



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS**

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Programme of Study : Ph.D.
Thesis Title : Intonational Phonology and Focus in two Varieties of Assamese
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Thesis Submitted to the Department/ Center : Humanities and Social Sciences
Date of completion of Thesis Viva-Voce Exam : 10th July' 2017
Key words for description of Thesis Work : Intonation, Phonology, Post-lexical prosody, Focus, Assamese

SHORT ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies intonational phonology and prosody of focus realisation in two varieties of Assamese: Standard Colloquial Assamese (henceforth SCA) and Nalbariya Variety of Assamese (henceforth NVA). The dissertation, which has been organised into nine chapters, studies various prosodic aspects of the two studied varieties. While chapter-1 introduces the theoretical background of the study together with the arrangement of the thesis, chapter-2 explores the lexical prominence pattern in SCA and NVA. Chapter-3 proposes an intonational model for the varieties. This dissertation establishes that Assamese is typologically similar to the other SALs, in that it is characterised by repeated rising contours on non-final constituents. Like SALs, it is the contour shape on the final constituent that determines the sentence type in the two studied varieties. Next four chapters (4-7) findings have been discussed regarding how focus (both contrastive focus (CF) and morphologically marked focus (MF)) manifest in Assamese with reference to SCA and NVA. The findings show that the two varieties maintain differences from each other in focus marking and post-focus compression. In spite of their differences, SCA and NVA share similarities with other SALs. Both varieties designate focus with rising contours, and the high tone realised on focused constituents is phonetically characterised with greater pitch value. Furthermore, the present work undertakes experiments in order to investigate phonetic cues to CF and MF. Focused constituents always show greater pitch rise compared to their WF renderings. These experiments revealed that in SCA CF manifestation, post-focus durational reduction is not statistically significant, whereas in NVA this reduction is always significant. As against the tendency in SCA to retain the prosodic phrasing structure of the post-focus sequence, in NVA dephrasing of the sequence has been proposed. Chapter-8 consolidates all the findings regarding CF and MF realisation in the two varieties. Finally, chapter-9 concludes the dissertation with references to limitations and future prospects of the present study.