The effect of prosodic cues on semantic prediction · Ling 611 final project

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1 Introduction

In Turkish, factive attitude reports are realized with a pitch contour that is distinct from that of non-factive attitude reports.

The difference is in the position of focus (matrix vs. embedded), which is realized by an H-*ip* boundary before the focused word, followed by an H*L contour aligned with its stressed syllable.

(1)   ATTITUDE REPORT
Tunc [Dilara'nin Ankara'da   ol-dug-un-u]   bil-iyor.
Tunc Dilara.GEN Ankara.LOC be-NONFUT.NMZ-3S-ACC know-PRES.3S

Tunc {knows, believes} that Dilara is in Ankara.

    a.   MATRIX FOCUS:
Tunc Dilara'nin Ankara'da oldugunu)$^{H-}$ (*bili^{H*}yor*$_F$)   ... #ama Ankara'da degil.
Tunc knows that Dilara is in Ankara   ... #but she's not.

    b.   EMBEDDED FOCUS
Tunc Dilara'nin)$^{H-}$ (*An^{H*}kara*$_F$'da oldugunu biliyor)   ... ✓ama Ankara'da degil.
Tunc believes that Dilara is in Ankara   ... ✓but she's not.

Usually, if a verb 'is' factive, both options in (1) are available—with the associated interpretive difference. If a verb is non-factive (like 'believe'), the early focus contour is preferred and the late focus contour is marked.

(2)   ATTITUDE REPORT
Tunc [Dilara'nin Ankara'da   ol-dug-un-u]   san-iyor.
Tunc Dilara.GEN Ankara.LOC be-NONFUT.NMZ-3S-ACC believe-PRES.3S

Tunc believes that Dilara is in Ankara.

    a.   MATRIX FOCUS:
#Tunc Dilara'nin Ankara'da oldugunu)$^{H-}$ (*sani^{H*}yor*$_F$)   ... ✓ama Ankara'da degil.[1]
Tunc believes that Dilara is in Ankara   ... ✓but she's not.
(Contrastive focus on 'believe'?)

    b.   EMBEDDED FOCUS
Tunc Dilara'nin)$^{H-}$ (*An^{H*}kara*$_F$'da oldugunu saniyor)   ... ✓ama Ankara'da degil.
Tunc believes that Dilara is in Ankara   ... ✓but she's not.

Given this pattern, we can ask whether people use prosodic features to predict the semantic properties of upcoming verbs.

(3)   HYPOTHESIS
    a.   Late focus favors factive verb predictions.
    b.   Early focus does not favor factive verb predictions.
        (i)   Non-factives predicted more often, OR
        (ii)   No difference in rate of prediction.

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[1]To the extent/in contexts where this sentence is acceptable, the continuation by denial is acceptable.

The early focus contour is equally compatible with factive verbs and non-factives. So there might be no preference in this condition. However, non-factives are *only* good with the early focus contour, so people might prefer non-factive predictions in the early focus condition.

It would be interesting to include very early cues as well.

Bigger picture: If there is an effect, we must ask *how* prosodic cues are integrated to make semantic/pragmatic predictions. I'm not perfectly clear on this at this stage.

2   Materials & Methods

- Incomplete attitude reports, with the attitude verb left out, presented auditorily: E.g.,

    (4)   Tunc Dilara'nin Ankara'da oldugunu
           Tunc Dilara   in Ankara   be
           Tunc ___ that Dilara is in Ankara.

- Two conditions: Early focus, Late focus.

    (5)   a.   Early focus:
                 Tunc Dilara'nin) (Ankara'da oldugunu
           b.   Late focus:
                 Tunc Dilara'nin Ankara'da oldugunu)

- Forced choice completion task: Factive verb or non factive verb.

- Predictions:

    - In the late focus condition, % factive completions > % non-factive completions.
    - In the early focus condition, % factive ≈ % non-factive.

- 12 experimental items each recorded in EF and LF.

- Two lists:

    - List 1: Sentence 1 EF, Sentence 2 LF. . .
    - List 2: Sentence 1 LF, Sentence 2 EF. . .

- 6 of the 12 items are recorded by author, 6 come from a previous elicitation study and other speakers (3 from one speaker and 3 from another).

- Half of the items have know/believe as possible completions, the other half remember/think.

- 12 fillers, 2 from author, 5 each from other two speakers. (Participant gets 8 sentences per speaker in total.) Among the fillers:

    - 6 root transitives.
    - 4 attitude reports with intonation patterns unlike experimental items.
    - 2 neg raising attitude reports, with matrix negation.
    - Forced choice in the fillers: imagine/give importance to; see/hear. (There are an equal number of pairs of verbs. 6 san/bil, 6 hatirla/dusun, 6 hayal et/onemse, 6 gor/duy)

- Finale: two comprehension questions. Two ARs recorded in EF and LF conditions. Question: Is the embedded proposition true or false?