1. Introduction

Focus: part of a sentence that conveys new information on a topic (Vallduví & Engdahl 1996, Lambrecht 1996). Focus is coded by prosodic cues in many languages: pitch and/or duration.

Prosodic focus marking in L1 Mandarin speaking children: (Yang & Chen 2014a)
- Age 4: start to use duration to differentiate focus from pre/post-focus, and pitch to differentiate focus from pre-focus.
- Age 8: use pitch and duration to differentiate focus from non-focus.

L1 Bai children: Bai children use Bai at home and learn Mandarin at school. Prosodic focus marking in monolingual adult speakers of Bai: only duration (Liu, Chen & Van de Velde 2014)

Research questions:
1. Do child L2 speakers of Mandarin mark focus prosodically? (focus)
2. Do they differentiate different focus types? (size and contrastivility)
3. Which prosodic cues do they use? (pitch or duration)
4. Which development path do the children follow to become native-like in their L2?

2. Methodology

2.1. Experimental materials
- 5 Focus conditions:
  1. NF-1: narrow-focus on the subject NP in sentence-initial position
  2. NF-m: narrow-focus on the verb in sentence-medial position
  3. NF-2: narrow-focus on the object NP in sentence-final position
  4. BF: broad focus
  5. CF-m: contrastive-focus on the verb in sentence-medial position
- 80 SVO target sentences.
- Question-answer pairs are embedded in a picture-based game.

2.2. Data elicitation
Example: CF (contrastive focus) condition

3. Analysis and Results

3.1. Analysis
- Acoustic measurements: pitch-max, pitch-min, pitch-range, duration.
- Statistical analysis: Mixed effect Modelling

Focus:
- NF-m(focus) vs. NF-f (post-focus)
- NF-m(focus) vs. NF-f (pre-focus)

Size of focal constituent:
- (NF-m + CF-m) vs. BF (broad focus)

Contrastivility:
- NF-m (non-contrastive focus) vs CF-m (contrastive focus)

Interaction between focus types and lexical tones

3.2. Results

![Figure 1](image1.png)

Figure 1. Mean duration of CF-m (contrastive focus) vs. NF-m (non-contrastive focus) in Age 6-

![Figure 2](image2.png)

Figure 2. Mean pitch range of CF-m (contrastive focus) vs. NF-m (non-contrastive focus) in Age 6-

4. Discussion and Conclusions

- I. Do child L2 speakers of Mandarin mark focus prosodically? (focus)
  Yes. Children from both age groups increased the duration on verbs under focus as compared to post-focus.
  The earlier mastery of the use of duration in L2 to distinguish narrow focus from non-focus suggests (1) that duration as a cue may be easier to learn or (2) that the children benefitted from positive L1 transfer.

- II. Do they differentiate different focus types? (size and contrastivility)
  No. Child L2 speakers from both age groups neither used duration nor pitch to differentiate focus types that differ in the size of the focal constituent.

- III. Which prosodic cues do they use? Pitch and duration are used in different conditions by different age groups.

- IV. Which development path do the children follow to become native-like in their L2?
  The acquisition of prosodic focus-marking in Mandarin is a gradual process in child L2. L2 Mandarin-speaking children did use pitch (albeit not in all tones at younger ages) in addition to duration to distinguish contrastive focus from non-contrastive focus.

Acknowledgements: We are grateful to all the bilingual participants from Jinhe Primary School and to children’s parents for their cooperation. We also thank Shanpeng Duan and teachers of Jinhe Primary School for their enormous support for the fieldtrip. Aoju Yang, Anna Sara Romoren for their feedback. This study is supported by a scholarship from the Chinese Scholarship Council to the first author and a VIDI grant (276-89-001) from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research to the second author. Map is cited from Chinese government website: http://www.gov.cn