**Production and perception of focus in naturalistic Turkish speech**

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In the extensively free word order language of Turkish, focus and its realization, as a fundamental notion of information structure, has been investigated from multiple perspectives. These include the purely syntactic hypothesis, postulating an immediately preverbal focus position; the primarily prosodic hypothesis of focus realization through pitch contour modulation; and the dual hypothesis, integrating syntactic and prosodic assumptions. However, despite numerous predominantly theoretical investigations, no consensus on the focus realization mechanisms in Turkish has been reached so far. In light of this debate, the presented PhD project aims to contribute experimental data on the realization and perception of focus constructions in naturalistic Turkish speech, unrestricted by previous hypotheses.

The project’s first completed experiment aimed to describe focus realization in Turkish. In contrast to previous experimental studies on this topic, a methodological approach was developed that allowed participants to formulate syntactically unrestricted focus-bearing phrases while controlling context through *wh*-questions and accompanying animations. By investigating the ways of encoding focus in its asymmetries (i.e., focus types, focus scope, and argument hierarchy), this experiment provided clear evidence against a rigid focus position in Turkish, in favor of acoustic correlates of focus asymmetries in the form of fundamental frequency and intensity. Two subsequent experiments in preparation aim at investigating the processing of the obtained naturalistic focus constructions, specifically studying (i) the effects of mismatch between *wh*-questions and syntactically variable answers regarding focus type in sentence processing, and (ii) differences in the depth of processing between focused and non-focused phrases within sentences.