether the stress correlates change to express focus. The target syllables were always CV with either /a/ or /i/ in trisyllabic words. The focus particle *-sa* was placed at different positions as appropriate for each focus condition. Ten native Garo speakers (8 females) from the town of Tura in India were recorded. Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2022) was used to segment the target vowels and measure F0, duration, and intensity in all three syllable positions.

A preliminary analysis of the data from one female speaker shows that in the baseline condition (PreF), syllable 1 has the greatest duration compared to syllables 2 and 3, which have similar length (Fig. 1) and syllable 3 that has the highest F0 with relatively rising contour compared to syllables 1 and 2 (Fig. 2). In Focus, duration increases in all the syllables, but syllable 1 remains the longest and the F0 pattern remains the same as in the baseline. In PostF, duration increases slightly and only in the first two syllables, and the F0 range is reduced between syllables 1 and 3, but the overall F0 pattern remains the same as in the other conditions.
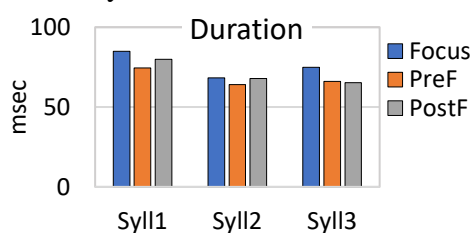

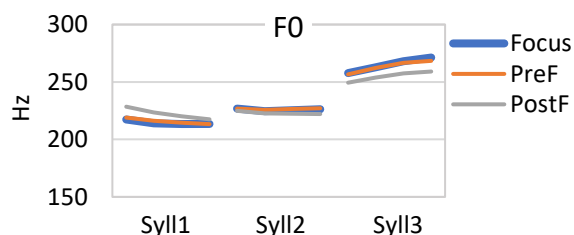**Figure 1:** Vowel duration by syllable position in three focal conditions.

Figure 2: F0 by syllable position in three focal conditions.

Both edges of Garo words display some enhancement: syllable 1 is consistently longer, but syllable 3 has consistently higher F0. Focus fails to enhance either edge and post-focally we see no compression of either phonetic property. These patterns also show no evidence of phonological prosodic focus: the pitch-accent and its alignment remain the same and there is no evidence that the prosodic domains differ across the conditions. These results suggests that Garo does not mark focus prosodically and it relies on the presence of the focus particle.

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