Information Focus marking in French. Acoustic predictors of postfocal deaccentuation

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Information Focus (IF)

The part of the answer which resolves the question.

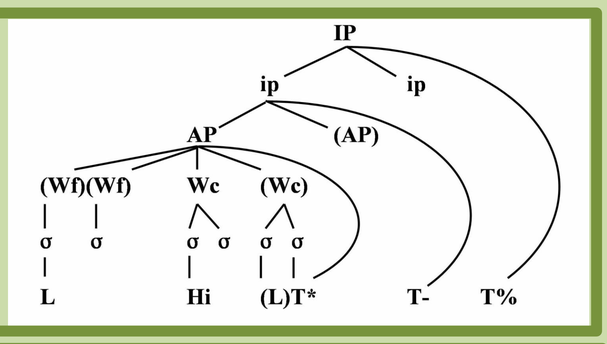
(1a) All focus answers
Q: What happened
A: [John invited Mary last night]F

(1b) Narrow focus answers
Q: **Who** did John invite last night?
A: John invited **[Mary]F** last night

French Intonational Phonology

Adapted from [3]

Optional initial rise LHi
Obligatory final pitch accent T*



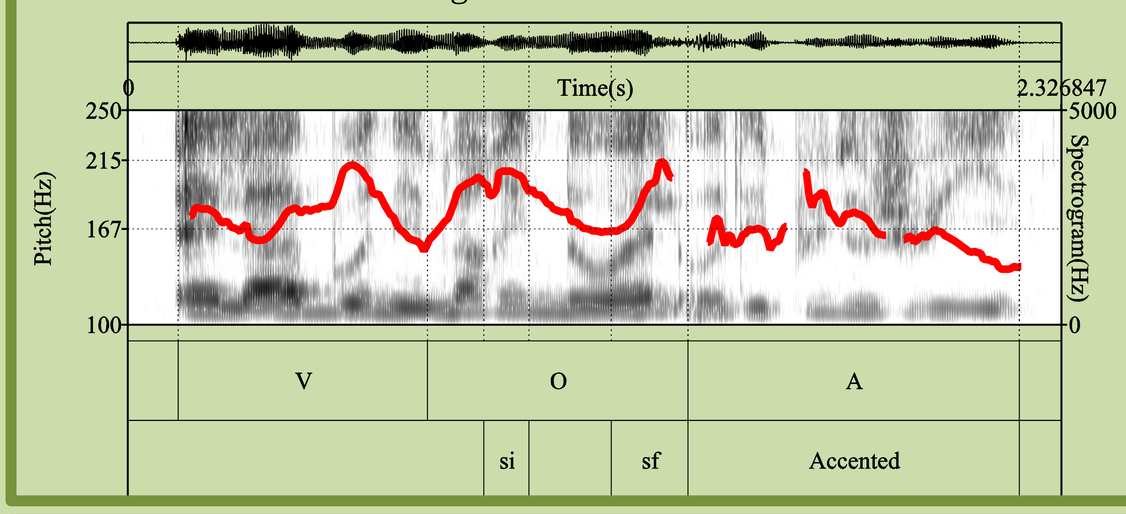
Prosodic marking of focus in French

see [1] [2] [3] [4]

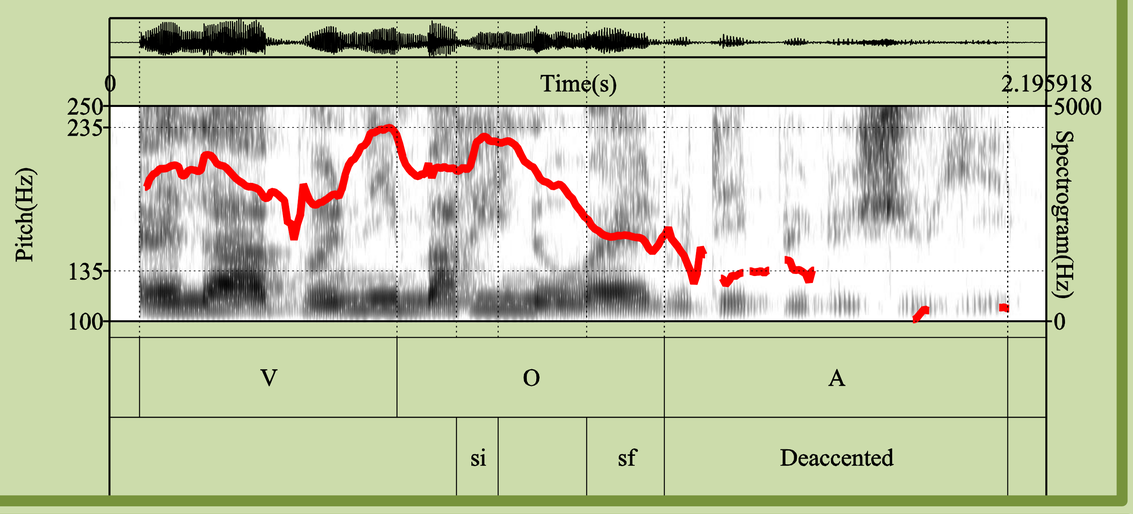
Consensus : Postfocal dephrasing
Open questions: **Role and characteristics of the initial rise LHi?**
Role and characteristics of pitch range? On the focal constituent?
On the prefocal constituent?

Data

Answers to broad or partial questions bearing on the object O
Pattern: V (subject clitic+verb), O (Object), A (adverbial)
[J'ai visionné]V [les videos]O [la nuit dernière.]A
"I screened the videos last night"



Postfocal dephrasing (Deaccented A)
60% of the answers to partial questions
30% of the answers to broad questions

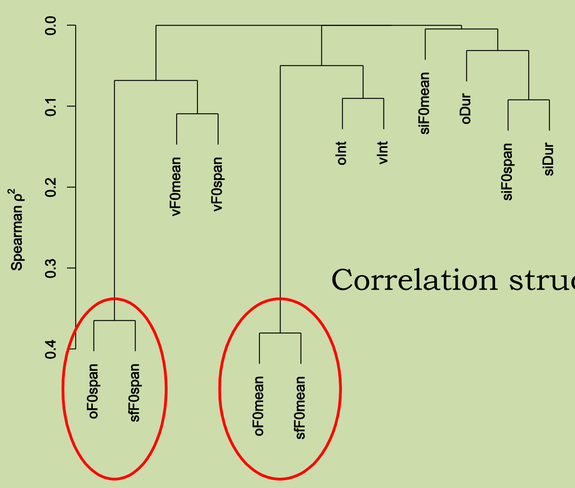


Measures (on V, O, si & sf)

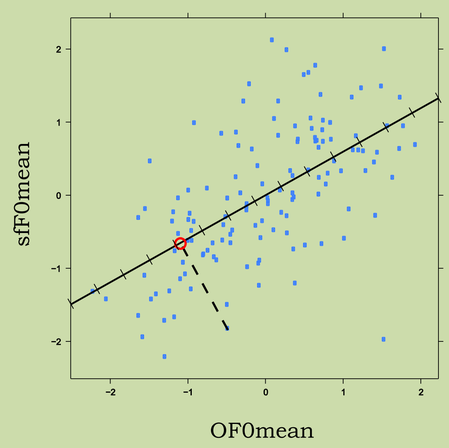
Mean duration, mean F0, F0 span (F0maximum-F0minimum) and mean intensity
si=first syllable of the content word of O (**LHi**)– **sf**=final syllable of the AP (**T***)

Correlations

To run statistics: highly correlated variables are replaced with their first principal components



Correlation structure



First principal component of OF0mean and sfF0mean

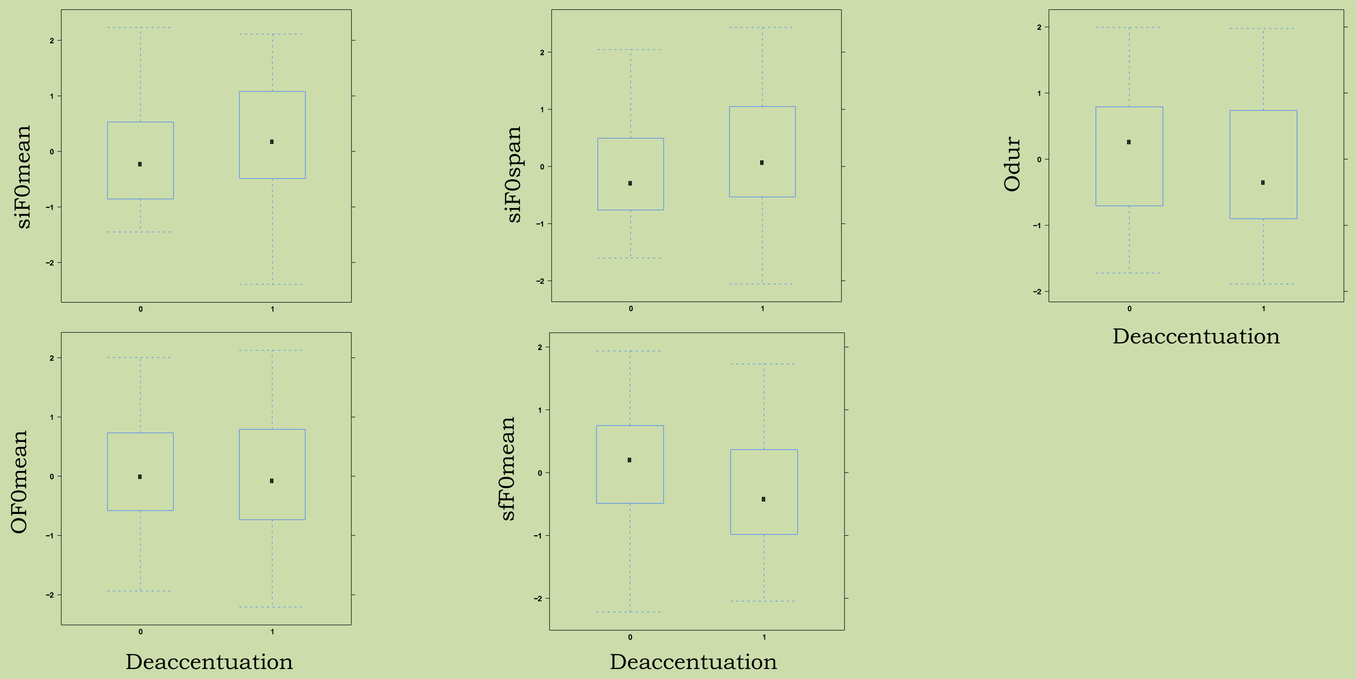
Statistics

Model: Logistic regression.
Dependent variable : Probability of deaccentuation.
Predictors: PC1(OF0mean, sfF0mean), PC2(OF0mean, sfF0mean), PC1(OF0span, sfF0span), PC2(OF0span, sfF0span), siF0mean, siF0span, Odur, vF0mean, vF0span, oInt, vInt, siDur.
Random factor: Subject's identity.

Results

Significant predictors

	PC1 (OF0mean, sfF0mean)	Odur	siF0mean	siF0span
Z:	-2.643	-2.762	2.095	2.160
Pr(>|Z|):	0.00821	0.00574	0.03618	0.03077



Conclusion

In our *Information* focus data, deaccentuation is predicted by **intensification of the initial rise LHi** on the focal Object O
=>**double marking**: left and right edge of the focal constituent.
Compared with results obtained with *contrastive* focus in [3] and [4]:
Confirm that **pitch range is higher** in focal O but on LHi, not on T*;
Contrary to contrastive focus, **no pre-focal pitch compression**;
The shorter duration of the focus constituent remains to be explained.

References

[1] Di Cristo, A. 1999. Le cadre accentuel du français contemporain, Langues 3(2), pp.184-205, Langues 4(2), 258-267.
[2] Beyssade, C.; Hemforth, B.; Marandin, J.-M.; Portes, C. 2010. Information Focus in French, In : Yoo, H-Y & Delais-Roussarie, E. (eds), Proceedings of IDP2009, Paris, September 2009, 9-17.
[3] Jun, S.-A. & Fougeron, C. 2000. A phonological model of French intonation, in Botinis, A. (ed.) Intonation: Analysis, modeling and technology. Kluwer, 209-242.
[4] Dohen, M. & Loevenbruck, H. 2004. Pre-focal Rephrasing, Focal Enhancement and Post-focal Deaccentuation in French. In Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Spoken Language Processing, 1, 785-788.

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