

## Prosodic focus marking in Swedish children

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According to the Lund model of Swedish intonation [1], focus is marked by adding a floating high tone to the lexical accent of a focal word, and by downstepping post-focal accents<sup>1</sup>. Research on prosodic development in Swedish children has primarily been concerned with word prosody [2,3,4]; thus little is known about the acquisition of sentence prosody. To shed light on this issue, we used a picture game to investigate prosodic focus marking in Swedish children, compared to adults.

Semi-spontaneous SVO sentences were obtained from 5 children (mean age 5;3) and 5 adults, as responses to *who*-, and *what*-questions in a picture-based game. The game included 18 question-answer mini-dialogues, rendering sentences with initial, medial, and final focus. Pitch and duration measurements were extracted from medial and final target words using Praat [6].

Mixed effect modelling was used to examine the effect of focus (focal vs. post-focal) on pitch range and word duration in medial and final position. The adults were found to produce focal target words with significantly larger pitch range and significantly longer duration than their post-focal counterparts in both positions. For the children, the effect of focus approached significance ( $p=.061$ ) only for word duration sentence-medially.

The results of our analysis of pitch range and duration merit interpretation in light of the phonological categories in question (e.g. accent type and focal high), and we are currently finalizing a phonological analysis of the sentences. At the symposium we will discuss the complete analysis from a cross-linguistic perspective [5,7].

### References

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<sup>1</sup> Stockholm Swedish.