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Prosodic Analysis of Wh-indeterminate Questions in L2 Korean

Jung In Lee

Portland State University

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Prosodic Analysis of wh-indeterminate questions in L2 Korean

Jung In Lee

Department of Applied Linguistics
Portland State University

What is wh-indeterminates?

Wh-indeterminates are **wh-pronouns** that serve a range of functions in different **sentence types**. These functions include acting as **interrogatives** (e.g., 'who'), **universal quantifiers** ('everyone'), **existential quantifiers** ('someone'), **negative polarity items** ('anyone'), and **free choice items** (also 'anyone').

(Kuroda ,1965)

Wh-indeterminate in Korean

	누구	언제	어디	무엇 (뭘)
wh-interrogative	who	when	where	what
wh-indefinite	anyone	any time	anywhere	anything

Ambiguous wh-indeterminate questions

내일	어디		가요?
		Korean	
[nɛir	ʌdi		gajo]
tomorrow	where/anywhere	IPA	go-PST
	English Gloss		

Wh-question: **Where** are you going tomorrow?

yes-no question: Are you going **anywhere** tomorrow?

Three prosodic cues for disambiguation

1. Accentual Phrasing (intonation pattern in wh-phrase)
 - a. time difference between the highest F0 of the wh-phrase and the lowest F0 following
 - b. post-wh L tone deletion on the first post-wh syllable in wh-questions
 - c. post-wh L tone has higher pitch in – questions
2. F0 peak on wh-word
 - a. maximum pitch on wh-word is higher in wh-questions
3. Boundary tone
 - a. wh-questions: LH%
 - b. yes-no questions: H%

Jun & Oh, (1996) and Yun & Lee (2015)

Research questions

1. Are L2 Korean speakers with English L1 able to produce wh-questions and yes-no questions with target-like intonation patterns?
 - a. Is it target-like with respect to accentual phrasing
 - b. Is it target-like with respect to f0 peak on wh-word
 - c. Is it target-like with respect to boundary tone
 - d. Can L1 speakers distinguish wh-questions from yes-no questions?
2. Are L2 Korean speakers with English L1 able to disambiguate the wh-questions and yes-no questions?
3. Is there evidence of L1 influence on learners' understanding and use of wh-questions and yes-no questions?

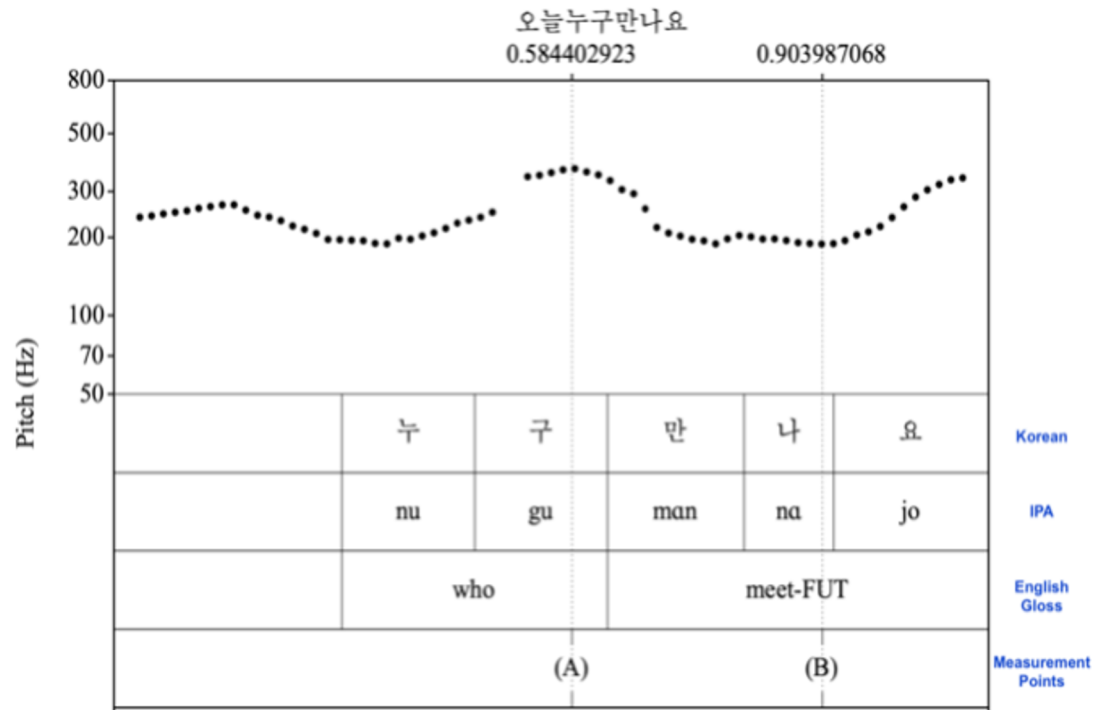
Research methods

Pre-test survey	Production test				Perception test	Post-test interview
Language background	Accentual phrasing	F0 on wh-word	Boundary tone	L1 Listeners' judgment	Listen to Seoul Korean and choose the answer	Qualitative data

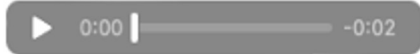
Prosodic analysis on PRATT



Annotations for analysis



Perception Test



네/아니요

Yes/No

김치찌개 먹었어요

I had kimchi stew

Results

1. Accentual Phrasing

- a. time difference varied considerably it did not show any correlation between question types
- b. most participants showed target-like production in wh-questions with post-wh L tone deletion
- c. f0 on the post-wh L tone did not show target-like difference

2. F0 peak on wh-word

- a. only one participant had significantly higher pitch on the wh-word in wh-questions showing a target-like production.

3. Boundary tone

- a. wh-questions: LH% → LH% (target-like)
- b. yes-no questions: H% → LH% (non-target-like)
- c. Overall, a strong preference and potential bias towards LH% was revealed

Discussion

- L1 influence
- Language proficiency (intermediate vs. advanced learners)
- Exposure to the language outside classroom
- Study-abroad experience
- Pedagogical implications for prosody instruction in KFL classrooms

Thank you