
When *aussi* mixes things up

Prosodic disambiguation of association with additive focus in French

Haohan Zhang¹, Lisa Brunetti² & Hiyon Yoo²

¹Université Paris Cité, ²Université Paris Cité / CNRS

haohan.zhang@etu.u-paris.fr, lisa.brunetti@u-paris.fr, hi-yon.yoo@u-paris.fr

The present research investigated the prosodic disambiguation of the additive focus adverb (FA) *aussi* ‘also’ in French through a production experiment, aimed to define the intonation pattern when the associate of *aussi* is located (a) in the middle of the sentence as an argument of verb or (b) at the end as an adjunct. Every sentence was preceded by a disambiguating context.

- (1) Hugo a aussi présenté sa femme à Manon
Hugo AUX. also introduce.PST. POSS.F. wife to. Manon
SSG.PRS PTCP SG PREP

‘Hugo also introduced his wife to Manon’

The prosodic analysis using F_ToBI (Delais-Roussarie et al., 2015) shows a dominant pattern of H* L- for middle-position associates (50% of the cases). This pattern is mainly located in the final syllable of the associate, indicating a high pitch accent followed by a boundary tone, which marks the boundary of narrow focus. An early H* peak (in the penultimate syllable) is an interesting phonetic cue in this position, especially appearing with long associates. For the associate in final position, the intonation patterns appeared more varied. The most frequent pattern, Hi L* L%, accounts for 37.5% of the corpus and represents the typical intonation at the end of declaratives in French. In this final position, an added pause just before the associate may serve as an important acoustic cue. Furthermore, a prosodic prominence was found on *aussi*, with H* systematically appearing on /si/ (unlike previous findings : Benazzo & Patin 2017).

Using the production experiment data, a perception experiment was conducted to explore the identification of the associate by French speakers. Results revealed a significant effect of the associate position, indicating improved performance when the associate was adjacent to the FA ($p < 0.01$).

Both findings raise questions about the role of proximity between FA and associate in the prosodic realisation of the latter, which might be explored in the future through online experiments such as eye-tracking. Future research will also include a more comprehensive statistical analysis for the production data, and a more fine-grained analysis of the perceptual cues used to identify the final associate.

References: • Benazzo, S., & Patin, C. (2017). French additive particle *aussi*: Does prosody matter. *Focus on Additivity: Adverbial Modifiers in Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages*, 107-136. • Delais-Roussarie, E. ... & Yoo, H.-Y. (2015). Intonational phonology of French : Developing a ToBI system for French. In *Intonation in Romance*, OUP, 63-100.