

The acquisition of prosodic focus marking from a cross-linguistic perspective

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Previous research on young children's knowledge of prosodic focus marking has revealed an apparent paradox, with comprehension appearing to lag behind production. Comprehension of prosodic focus is difficult to study experimentally due to its subtle and ambiguous contribution to pragmatic meaning. I will discuss the relevant methodological issues and present a comprehension task that, we believe, bypasses them. The rest of the paper will be presenting and discussing the findings from 3-6-year old English-, German- French- and Mandarin-speaking children and adults.